

Yarra Planning Scheme

Amendment C345yara

Explanatory Report

Overview

The amendment proposes to apply an interim Heritage Overlay to the North Richmond Housing Estate (pictured below). This includes the public housing towers at 106-112 Elizabeth Street and 139 Highett Street, the properties at 23 and 25 Lennox Street, as well as the surrounding green open space and associated ancillary areas (see Figure 1 below).

Under Criterion A, the North Richmond Housing Estate is one of the largest, intact examples of public housing estates developed by the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) as part of its post war high-rise program of slum reclamation and public housing provision in inner Melbourne.

The citation and statement of significance identify the high-rise towers in their form, scale and materiality as individually significant and the surrounding grounds (with some exemptions) as contributory (see Figure 2 below).

Further potential for social and cultural heritage values was identified under Criterion G. Specifically; it's association with the Vietnamese community may still be of relevance. Further community engagement and consultation will be required to understand and assess these potential heritage values. This will be analysed further for the preparation of the permanent heritage overlay.

Applying an interim Heritage Overlay is necessary to protect the North Richmond Housing Estate from demolition by Homes Victoria while the final strategic work is completed to apply a permanent Heritage Overlay to the subject land.

Details of the amendment

Who is the planning authority?

This amendment has been prepared by the Minister for Planning who is the planning authority for the amendment.

The amendment has been made at the request of Yarra City Council.

Land affected by the amendment

The amendment applies to land identified in the map below. This comprises the North Richmond Housing Estate, including the public housing towers at 106-112 Elizabeth Street and 139 Highett Street, Richmond, the properties at 23 and 25 Lennox Street, as well as the surrounding open green space and associated ancillary areas.

Figure 1: Aerial map showing extent of study area and affected land



What the amendment does

The amendment proposes to address identified gaps in the heritage overlay and ensures that significant and contributory heritage fabric is not lost due to impending demolition.

The amendment proposes to:

- Amend the schedule to Clause 43.01 (Heritage Overlay) to insert an interim Heritage Overlay HO504 to the North Richmond Housing Estate Precinct:
 - 106 Elizabeth Street, Richmond
 - 108 Elizabeth Street, Richmond
 - 110 Elizabeth Street, Richmond
 - 112 Elizabeth Street, Richmond
 - 139 Highett Street, Richmond
 - 23 Lennox Street, Richmond
 - 25 Lennox Street, Richmond
- Apply the interim Heritage Overlay (HO504) to the land comprising the North Richmond Housing Estate. As shown on Planning Scheme Map No. 6.

- Amend the incorporated document City of Yarra Database of Heritage Significant Areas, July 2026, which is listed in the Schedule to Clause 72.04 – Incorporated Documents to include interim HO504 (North Richmond Housing Estate).
- Amend the planning scheme maps to apply new HO504 the land identified as the North Richmond Housing Estate (pictured below).
- Amend the Schedule to Clause 72.04 (Incorporated Documents) In this Planning Scheme to include the incorporated document North Richmond Housing Estate (106-112 Elizabeth Street, 139 Highett Street, and 23-25 Lennox Street, Richmond).
- Amend the Schedule to Clause 72.08 (Background Documents) in this planning scheme to include the background document *106-112 Elizabeth Street, 139 Highett Street, and 23-25 Lennox Street, Richmond*.

Strategic assessment of the amendment

Why is the amendment required?

A heritage report was prepared by Extent Heritage to justify and inform the proposed interim Heritage Overlay for the comprising the North Richmond Housing Estate.

- a) *106-112 Elizabeth Street, 139 Highett Street, and 23-25 Lennox Street, Richmond.*

The heritage report was commissioned as strategic background analysis at the request of Council. This was in response to Homes Victoria's information to commence demolition of 139 Highett Street within the North Richmond Housing Estate Precinct.

The North Richmond Housing Estate is one of the largest, intact examples of public housing estates developed by the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) as part of its post war high-rise program of slum reclamation and public housing provision in inner Melbourne.

Developed on land previously occupied by workers' cottages associated with low income and working-class post-war migrant communities, the Estate illustrates the state government's approach to addressing post-war housing shortages through large-scale redevelopment and the provision of purpose-built public housing estates incorporating recreational amenities and shared open spaces. Its development is a tangible manifestation of a significant phase in the urban and social transformation of Richmond and the wider City of Yarra.

The report shows that the North Richmond Public Housing Estate meets the threshold to be included within the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay through meeting several basic and threshold tests.

Specifically, the report identifies North Richmond's Public Housing Estate's significant and contributing elements as shown in the map below.

Figure 2: Identification of level of significance



Amendment C345yara implements the recommendations of Extent Heritage's report on an interim basis. Further strategic work and community consultation will be completed to also fully assess the social and cultural significance of the North Richmond Housing Estate.

How does the amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

The Amendment implements the objectives in *Section 4 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act), in particular:

- *To conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value; and*
- *To protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and co-ordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community;*
- *To balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.*

How does the amendment address any environmental, social and

economic effects?

The amendment is expected to generate positive environmental and social outcomes.

Environmental

From an environmental perspective, the protection of heritage places supports sustainability by encouraging the conservation and continued use of existing built assets. Extending beyond the built form aspect of the amendment, the protection of the surrounding landscaping of the North Richmond Housing Estate will have a multitude of positive outcomes for the community. Some of which being, mitigating the urban heat island effect in a municipality with a low level of green open space, providing ongoing access to green open space for the residents of the City of Yarra and retain habitats that contribute to the local biodiversity.

Social

Under Criterion G, the assessment provided by Extent Heritage identified the potential for social and cultural heritage values associated with the North Richmond Housing Estate. Specifically, it's association with the Vietnamese community. However, further community engagement and consultation will be required to understand and assess these potential heritage values.

The outcome of this work will in part inform the application of a permanent Heritage Overlay on the land.

The amendment is expected to have negligible economic effects.

Does the amendment address climate change?

The Amendment will protect the significant open space areas within the North Richmond Housing Estate. This will support climate change resilience within the municipality, improve urban greening and environmental sustainability.

The amendment supports the protection of the identified individually significant heritage buildings, thereby minimising greenhouse gas emissions associated with demolition of buildings, waste generation, new building construction and material production.

Does the amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

The land affected by the Amendment is not located within an identified area of bushfire risk.

Does the amendment comply with the requirements of any other Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?

The amendment complies with Ministerial Direction No. 11 (Strategic Assessment of Amendments) under section 12 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The

amendment is consistent with this direction which ensures a comprehensive strategic evaluation of a planning scheme amendment and the outcomes it produces.

The amendment is consistent with the Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes under Section 7(5) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

How does the amendment support or implement the Planning Policy Framework?

The amendment supports and implements the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) by advancing key objectives related to heritage conservation, sustainability, and inclusive communities.

In particular, the amendment supports Clauses

- 15.03-1S (Heritage Conservation) - which seeks to ensure the conservation of places of heritage significance.
- 13.03-1S (Urban Heat) - which seeks to reduce urban heat and minimise impacts of urban heat on human health and wellbeing.

How does the amendment support or implement any relevant strategic plan or policy statement adopted by a Minister, government department or public authority?

Plan For Victoria – Pillar 3 (Great places, suburbs and towns): Preserve Victoria's rich and diverse cultural heritage by protecting significant sites and precincts.

The amendment will protect the North Richmond Housing Estate, a site of historical significance to the City of Yarra. The North Richmond Housing Estate is one of the largest and most intact examples of post war high-rise program of slum reclamation and public housing provision in inner Melbourne.

the Estate illustrates the state government's approach to addressing post-war housing shortages through large-scale redevelopment and the provision of purpose-built public housing estates incorporating recreational amenities and shared open spaces.

Is the amendment consistent with the delivery of the relevant housing target set out in the Planning Policy Framework?

The North Richmond Housing Estate is currently home to approximately 220 households and used to be home to approximately 1,000 residents. The Amendment does not diminish the North Richmond Housing Estate's residential capacity. Rather, the Amendment enables their retention through protecting one of the largest and most intact examples of the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) high-rise program of slum reclamation programs that occurred across Melbourne.

How does the amendment support or implement the Local Planning Policy Framework, and specifically the Municipal Strategic Statement?

The amendment supports the application of the local planning policy Clause 15.03-1L- Heritage through protecting the markedly significant North Richmond Housing Estate towers, ancillary buildings and green open space as identified by Extent Heritage in *106-112 Elizabeth Street, 139 Highett Street, and 23-25 Lennox Street, Richmond* and as shown in Figure 2 above.

How does the amendment support or implement the Municipal Planning Strategy?

Amendment C345yara recognises and protects The North Richmond Housing Estate heritage significance, which is consistent with the following parts of the Municipal Planning Strategy:

- *Respect Yarra's distinctive features and landmarks, including Significant landmarks and tall structures, including church spires, clock towers, industrial structures and heritage signs*
- *A diverse mix of buildings reflecting different forms and eras of development.*
- *Open spaces which are integral to the urban structure.*
- *Parks and gardens.*
- *Conserve and enhance the municipality's highly valued heritage places to retain and promote Yarra's distinctive character and sense of history.*
- *Retain and adapt Yarra's historic industrial buildings as a means of connecting with the past.*
- *Conserving and enhancing heritage places and streetscapes while still allowing appropriate development.*

How does the amendment balance any competing policy objectives or strategies?

The State Government has required councils across Victoria to demonstrate that they have sufficient capacity in their planning schemes to accommodate future intensification.

While this work has not been finalised, Yarra City Council has shown that there is significant dwelling capacity available within its scheme. Plan For Victoria has designated the entire municipality as an activity centre. While Council has requested more clarity on the meaning of this designation, the recently approved BFOs as in C271, C273 and C291yara have partially implemented achieving further intensification potential.

Applying an interim Heritage Overlay protects the public housing buildings, retaining

the existing dwelling potential and level of amenity. In line with elements identified in the citation, certain changes would still be allowable subject to design details and heritage advice on a case-by-case basis.

Does the amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

C345yara uses the most appropriate VPP tool by using the Heritage Overlay to achieve protection of heritage places.

This approach is consistent with the Ministerial Direction - The Form and Content of Planning Schemes and the Victorian Local Heritage Guidelines that have recently replaced the Planning Practice Note 1- Applying the Heritage Overlay.

How does the amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

No other agency was consulted when preparing this amendment. Relevant agencies will be contacted as part of the permanent Heritage Overlay amendment process in the future.

Does the amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

C345yara makes changes to heritage controls applying to places of cultural heritage significance and is not expected to have any impact upon the objectives, strategies and decision-making principles of the *Transport Integration Act 2010*.

How does the amendment have regard to the principles set out in the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017* in relation to Yarra River land and other land, the use or development of which may affect Yarra River land?

Council has considered the Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017. In determining whether Yarra River land is affected by a planning scheme amendment, Yarra has referred to Part 3 of the Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017.

The Yarra River land (including other land) is not affected by this planning scheme amendment.

Resource and administrative costs

What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?

C345yara proposes to introduce an interim Heritage Overlay to the area identified in the map provided by Extent Heritage and make other minor changes to the Yarra Planning Scheme, which will have negligible impact on the current or future resources or administrative costs of the responsible authority.

