

VICTORIA STREET EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND



Urban Design Framework
Prepared for the City of Yarra
16 November 2005

in
association
with
mgs
JONES & WHITEHEAD Pty Ltd

The Victoria St East precinct is undergoing extensive private-sector redevelopment. The new Victoria Gardens shopping centre and associated apartments are the first stages in the transformation of industrial sites south of Victoria Street. A number of large property holdings north of Victoria Street and west of Burnley Street have also been mooted for redevelopment including the former Fire Brigade site. Redevelopment is also likely on many smaller properties.

The State Government has identified the precinct as a new activity centre, stretching the Victoria Street shopping strip to the Yarra.

This Urban Design Framework (UDF) is intended as a guide for change in the area, to support Council and State policies including Melbourne 2030, to address community concerns, and to help new development fit comfortably with adjoining areas that will not change significantly.

The UDF complements and should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and planning controls, including the City of Yarra Planning Scheme Amendment C66.

This version of the UDF has been revised to reflect input from a public exhibition process in 2004-05.



VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 1: INTRODUCTION

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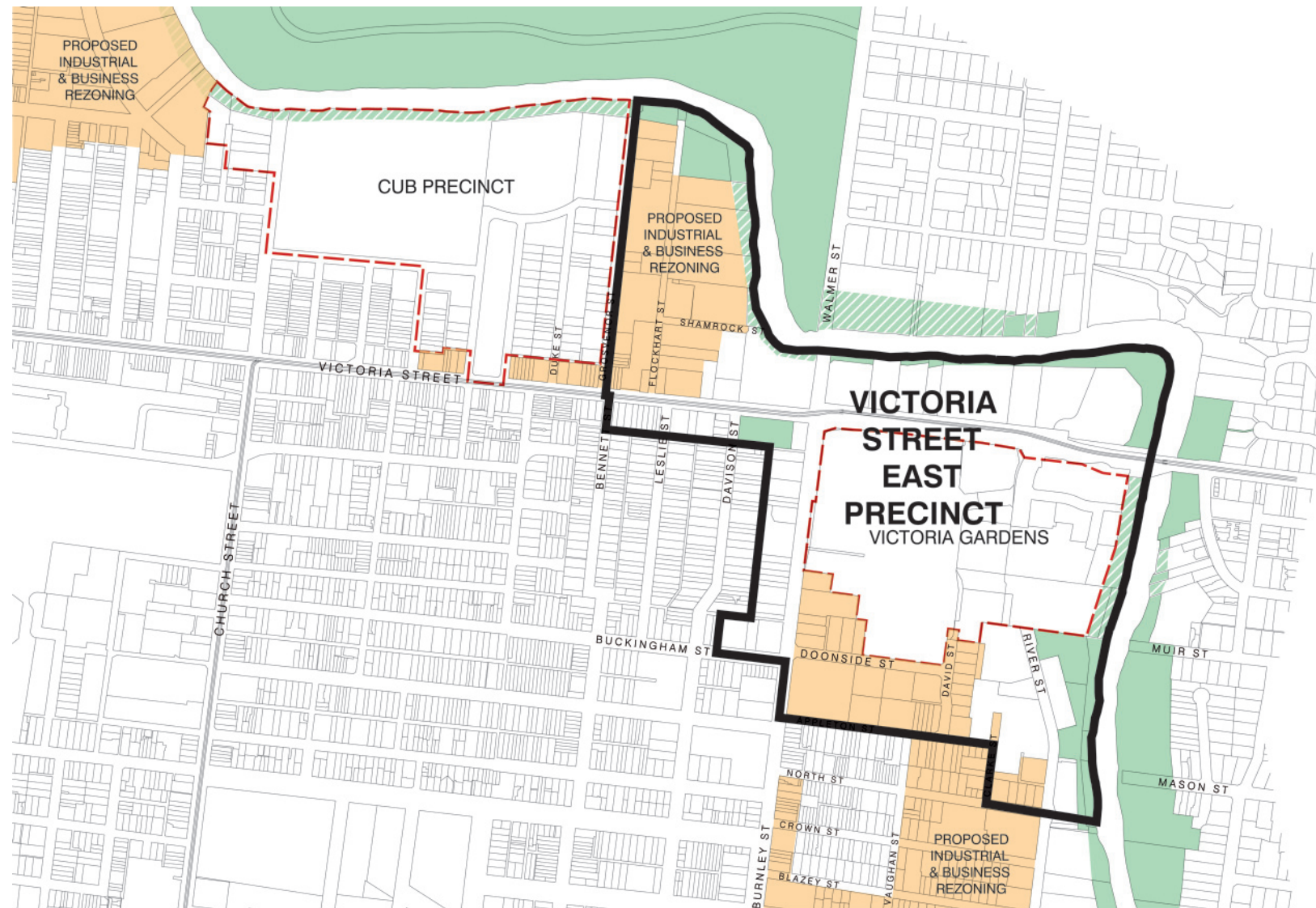
The UDF focuses on the area around Victoria Gardens. However, the emphasis is not on the Victoria Gardens site itself, where development is guided by the provisions of a Comprehensive Development Zone but on its interfaces with areas around it, especially where there are opportunities for significant redevelopment. These interfaces raise important issues that must be addressed by development.

Proximity to the river allows links between the activity centre and the area's most important open space. New development can improve the accessibility and amenity of riverside open spaces, but it will also be constrained by the need to protect the river corridor's qualities.

Proximity to Abbotsford's industrial area, especially the Carlton United Brewery, provides potential synergies and constraints for new land uses.

Development also needs to respect the established residential neighbourhoods to the west of Burnley Street.

As a 'new' activity centre on former industrial land, the area requires development of amenities and infrastructure of all kinds including streets and public spaces as well as community facilities to serve the local population.



URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK & RELATED STUDY AREAS

The primary area addressed by the Victoria Street East Precinct Urban Design Framework is outlined with a heavy black line. This includes the full extent of Victoria Gardens.

The recent City of Yarra Industrial and Business Land Strategy Review recommends rezoning of a number of areas scattered throughout the municipality and some of these overlap with the area addressed by the Urban Design Framework.

The CUB precinct, which is a major industrial site and employment base within the City of Yarra, is not recommended for any change in zoning and therefore forms a clear boundary for the UDF study area.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES

Future development of the Victoria Street East precinct should:

- Create strong public links to the Yarra River and improve the accessibility and amenity of the river corridor as a significant public open space.
- Encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking for access between the precinct and other parts of Melbourne, in preference to use of private motor vehicles.
- Maximise opportunities for redevelopment of industrial sites, while protecting the amenity of nearby low-rise neighbourhoods and enhancing the landscape character of the river corridor.
- Incorporate activities that complement other activity centres in Yarra and adjoining suburbs, and relate strongly to the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Create new local employment opportunities and protect existing ones, especially in the CUB precinct.
- Capitalise on existing infrastructure in and around the precinct, including parklands on the other side of the river, to support desirable uses for the area.

This will be supported by:

- Development and improvement of infrastructure and the public realm, especially local circulation networks.
- A complementary mix of land uses.
- Built form that responds to its context.

The Urban Design Framework addresses these three themes in turn on the following pages.

VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 2: STUDY AREA & OBJECTIVES

The Yarra River corridor is a significant metropolitan landscape resource. Concerns relating to it include:

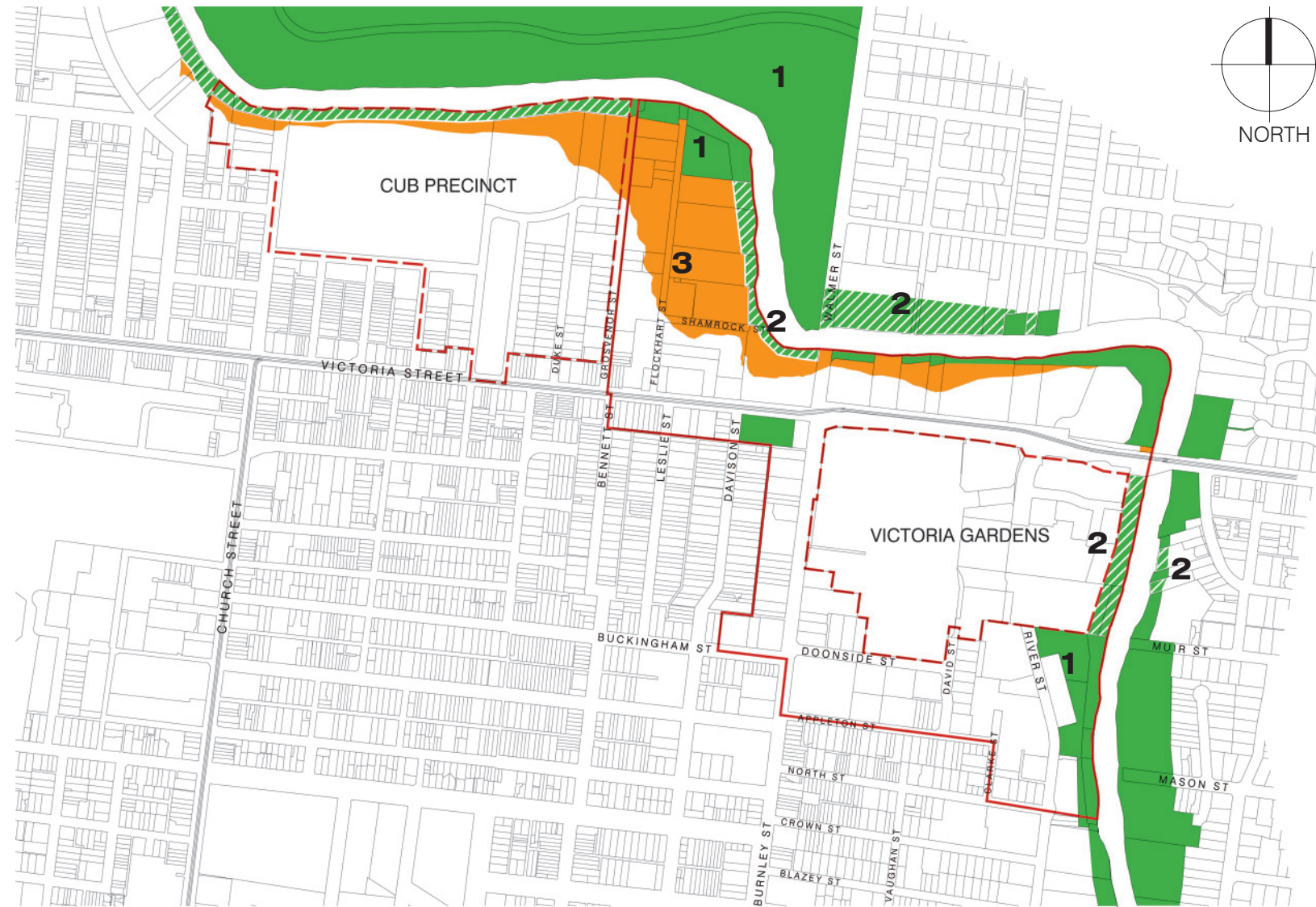
- Protecting against visual impacts of nearby new development.
- Improving the availability of open space, recreation trails and links.
- Deterioration of perceived landscape quality.
- Loss of vegetation and native habitat.

A number of Public Acquisition Overlays exist with the aim of creating more continuous public open space and access along the river.

Amendment C66 to the City of Yarra Planning Scheme includes built form controls to protect the the river corridor's amenity and character.

A recent Government review of planning policies and controls for the Yarra River corridor supports the Amendment C66 built form controls and existing Public Acquisition Overlays.

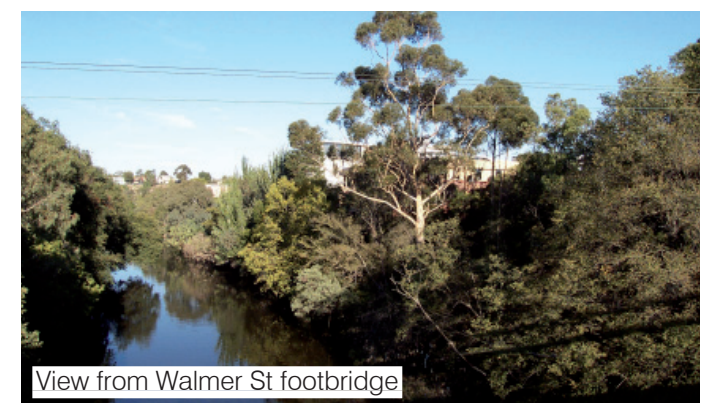
Melbourne Water is also reviewing development controls in flood-prone areas. The aim is to identify areas subject to the greatest risk and frequency of flooding. More stringent controls and application requirements may include preventing subdivision of properties most at risk.



YARRA RIVER AND ASSOCIATED OPEN SPACES

The Yarra River corridor should be improved as one of the metropolitan area's most significant public spaces, with better public access to and along it, maintenance and enhancement of a high amenity landscape based on its natural and historic character, and complementary development adjoining it.

1. Areas of existing open space to be retained and protected from adverse impacts of adjoining development.
2. Areas designated for Public Acquisition Overlays (hatched) to add to the riverside open space system.
3. Areas within 1 in 100 year floodplain. Where likely flooding depths exceed one metre, the existing Land Subject to Inundation Overlay is proposed (by Melbourne Water) to be replaced with a Floodway Overlay.



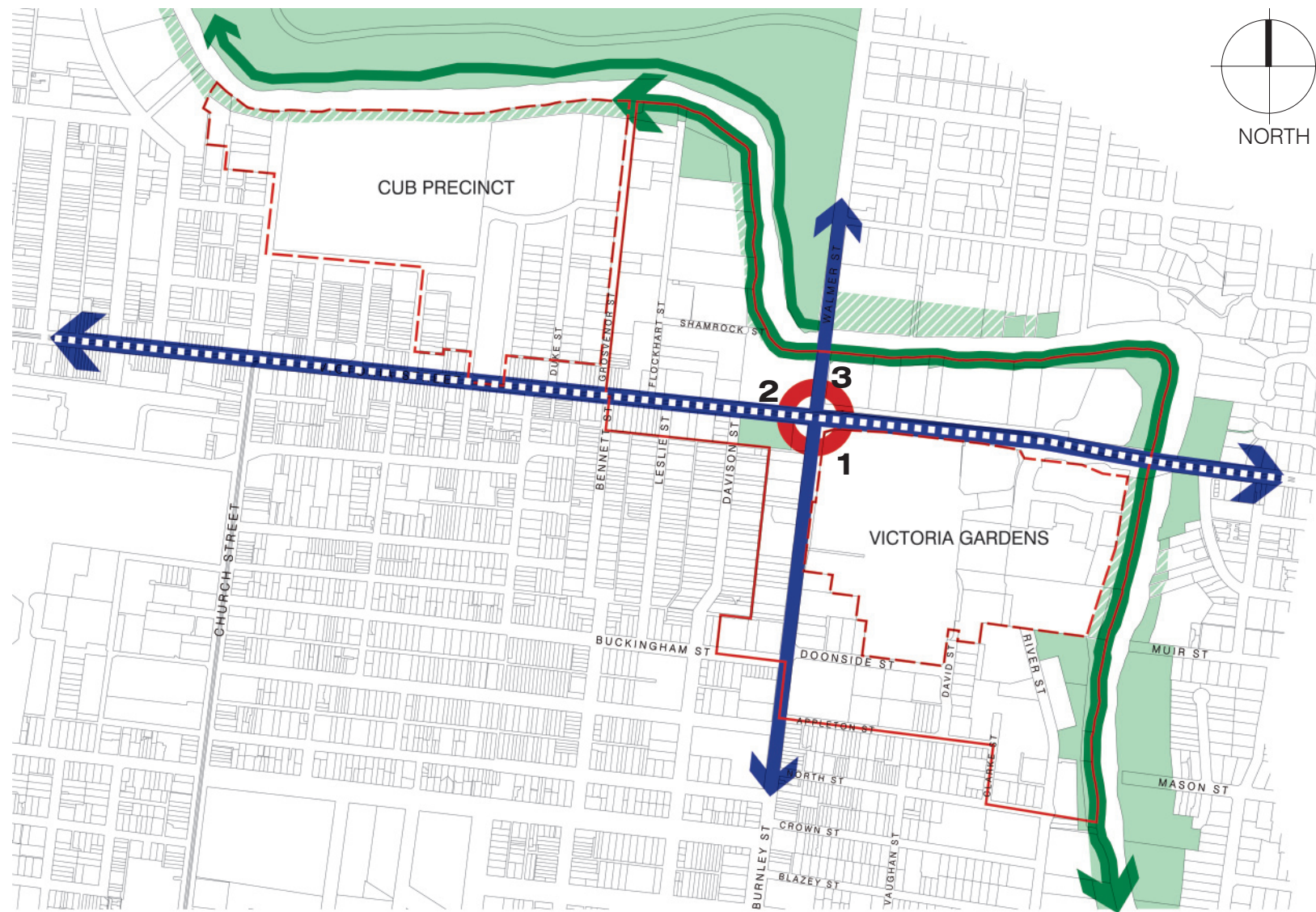
Victoria Street, Burnley Street and the Yarra River are the most important routes through the precinct.

Pedestrian traffic in Victoria Street supports its role as a tram route. Synergies between pedestrians and trams support retail vitality. However, amenity in the street is poor, and should be improved with streetscape enhancements, traffic management, and complementary development.

The intersection of Victoria and Burnley Streets is especially hostile to pedestrians, and should be improved to support access to trams.

Burnley Street has limited potential to develop as an extension of the Victoria Street activity strip as it carries no public transport services. The internal orientation of Victoria Gardens Stage 1 also limits the street's vitality. However, pedestrian amenity should be given high priority.

The importance of the river corridor as a local and metropolitan open space, the existing riverside paths are meagre. Pedestrian and bicycle access along the river should be improved.



PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

1. Remove or reduce slip lanes at Victoria Street/Burnley Street intersection to improve pedestrian access, especially to tram stops.
2. Widen the northern Victoria Street footpath west of Walmer Street, either by setting a new building back from the existing property boundary or by creating a colonnade within the existing building envelope.
3. Improve the pedestrian amenity of Walmer Street and access to the existing footbridge.



Victoria St adjacent to the MFB building



Victoria St frontage of Victoria Gardens



Burnley St frontage of Victoria Gardens



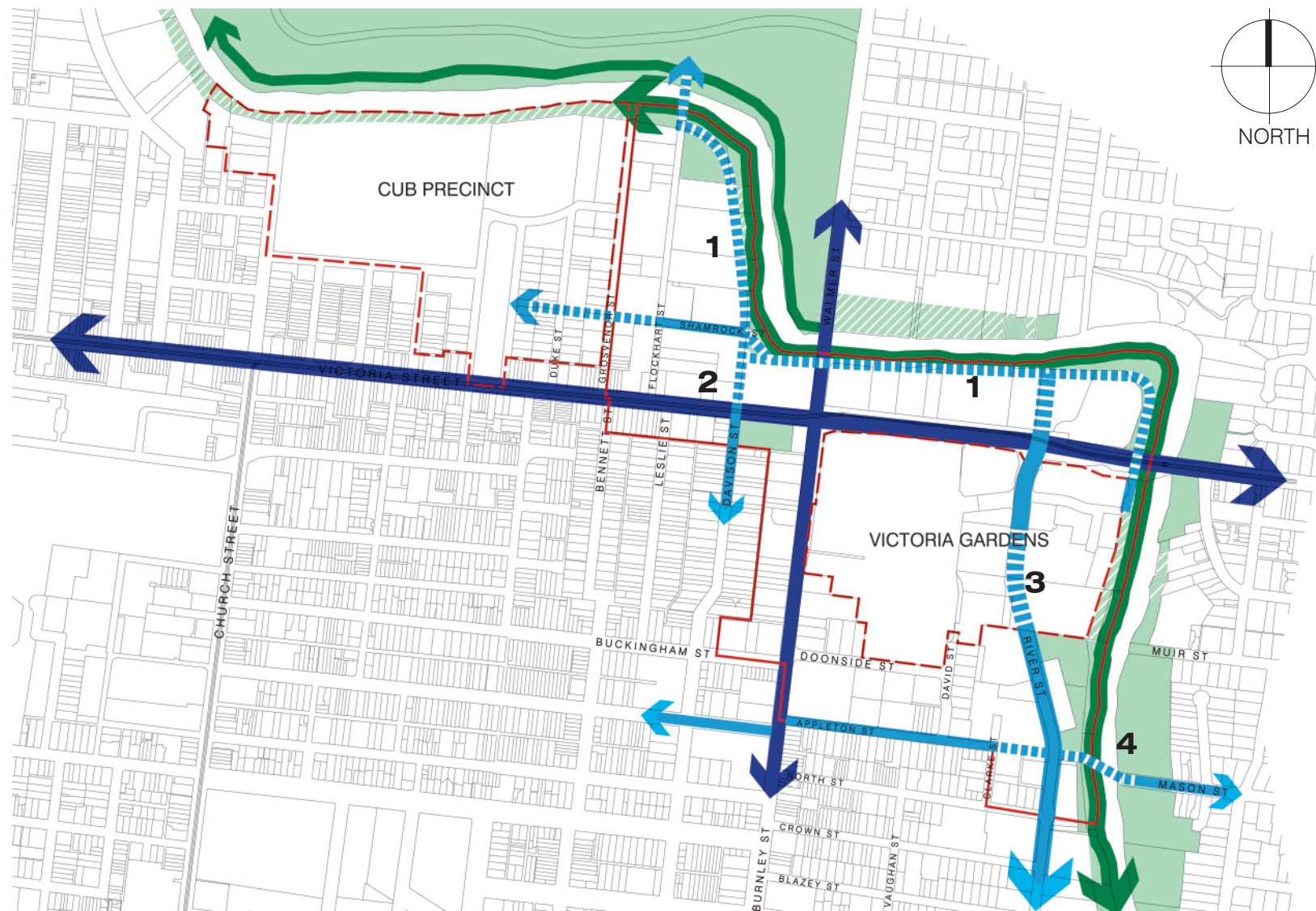
Footpath obstructions at Victoria Gardens, Burnley St

Heavy traffic in Victoria and Burnley Streets and limited space along the river limit the potential pedestrian amenity of these routes, despite their importance. A complementary set of major walking and cycle routes is needed to create a good pedestrian system to support the activity centre.

Given the limited capacity to widen the existing standard pathway, access along the river should be improved north of Victoria Street by forming another path higher on the embankment as a part of any redevelopment of river-front properties. This should link to Walmer Street and the existing 'Fenix' cafe terrace at Victoria Gardens.

Mid-block links between the river and areas west and south should be provided through the Metropolitan Fire Brigade site and other major redevelopments.

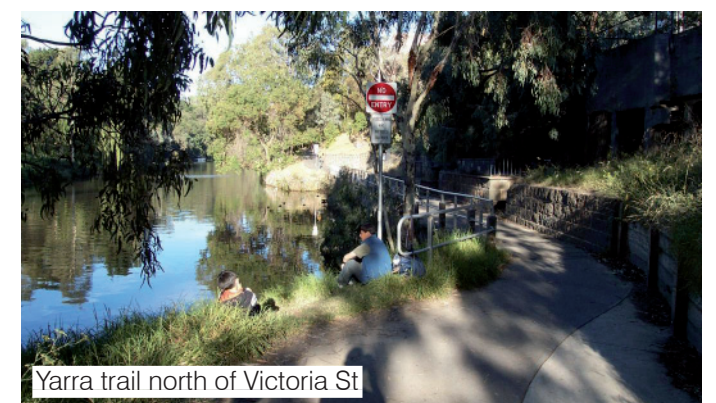
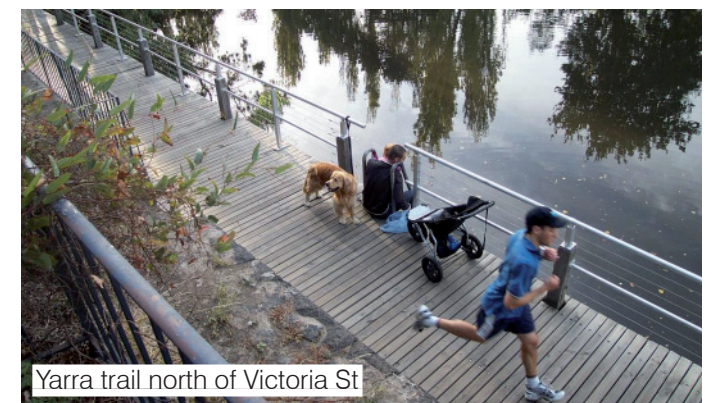
Although a major asset, the river is also a barrier and the pedestrian amenity on existing road bridges is poor. A new footbridge should be built between Bridge Road and Victoria Street. This would greatly expand the pedestrian catchment around Victoria Gardens. In providing access to Pridmore Park, Hawthorn, it would be more affordable than acquisition of new parkland in Richmond to support increased local development.



SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

Recommended new links include:

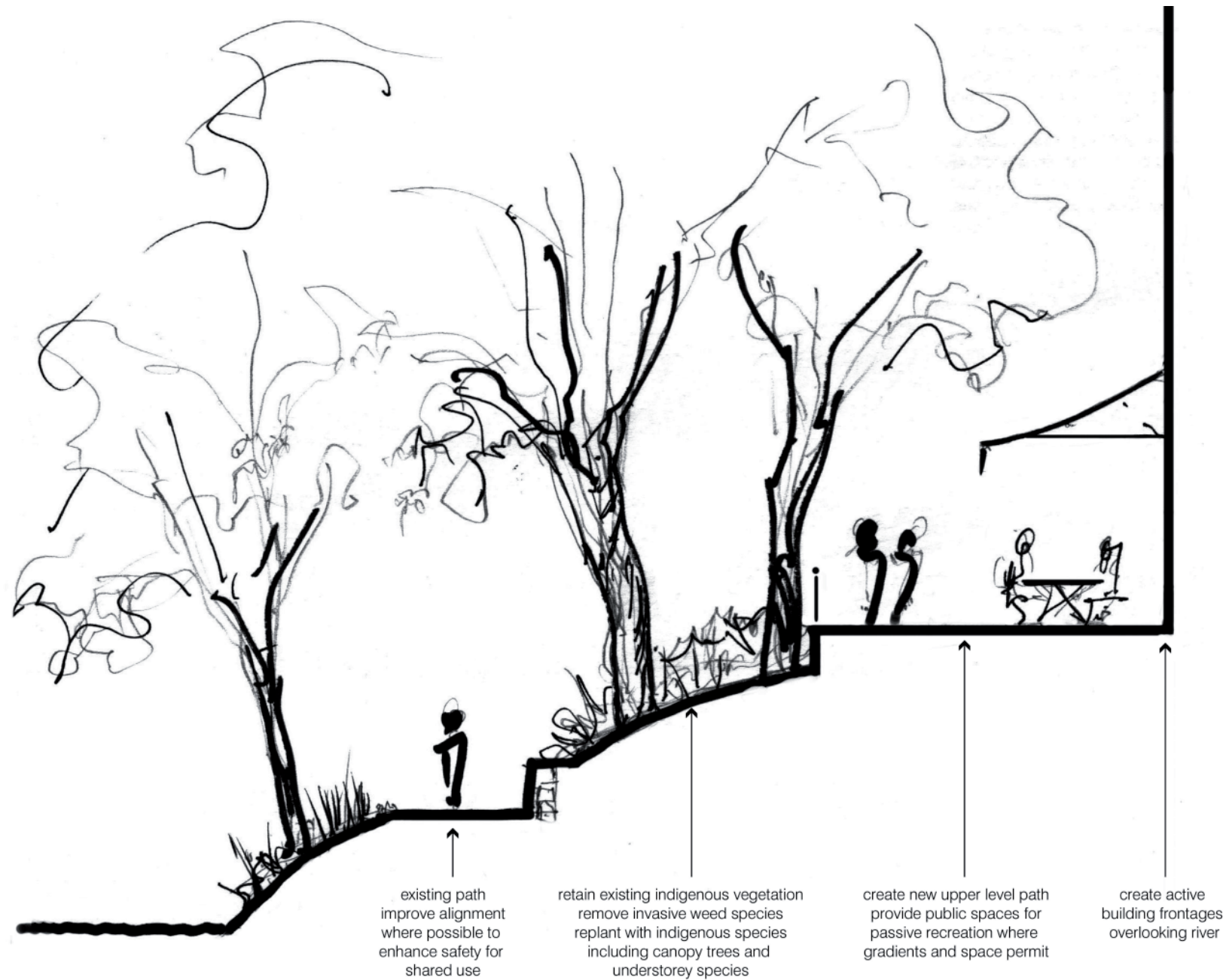
1. A new upper-level pathway along the Yarra north of Victoria Street, from Victoria Street Bridge to Flockhart Street. Further detailed design is required to resolve its alignment and levels.
2. New mid-block links at the MFB site connecting the riverside paths west to Flockhart and Grosvenor Streets, and south to Davison Street.
3. Extension and linking of River Street as a pedestrian-priority boulevard. This should be a generous, integrated public space linking Victoria Gardens with the area to the south although its traffic role will vary along its length. Traffic calming, part closures or barriers may be appropriate in various locations to prevent undesirable through traffic.
4. Enhanced link from Appleton Street to the river and new footbridge to Mason Street, Hawthorn.



Buildings should be set well back from the river and the resulting open space made accessible to the public. Buildings should create an attractive interface with the public space including active frontages in selected areas. Where building setbacks and ground levels permit, passive recreation spaces should be considered, particularly in association with any active building frontages.

The existing riverside path should be retained and extended. A second path should be made at a higher level between Victoria Bridge and Flockhart Street, linked to the arcaded river front of the building at 663 Victoria Street. A detailed feature survey and design is required to determine the best alignment and widths for the new path. Of the two resulting paths, the one that provides the safest bicycle facility should be designated as a bike path and the other as a footpath.

Existing indigenous trees should be protected. Unless retaining vegetation of particular historic significance, all plantings should extend the area's indigenous character including a canopy of large trees and appropriate understorey species.



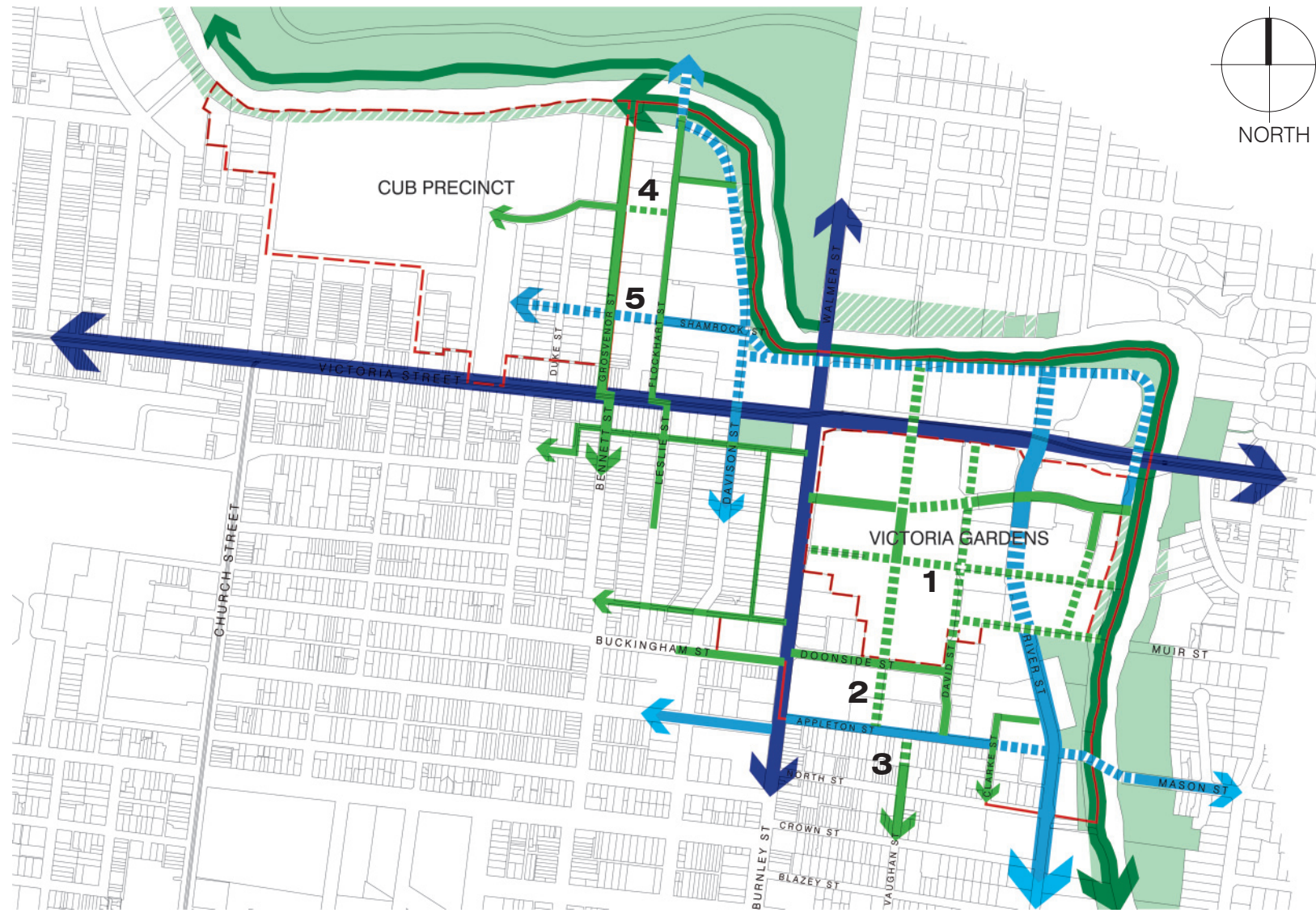
In addition to a framework of major routes, a fine-grained network of pedestrian-friendly streets is essential to ensure convenient universal access throughout the precinct.

Many of these routes follow existing streets. However, high-density redevelopment of large industrial properties requires the creation of new streets. Even in areas with ongoing industrial uses, pedestrian spaces should be improved as a high quality environment is increasingly important to high-technology businesses.

Where possible, new links should align with existing routes and follow direct lines to make them easy to navigate. This is especially important to enable views through to the river and to riverside open spaces and vegetation.

Several opportunities for new mid-block links are (coincidentally) adjacent to heritage buildings, as at 26 Doonside Street and the Westons buildings in Grosvenor Street. The new links and heritage buildings will jointly contribute to the amenity and character of the circulation system.

All streets in the area should provide a high standard of pedestrian amenity and safety, supported by treatments of the public realm as well as by adjoining development.



TERTIARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

Create a fine-grained pedestrian network throughout the precinct. New links should be created including:

1. Multiple routes through Victoria Gardens, extending and linking with existing. These include internal links through the shopping centre, although preference should be given to the creation of open-air routes that are fully accessible to the public at all hours.
2. Victorian Chemical Company (new north-south street past 26 Doonside Street)
3. Vaughan Street extension north of North Street
4. Southampton Street extension (Westons site, 30 Grosvenor Street)
5. Shamrock Street extension (Going Going Gone site, Flockhart to Grosvenor Street)



Southampton and Grosvenor Streets



26 Doonside St



Vaughan St between North and Appleton



Path between Victoria St and the Yarra

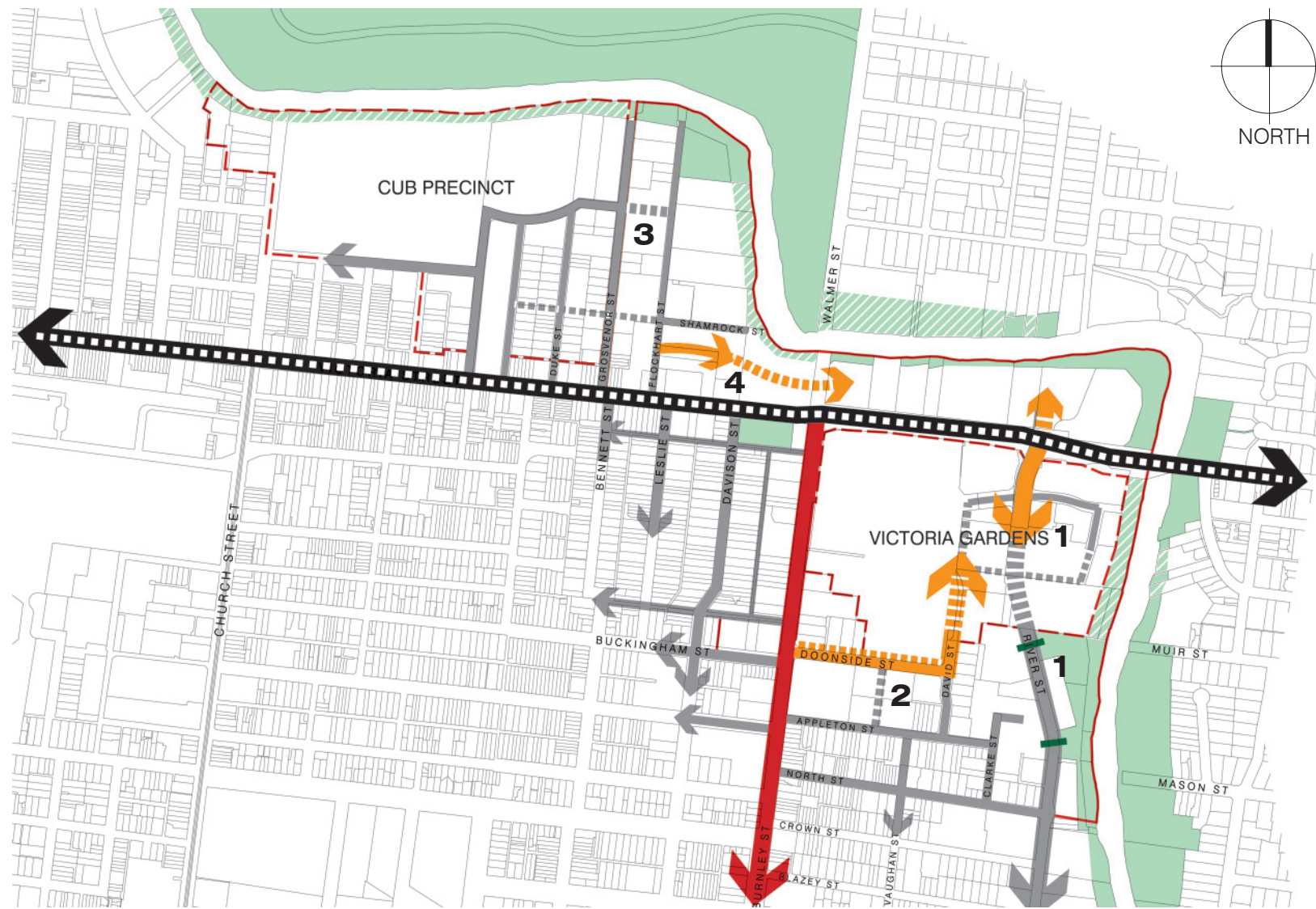
Development should be oriented towards walking and public transport to improve the sustainability of the activity centre and to avoid conflict with other activities through generation of additional traffic.

The Victoria Street tram route is part of the Principle Public Transport Network. It also carries heavy private vehicular traffic and thus suffers from congestion, which impedes tram services. The aim should be to reduce this conflict by reducing vehicular traffic in Victoria Street.

Burnley Street connects the precinct to City Link. However, the convenience of this access should not promote development that encourages on access from City Link. The housing along of much of Burnley Street, congestion at Swan Street and Bridge Road and the street's importance for access to industries in Abbotsford suggest that demands on this route should not be increased.

Development in the precinct must minimise vehicular traffic generation.

None-the-less, new streets are needed to access new development and to distribute local traffic to minimise impacts on existing streets. These should be designed for local traffic, discouraging their use as through traffic 'rat-runs'.



TRAFFIC ACCESS ROUTES

4. River Boulevard provides a major traffic entry into Victoria Gardens from the north. It should be continued as a pedestrian boulevard to link with River Street, using traffic calming or barriers as appropriate to prevent its abuse as a through route. As a public space, it should form a continuous spine for the precinct, but its varying traffic role should be carefully managed along its length.
2. Doonside Street should be improved as a major vehicular entry to Victoria Gardens and the area to its south, to keep traffic away from Victoria Street and housing south of Appleton Street. Doonside Street should be widened (on the north side, to create an overall road reserve width of 18 to 20m) and extended north into Victoria Gardens via David Street.
3. Southampton Street link to Flockhart Street (Westons site) to improve local access without use of Victoria Street.
4. Vehicular access to the MFB and Walmer Street sites should be via Flockhart Street and then underground below Walmer Street to minimise impacts on Victoria Street frontages and the pedestrian-priority space at Walmer Street.



Victoria Gardens, Burnley St



Inactive Victoria Gardens frontage to Burnley St



Inactive Victoria Gardens frontage to Victoria St

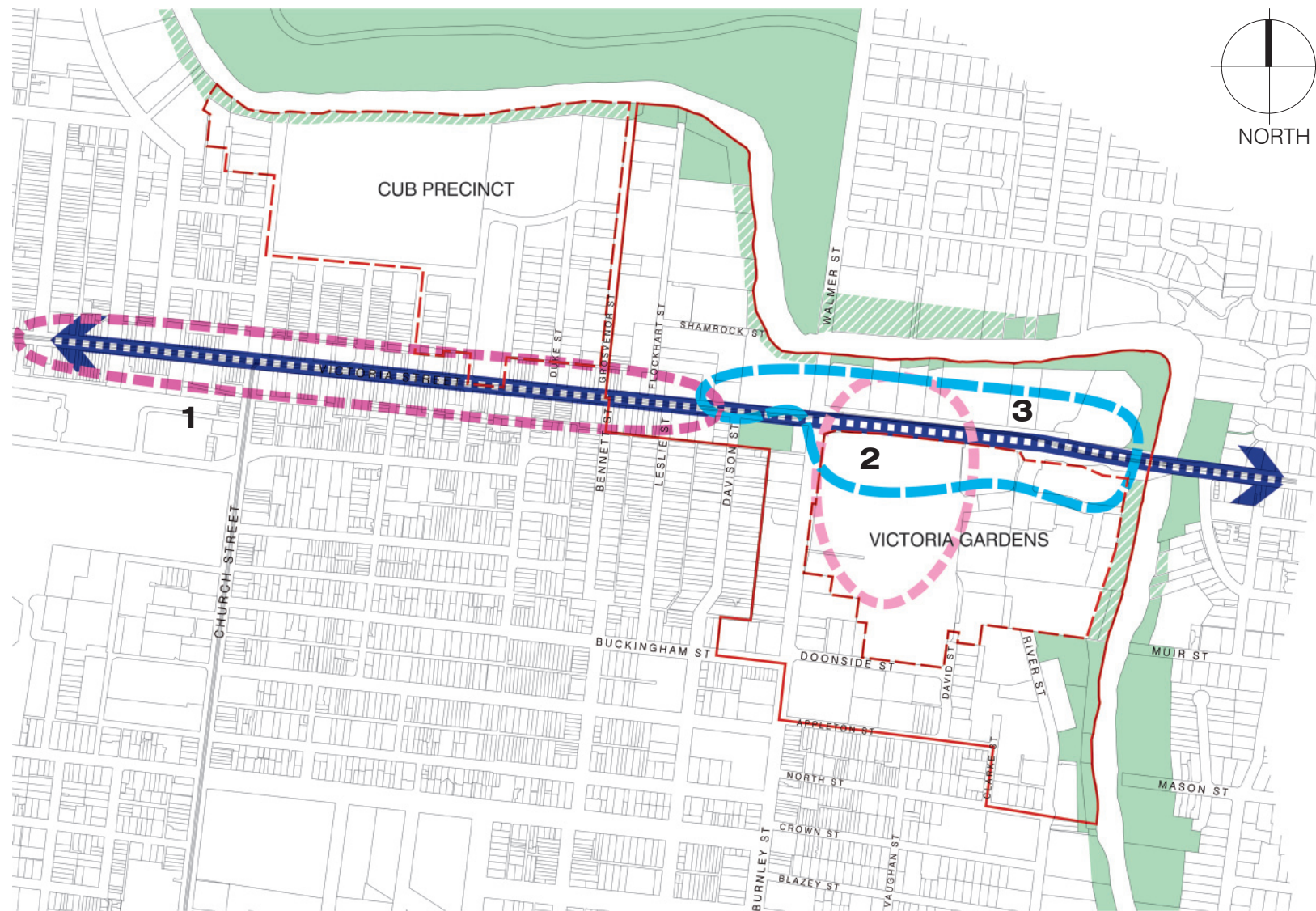


River St

The local circulation structure is a major determinant of land use distribution. As the main access route and public transport corridor through the precinct, Victoria Street forms a natural extension of the existing activity strip to the west.

The street's long length and the break created by Williams Reserve result in variations in the mix of activity along it, ranging from intensive retail to commercial, but these should be seen as complementary parts of a cohesive strip. Development and management of the Victoria Gardens shopping centre should add to this cohesive strip rather than creating a competing centre.

All development fronting onto Victoria Street should contribute positively to the pedestrian environment. 'Shop top' housing can be important as a way to add further vitality to the strip. Development should ensure a high proportion of active frontages, high quality architectural detailing and finishes, protection from wind and other measures to improve amenity. Driveway crossovers and service entries should be avoided if access to properties can be made from other streets. Where crossovers cannot be avoided their widths should be minimised and clear priority given to pedestrians on footpaths.



ORIENTATION OF ACTIVITIES TO VICTORIA STREET

1. Integrate the western end of the Victoria St East Precinct with the fine-grained retail strip to the west. Encourage 'shop top' housing and other complementary uses.
2. Victoria Gardens shopping centre: Encourage opening of the centre out towards Victoria Street and provision of retail complementing the remainder of the strip.
3. Extension of Victoria Street strip to the Yarra: Support continued commercial emphasis within a mixed-use area including residential above street level.



Victoria St



New labs in Flockhart St



CUB car park Flockhart St



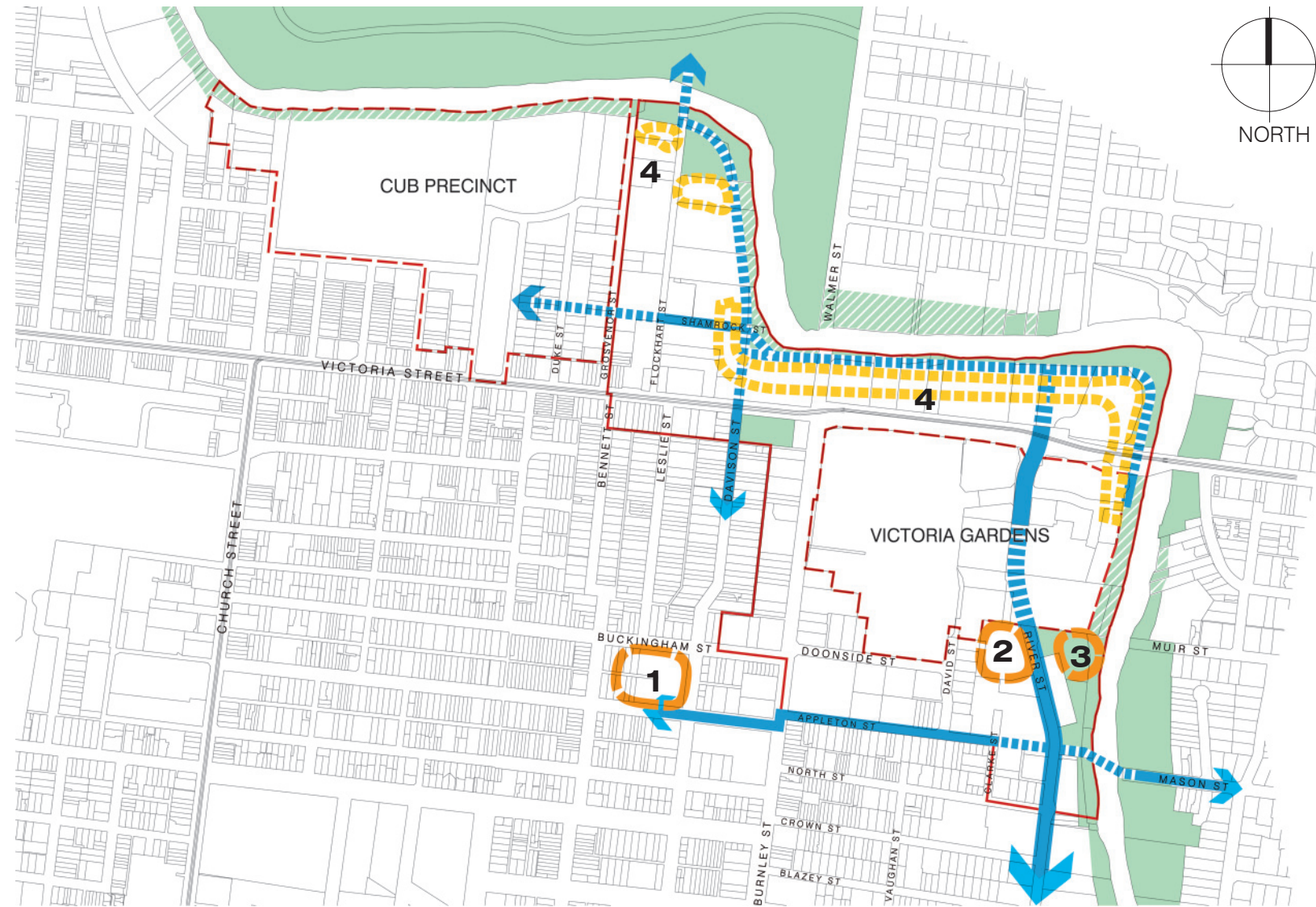
Flockhart Reserve

Development along the river should facilitate public access to the riverside open spaces. It should accommodate activities fronting the river that contribute to a good interface between private building uses and public spaces.

Hospitality, entertainment and recreational uses may be appropriate east of Walmer Street, capitalising on the northerly aspect and proximity to public transport to improve access to, amenity in, and use of the river corridor.

Uses west of Walmer Street must respond to nearby industries, ensuring that they do not prejudice the role of the CUB precinct. Amenities integral to industrial operations may be appropriate, e.g. corporate offices, training facilities, hospitality and function spaces directly linked with local industries.

Riverfront paths and other secondary circulation routes also provide appropriate locations for civic and community facilities, ensuring their accessibility and public profile while keeping valuable frontages on the main strip for commercial use. Activation of frontages onto secondary routes is also important, and community facilities can be useful in this respect where retail uses may not be viable.



ORIENTATION OF ACTIVITIES TO THE RIVER

1. Yarra Primary School
2. Yarraberg Child Care and Community Centre
3. Existing playground
4. Appropriate locations for ground-level uses oriented to the river and secondary circulation routes.



Riverfront cafe in Victoria Gardens



Recent housing on River St.



Yarra trail



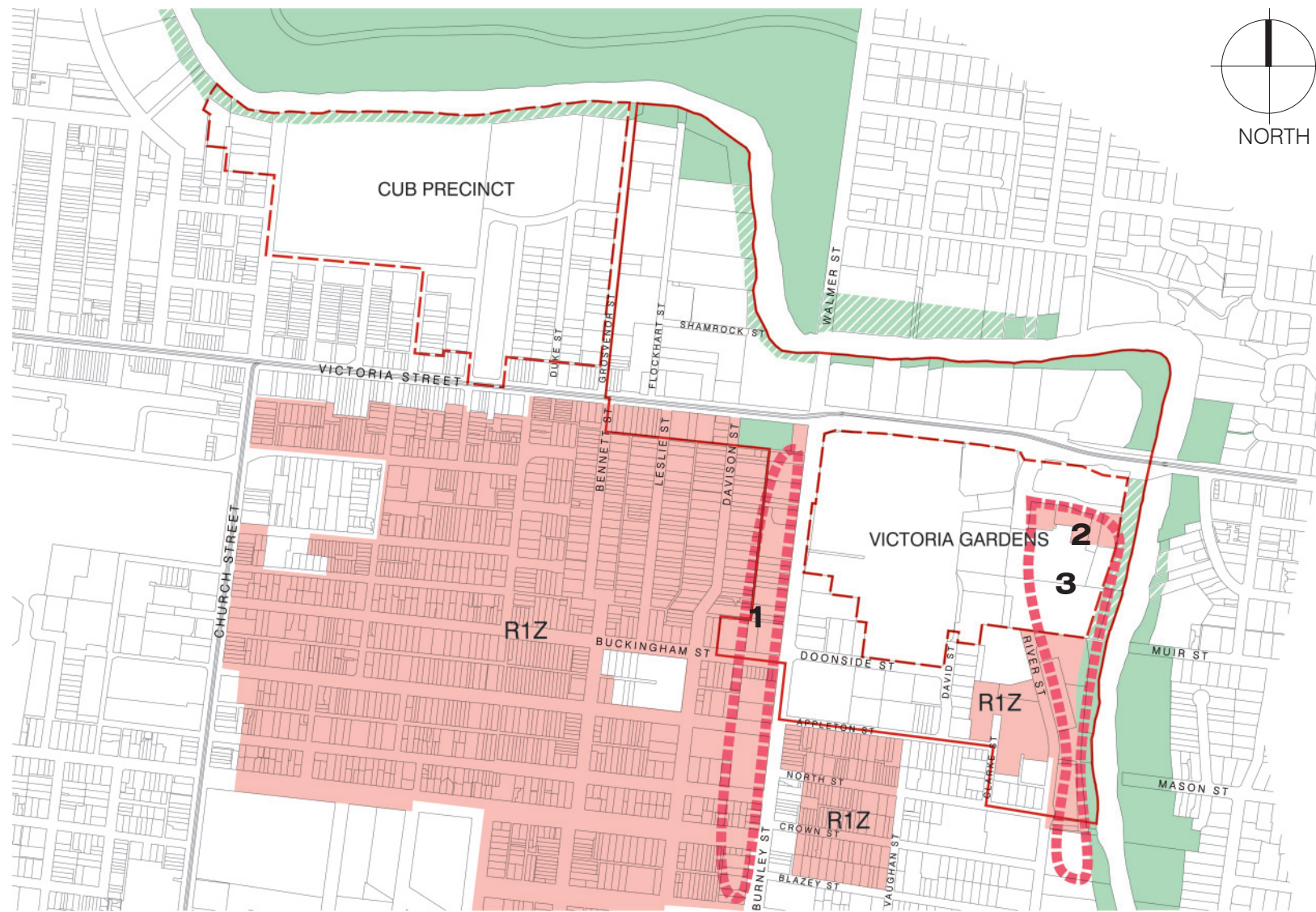
Yarra Primary School, Buckingham St.

VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 10: RIVER-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES

The land on the west side of Burnley Street is now zoned Residential 1 and forms part of a continuous residential neighbourhood extending south-west from Victoria Gardens.

Burnley Street traffic makes the frontage relatively undesirable for low-rise houses and several of these properties are occupied by non-conforming uses. These factors combined with recent property consolidation create the scope for higher intensity redevelopment. This provides potential for residential growth in keeping with Melbourne 2030 targets while maintaining the residential character of the area.

Undeveloped sites between River Street and the Yarra are obvious candidates for further residential development in keeping with Victoria Gardens Stage 1 and recent housing development to the south.



CONSOLIDATION OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS AT INTERFACES WITH OTHER USES

1. Potential for higher intensity housing to consolidate the Burnley Street edge of the Residential 1 Zone.
2. Housing within Stage 1 of Victoria Gardens.
3. Area for new housing to consolidate a residential edge to the river. This is recommended under the existing Comprehensive Development Zone.



Victoria Gardens apartment buildings



Housing on Clark St



Infill housing facing Williams Reserve



New 4+ storey residential in Burnley St

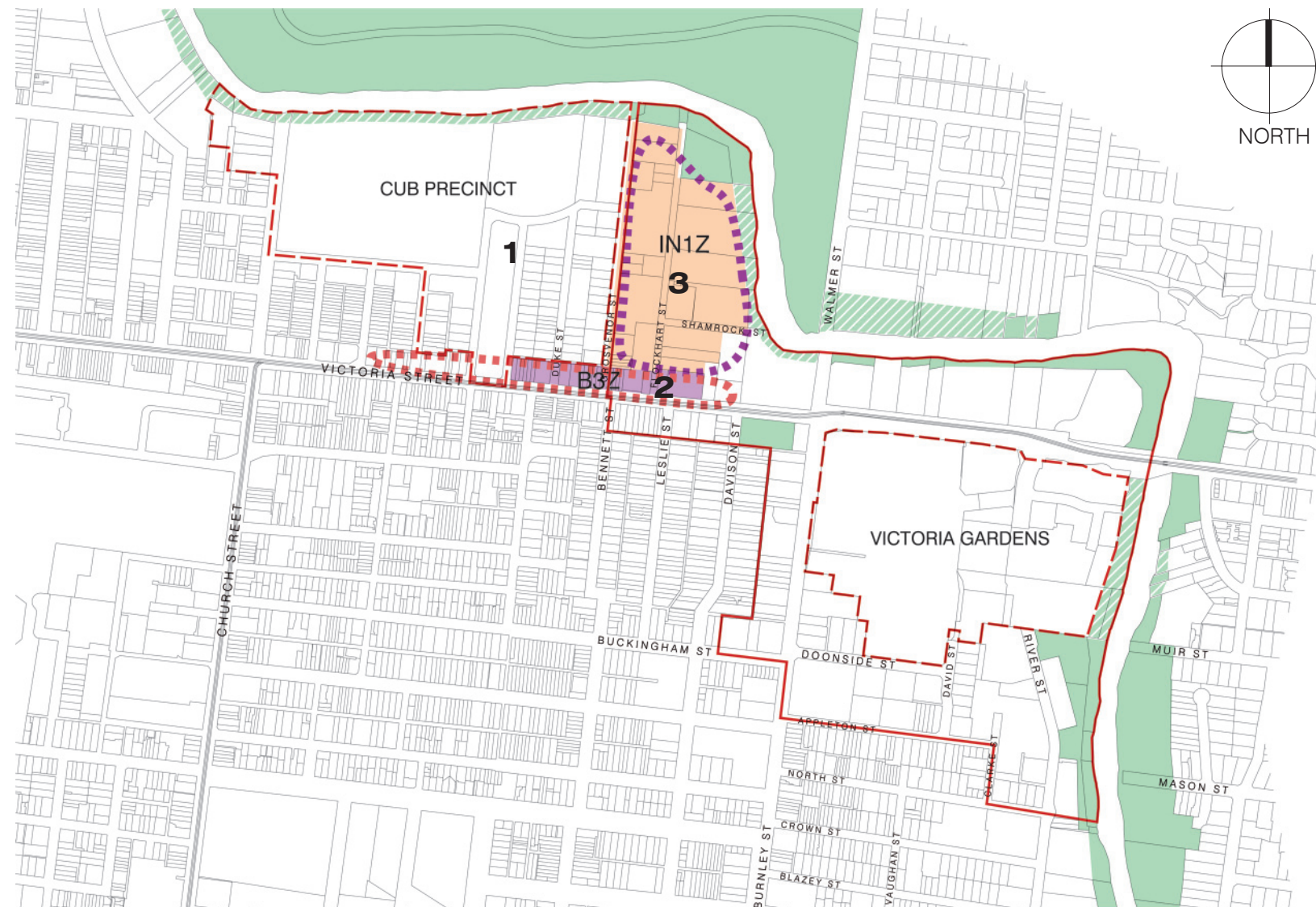
VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 11: CONSOLIDATING RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The recent *City of Yarra Industrial and Business Land Strategy Review* makes a number of recommendations regarding uses in the Victoria St East Precinct. These are based on:

- Declining demand for industrial and related land.
- Increasing demand for business services and office type uses.
- Objectives to maintain local employment opportunities.

Changing a number of areas from Industrial to Business zoning is recommended to support local business development. Proximity to activity centres, public transport and amenities including the Yarra River supports this shift to higher order uses.

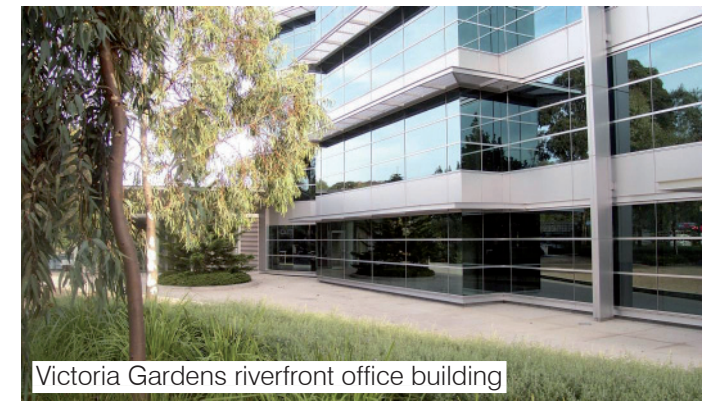
Conversely, development is constrained in flood-prone areas, especially where likely 1 in 100 year flooding depths exceed one metre (the area of the proposed Floodway Overlay). More stringent controls and application requirements will include preventing subdivision of properties that are entirely within the Floodway Overlay.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Recommendations of the City of Yarra Industrial and Business Land Strategy Review aim to protect important industrial activity while supporting a general shift in emphasis from industrial activity to businesses within the municipality. Specific zoning changes recommended to support this include:

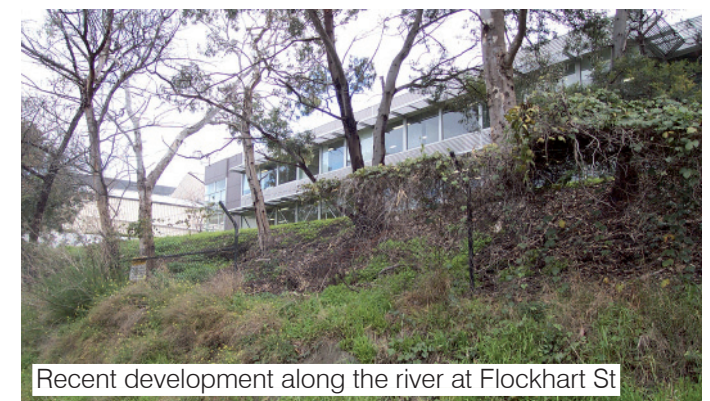
1. CUB precinct to retain Industrial 1 Zoning.
2. Change the Business 3 Zone along Victoria Street frontage west of the Fire Brigade site to Business 1 Zone.
3. Land between Grosvenor and Walmer Streets to be rezoned from Industrial 1 to Business 2 Zone, with a local policy that identifies the future of the area as an employment precinct, but with the opportunity for a residential component as part of mixed use developments. (Note that the new Floodway Overlay will constrain development and prohibit the subdivision of a large proportion of the properties along Flockhart Street.)



Victoria Gardens riverfront office building



42 Flockhart St



Recent development along the river at Flockhart St



Flockhart Reserve and CUB car park

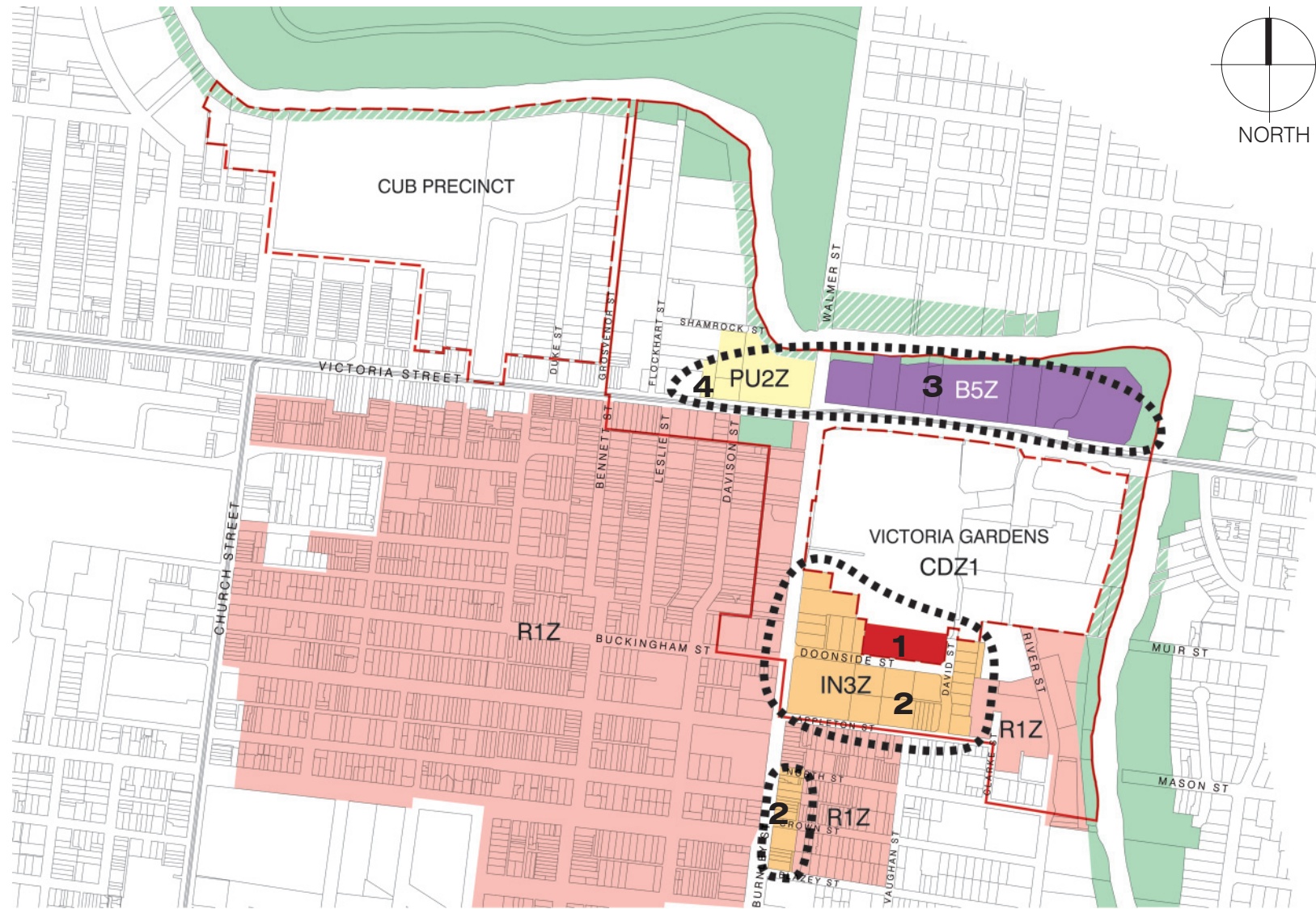
VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 12: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The area south of Victoria Gardens includes a mixture of incompatible uses. The presence of chemical industries has resulted in imposition of a 'Sensitive Use Buffer' in the Victoria Gardens master plan that prohibits housing, child care, preschool, primary school, public open space, etc. None-the-less, there are existing houses within a similar distance to the south.

Many local industrial properties and houses are in poor condition and redevelopment of both is occurring. Relocation of dangerous industries should be encouraged and the Industrial 3 Zone and Sensitive Use Buffer replaced with a Mixed Use Zone to encourage more appropriate redevelopment as a transition between Victoria Gardens and residential areas.

Provision of housing north of Victoria Street may be desirable in that redevelopment could be achieved with relatively narrow floor plates, thus enabling deeper setbacks from the river and minimising impacts of taller buildings on riverside open spaces (this is a permitted use under the existing Business 5 Zone).

With relocation of the Fire Brigade to Burnley, the zoning of their Walmer Street site should be changed to encourage redevelopment integrated with the surrounding area.

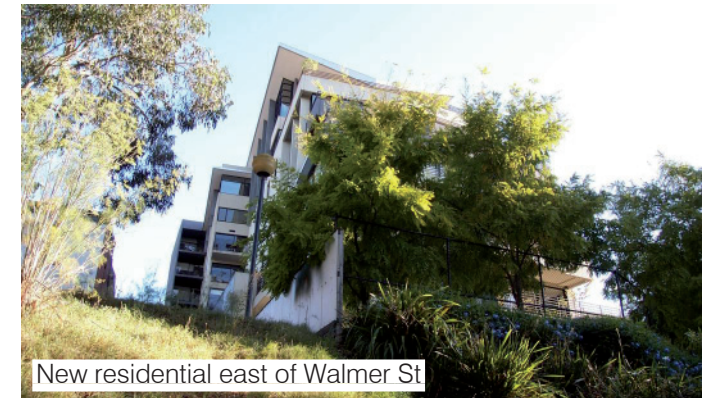


MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Existing 'Sensitive Use Buffer' within Victoria Gardens due to nearby chemical industries. Eventual change to a Mixed Use Zone is recommended if made possible by changes in nearby industries.
2. Change Industrial 3 Zone to Mixed Use Zone to enable a mix of commercial and higher density residential uses. This would help to create an appropriate transition between Victoria Gardens and nearby residential areas, and would reflect existing commercial uses along Burnley Street.
3. Encourage residential development above commercial uses at street and river levels north of Victoria Street.
4. Consider rezoning the Fire Brigade site (which has recently been sold to a private developer) from a Public Use Zone to Business 5 Zone to match the area to the east.



Mixed housing and industry, Appleton St



New residential east of Walmer St



Building conversion, Appleton St



Davison St

VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 13: MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Few buildings in the precinct are protected by Heritage Overlays. Redevelopment of former industrial sites, as with Victoria Gardens, often involves site clearance and complete reconstruction. This risks the creation of a sterile environment with a poor sense of identity and no connections with local history.

Retention of substantial, sound and characterful buildings is therefore desirable within major redevelopment projects, whether they are protected by heritage overlays or not.

Investigation of extending Heritage Overlays to protect a few additional buildings is recommended, including:

- 26 Doonside Street
- Loyal Studley Hotel
- 12 Burnley Street

Most of the area's industrial buildings are very robust in character and can sit comfortably beside large modern ones without detriment. Protection of the heritage values of these buildings would not, generally, require adjoining new buildings to be of a matching or subservient scale.



EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAYS AND OTHER BUILDINGS TO RETAIN

Retention of substantial and characterful buildings not covered by Heritage Overlays should be encouraged, including:

1. *Loyal Studley Hotel, 53 Burnley Street*
2. *12 Burnley Street*



Skipping Girl sign



26 Doonside Street



Loyal Studley Hotel, Burnley St



Industrial buildings, rear of 12 Burnley St

VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 14: RETENTION & RE-USE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

Typical buildings in industrial and business zones have no front or side setbacks. The limited areas within the precinct with residential zoning also include industrial buildings and row houses. This gives the area a strong urban character. It also creates the potential for high densities even with relatively low rise development.

Development throughout the Victoria St East Precinct should adopt this pattern of no front or side setbacks unless contributing to public space along the river.

This building pattern makes the quality of buildings crucial to the quality of the public realm. All development should contribute to the public realm with:

- Active frontages at ground level and windows at levels above ground floor overlooking the streets.
- Good 'street architecture' with articulated facades, fenestration, parapet treatments, other detailing and materials that give a sense of human scale and interest to the streetscape.
- Use of rear lanes, where they exist, to provide service and vehicular access to the site, and avoidance of ground level car parks or parking in structures exposed street frontages.



BUILT FORM: GROUND LEVEL FRONT & SIDE SETBACKS

1. Priority for provision of any landscaped setbacks and additional open space in the precinct should be directed towards the river corridor. Any setbacks or open spaces should be designed to integrate with the river corridor landscape including allowance for screen planting using a range of overstorey and understorey indigenous species.
2. Business and Industrial zones in the precinct are typified by buildings with no front or side setbacks. New development should maintain this building pattern with no setbacks from streets or adjoining buildings.
3. Some industrial and commercial buildings without setbacks also exist within the residential zones in the precinct, especially along the west side of Burnley Street. The zero setback pattern should be extended into this area also.
4. The pocket of housing near River Street south of Victoria Gardens is dominated by row-houses with no significant setbacks.



Larger-scale but still low-rise industrial buildings



Single-storey industrial buildings



Single-storey industrial buildings

VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 15: GROUND LEVEL BUILDING SETBACKS

Areas surrounding the Victoria Street East Precinct are characterised by low-rise buildings or open space. These require careful transitions in scale to any higher development within the precinct to protect their character and amenity.

Victoria Street west of Burnley Street is a traditional low-rise retail strip. It has an eclectic character and the quality of individual buildings is often poor, but the building grain and scale is significant to the street's pedestrian amenity and should be maintained.

Residential areas to the south and west have a consistent low-rise character despite a mix of building types, with older one-storey houses and two- to three-storey flats, and newer development up to three storeys.

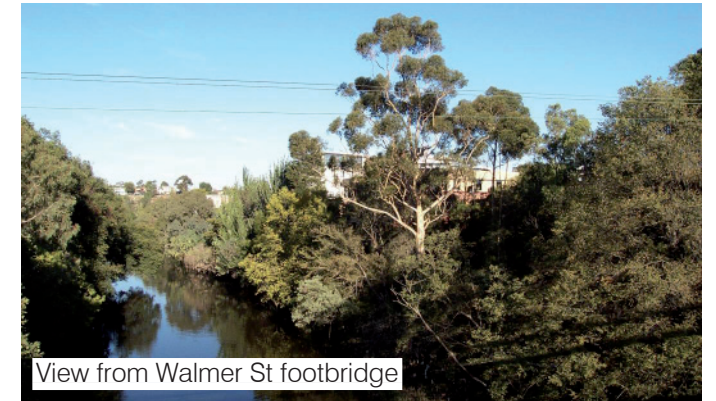
Although buildings are visible along most of the Yarra River corridor, its valued qualities are diminished when buildings visually intrude into the open space and dominate or block views of vegetation.

Most local streets within the Precinct are narrow (typically only 12 to 15 metres wide) so low rise frontages are needed to ensure sunlight and amenity in public spaces.



AREAS WITH ESTABLISHED SENSITIVE LOW-RISE CHARACTER

1. Two-storey buildings are typical along Victoria Street west of the Victoria St East Precinct. New buildings up to 11m high at the street frontage could sit comfortably within this context. Any taller buildings should avoid greater overshadowing the pedestrian space in Victoria Street and the residential areas to the south.
2. One- to two-storeys are typical of residential areas, with three storeys the general maximum including older flats and new units. Moderately higher buildings may be appropriate along Burnley Street in response to the traffic and Victoria Gardens, but must provide transitions in scale within their sites to protect amenity in adjoining low-rise housing.
3. Yarra River Corridor as per Amendment C66, including 'crest line' of the river bank used as a basis for minimum building setbacks and height limits.
4. Williams Reserve, Annettes Place and the Yarraberg Child Care and Community Centre are sensitive facilities that should not be subject to increased overshadowing.



View from Walmer St footbridge



One-storey residential in Davison St



Three-storey apartments in Davison St



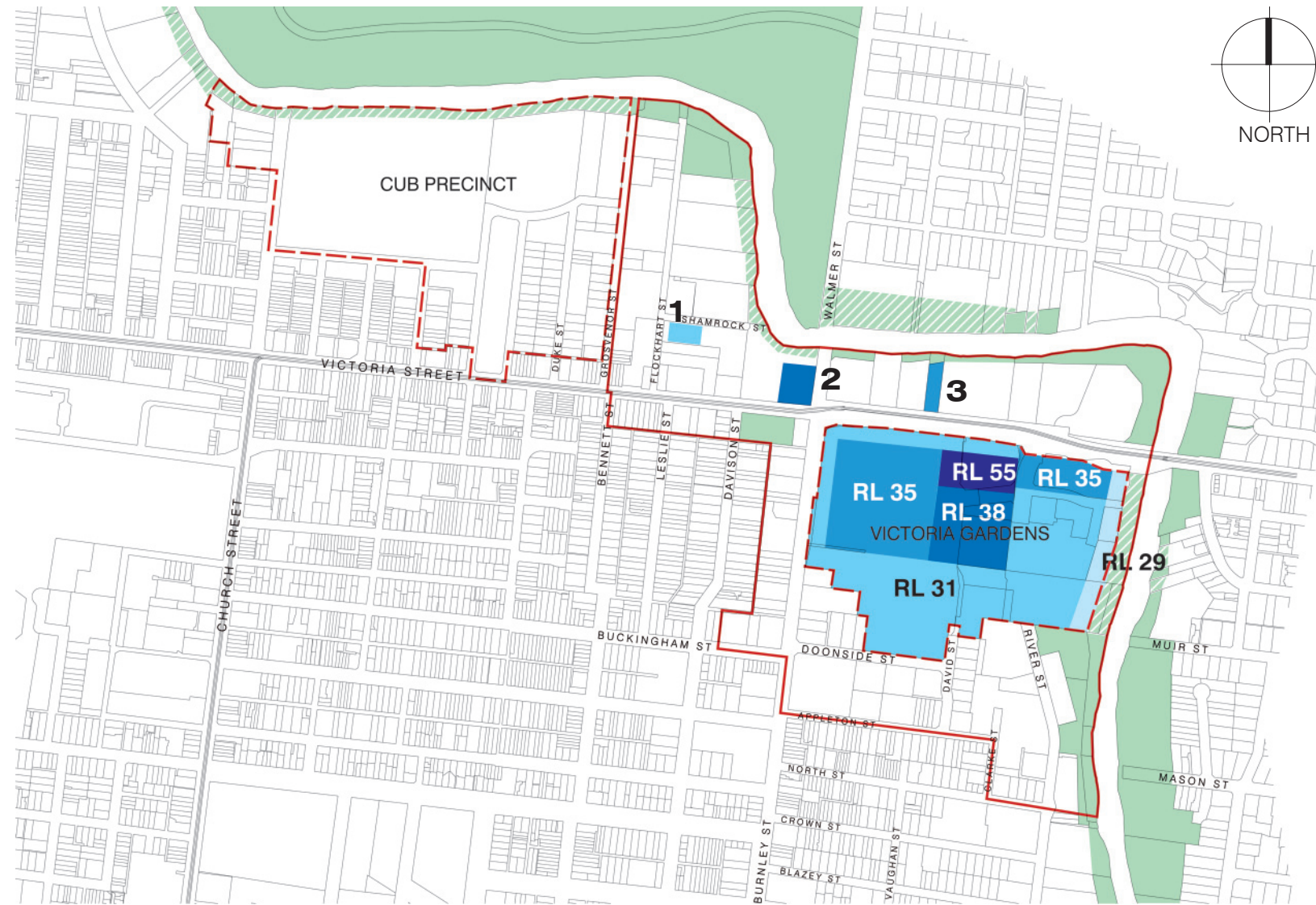
New three-storey residential in North St

VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 16: BUILDING HEIGHT CONSTRAINTS

There are a few tall buildings in the precinct, some of which are very obtrusive. However, these will not be demolished and replaced by smaller buildings and therefore negative impacts resulting from factors other than their height will not be addressed unless reconstruction with new buildings of a similar or slightly greater height is allowed. These buildings set a context for relatively tall new buildings in their immediate vicinity to form transitions to lower-scale development typical of the precinct.

Traffic impacts and building heights in Victoria Gardens suggest taller buildings along Burnley Street than at present. A recent four-storey apartment building south of Kent Street sits well in this context. However the major determinant for heights in this area is the aim to protect residential amenity to the west. Taller buildings would only be appropriate on large sites where offsets to existing housing are greatest.

The Victoria Gardens site can accommodate relatively tall buildings as height transitions can be provided within the site to protect surrounding areas' amenity. The height limits in the Yarra Planning Scheme allow for much taller buildings in the unbuilt central and northern parts of the site than the areas built in Stage 1.

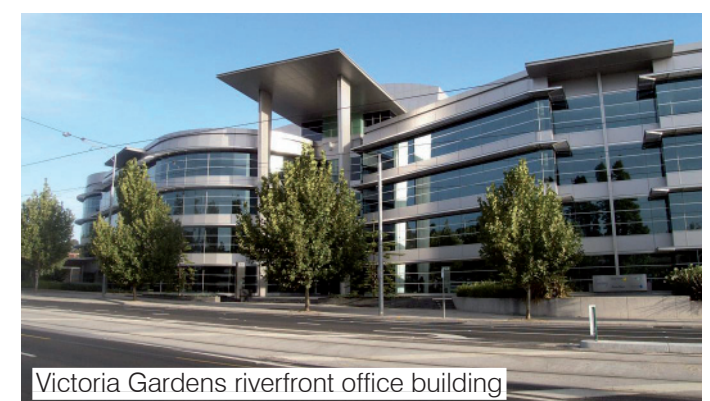
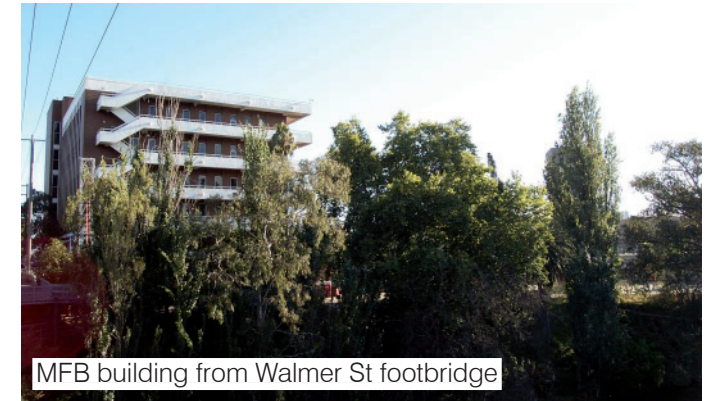


EXISTING BENCHMARKS FOR TALLER NEW DEVELOPMENT

Maximum heights set by the Yarra Planning Scheme for the Victoria Gardens site range from RL 29 near the river, with areas at RL 31, RL 35 and RL 38, to a maximum of RL 55 mid-block along Victoria Street (with a lower podium at the street boundary). Victoria Street is about RL15 at Burnley Street.

Maximum building heights established by existing buildings outside of Victoria Gardens include:

1. Marfleet building approx height RL 30.5
2. Metropolitan Fire Brigade approx. height RL 40.75
3. 659 Victoria Street approx height RL 35



VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 17: BUILDING HEIGHT OPPORTUNITIES

The recommended building heights for the precinct aim to:

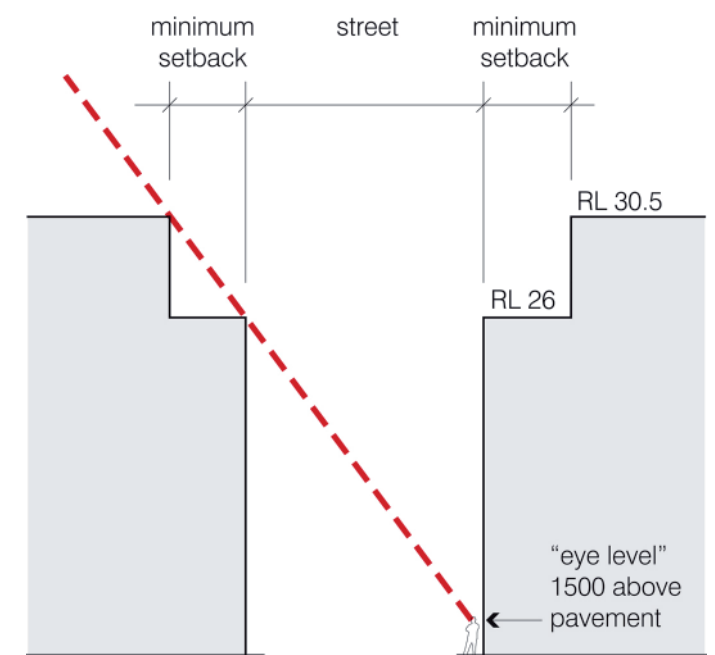
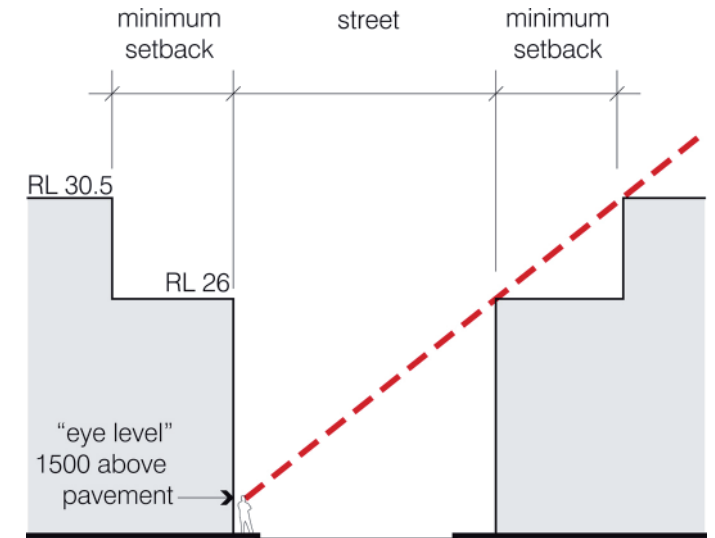
- Respond to opportunities for relatively taller buildings adjoining the MFB building and along Burnley Street.
- Protect the amenity and character of adjoining low-rise residential areas.
- Protect the amenity and valued characteristics of the Yarra River corridor.
- Maintain amenity in streets and other public spaces.
- Protect sensitive community facilities from overshadowing and other detrimental impacts.
- Create harmonious visual relationships between neighbouring buildings.
- Protect views to important landmarks.

Although the land slopes down to the east of Victoria Gardens and north of Victoria Street, the area south of Victoria Street and west of River Street is quite flat, varying between RL15 and 16. Building heights in the sloping areas near the river are generally constrained by Amendment C66. Adoption of height limits based on RLs rather than height above street level is therefore proposed for the remainder of the Precinct, to be consistent with the system used in Victoria Gardens.



PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHT CONTROLS

1. *Victoria Gardens: Existing Comprehensive Development Zone and height limits (no changes recommended).*
2. *River Interface: Yarra River Corridor built form controls as per Amendment C66. Increases in height beyond the general recommendations in C66, in exchange for equivalent increased ground-level setbacks that add to the public space, may be appropriate in some places and within a range of limiting criteria (see pages 19 and 20).*
3. *Burnley Street Residential Interface: Transitional building heights opposite Victoria Gardens, ensuring protection of amenity and character of adjoining residential areas, up to RL 30.5 maximum at the Burnley St frontage and grading down to RL 26 maximum at the laneway along the western edge of the Precinct (see page 21).*
4. *Industrial and Commercial Interface: Maximum height RL 26 along street frontages. Increases in height to RL 30.5 maximum may be acceptable with upper level setbacks to ensure no detrimental impact on views of significant landmarks (e.g. the Skipping Girl sign) and no more overshadowing of the adjoining streets, public spaces or private properties beyond that caused by building to RL 26.*



INDUSTRIAL INTERFACE HEIGHT LIMITS

Max. height at street frontage RL 26;
 Max. height with upper level setbacks RL 30.5;
 Upper level setbacks to be proportional to street width as illustrated to avoid increased visual impacts in street spaces.

VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 18: PROPOSED HEIGHT CONTROLS

Amendment C66 sets out building setbacks and height limits in relation to the river with the aim to strengthen the apparent scale of the river and the topography of its banks, and allow vegetation to dominate views from and across the river corridor. Improvement of open space amenity and accessibility is also a concern. As this is affected by factors other than building height, the C66 controls should be used as a benchmark rather than rigid limits in determining the appropriate built form for a given site. Factors to consider include:

- Deeper setbacks to make better public spaces with room for substantial vegetation, and to provide better public access to the river.
- Building frontages should enhance the safety, appearance and useability of public spaces.
- The MFB building is expected to remain and it may be appropriate for adjoining new buildings to create height transitions to the typical lower building heights of the precinct.

It may therefore be appropriate to allow greater height in some places, however, any increased height should be subject to:

- Public space contributions equivalent to the floorspace gained through height increases. This should be in addition to the area of any existing Public Acquisition Overlays.
- No overshadowing (at winter solstice) beyond that resulting from buildings up to RL 26 of: Victoria Street's southern footpath and the park to the south of Victoria Street;

The proposed east-west pedestrian link from the river to Flockhart Street (see page 5); and

The riverside open spaces.

Increased height should also be contingent upon superior design quality, environmental sustainability, heritage restoration and adaptive re-use, no negative public and private amenity impacts, and protection of nearby sites' development potential.

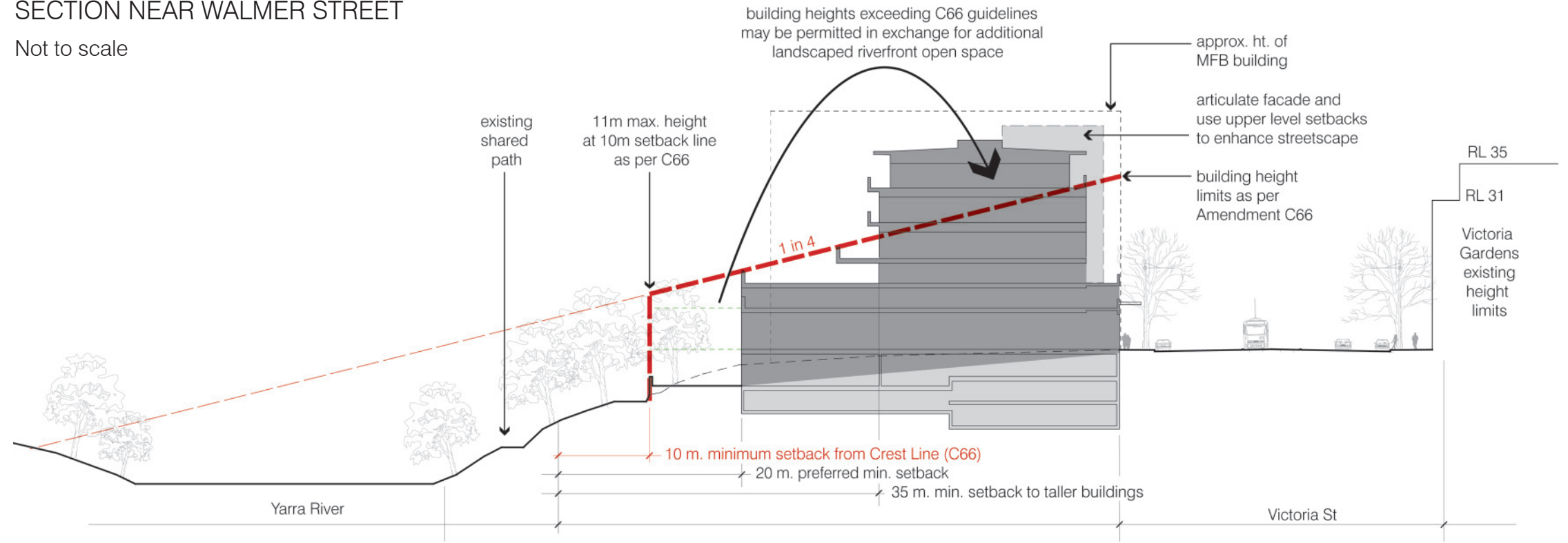


PLAN: BUILDING HEIGHT AND SETBACK CONTROLS BETWEEN VICTORIA ST AND YARRA RIVER (NOT TO SCALE)

VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 19: HEIGHT LIMITS & SETBACKS – NORTH OF VICTORIA ST

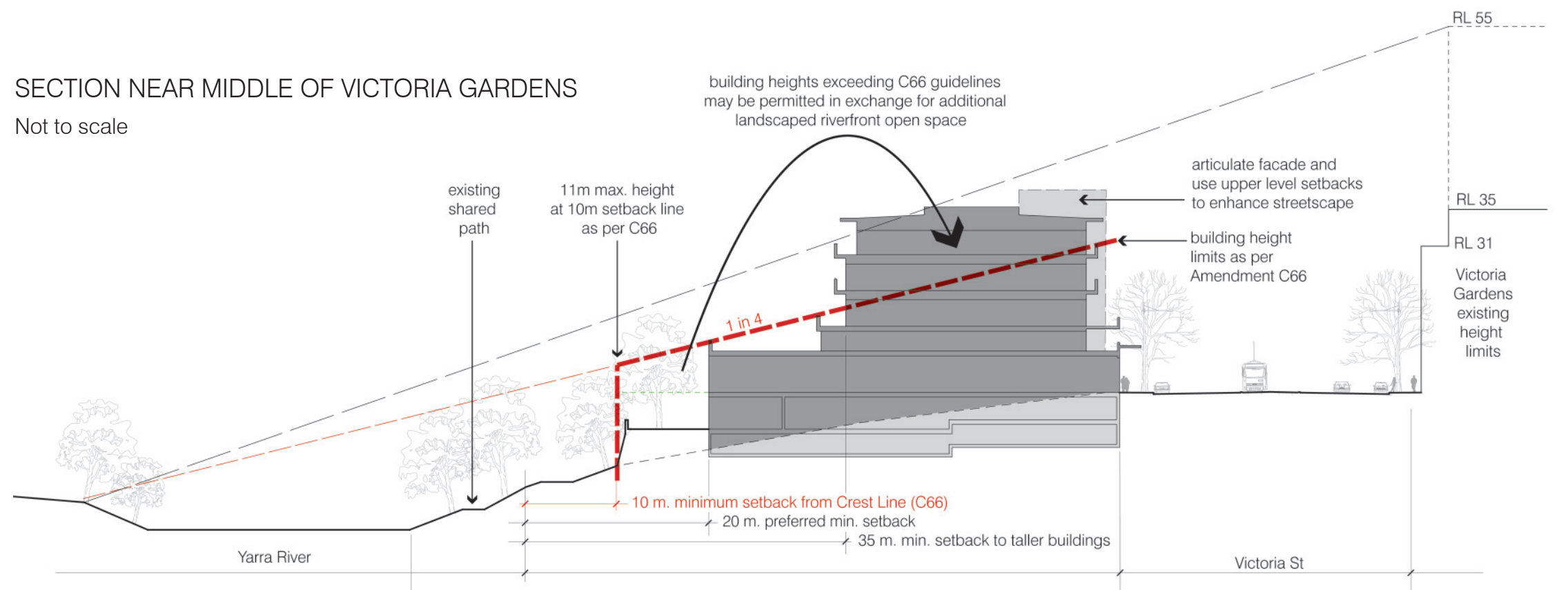
SECTION NEAR WALMER STREET

Not to scale



SECTION NEAR MIDDLE OF VICTORIA GARDENS

Not to scale



VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 20: HEIGHT LIMITS & SETBACKS – NORTH OF VICTORIA ST

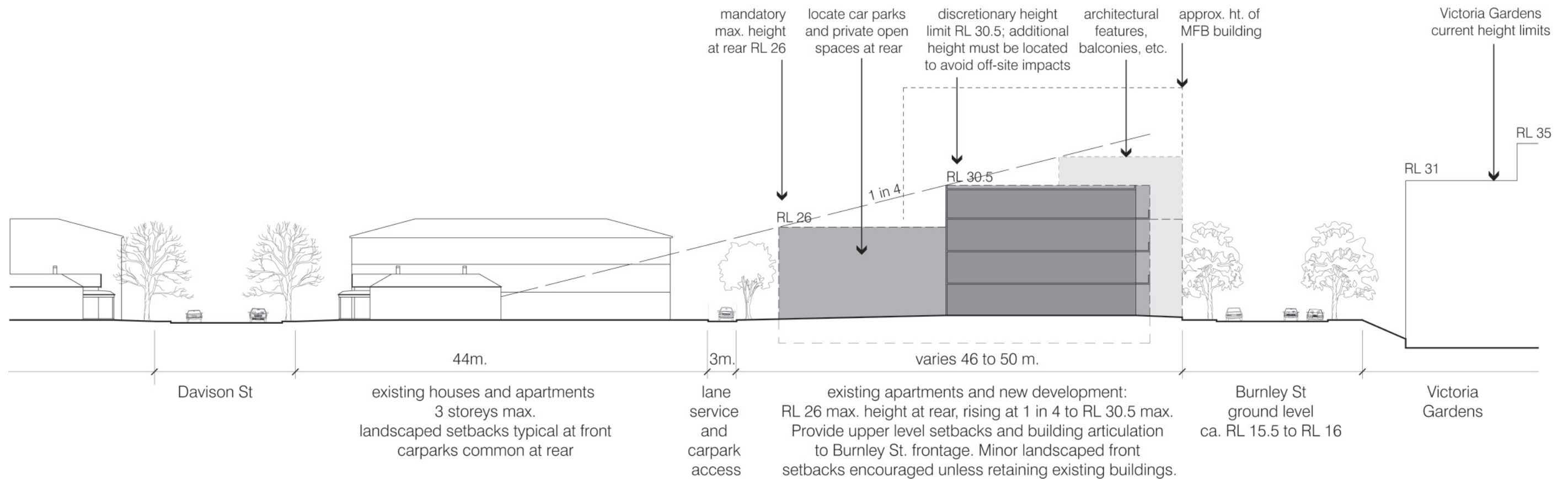
The properties on the west side of Burnley Street suit slightly greater heights and development intensity than some other areas in the Victoria St East Precinct. However, to protect residents' amenity to the west, a mandatory height limit of RL 26 should apply along the lane at the west boundary of the Burnley Street properties, with permitted heights increasing to the east at a gradient of 1 in 4 to a discretionary maximum at RL 30.5, allowing for architectural features beyond RL 30.5 to provide architectural interest to the Burnley Street frontage.

Approval of building heights beyond RL 26 should be subject to an assessment of superior performance under a number of criteria, including:

- Architectural design quality,
- Environmental sustainability,
- Heritage restoration and adaptive re-use,
- Public and private amenity impacts, and
- Protection of the development potential of nearby sites.

The general bulk of any building above RL 26 should be set back from the street. However, architectural features along the street frontage should be used to provide for varied architectural effects and to support functional requirements of buildings (e.g. lift over-runs) without an overall increase in building bulk. Development within these volumes should include no more than 33% habitable building space, and no less of the volume than 33% should be open to sky above.

Apart from minor (say 2m) landscaped front setbacks to soften the streetscape, no front or side setbacks are encouraged. Any setbacks or private open space should provide useable spaces or recreation facilities for occupants of buildings on the site. Car parking should not be located at the street frontage.



TYPICAL SECTION: DAVISON STREET TO BURNLEY STREET

VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 21: HEIGHT LIMITS - BURNLEY ST RESIDENTIAL INTERFACE

POLICY AND PLANNING CONTROLS

Future development in the precinct will be dominated by the private sector. Desired public outcomes therefore depend upon the application of planning controls and policies tailored to specific objectives for of the precinct.

The recent reviews of Yarra's industrial areas and activity centres are relevant to the Victoria St East precinct and establish directions for retail, commercial and industrial activity in the area.

Planning Scheme Amendment C66 sets out the vision and objectives for built form across the municipality, and is the primary decision-making tool for Council in relation to questions of built form in planning approvals. However, the broad-scale nature of C66 principles and policies make additional, more site-specific planning and design guidance important for particular precincts. This Urban Design Framework provides such guidance in conjunction with C66.

Issues to be addressed in future planning and policy development for the Precinct include:

- Identifying new streets, pedestrian rights-of-way and public spaces to be provided within the redevelopment of major sites through a process of negotiating with developers.
- Rezoning of the Industrial zones south of Victoria Gardens as per the Industrial and Business review.
- Review of Heritage Overlays.
- A review DDOs controlling built form along the west side of Burnley Street opposite Victoria Gardens.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS

Developers' input into planning for the area is required. This applies even in relation to factors such as the provision of community services, which are typically planned only by Councils. The future demographics of the area will depend on the nature of development and the target market for new residential units. These will be determined primarily by developers, not Council. Developers are therefore in the best position to support pro-active planning of services, rather than waiting to react after new communities have become established without appropriate services in place.

In addition to conventional requirements for supporting information, major development proposals should therefore be supported by:

- An analysis of community infrastructure needs linked to the projected demographics and population levels resulting from the development.
- Traffic and parking analysis encompassing bicycle circulation and parking, potential demands on public transport services, and appropriate provision of pedestrian circulation space based on equivalent high-density pedestrian-oriented precincts.

Requirements for development contributions should be reviewed with respect to:

- Realistic, comprehensive costs for the development of appropriate public infrastructure and open space facilities to support the expected intensities of private development in the precinct.
- The potential for allocation of developer contributions towards open space, infrastructure, and community services.

STATE-LEVEL SUPPORT

The Yarra River corridor is the most significant public space in the precinct and is a resource of metropolitan significance. Management and improvements should, appropriately, be supported by the State Government (e.g. through Parks Victoria).

Given the complexity of the riverbank environs, a relatively detailed planning and design study should be undertaken to support management and improvement of the river corridor including:

- Feature surveys and condition surveys to accurately document the existing landscape.
- A master plan addressing existing and proposed public land, and also areas of building setbacks on private land fronting onto the river.
- Detailed design guidelines for privately-owned land fronting onto the river corridor to ensure that it complements and is integrated with the public parkland and adjoining privately-owned open spaces.
- Accurate cross-sectional analysis and view-line analysis showing the impact of potential buildings along the river corridor.
- Detailed guidelines for building setbacks and frontage qualities to ensure protection of important qualities of the river corridor.

This detailed study is of particular importance for the area north of Victoria Street and east of Walmer Street, where space constraints are most severe.

Other measures to support objectives for the precinct include State support for Public Acquisition Overlays to consolidate public parkland along the river.

COUNCIL CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM

Enhancement of existing streetscapes and other open spaces should be undertaken by Council through a program of capital works improvements. Some of the funding for these works would, logically, be linked to development contributions.

VICTORIA ST EAST PRECINCT, RICHMOND 22: IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES