

Hodyl & Co

Planning Scheme Amendment C280
32-68 Mollison St, Abbotsford

Expert Evidence - Urban Design
Leanne Hodyl

Prepared for Maddocks

September 2021

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Prepared by Hodyl & Co for Maddocks

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Hodyl & Co—Amendment C280 - Mollison Street, Abbotsford



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Introduction

Personal details

Ms Leanne Hodyl
Managing Director
Hodyl & Co
Suite 1.2 / 2 Collins St
Melbourne VIC 3000

Qualifications

- 2009 Masters of Urban Design
University of Melbourne
Dean's Honour Award
- 2004 Graduate Diploma of Arts (Social Theory)
University of Melbourne
- 1997 Bachelor of Science (Architecture)
University of Newcastle

Awards and associations

- 2021 - Joint President - Urban Design Forum Australia
- 2020 - Editor and Founder, Cities People Love
- 2019 - Senior Industry Fellow, RMIT
Honorary position
- 2017 - Member, VPELA
- 2016 - Member, Planning Institute of Australia
- 2015 President's Award for Planning
Planning Institute of Australia - Victoria
- 2014 Churchill Fellowship Award
Churchill Memorial Foundation

Professional Experience

- 1] I have over 20 years of experience delivering urban design and strategic planning projects working in both the public and private sectors in Melbourne, Sydney, Darwin and regional Victoria.
- 2] Since January 2016, I have been the Managing Director of Hodyl & Co, a research, urban design and strategic planning consultancy. Prior to this I led the City of Melbourne's Urban Strategy Unit, responsible for leading complex urban design and planning projects across the municipality, including the Southbank Structure Plan, Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan and City North Structure Plan.
- 3] Over the past 10 years I have focused on developing best practice approaches to delivering good urban design in high-density neighbourhoods. This includes:
- In 2014 I completed a Churchill Fellowship focused on the design of high-rise developments in New York, Vancouver, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul. This award-winning research identified the most effective planning policies utilised in high-density neighbourhoods in these cities.
 - I am the author of the Central City Built Form Review Synthesis Report (2016) prepared on behalf of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). This work built on the findings of my Churchill Report and led to significant built form policy reform in Melbourne's CBD and Southbank.
 - I am the author of the Urban Design Strategy for Fishermans Bend (2017), Australia's largest urban renewal area.
 - The provision of expert evidence at Planning Panels Victoria for the following locations:
 - » Melbourne CBD & Southbank (C270)
 - » Fishermans Bend (GC81)
 - » Carlton (C196)
 - » Kensington & North Melbourne (C191)
 - » West Melbourne (C309)
 - » Swan St, Richmond (C191)

- 4] I was assisted in the preparation of the 2019 Peer Review by Bec Fitzgerald, an Associate Urban Designer with Hodyl & Co. The opinions expressed in this report are entirely my own.
- 5] A full resume of my experience is provided in Appendix A.

Instructions

- 6] I have been instructed to:
- Prepare a statement of evidence and appear as an expert witness. The statement should focus on the peer review work that I undertook and provide my views about the Amendment in overall terms as it is proposed.

Background documents

- 7] The following key background documents have informed my statement:
- The exhibited Amendment documentation
 - The Yarra Spatial Economic and Employment Strategy (SGS, 2018)
 - The Peer Review prepared by Hodyl & Co in 2019.

Discussion

Peer review - overview

- 8] Hodyl & Co was invited to undertake a peer review of the Planning Scheme Amendment Request prepared by the Meydan Group for 32-68 Mollison Street, Abbotsford in 2019.
- 9] A copy of the Peer Review is attached in Appendix B.
- 10] The scope of this peer review included consideration of:
- The suitability of the potential increases in the building height.
 - Whether a consistent building height should apply.
 - Specific site constraints that will influence the development.
 - Suitable building envelopes for the site (street wall, upper floor setbacks and building separation).
 - Delineation of active frontages.
 - The context, including recent development approvals.
 - Other key urban design issues such as the interface of the ground level to the street and access issues.
- 11] The Peer Review considered the existing permit (PLN17/0679) , the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment as well as the indicative Development Proposal (Attachment 3 in the Planning Scheme Amendment Request report) in order to identify revisions to the Amendment that would be considered necessary to deliver positive urban design outcomes.
- 12] The Peer Review is in two parts:
- Part A: Indicative Development Review which incorporates the urban design assessment of the indicative development proposal.
 - Part B: Planning Scheme Amendment Review and recommendations for changes to facilitate positive urban design outcomes.
- 13] The Peer Review includes a summary of the site and context drivers (see paragraphs 11 - 18) that will influence the development. In summary, these consider:
- Site location
 - Site interfaces
 - Site frontages
 - Industrial & warehousing context
 - Adjacent buildings which include a mix of warehouse, apartment and commercial buildings.
 - Heritage overlays
 - Neighbouring development approvals.
- 14] A site visit was undertaken to support the Peer Review in October 2019.
- 15] The review of the indicative development proposal identified three key areas of concern with associated recommendations to address each one provided. These were:
- The need to manage the design of the ground plane, with recommendations to:
 - » Provide a pedestrian link that connects William Street to the existing laneway to the north of the site (with a width of 6m nominated).
 - » Locate vehicle access off a new service laneway within the site.
 - The need to establish an appropriate podium scale and design response, with recommendations to:
 - » Designate 3 to 4 storey street wall heights (3 storeys to Little Nicholson Street and 4

storeys to the corner of Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent).

- » Introduce a setback of 3 metres above the street wall height on Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent.
- » Introduce a setback of 5 metres above the street wall at Little Nicholson Street.
- » Introduce a setback of 3m from the boundary or the laneway centreline to the north of the site.
- » Include a materials strategy that distinguishes between the lower and upper levels, that is responsive to the local character.
- » Introduce a requirement for the building to be chamfered at the Mollison Street / Victoria Crescent corner with no cantilevering of upper levels.
- The need to create a height strategy that is responsive to the context, with recommendations to:
 - » Require that the building be read as three separate upper level forms set within a 3 to 4 storey podium.
 - » Require minimum upper level separation of 6 metres.
 - » Introduce a maximum overall height of 32 metres to the west of the site, stepping down to 23 metres to the east of the site.
- The Peer Review recommends that all of the above recommendations are incorporated into a revised version of the Planning Scheme Amendment

Proposed amendment - overview

- 16] The Amendment proposes to:
- Replace the existing incorporated Plan Overlay (IPO) - Schedule 1
 - Delete the IPO 1 from 61-69 William Street, Abbotsford
 - Amend Clause 72.04 to replace the incorporated document '32-68 Mollison Street and 61-69 William Street, Abbotsford July 2013' with '32-68 Mollison Street, Incorporated Plan (March 2021)'.
- 17] More specifically the updated IPO:
- Increases the allowable building height from 5 storeys (23m) to 7 storeys (32m) for part of the land. 5 storeys applies to the eastern part with 7 storeys applied to the western part.
 - Increases the street wall height from 3 storeys to 4 storeys at the eastern end of the site.
 - Increases the upper level setbacks from 2 metres to 3 metres.
 - Introduces a ground level setback on Little Nicholson Lane to support two-way traffic.
 - Introduces a requirement for a chamfer at the intersection of Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent.
 - Introduces a requirement for upper building separation of 6 metres.
 - Introduces a solar access requirement to the southern footpath on Mollison Street between 10am and 2pm at the September equinox.
 - Introduces a requirement for a minimum of 80% active frontages to Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent.
 - Introduces a requirement for materials definition between lower and upper levels of building.
 - Introduces a requirement that car parking is concealed from Victoria Crescent and Mollison Street.
 - Introduces a requirement for bicycle parking.
 - Limits vehicle access to Little Nicholson Street and

Mollison Street.

- Requires pedestrian access to be from streets (with primary access from laneways to be avoided).
- Requires service cabinets to be appropriately located and integrated with the design of the building utilising the laneway where possible.

18] I understand that the proponent has made a commitment to widen Little Nicholson Street (the laneway) and to improve pedestrian crossing on Mollison Street at the Victoria Crescent intersection. These commitments would be confirmed and formalised through a Section 173 Agreement.

Support for Amendment

19] I consider that the proposed IPO will deliver better urban design outcomes than the current IPO that is in the Yarra Planning Scheme. The key improvements include:

- Support for a building form, scale, modulation and materials strategy that is better aligned with the existing context and character of Abbotsford. This includes the inclusion of a defined 3 to 4 storey podium base with recessed upper levels from all four boundaries, requirements for separation of upper building forms and the inclusion of design treatments that visually distinguish the lower and upper floors.
- Inclusion of a requirement for activation of the Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent frontages. This will make these streets more engaging and safe for pedestrians.
- Removal of vehicular access from Victoria Crescent which will support high levels of pedestrian amenity along this street.
- Solar access protection for the southern footpath of Mollison Street between 10am and 2pm on September 22 which will maintain good levels of pedestrian amenity and comfort.
- A requirement to chamfer the building corner at Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent which will provide for a generous public space on the corner

supporting easier movement for pedestrians.

20] I consider that the revised IPO provides far greater clarity and certainty on the urban design outcomes sought. This level of guidance will be of benefit to the proponent, decision-makers and the community.

21] The delivery of a formal and raised pedestrian crossing across Mollison Street at the intersection with Victoria Crescent is also strongly supported. This will improve the safety of this crossing point for pedestrians and provide legibility of the pedestrian priority to drivers.

22] I support the inclusion of a greater amount of employment floorspace in this precinct which is identified as a key employment precinct in the Spatial Economic and Employment Strategy 2018.

Differences in the Amendment from the Peer Review

23] The following recommendations of the Peer Review have not been adopted within the Amendment:

- Introduction of a pedestrian link connecting William Street to the existing laneway.
- Provision of vehicular access via the existing laneway.
- Inclusion of a 5 metre setback above the street wall in Little Nicholson Street. A 3 metre setback was adopted.
- The requirement that the development should be read as 3 separate upper level forms. The proposed planning controls requires that it is read as 2, not 3 separate forms.

24] The Amendment requires a ground level setback from Little Nicholson Street to enable two-way traffic movements.

Site layout

25] The recommendation to introduce a new pedestrian link connecting William Street to the existing laneway was focused on reducing the visual bulk of the development at the Mollison

Street frontage, providing an opportunity to reduce traffic impacts on Little Nicholson Street, improving amenity at the lower levels of the building by increasing access to an outlook from an additional laneway and expanding the pedestrian network in line with the proposal at 20-30 Mollison Street where an east-west pedestrian link has been provided at the northern interface.

- 26] I consider that all of these benefits would be provided through this link and would recommend that is included in the IPO.
- 27] The reduction in the upper level setback along Nicholson Street is considered acceptable as the laneway is now being widened. This will create a more generous public space that is less overwhelmed by adjacent development.

Further changes recommended to the exhibited IPO and Incorporated Plan

Active frontages

- 28] The Incorporated Plan includes a requirement that 80% of frontages to Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent are active. This is typically interpreted as requiring an active use at ground level with full visibility between the interior of the ground level and the street. This is typically achieved through the inclusion of full height glass facades fronting the street.
- 29] I support the intent of this requirement, that is to create active, engaging and safe streets. I don't consider that this is the best method of regulating this outcome in this specific context.
- 30] The existing character of Nicholson Street and Mollison Street is defined by a mixture of residential and warehousing buildings. The residential buildings provide active engagement of the street through the inclusion of regular doorways, entrances and front gardens. The warehousing buildings provide a mixed level of activation, with some including doors and windows to the street while others do not provide activation of passive surveillance of the street.

- 31] The existing character of Victoria Crescent is defined by older warehouses (which include doors and roller door entrances), and newer commercial buildings, many of which include a continuous glass frontage at ground level.
- 32] Floor to ceiling glass facades at the ground floor are suitable in a retail context where the maximum level of visual permeability between the building's interior and the street is desirable. They do not typically suit commercial and industrial buildings where ground floor uses include office spaces or warehousing/production spaces. This is because there is often a desire or need for some visual privacy from the public street. This is evident in Victoria Crescent where many of the windows of many of these buildings have been covered with decals that block the view in from the street in order to provide privacy to building occupants.
- 33] I would recommend including a requirement in Table 1 of the Incorporated Plan that supports the creation of safe and engaging streets. In a commercial / industrial context, however, I consider that a more appropriate way of articulating this would be through a category of Building and Works titled 'Street activation and engagement' with a Requirement as follows:
- New development should include multiple entrances and building openings along the extent of frontage to Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent. These should be sufficient in number and spacing to provide a high level of passive surveillance along Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent frontages.
- 34] The requirement for a minimum 80% frontage to both streets should be deleted.

Conclusion

Conclusion

- 35] I am largely supportive of the Amendment in its current form.
- 36] I recommend the following two changes to the Amendment to improve the delivery of positive urban design outcomes:
- Include a north-south laneway link as identified in the Peer Review.
 - In Table 1 of the Incorporated Plan, change 'Active Edges' to 'Street activation and engagement' and update the requirement to:
 - » New development should include multiple entrances and building openings along the extent of frontage to Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent. These should be sufficient in number and spacing to provide a high level of passive surveillance along Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent frontages.

Appendix A - CV

Leanne Hodyl Managing Director

Leanne is the founder and Managing Director of Hodyl & Co, a design and planning consultancy focused on creating cities people love. She has 20 years experience delivering urban policy and design projects critical to the future development of cities. This includes leading housing strategies, built-form policy for high-density urban environments, arts strategies, urban renewal intensification strategies, master plans for existing urban areas and infrastructure planning projects.

Her work is informed by qualifications in urban design, architecture and social theory, and extensive experience in strategic planning. By integrating all of these essential elements of urban design and planning practice she has a demonstrable track record in delivering successful urban policy and public realm projects.

Leanne previously led the City of Melbourne's Urban Strategy group which was responsible for delivering major urban design and strategic planning projects in Melbourne.

Her professional experience includes working for government and private clients. As an urban design expert she is a member of the Office of the Victoria Government Architect's Victorian Design Review Panel and regularly provides urban design advice as an expert witness at VCAT and in planning panels.

Leanne was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2014 to investigate global planning policies that shape high-rise living in central cities. This research was awarded the Victorian Planning Institute of Australia's President's Award for Planning Excellence in 2015. It has been pivotal in shifting policy around high-density design in central Melbourne. Leanne has an ongoing interest in research and its ability to improve policy and design outcomes and is a Senior Industry Fellow with RMIT's School of Global, Urban and Social Studies. She launched Cities People Love in 2020, a collaborative research platform that aims to improve the design and planning of cities.

Qualifications

2009	Master of Urban Design Dean's Honours Award, Melbourne University
2003	Graduate Diploma of Arts (Social Theory) Melbourne University
1998	Bachelor of Science (Architecture) Newcastle University

Career overview

2021—	Joint President, Urban Design Forum Australia
2020—	Founder and Editor, Cities People Love
2019—	Senior Industry Fellow—RMIT University
2017—2020	Contributing Editor, Landscape Australia
2016—	Victorian Design Review Panel member Office of the Victorian Government Architect
2016—	Managing Director, Hodyl & Co
2015	Manager—Urban Strategy, City of Melbourne
2011— 15	Coordinator—City Plans and Policy, City of Melbourne
2008— 11	Associate Director, Urban Design Team Leader, AECOM
2004— 08	Associate—Urban Design, Hassell
2002—04	Urban Designer, David Lock Associates
1998— 99	Architectural Assistant, Bligh Voller Nield

Awards & Recognition

2018	Victorian Award for Best Planning Ideas: Small Project (Commendation)—Darebin Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework, PIA
2016	Victorian Award for Best Planning Ideas: Small Projects—City Road Master Plan, PIA
2015	President's Award for Planning Excellence, PIA, Victoria
2014	Churchill Fellowship, Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
2013	Victorian Award for Public Engagement and Community Planning for Future Living (Housing discussion paper), PIA
2010	Commendation for Urban Planning Achievement, Southbank Structure Plan, PIA

Key projects, 1999—2021

SPATIAL AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Future Darebin City Vision - City of Darebin
- Fishermans Bend Urban Design Strategy—DELWP
- Fishermans Bend Employment Precinct Strategic Plan—DELWP
- Younghusband Rejuvenation, Kensington—Impact Investment Group
- Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan—City of Melbourne
- City North Structure Plan—City of Melbourne
- Southbank Structure Plan—City of Melbourne
- University Hill Master Plan—MAB Development
- Macquarie Park Rail Corridor Urban Design Framework—NSW Liveable Cities Unit
- Moe, Morwell and Traralgon Urban Design Frameworks Victorian State Government
- Cities as Water Supply Catchments, Monash University

BUILT FORM POLICY

- Footscray Activity Centre - City of Marybrynong
- Central Geelong Urban Design Guidelines - City of Greater Geelong
- Heidelberg Road Built Form Framework - City of Yarra
- Fishermans Bend Urban Design Strategy & Amendment GC81— DELWP
- Sunlight to Open Spaces Report - City of Melbourne
- Central City Built Form Review Synthesis Report & Amendment C270 - DELWP
- Central City Built Form Review - Urban Design Analysis of Special Character Areas & Amendment C270- DELWP
- Moonee Ponds Activity Centre Built Form Framework—City of Moonee Valley
- Central Melbourne Retail Study - Perri Projects
- Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan & Amendment C190—City of Melbourne
- City North Structure Plan & Amendment C196 —City of Melbourne
- Southbank Structure Plan & Amendment C171—City of Melbourne
- Macquarie Park Rail Corridor Urban Design Framework - NSW Liveable Cities Unit

- High St, Darebin Urban Design Framework—City of Darebin

URBAN DESIGN ADVICE

- Urban Design advice for a range of private development sites in inner Melbourne
- Urban Design Expert Witness for individual development sites at VCAT and planning scheme amendments at panel (including all those noted above).

HOUSING POLICY

- Oakover Village Housing Diversity Report, City of Darebin
- City of Melbourne Housing Strategy, Homes for People, City of Melbourne
- Future Living Housing Discussion paper, City of Melbourne
- Churchill Fellowship Report, 'Investigating the social impacts of high-density, high-rise housing' - Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
- Ballarat Residential Infill Study, Ballarat City Council

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES / ARTS INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

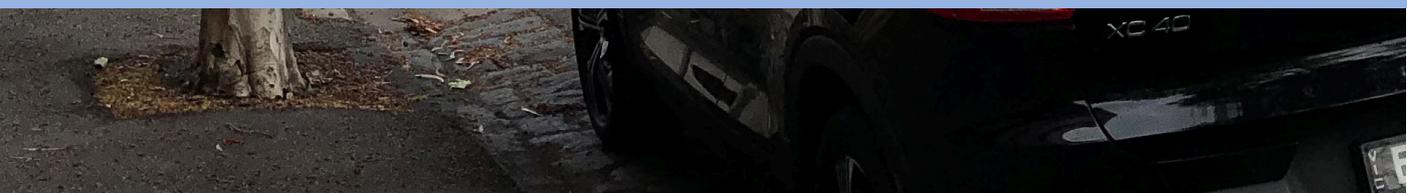
- Creative Neighbourhoods Research project - Creative Victoria
- Moreland Arts Infrastructure Framework - City of Moreland
- Darebin Cultural and Creative Industries Framework, Darebin City Council
- Northland Urban Renewal Precinct Arts Infrastructure Strategy - City of Darebin
- Melbourne Arts Infrastructure Framework, City of Melbourne

Appendix B - Peer Review



**32-68 Mollison Street, Abbotsford
Urban Design Peer Review**

Prepared for the Yarra City Council
October 2019



cities people love

Hodgyl+Co

This independent report has been prepared for Yarra City Council. All due care has been taken in the preparation of this report. Hodyl + Co, however, are not liable to any person or entity for any damage or loss that has occurred, or may occur, in relation to that person or entity taking or not taking action in respect of any representation, statement, opinion or advice referred within this report.



Prepared by Hodyl + Co for the Yarra City Council
Project team: Leanne Hodyl + Bec Fitzgerald
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October 2019
Version A

32-68 Mollison Street, Abbotsford | Hodyl + Co

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Introduction

- 1) In September 2019 I was engaged by the Yarra City Council to provide an independent peer review of a proponent-led Planning Scheme Amendment request for 32-68 Mollison Street Abbotsford.
- 2) The site was previously subject to a proponent-led Planning Scheme Amendment (C170) in 2013 that rezoned the site from Industrial 1 Zone to Business 3 Zone and applied an Incorporated Plan Overlay Schedule and an Environmental Audit Overlay to the site.
- 3) The purpose of the Incorporated Plan Overlay (see Figure 1) was to facilitate the use and development of the land at 32-68 Mollison Street for office, commercial and other compatible uses.
- 4) The Incorporated Plan Overlay included the following key provisions -
 - » A mandatory maximum height of 23 metres (5 storeys), the management of the northern interface to provide for continued industrial purposes, a building setback above the parapet of 2m, and a preferred vehicle entry/exit identified on Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent.
 - » The current Planning Scheme Amendment requests an increase in the permitted maximum height from five to seven storeys.
 - » An existing planning permit applies to the site (PLN17/0679) that permits a five storey office building with two levels of basement parking.
 - » The planning permit applies to the area within the Incorporated Plan Overlay and a site to the north-east (10 Victoria Street).

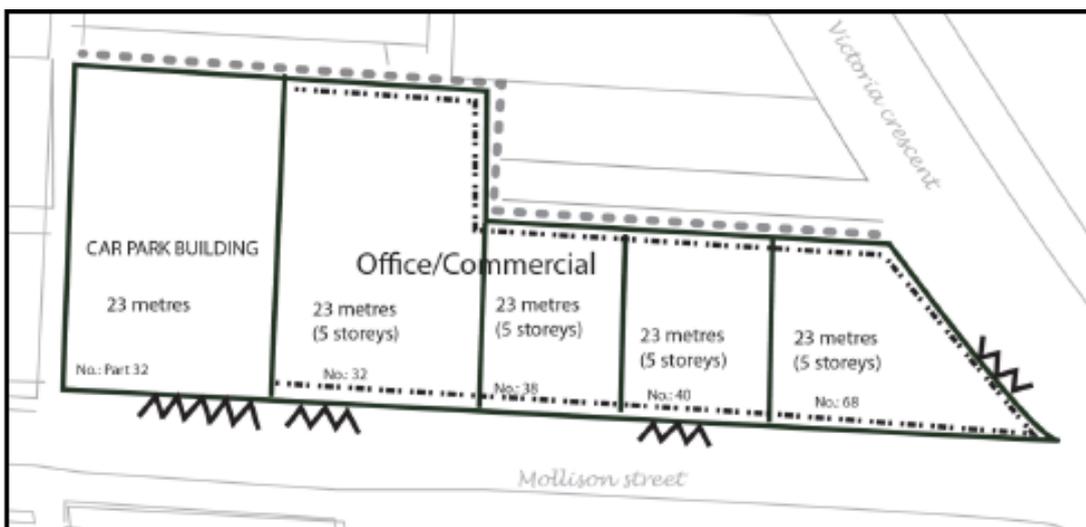


Figure 1 Incorporated Plan Overlay (C170).

- 5) The existing permit allows the site to be developed in two stages (see Figure 2). The developer has indicated their intention is that Stage 1 of the development progresses while the current Planning Scheme Amendment is assessed. Details of how they propose to manage the development are included in the Planning Scheme Amendment Request.
- 6) Our urban design review is focused on assessing the merit of the indicative development, identifying what revisions to the design are required and therefore recommending revisions to the Planning Scheme Amendment that would be necessary to deliver acceptable urban design outcomes.
- 7) The review is divided into Part A: Indicative Development Review and Part B: Planning Scheme Amendment Recommendations.
- 8) Part A: Indicative Development Review is an urban design assessment of the indicative development provided in Attachment 3 of the Planning Scheme Amendment Request (p.77 - p.94).
- 9) Part B: Planning Scheme Amendment Recommendations is an assessment of the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment provided in Attachment 2 of the Planning Scheme Amendment Request (p.69 - p.76).
- 10) Part B includes a summary of recommendations to inform the Planning Scheme Amendment and facilitate best-practice urban design outcomes on the subject site.

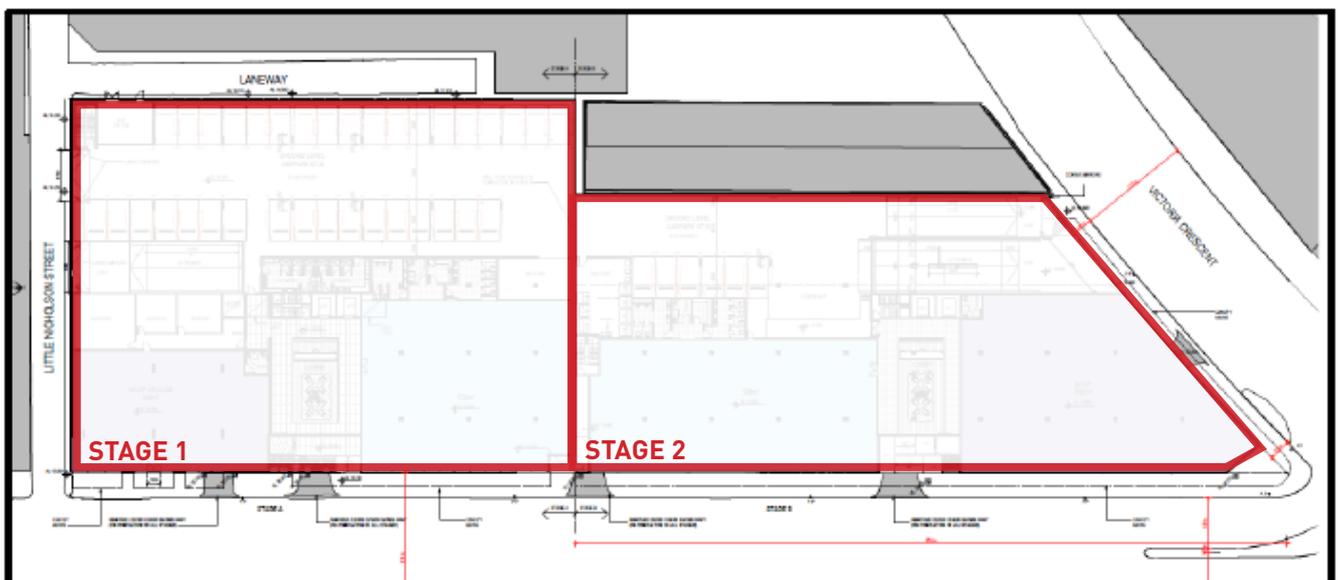


Figure 2 Approved permit at 32-68 Mollison Street and 10 Victoria Crescent.

Site and context

- 11) The site is located at 32-68 Mollison Street, Abbotsford. It is bounded by Victoria Crescent to the east, Mollison St to the south, Little Nicholson St to the west and by two private sites to the north.
- 12) It has a street frontage of approximately 147 metres to Mollison St (southern interface), 46 metres to Victoria Crescent (eastern interface) and 47 metres to Little Nicholson St (Western interface). It is an irregular shape with a total area of 4,360m².
- 13) It is located to the south-east of an ageing industrial precinct to the west of the Yarra River. The industrial precinct is predominantly warehouses of varying scales with some more recent commercial developments.
- 14) There is a mixture of buildings to the south of the subject site. These include:
 - » The individually significant Former Denton Hat Mills, a three storey brick warehouse that has been adapted into a mixed-use development.
 - » A recently completed four storey apartment development with a one storey brick street wall (see Figure 4).
 - » A mixture of 1-2 storey commercial buildings and warehouses (see Figure 5).
- 15) The precinct to the south is predominantly covered by heritage overlays.
- 16) To the east of the subject site is a two storey commercial development and a one storey warehouse.
- 17) There are two approved developments neighbouring the subject site.
 - » To the west of the site (20-30 Mollison Street) is an eight storey office building with a rooftop garden and an overall height of 33.5m. The office has a high-level of activation at the ground floor, provides a new pedestrian connection to the north of the site and has a defined three storey podium with varying setbacks at upper levels.
 - » To the north of the site (12-20 Victoria Crescent) is an office building which varies in height from five storeys (at the eastern interface) to seven storeys (at the western interface) with the roof/plant creating an additional storey. The approved development has an overall height of approximately 33 metres.
- 18) The approved development at 12-20 Victoria Crescent includes the retention of a portion of a heritage building, a high-level of activation to Victoria Crescent and a break in the massing at the second level to create two distinct upper level forms of varying heights (see Figure 3).

Break in the massing at the second level to create two distinct upper level forms of varying heights

Retention of existing heritage building

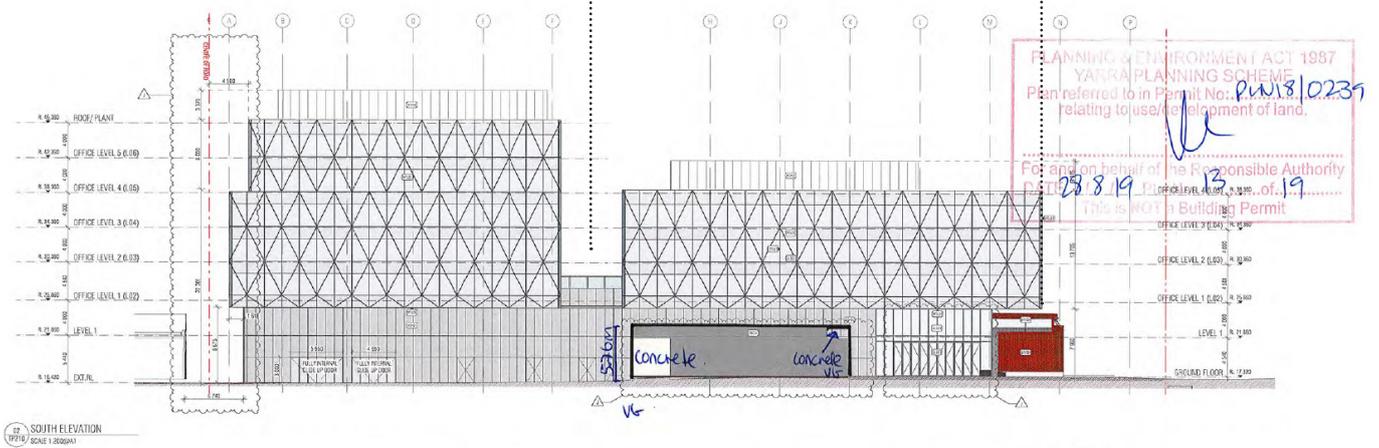


Figure 3 Approved permit at 12-20 Victoria Crescent (with key factors noted).

Recently developed four storey apartment

Subject site

Adjacent 1-2 storey commercial buildings and warehouses

Subject site



Figure 4 Looking north-west along William Street towards the subject site.

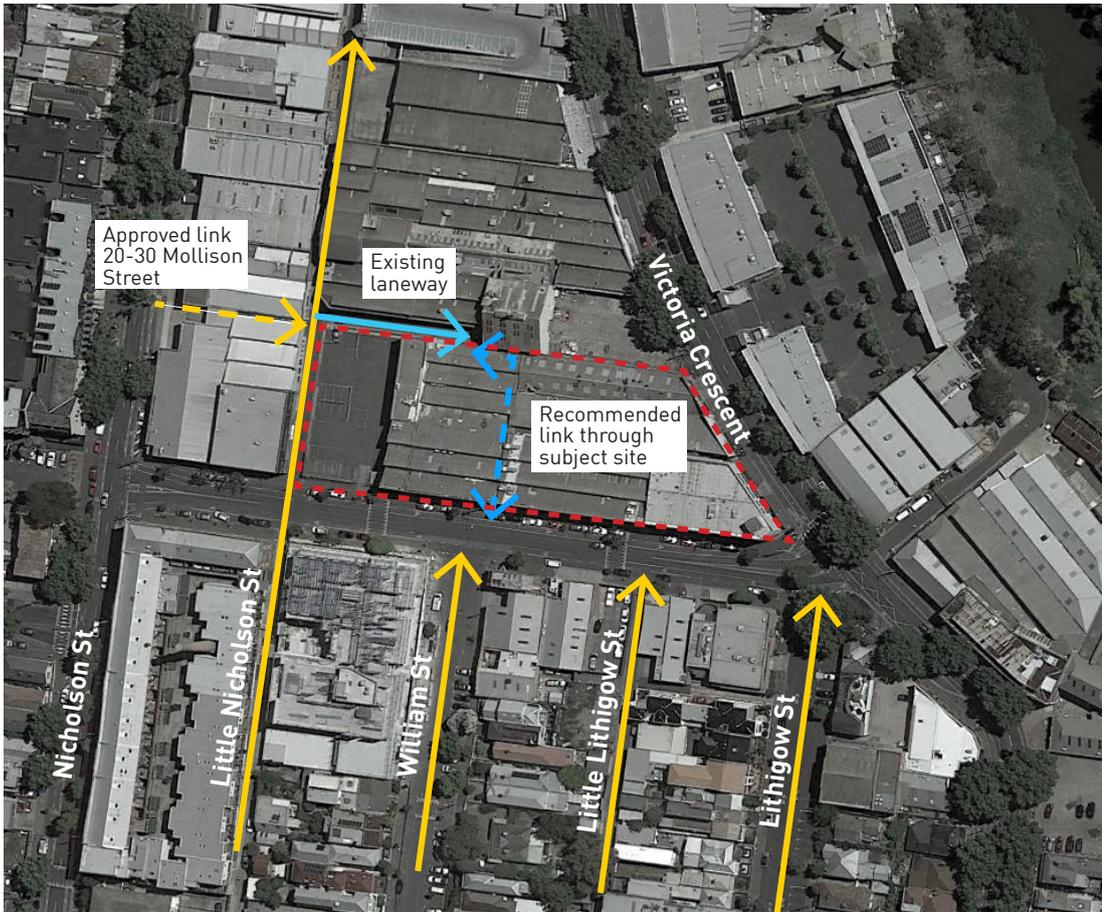
Figure 5 Looking west along Mollison Street from the intersection of Victoria Crescent and Mollison Street.

Part A: Indicative Development Review

- 19) An urban design review of the indicative development was undertaken.
 - 20) The proposed increase in the overall height limit will have a significant impact on the surrounding area and this proposition has therefore triggered a broader review of the overall site layout and massing as well as the overall height.
 - 21) Upon review of the indicative development, a series of urban design recommendations have been made. The discussion supporting these recommendations has been grouped under the following directions:
 - » Managing the ground plane
 - » Establishing an appropriate podium
 - » Creating a responsive massing strategy
- ### Managing the ground plane
- 22) The industrial history of this precinct has resulted in limited granularity of the street network when compared with the surrounding residential areas.
 - 23) This results in challenges in managing the street network and traffic requirements within large sites.
 - 24) Although there is a natural logic to placing vehicular entrances of rear laneways, this is increasingly challenging as these laneways often lack the capacity to manage the large volumes of traffic generated by new developments.
 - 25) Widening Little Nicholson St at the Mollison St intersection will assist in managing traffic flow but will still channel high volumes of traffic onto a narrow street with limited capacity.
 - 26) The subject site represents the termination of three residential streets to the south of the subject site. These are William Street, Little Lithgow Street and Lithgow Street, with Little Lithgow Street predominantly functioning as a rear laneway.
 - 27) There is an opportunity to extend William Street to the north which would offer the following benefits within the subject site:
 - » Reducing visual bulk at the Mollison Street frontage by breaking up the overall massing, particularly as its viewed from the low-scale residential dwellings on William Street.
 - » Providing an opportunity to reduce traffic impacts on Little Nicholson Street by locating the carpark entrance off a new service laneway.
 - » Improving amenity at the lower levels of the building by increasing outlook.
 - » Connecting to the existing laneway to the north of the site and effectively expanding the pedestrian network in line with the proposal at 20-30 Mollison Street in which an east-west pedestrian link has been provided at the northern interface.

Recommendations

- Provide a pedestrian link that connects William Street to the existing laneway to the north of the site (nominally 6m in width).
- Vehicle access to the subject site should occur off a new service laneway within the site.



- - - Subject site
- ↔ Recommended link through subject site
- ➔ Existing streets to the south of the subject site
- ➔ Existing laneway abutting subject site
- - - ➔ Approved link at 20-30 Mollison Street

Figure 6 Looking north-west along William Street towards the subject site.

Establishing an appropriate podium

- 28) A site of this scale requires a sophisticated massing strategy that responds to the surrounding context and minimises the bulk of the development.
- 29) The Mollison Street frontage is approximately 147 metres wide and visual bulk needs to be carefully managed at this interface.
- 30) The existing building on the site has an overall height of three storeys, stepping down to two storeys to the west of the site (see Figure 7).
- 31) There are recent positive development examples in the surrounding context in which the existing warehouse has been adopted as the podium with the upper level forms setback (see Figure 8).
- 32) Although the existing building is not to be retained at 32-68 Mollison Street, the overall height of the existing building provides a starting point for establishing an appropriate street wall height that is in keeping with the existing character and context.
- 33) The recently approved development at 20-30 Mollison Street also provides an indication of emerging street wall heights. This building design establishes a three storey podium in predominantly recycled brick. The podium is reinforced by variable upper level setbacks, a recessed terrace at the fourth storey and a distinct change in materiality above the podium (see Figure 11).
- 34) This is most effective at the Nicholson Street interface where a 4.5 metre setback and a change in materiality creates a clear distinction between the podium and upper levels.
- 35) A successful podium strategy requires this differentiation through massing and materiality. Material differentiation that isn't supported by a change in the massing effectively creates a 'facade' podium that cannot be read in three dimensions.
- 36) Figure 8, Figure 10 and Figure 11 all establish context specific podiums in which there is a clear distinction between the podium and upper levels achieved through massing and materiality. These range in height from one storey to three storeys.
- 37) The success of these massing strategies is that there is a clear visual distinction between the podium and the upper levels that does not just rely on a change in materials.
- 38) This requires a setback above street wall that assists in making the upper levels appear visually recessive. The existing setback above the street wall specified in the Incorporated Plan Overlay is 2m.
- 39) An increase in the setback to 3 metres to Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent is considered more appropriate in the context of increasing the overall height to seven storeys.
- 40) A 3 metre setback is also considered more appropriate to the northern boundary, in order to create adequate building separation at the upper levels.



Figure 7 Existing building looking west along Mollison Street.



Figure 8 Building at corner of Gipps St and Nicholson St.



Figure 9 Building at corner of Gipps St and Nicholson St.



Figure 10 Building at corner of William St and Nicholson St.



Figure 11 Proposed development to the west of the subject site (20-30 Mollison St).

- 41) This would create a more distinctive break between the podium and upper levels and assist in managing visual bulk at upper levels.
- 42) This should be increased to 5 metres at the Little Nicholson Street interface to ensure that human-scale is retained along this narrow street (approximately 5 metres wide).
- 43) The site has a triangular shape at the south-eastern corner. This corner should be chamfered to mark the corner and create a generous widening of the footpath at the intersection.
- 44) This also creates a positive reference to the existing building which has used the same strategy to mark the corner and manage the irregular site shape at the intersection (see Figure 12).
- 45) The indicative development proposal chamfers the corner at the ground level and then cantilevers the building over the corner at the upper levels.
- 46) This is considered an unacceptable approach that undermines the podium strategy and creates undefined space at the ground level that make no positive contribution to the public realm.



Figure 12 Chamfered corner of the existing building as viewed from the intersection of Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent.

Recommendations

- Street wall height should range from three to four storeys: three storeys to Little Mollison Street and four storeys to the corner of Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent.
- Introduce a setback above the street wall of 3m from Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent
- Introduce a 5m setback above the street wall at Little Nicholson Street
- Introduce a 3m setback from the boundary or the laneway centreline to the north of the site.
- Require material definition between the podium and upper levels that is responsive to the local context and character. Podium materials should be detailed and robust with visually recessive materials used at upper levels.
- Corner should be chamfered at the Mollison St and Victoria Crescent intersection to mark the corner. No cantilevering should occur at upper levels.

Creating a responsive height strategy

- 47) The subject site is located at a sensitive interface and marks the transition from industrial and commercial buildings to lower scale housing.
- 48) The existing development approvals to the north and west of the site will establish a new height datum for the precinct.
- 49) The site to the west has an approximate overall height of 33.5 metres. The site to the north varies across the site with the eastern upper form setback from Victoria Crescent (25 metres) and the western upper form (33 metres).
- 50) The subject site is more comparable in size (4,360m²) to the site to the north (approximately 4,100m²).
- 51) The site to the north provides a distinct break in the massing above a two storey podium. The separation between these upper level forms is approximately 7.5 metres (see Figure 3).
- 52) This is unsuccessful in the proposed development on the subject site which provides no distinctive break between the upper level forms for the first five storeys.
- 53) The existing approved development has an approval for five storeys with no break in-between the upper level forms. However, if the overall height is increased to seven storeys this effectively changes the typology and requires greater management of visual bulk at upper levels.
- 54) This is unacceptable outcome which would create unreasonable visual bulk when viewed from Mollison St and when approaching from the streets to the south which have a predominantly low-scale character.
- 55) A distinct break should be created in the form of a new pedestrian link (see recommendation on page 8) and upper level setbacks that effectively break the building into three upper level forms.
- 56) The height should then vary across the site to respond to the emerging heights of adjacent approvals.
- 57) An overall height of 32 metres to the west stepping down to 23 metres to the east of the site.
- 58) The proposed approach to massing and overall height would have the following benefits:
 - » Reducing visual bulk, as it is perceived from adjacent buildings, Mollison St and streets to the south of the subject site.
 - » Improving the efficiency and internal amenity of commercial floorplates.
 - » Creating a perception of multiple buildings of varying heights rather than one large monolithic building.

Recommendations

- Building should read as three separate upper level forms set within a three/four storey podium.
- Upper level forms should have a minimum separation of 6 metres.
- Maximum overall height of 32 metres to the west of the site, stepping down to 23 metres to the east of the site.

Part B: Planning Scheme Amendment Recommendations

- 59) My assessment of the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment is focused on its effectiveness in delivering positive urban design outcomes as identified in Part A. The current Planning Scheme Amendment drafting would fail to deliver adequate urban design outcomes.
- 60) The Schedule should be updated to incorporate the previously stipulated recommendations:
- » Provide a pedestrian link that connects William Street to the existing laneway to the north of the site (nominally 6m in width).
 - » Vehicle access to the subject site should occur off a new service laneway within the site.
 - » Maximum overall height of 32 metres to the west of the site, stepping down to 23 metres to the east of the site.
 - » Street wall height should range from three to four storeys: three storeys to Little Mollison Street and four storeys to the corner of Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent.
 - » Introduce a setback above the street wall of 3m from Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent
 - » Introduce a 5m setback above the street wall at Little Nicholson Street
 - » Require material definition between the podium and upper levels that is responsive to the local context and character. Podium materials should be detailed and robust with visually recessive materials used at upper levels.
- » Corner should be chamfered at the Mollison St and Victoria Crescent intersection to mark the corner. No cantilevering should occur at upper levels.
 - » Building should read as three separate upper level forms set within a three/four storey podium.
 - » Upper level forms should have a minimum separation of 6 metres.
 - » Maximum overall height of 32 metres to the west of the site, stepping down to 23 metres to the east of the site.
- 61) As per the recommendations, a specific street wall height, variable overall height, requirement for separation between upper level forms, minimum separation distance between upper levels forms and a setback above the street wall height should be introduced.
- 62) The statement 'separation of the built form **OR** design treatments to ensure it does not appear as one building mass' is not supported, design treatments must occur in combination with building separation to effectively manage visual bulk. The objective should therefore use the word **AND** not **OR**.
- 63) The modification of the 'active ground floor' requirements are not supported. The proposed development should provide above 80% active frontages to the Mollison Street and Victoria Crescent frontage (including individual entrances to tenancies). This will be facilitated by the provision of a service laneway.
- 64) The suggestion to incorporate an overshadowing requirement to protect the south side of Mollison Street is supported.



Figure 13 Render of indicative development, looking east along Mollison Street.



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