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Northland Residential Neighbourhood Precinct Structure Plan

September 2014



This document is intended to be a guide for future development. Information and descriptions contained in this publication are current at the time of printing. Subsequent changes may occur. While attempts have been made to ensure information is accurate it is not intended as precise or absolute in its representations.

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1. Introduction

This document outlines a long-term plan for the transformation of the Residential Neighbourhood Precinct within the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct.

The Residential Neighbourhood Precinct performs an important role in providing a diverse range of housing types near public transport, local schools and employment areas. As the focus on sustainable access to goods and services increases, this area will come under increased redevelopment pressure.

This Plan provides a strategic framework to address today's issues while looking to the future to unlock economic and spatial opportunities to facilitate long-term change.

Guided by this Plan, the Residential Neighbourhood Precinct will evolve to provide an increased choice in housing type, enable improved access to the Darebin Creek corridor and take advantage of the numerous community facilities offered in the local area.

1.1 Why this plan is needed

The Northland Residential Neighbourhood Precinct has been identified as having significant potential for renewal, through State and Local planning policy documents (outlined further below).

This Residential Neighbourhood Precinct is viewed as a quiet suburban area, wedged between the Darebin creek corridor, Northland Shopping Centre, grade separated from the Summerhill Shopping Centre and has Albert Street forming its western edge.

Numerous issues within the precinct have been identified, including high car dependency, lack of land use diversity, poor accessibility and low quality public spaces. These issues are symptomatic of relatively uncoordinated growth to date. Furthermore, there are high levels of socio-economic disadvantage in the local community.

On the other hand, the area has many assets, being relatively well provided for with schools, community health facilities, public transport, local parks and the Darebin Creek is a major asset.

Opportunities to reinvigorate this Precinct can be unlocked through establishing a new urban structure and providing the regulatory controls to ensure redevelopment reinforces this structure. This Plan forms part of this regulatory control, and identifies opportunities to intervene and steer the development of the precinct in desired directions.

The Vision for this Precinct is to improve connections to surrounding destinations and community facilities, reinvigorate land use activity, bring new investment in business and infrastructure and deliver broad community benefits.

1.2 Strategic Context

State Policy Context: Plan Melbourne

The State Government's Metropolitan Planning Strategy, *Plan Melbourne*, establishes direction for managing growth and development across the metropolitan area through to 2050. It contains various Directives and Initiatives that influence how urban renewal areas such as NURP will be approached by the Victorian Government.

Plan Melbourne identifies numerous employment clusters across the metropolitan region. These clusters are identified as having national significance, and provide substantial employment and growth opportunities. The Northland Urban Renewal Precinct falls within the La Trobe National Employment Cluster ("the Cluster") (refer Figure 1).

The development of the Cluster will encourage growth in employment anchored by La Trobe University, Heidelberg hospitals and industrial areas. Within the Cluster and surrounding areas, housing growth is planned as part of the "20 minute neighbourhood" initiative.

The direction for this area as established by *Plan Melbourne* provides a new lens through which to view the redevelopment potential of the Northland Residential Neighbourhood.



Centrally located between the Melbourne CBD and the rapidly expanding northern growth corridor, this Urban Renewal Precinct forms part of a broader vision for Melbourne’s northern region.

The Precinct has the potential to improve existing tenuous links to employment areas and other key destinations including La Trobe University and the Austin medical precinct in Heidelberg, which is now recognised as a significant employment and innovation cluster.

The La Trobe National Employment Cluster is a key driving force for continued economic investment and growth in the northern metropolitan area.

Local Policy Context: Northland Urban Renewal (NURP) Structure Plan

The Structure Plan for this major urban renewal area has been in the making since 2009. It signals the potential for significant population growth in Darebin and the broader Melbourne metropolitan region. The Northland Urban Precinct Structure Plan (still in draft) takes a long term view and identifies the strategies required to respond to core issues.

The development of a realistic and forward thinking structure plan to guide the direction, scale and nature of development in NURP is a project of considerable importance. Specifically the Plan sets a Strategic Response to the following elements:

- Housing for the future;
- Local employment and investment;
- Public Realm;
- Movement and access;
- Sustainable living and working; and

- Supporting community infrastructure needs infrastructure.

The NURP Structure Plan is an unprecedented opportunity to tackle long term physical, environmental and socio-economic issues in this part of Melbourne. It provides opportunities for improved regional prosperity and liveability that align with the direction of *Plan Melbourne*.

The envisaged transformation of these currently underperforming brownfields and surrounding low scale residential precincts will deliver flow on benefits to the Cluster and the region.

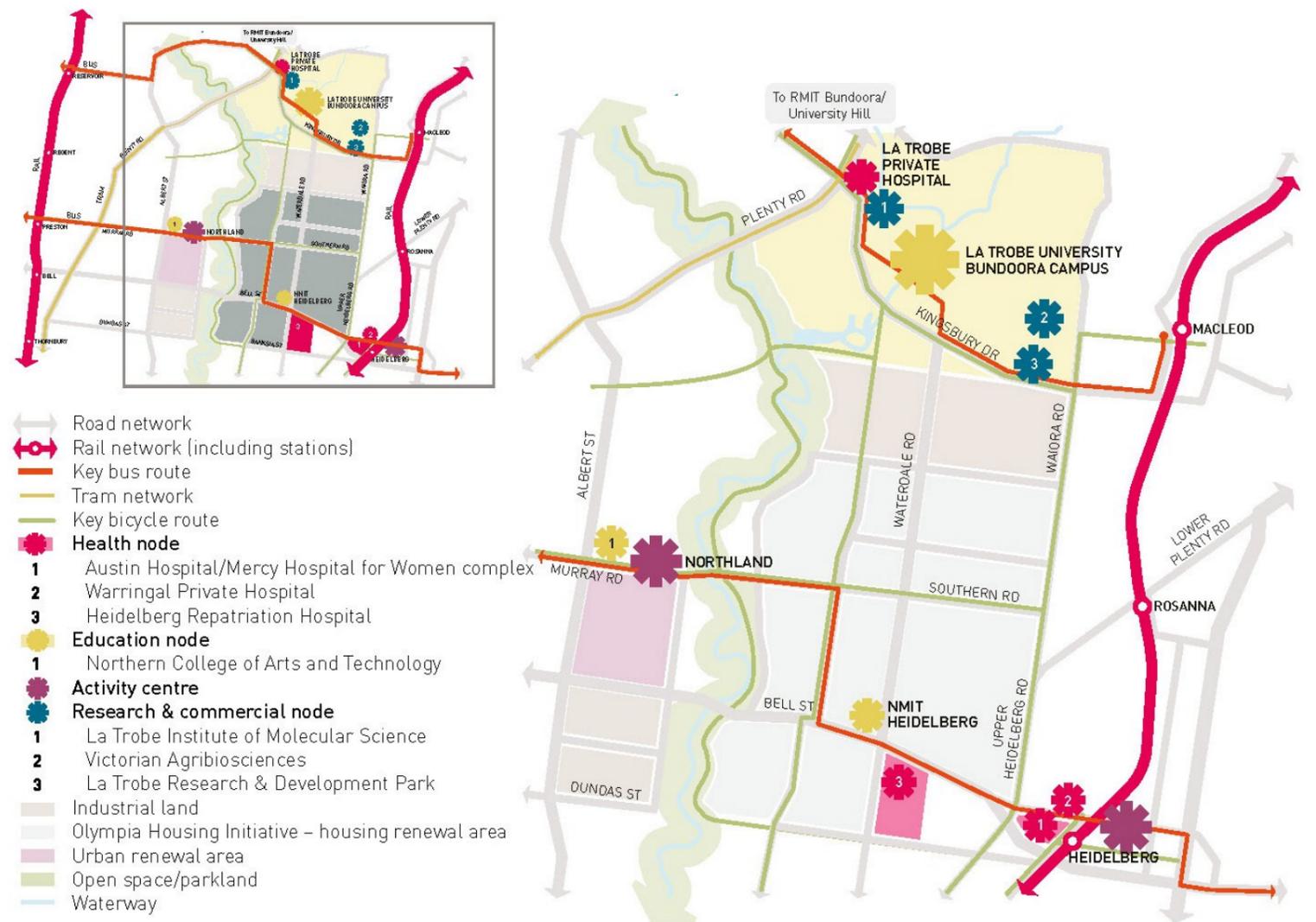


Figure 1: La Trobe National Employment Cluster as shown in *Plan Melbourne*.

Source: Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure 2014

1. Introduction

Darebin Housing Strategy

The Darebin Housing Strategy 2013 sets the strategic directions for housing in the future. There are significant challenges with projected population growth of approximately 30,300 additional people by 2033.

The Strategy sets out a hierarchy to support the management of growth and change that prioritises diverse housing, including multi-storey development, in or near activity centres, transport and other key destinations (schools, universities, community centres).

Darebin Housing Strategy 2013-2033



The Housing Change Framework Plan identifies the Northland Residential Neighbourhood within the Substantial Housing Change (Precinct A) and Incremental Housing Change areas (Precinct B). These are high level strategic directions that are to be further refined through the process of preparing the Precinct Structure Plan which will the context and physical opportunities and limitations.

Substantial Housing Change areas have the capacity to accommodate substantial residential development over time. These areas will support increased residential densities and increased housing diversity. It is expected that the character of these areas will change substantially in the future.

Substantial Change Areas generally display one or more of the following characteristics:

- Have an evolving character where there is an eclectic mix of new and old forms of architectural style and housing typologies. This includes more recent apartment developments at higher densities and in mixed-use formats.
- Are identified locations for increased residential densities to support economic investment and growth in the La Trobe National Employment Cluster.
- Are within or immediately adjacent to activity centres that possess superior access to the Principal Public Transport Network;
- Have a frontage to a strategic corridor; or
- Are generally within 400 metres of a train station or tram route.

Incremental Housing Change areas have the capacity to accommodate a moderate level of residential development over time. It is expected that the general character of Incremental Change areas will evolve over time as new yet modest types of development are accommodated. These areas are characterised by:

- A diversity of housing stock, diversity of lot sizes and a more varied neighbourhood character. Typically areas include some medium density and small apartment development, but the predominant dwelling stock is single to double storey dwellings;
- Have some stand-alone or small clusters of heritage sites, including along strategic corridors, however are generally unaffected by extensive heritage recognition;
- Are located:
 - within an 800 metre walkable catchment of an activity centre; and
 - generally within an 800 metre walkable catchment of train, tram or SmartBus services.

Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy 2014

The Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy (DELUS) establishes direction for Darebin's commercial and industrial precincts. It takes into account shifts in employment, industrial land use and commercial activity that are taking place within the municipality.

The Northland Shopping Centre is identified as Darebin's largest retail centre. It serves a large regional catchment and is part of the broader Northland Activity Centre. The DELUS identifies the key challenges for the Northland Activity Centre as improving the amenity of the centre and surrounding neighbourhood and increasing the intensity and diversity of development in and around the shopping centre.

Summerhill located adjacent to the Plenty Road/Albert Street intersection is a Neighbourhood Activity Centre. With two of the key sites subject to redevelopment proposals comprising ground floor retail and residential multi-level apartments above the following matters are considered relevant in DELUS:

- *Redevelopment of the two sites to a similar level of retail floor space as presently provided is supported. The inclusion of the commercial and residential uses at the site is further supported given the sites' access to fixed rail (tram) infrastructure.*
- *Future retail or commercial development should seek to provide internal connectivity between the two sites.*

The future directions for the Summerhill centre are:

- *Encourage mixed use redevelopment of the Summer Primary Neighbourhood Activity Area; and*
- *Subject to an update of retail floorspace projections, ensure that any redevelopment of the activity area does not materially increase the current level of retail floorspace provided*

It is noted that the Summerhill Activity Centre is further directed through the Plenty Road Corridor Urban Design Framework to consolidate with medium rise mixed use buildings which support the economic growth of this centre. There is a precinct plan requiring improved access to be facilitated between the centre and the residential neighbourhood to the south.

The Crevelli Street shops were identified in DELUS as an underperforming centre. The cluster of shops were recommended for rezoning to Residential 1 Zone. The future directions identified in DELUS were set out prior to the release of Plan Melbourne and identification of the La Trobe Employment Cluster.

Dwelling growth and population projections for the precinct have changed and warrant reconsideration of the role this centre may play as an alternative small community focal point, which does not seek to compete with but rather complement the anticipated changing population.



Summerhill Shopping Centre

2. Residential Neighbourhood Context

The Northland Residential Neighbourhood comprises the established residential housing surrounding the Northland Shopping Centre.

As noted above, this area is identified in *Plan Melbourne* as having capacity to accommodate residential development at greater densities, to support the La Trobe Employment Cluster. This precinct forms the western edge of the Cluster and it is anticipated that increased development pressure will occur as the area becomes recognised for its proximity to the employment hubs at La Trobe University and in the core Northland Urban Renewal Precinct.

The vision for this area is to be further developed by the (NURP) Structure Plan (currently in draft).

Public housing currently accounts for over 20 per cent of all dwelling stock in the precinct. Much of the original detached public housing stock is now in private ownership, however the proportion of public housing remains much higher than the Melbourne average. The Department of Human Services (DHS) generally redevelops or sells housing in this area as it ages. It has retained substantial contiguous land holdings throughout.

This area continues to experience gradual change as a consequence of an ageing community, and a number of long term residents choosing to down-sizing to smaller housing.

The following forms of renewal are taking place in this area:

- Upgrade and renovation of privately owned stock;
- Upgrade, ongoing maintenance and renewal of DHS stock;

- New residents (predominantly families) moving in as traditional 2 - 3 bedroom houses become available;
- Small scale infill development in the form of villa units and townhouses.

For the purpose of this Plan, the neighbourhood has been divided into three precincts (refer Figure 2):

- Northland Precinct A, which is located immediately north of the Northland Shopping Centre
- Northland Precinct B, which is located immediately south of Summerhill Shopping Centre
- Northland Precinct C, which comprises the Albert Street corridor.

Each precinct has distinguishing features and differing opportunities and constraints. These features, as well as potential development opportunities, are explained further below.

2.1 Northland Precinct A

This precinct extends north from Murray Road to Tyler Street with a number of residential streets and cul-de-sacs. It surrounds the Northland Shopping Centre, which is an inward focussed mall with retail, entertainment and a range of other commercial services (refer Figure 2).

This area predominantly comprises traditional, single storey, detached housing on large lots (500-600 square metres). There are also significant amounts of cluster housing and townhouses that have emerged over the last 20 years, predominately along and north of Wood Street. These were generally developed by the Department of Human Services.

Housing is characterised by its modest proportions, domestic styling and materials such as brick or weatherboard. Inter-war dwellings predominate in the south-western part of this precinct, while north of Wood Street post-war era development is typical. Housing typically sits within a suburban garden setting.

Wood Street is eclectic in the mix of development typologies including recent townhouse redevelopment (south side, west of Rita Street) whilst a 3 storey apartment form stands among detached dwelling stock.



Traditional housing stock within the Neighbourhood Residential Precinct



Typical streetscape presentation within the Neighbourhood Residential Precinct

Housing along Hannah and Wood streets has a direct interface with the Northland Shopping Centre car park. There is redevelopment occurring in this vicinity that has resulted in the relocation of the bus interchange (which is now located to the Murray Road frontage). Expansion of retail tenancies into the car park area is occurring.

In addition to housing, the precinct also accommodates the East Preston Islamic College (which includes a strategic site development parcel to its south), Preston North East Primary School and the Northern College of Arts and Technology (NCAT). There is a strategic development opportunity on the vacant southern portion of the East Preston Islamic School's 8.6ha property, however it is encumbered by environmental overlays pertaining to the creek and flooding, as well as an environmental audit overlay relating to potential site contamination.

Significant topographical differences exist between the shopping centre and housing on Hannah and Wood Street. Furthermore extensive high fencing separates Hannah Street from the shopping centre, creating a significant visual barrier. Overtime it is anticipated that redevelopment of the shopping centre will re-shape these interfaces to provide a more positive streetscape contribution.

It is anticipated that public transport improvement within the NURP will result in increased development pressure in this precinct.

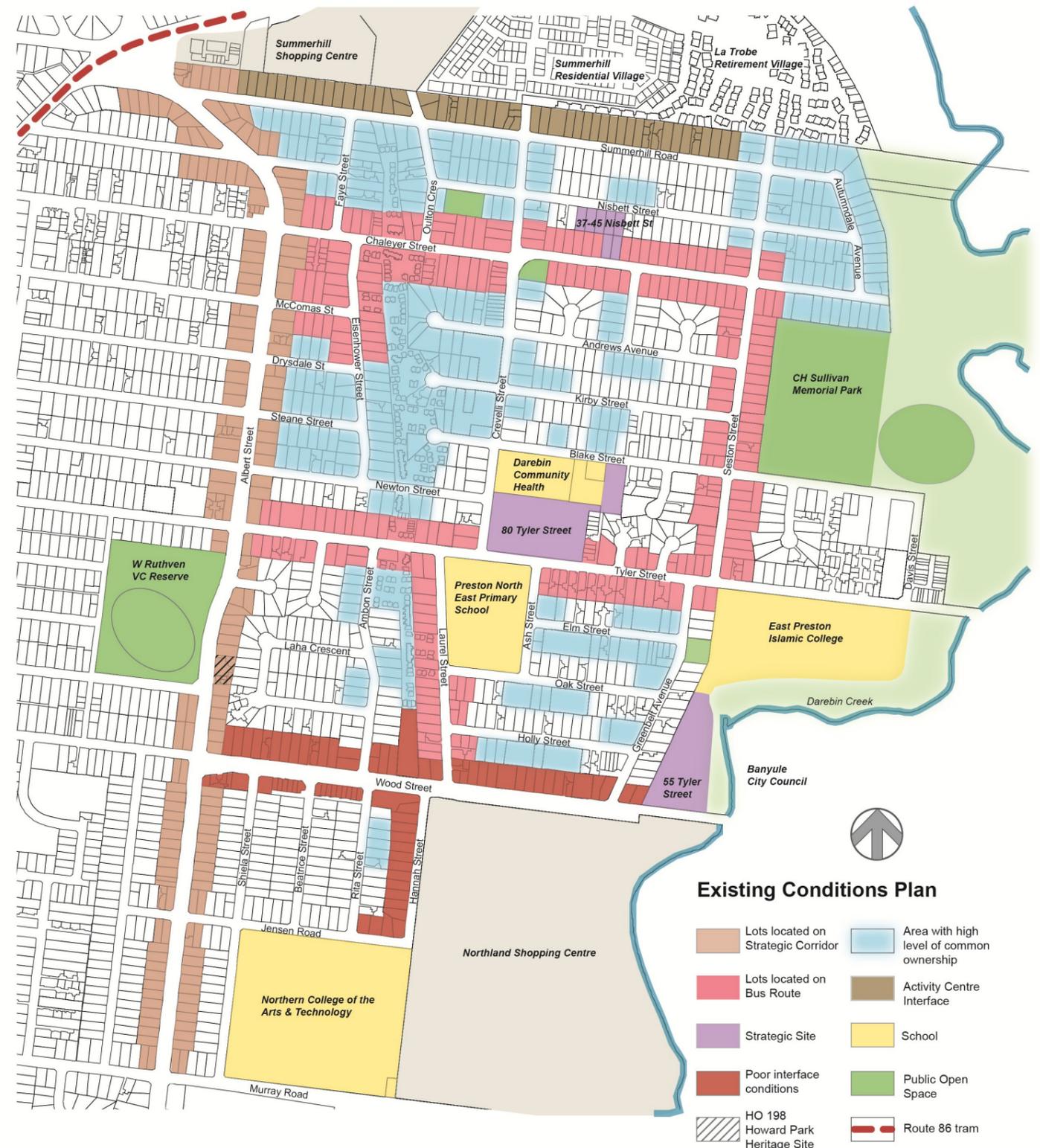


Figure 2: Northland Residential Neighbourhood Existing Conditions

2. Residential Neighbourhood Context

2.2 Northland Precinct B

Precinct B comprises the established residential streets between Tyler Street and Summerhill Shopping Centre, and between the Darebin Creek to the east and Albert Street corridor to the west. Within the precinct are the CH Sullivan Memorial Park and Darebin Community Health Service.

Development is of a similar era to Precinct A and comprises a mix of detached dwellings, cluster housing of the post-war era to more contemporary housing. The urban form has a spacious quality offered by separation of dwellings, low fencing and mix of gardens with planting and open grass gardens.

The changing topography, particularly rising towards the north-west, results in varied streetscapes with elevated dwellings and gardens on one side of the street, and dwellings below street level on the other. These elevated parts of the precinct offer expansive views to the south, including some city skyline views.

On the northern boundary of the precinct is the Summerhill Village Shopping Centre which is elevated approximately 4m above adjacent residential area to the

south. There are several strategic connections through this site that could be improved to provide more connectivity to the shops and the Plenty Road tram service. Properties on the north side of Summerhill Road form a key interface with the activity centre and Summerhill Residential Village, which offers small independent living opportunities for older citizens alongside the La Trobe Retirement Village. The precinct is also proximate to Reservoir Secondary College.

These facilities provide goods, services and infrastructure that support community life in this precinct.

The precinct is also serviced by a local shopping strip at Crevelli Street. The centre is currently under performing, and there is opportunity for this centre to undergo renewal as this precinct develops. It can offer opportunities for local activity and mixed use development. Whilst the Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy considered the centre not to be viable in the future based on its current context, there is now forecast change and population growth supported by the Cluster recognition. The rezoning of surrounding land will help reinvigorate the centre and encourage shop-top housing to also occur.

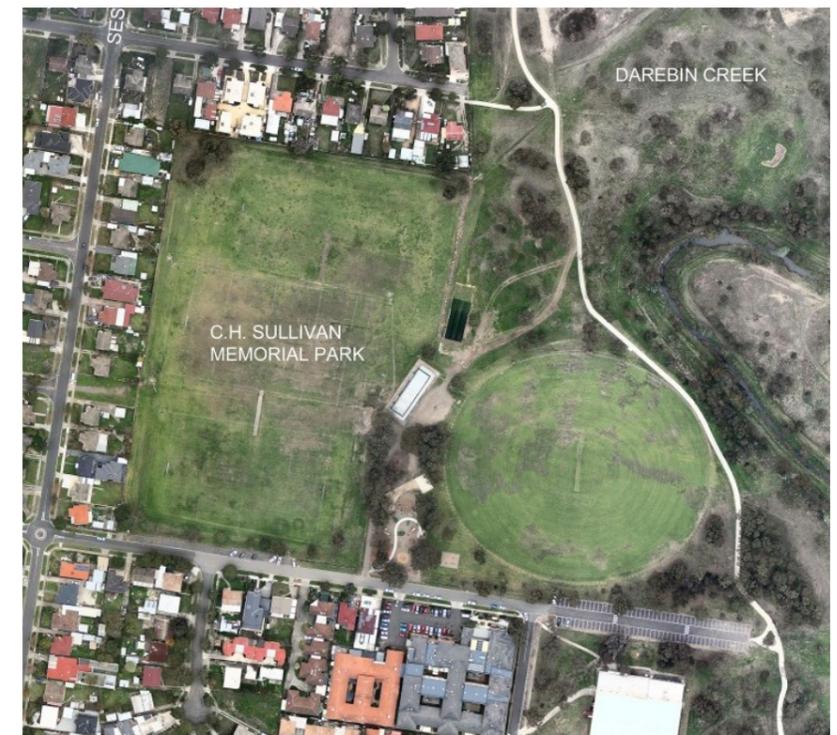
Whilst Sullivan Memorial Park is a key asset of the precinct, the northern and western edges of it is characterised by the high back fencing of adjoining houses along Clingin and Seston streets. This form of development, which ‘turns its back’ onto major recreational and environmental features, creates a poor urban design outcome and does not take advantage of such assets.

Furthermore, the lack of connectivity to these parks and the Darebin Creek corridor can be enhanced by more through pedestrian links and where possible creating development which overlooks these areas to improve surveillance and sense of safety.

There are numerous opportunities for redevelopment in this area, including the former Northern School for Autism at 80 Tyler Street (identified as a 1.4 hectare strategic development site). 37-45 Nisbett Street & 48-50



Views south-west from Summerhill Road (at Oulton Crescent)



Clingin Street form a conglomeration of contiguous sites in common ownership which can be a strategic redevelopment site of 4,050 square metres area with dual street frontages.

2.3 Northland Precinct C

Precinct C comprises the Albert Street corridor and adjoining properties (refer Figure 2). Albert Street is a wide divided road, which distinguishes it from the majority of the Northland Residential Neighbourhood. It carries a large amount of through traffic and is managed by VicRoads as a Category 1 arterial road. Frequent vehicle crossovers provide access to individual lots along Albert Street.

Dwelling stock is similar to that of Precincts A and B with post war brick dwellings siting within a modest garden setting. The original dwelling stock remains largely intact with minimal redevelopment. There are only one or two sites that have been redeveloped for townhouse style development along the corridor.

At the northern end of Albert Street the lots are irregular shape in response to the undulating topography. Where lots front onto Albert Street, the lot width is generally between 16m—18m. There is greater variability in the lot



Albert Street Corridor



Figure 3: Northland Residential Neighbourhood Aerial Photograph

2. Residential Neighbourhood Context

depth of 30m - 44m on either side of the street. Where these deeper lots present a side fence to Albert Street there are considerable stretches that are inactive and exhibit a poor amenity outcome.

Features of this precinct include the W. Ruthven V.C. Reserve featuring a sports oval, tennis courts and pavilion. Opposite the reserve is a Victorian Heritage property “Howard Park” (172 Albert Street). Howard Park house was constructed in 1890 as a substantial single storey farm house and is representative of the Victorian Period (1851—1901) Italianate. It has been developed with units along its southern edge.

As growth increases in the surrounding region, Albert Street is expected to carry increased amounts of traffic. The surrounding properties are at risk of declining levels of amenity, particularly in the front gardens of residential properties along these corridors.

The typical response to this decline is to erect high front fences to block out noise and other pollution. This can result in poor streetscape appearance and reduced visibility between the public and private realm.



Howard Park Heritage Property (HO198)

High front fencing will negatively impact the pedestrian experience of this corridor, and will result in reduced passive surveillance opportunities. Surveillance can assist in providing a sense of safety and security for pedestrians. Views to the activity within the private realm provide visual interest to pedestrians and can encourage more walking.

This precinct has experienced minimal redevelopment to date. This provides the opportunity for greater success in transforming to a new more intensive character that is specifically designed to withstand the increasing activity along Albert Street which will occur as part of its Cluster connectivity role.

With redevelopment and the consolidation of lots, it may be possible to introduce rear laneways to provide alternative access to Albert Street properties. Providing new laneway connections would improve access to development, improve the pedestrian environment through the reduction of cross-overs over footpaths on Albert Street, and improve safety and function of this key arterial road. The consolidation of lots would provide other benefits including enhanced residential dwelling yields, arising from more efficient development parcels.

There is an opportunity for future development to respond positively to declining amenity and public/private interface issues by providing a more ‘urban’ development outcome. This could be in the form of orienting windows to the street to promote passive surveillance, reducing front setbacks and providing landscape buffers, and minimising noise impacts through double glazed windows.

2.4 Constraints

Characteristics that may impinge on redevelopment opportunities include:

- Where there is fragmented ownership via subdivision or strata title units; and
- Known recent redevelopment (over the last 10 years) indicating that further redevelopment is unlikely in the timeframe of the Precinct Structure Plan.

2.5 Opportunities

As demonstrated above, the potential for change and redevelopment within this precinct is significant. The following provides a summary of the opportunities within the precinct:

- High quantity of contiguous lots in common/single ownership;
- Potential for more efficient development parcels to be formed through consolidating adjoining lots, including the ability to create strategic sites over 1000m²;
- Few heritage assets or planning controls (i.e. overlays) that would constrain development;
- Ageing dwelling stock that has potential for regeneration; and
- Access to public transport and community infrastructure as per a 20 minute neighbourhood concept in *Plan Melbourne*.

3.1 Urban Structure

The Northland Residential Neighbourhood comprises different elements that contribute to an overall urban structure. There are elements that contribute positively to the area and create a good sense of place, while other aspects impact negatively upon the function and amenity of the neighbourhood.

The following elements have been identified as contributing to the urban structure.

Residential Streets

There are a number of small streets or cul-de-sacs that do not connect to any destinations and only provide local residential access. Lined by housing on each side, this street pattern creates a 'long block' effect, lacking in regular cross-streets that offer create legibility in a neighbourhood. These long blocks decrease pedestrian accessibility to local schools, shops, health facilities and other homes in the neighbourhood.

Through Streets

Through streets are predominantly residential in nature. Some streets have a greater volume of traffic as they provide access to several recreational facilities located along the Darebin Creek Corridor. Some of these streets also accommodate bus routes, generally connecting in a north-south direction.

Public Transport Routes

Bus routes along Wood Street, Clingin Street and Seston Street provide justification for increased density and more intensive development. The existing routes will benefit future residents, and increased population can improve the patronage of the public transport system. Such increases in density can establish a strong case for increased frequency and standards in public transport routes, and can assist in reducing car dependency .

Cycling, Walking and Pedestrian Safety

The pattern of well-connected residential streets facilitates walking and cycling in the area, especially to key destinations. There are, however, are some larger blocks that are less permeable due to cul-de-sacs and unique land ownership patterns. The Darebin Creek provides pedestrian and bicycle access from Tyler Street to Dougharty Road in Heidelberg West.

The Darebin Creek shared path provides off-road access to the Yarra River trail in the south, and the Metropolitan Ring Road in the north.



Darebin Creek shared path

Street edges

Wood Street is heavily used and provides secondary access to Northland Shopping Centre and the Darebin Creek. Along the south-eastern section of this street is the shopping centre's loading area and multi-deck car park facility, which faces residential properties to the north.

Inactive external elevations of the building present a bulky and relatively uninteresting interface to the residential properties opposite. The outcome is a poor pedestrian interface due to the visual presentation, extended hours of use with truck servicing and loading activities, as well as high levels of visitor traffic. This direct interface with the shopping centre results in a decreased level of residential amenity for the properties on the north-east section of Wood Street.

With significant amounts of through traffic using Wood Street and the area's proximity to Northland Shopping Centre, there is opportunity for small businesses and community uses to establish and leverage off these characteristics.

Hannah Street (west of the shopping centre) is also subject to a similarly poor interface. To overcome it high fencing (at times solid) and tree planting is provided to create a visual screen between the Hannah street residential properties and the car park/loading areas of the shopping centre. A pedestrian walk through is provided at the southern end of Hannah Street.

3. Urban Structure Analysis

Primary Arterial Boulevard

Albert Street is 24m wide road reserve with a central 3m median dividing four lanes of traffic. This central median limits access in the east/west direction across Albert Street for pedestrians as well as constraining turning movements from the Residential Neighbourhood Precinct.

The only opportunity for right turn movements from the east of Albert Street is at the four signalised intersections and McComas Street, which is used by the local bus route. This generates additional internal vehicle movements and causes traffic to queue at east/west intersections.

To keep the flow of traffic moving, on-street parking is discouraged. It naturally places a role for pedestrian access due to the regularly intersection residential side streets. However the street does not provide an ideal walking or cycling environment at present due to a lack of shade trees and the adjacent form of development has limited interaction with the public realm.



Albert Street - primary arterial boulevard

The median provides an informal pedestrian refuge for crossing the street. There are some sections of the boulevard with established small-medium trees which can be improved upon. It has potential to further develop and offer a high quality of urban amenity.

High Amenity Creek Environs

The high level of amenity that the Darebin Creek offers will be a key driver for built form change. This raises a number of issues, especially relating to the relationship of development to the creek area. Properties in close proximity can be affected by a range of planning controls that demand sensitive responses to the conditions. These overlays include Environmental Significance Overlay (Schedule 2), Land Subject to Inundation and Special Building Overlay.

At the moment properties back onto the creek, which creates a poor safety and amenity outcome, given the limited surveillance of the creek area. Such an arrangement is typical in areas where creeks were polluted and unattractive, however significant improvements have been made along Darebin Creek to address these issues.

It is becoming increasingly common to improve creek interfaces through the separation of property frontages from the creek, usually by a road reserve. This enables housing to directly front the public open space and take advantage of the landscaped outlook, which provides greater accessibility and improved passive surveillance. This approach should be investigated for both the creek interface and around the C.H Sullivan Memorial Park northern and western edges.

Reconfiguring the relationship between the public and private realm through the provision of a new street and/or requiring redevelopment of existing private land to orient towards the creek may help to reduce the incidents of crime, graffiti and anti-social behaviour commonly associated with areas lacking passive surveillance.

Such an approach can also offer new development opportunities that may yield returns to improve the facilities at the park.

3.2 Issues

The urban structure of the place is critical to the enjoyment and experience of a place. The degree of mobility is influenced by a well defined and connected street grid.

There are a series of structural issues to be addressed by the plan:

- Poor connections, both internal to key destinations and external to the surrounding area;
- Minimal defining features, limited way finding to Darebin Creek and Council recreational facilities;
- Low car ownership means that there is a greater reliance on walking for access, reinforcing the need for quality footpaths and safe crossings;
- Poor interface conditions between different land uses;
- Inadequate existing public transport service and infrastructure to match growth projections;

- Inadequate direct and convenient linkages to nearby employment such as La Trobe University; and
- Parks and public spaces are scattered and disconnected.

3.3 Opportunities

The Northland Residential Neighbourhood is supported by a reasonably well connected movement network that supports a range of public transport, vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians as shown in Figure 4.

There are opportunities to improve the connectivity to provide greater walkability and more cycling connections. Figure 4 details a range of new connections that link to Darebin Creek Corridor, break up long stretches of private land to improve links into adjoining residential development and introduce through connections between cul-de-sacs.

Other opportunities should be investigated in the redevelopment of large parcels of land to provide additional pocket parks and landscaped linkages which will increase the mix of hard and soft landscaped areas which are conveniently accessed within the neighbourhood.

Further opportunities for improvement to the standard of public transport service to the area which should be investigated. Introduction of a higher order buses service to Albert Street as a strategic corridor as well as enhancing the local routes. Given the redevelopment potential there is likely to be a significant increase in patronage to support such changes.



Figure 4: Northland Residential Neighbourhood Movement Network Analysis

4. Precinct Structure Plan

4.1 Strategic Response

The Precinct Structure Plan (the Plan) at Figure 5 provides a growth management strategy to 2034 reflecting the principles of Plan Melbourne and the State Planning Policy Framework. It supports **housing redevelopment** opportunities over time along strategic corridors and bus routes, and around key destinations such as the shopping centre and parkland.

The Plan provides for greater potential patronage of **public transport** service levels resulting from increased housing. This will further support the need for efficient well connected public transport within the La Trobe Employment Cluster and beyond within the region serving a diverse population and needs. The growth within the Northland Residential Neighbourhood further contributes to the business case for the long term plan to extend the existing tram network through the NURP area to provide greater access between residential and employment areas. Advocacy will be required to ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with change.

The Precinct Structure Plan encourages **urban renewal** in this area with an incremental transformation to take place over 10 – 15 years. The transition will see ageing housing stock regenerate with diverse housing to support shifting demographics and an ageing community alongside infrastructure and public realm upgrades.

To manage the risk of unplanned or more ad hoc development and manage the transition to a greater degree of apartment style built form, the Plan includes building typologies which will consider overall precinct outcomes. The Plan takes advantage of the established subdivision pattern, particularly where there are less instances of small lot development.

Through **lot consolidation** multi-storey development of Garden and Urban Apartment building typologies will be encouraged with heights of at least three and four storeys. Consolidated lot development will lessen the risks of underdevelopment and provides the best conditions to achieve the preferred built form outcomes. Strategic sites will act as catalysts for change, setting a high quality benchmark for future development. These and strategic corridors such as Albert Street will be prioritised to strengthen the housing diversity and provision of new linkages.

The Plan aspires to retain a level of **social housing** while facilitating redevelopment to gain improvements to the public realm in the form of highly accessible neighbourhood parks and green open spaces. The inclusion of the residential land north of Tyler Street recognises the opportunities offered by clusters of land in common ownership including tracts of land managed by the Department of Human Services which are likely to require renewal over time. The plan seeks to build on the redevelopment program undertaken some years ago. The Plan provides for a more strategic intensification program that provides a net community benefit with additional connections and public open spaces as well as more efficient redevelopment parcels.

The Plan **builds on the strategic policy directions** and consultation undertaken in the preparation of NURP Structure Plan and Darebin Housing Strategy, which support more housing close to Northland Shopping Centre and other locations of employment and services.

The Plan is supported by an **implementation program** including rezoning and design controls to specifically accommodate more diverse housing. A range of non-

statutory actions will also be pursued including capital works and advocacy to achieve the optimal outcomes for the neighbourhood in support of NURP La Trobe Employment Cluster are enhanced.



The Plan prioritises the following urban restructuring outcomes:

- Strategic corridors, strategic sites, consolidated lots and in particular consolidated corner allotments are developed to support an increase in diverse private and social housing via more efficient redevelopment parcels and apartment style built form;
- A more compact built urban form;
- Better public/private interfaces contributing to quality streetscapes and a higher level of public realm amenity;
- Enhanced pedestrian safety;
- Greater use of active travel modes (walking and cycling) and public transport through higher densities in proximity to routes and tram stops and the development of safe travel paths;
- Strengthened links along the east/west streets to Darebin Creek corridor;
- Re-orienting buildings to overlook public open spaces and investigation of new development approaches adjacent to and overlooking the Creek parklands;
- A high yield on Strategic Sites through the use of Garden Apartment and Urban Apartment typologies; and
- Improved and strengthened central north/south spine providing a link from Northland Shopping Mall to the Summerhill Village Shopping Centre.

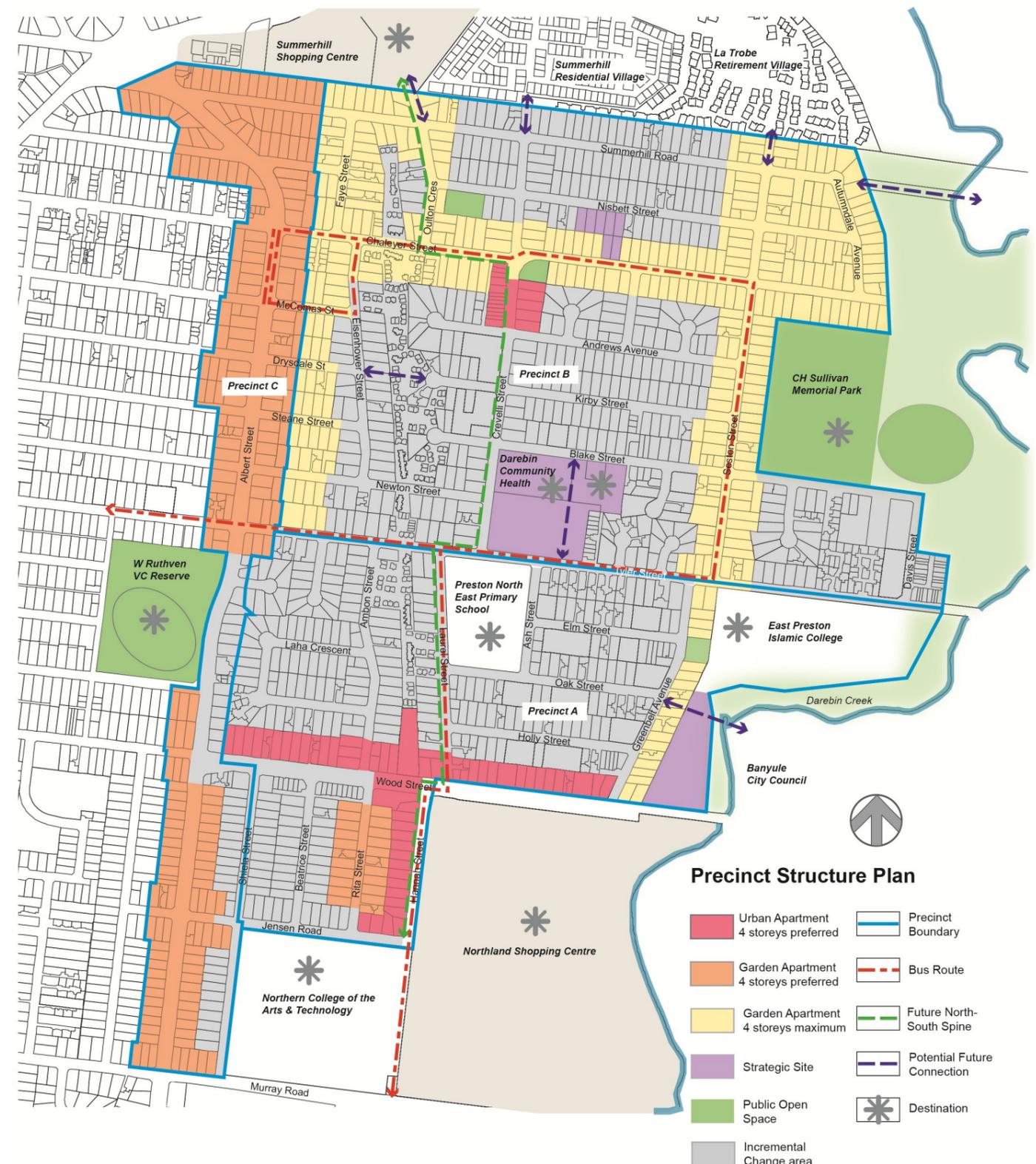


Figure 5: Northland Residential Neighbourhood Precinct Structure Plan

4. Precinct Structure Plan

4.2 Precinct Objectives

1. To transform the area from a disjointed sub-urban precinct to a highly connected walkable urban precinct.
2. Encourage residential areas which foster social interaction and walkable neighbourhoods that create a 'sense of place' and local identity
3. To encourage a greater diversity of high quality housing throughout the precinct
4. Increase residential density to facilitate a greater proportion of the work force living near employment hubs
5. Encourage a diversity of housing types in the form of multi-storey buildings throughout the precinct
6. To encourage strategic redevelopment of Department of Human Services to increase the diversity of house types available in the precinct
7. To improve access to and along the Darebin Creek Corridor
8. Encourage walking and cycling as active modes of transport
9. Encourage a greater level of sustainability through building layout, design, use of materials and in creating spaces adaptable for a range of different uses
10. Create and enhance streetscapes and a public realm that is safe, vibrant and sustainable

11. To make better pedestrian connections to the northern edge of the Northland Shopping Centre
12. To create new local connections to improve walkability around and to schools
13. Create opportunities for non-residential uses in locations where these do not compromise the residential amenity to foster local employment
14. To provide for the efficient use and improved accessibility to local community infrastructure and facilities
15. Create laneways through consolidation of lots and to increase the separation between taller built forms.
16. To support and increase the walkable catchment existing public transport services and advocate for improvements as patronage increases.



4.3 Preferred Built Form Outcomes

The preferred built form outcome for each precinct has been established through analysis of existing conditions and the broader strategic context.

The preferred built form outcome for each precinct incorporates new building typologies, specifically the Garden and Urban Apartments. These typologies have been developed to address poor streetscape and interface outcomes common in higher density development, and are further articulated in the *Darebin Residential Built Form Guidelines*.

The Garden Apartment typology has the following characteristics:

- The mass of the building is directed toward the street frontage and away from sensitive rear boundaries.
- Front and rear setbacks that allow for landscaping and a garden setting.
- A preferred or mandatory height of four storeys.

The Urban Apartment typology is similar to the Garden Apartment, but has varied ground floor conditions to respond to reduced streetscape amenity or maximise opportunities for non-residential mix of uses. Reduced front setbacks, and commercial floor to ceiling heights are encouraged to allow for commercial and/or community uses and active frontages. The Urban Apartment typology has a preferred height of four storeys.

This section provides an overview of each precinct's preferred built form outcome. It should be read in conjunction with Figure 5 - Precinct Structure Plan, and the Residential Built Form Guidelines.

Northland Residential Precinct A—South Area

As illustrated in Figure 5, the preferred built form outcome for this precinct incorporates Urban and Garden Apartment typologies, and incremental change areas. A summary of the built form outcome proposed is as follows.

- Urban Apartments with a preferred height of four storeys along the north side of Wood Street and the west side of Hannah Street.
- Garden Apartments with a preferred height of four storeys along Rita Street.
- Garden Apartments with a mandatory height of four storeys along the east side of Greenbelt Avenue.
- Strategic sites such as 55 Tyler Street will be developed according to its specific context and opportunities.
- Incremental development of three storey apartment buildings along Laurel Street with a focus on improving casual surveillance over the primary north-south precinct link and increasing modest housing densities along the bus route.
- The remainder of the precinct is incremental change. A variety of built form outcomes will occur in these areas, including townhouses, detached dwellings and low-rise apartment buildings. In these areas, higher built form will be supported only where lot consolidation (resulting in lots greater than 1000sqm) occurs.

A number of unique interface conditions occur within Precinct A, including with Darebin Creek, around Preston North East Primary School, Northland College of Art and Technology and Northland Shopping Centre.

These interface conditions require a built form response in accordance with the following:

- Built form should engage with the Darebin Creek and surrounding environmental area;
- A more active shopping centre interface along Wood Street, which will be edged by mixed use development. This will take advantage of the passing vehicle, pedestrian and cycling traffic which is achieved by development of the Urban Apartment built form typology;
- Ultimate removal of the high fence and 'back of house' presentation to Hannah St with the residential development evolving into a greater mix of uses that celebrate the relationship with the shopping centre; and
- Along these edges where a greater emphasis is being placed on the quality of the public realm a generally reduced from the existing 6m front setback should be considered to foster increased casual surveillance of the street and interaction with the public realm. High front fences would be discouraged in these circumstances.

Strategic sites such as 55 Tyler Street will be developed to be sensitive to the creek environs, adjacent residential sites fronting Greenbelt Avenue and respond to the Shopping Centre interface to achieve the following:

- East/west pedestrian/street connections through the site from the end of Oak Street and Wood Street to provide access to the creek corridor;
- Residential development should front and gain access to the Darebin Creek for casual surveillance;
- A transition from taller built form down to two storeys at the Creek interface
- Delineation between public and private spaces without the use of high front fences;
- Public access along the Darebin Creek escarpment or 22 metres from the Creek bank (whichever is greater) without overt intrusion into private open spaces;
- No development within the tree protection areas of the Creek corridor;
- Appropriate landscaping that complements the Creek corridor; and



4. Precinct Structure Plan

Northland Residential Precinct B—North Area

The Preferred Built Form Outcome in Precinct B (refer Figure 5) incorporates the Urban and Garden Apartment typologies and incremental change. A summary of the built form outcome proposed is as follows:

- Urban Apartments with a preferred height of four storeys along the east and west side of Crevelli Street between Andrews Avenue and Clingin Street surrounding the Crevelli Street shops.
- Garden Apartments with a preferred height of four storeys along Seston Street, Autumnedale Avenue, Clingin Street, Faye and parts of Nisbett Street, Summerhill Road, Oulton Crescent, and between properties on the Albert Street corridor and Eisenhower Street,
- Strategic sites such as 80 Tyler Street and Nisbett be developed according to their specific context and opportunities.
- Incremental development of three storey apartment buildings along the north side of Summerhill Road in response to the Summerhill Shopping Centre and residential developments of Summerhill Village and La Trobe Retirement Village
- The remainder of the precinct is incremental change. A variety of built form outcomes will occur in these areas, including townhouses, detached dwelling and low-rise apartment buildings. In these areas, higher built form will be supported only where lot consolidation (resulting in lots greater than 1,000sqm) occur.

The Plan encourages renewal of the Crevelli Street shops to create a community focal point. This will be assisted by provision of a more active street edge condition along Crevelli Street between Clingin Street and Andrews Avenue. The redevelopment of the cluster of shops with shop top housing and a range of non-residential uses will support a reinvigorated local community focal point. The redevelopment should also incorporate public realm improvements that support its designation on the main north-south spine.

The properties along the north side of Summerhill Road should be redeveloped with apartment buildings to take advantage of views gained from the elevated position of these properties. The rear interfaces with the Summerhill Shopping Centre should be designed with setbacks providing for good northerly aspect and to protect development amenity in response to the taller built form anticipated on the activity centre land.

Precinct B contains the highest concentration of common ownership sites and offers a number of unique opportunities to develop housing diversity and provision of social housing. These landholdings provide properties of 1,000sqm or more. The preferred outcome for these concentrations of ownership is to have a strategic development framework established to take a considered and holistic approach to provide through block linkages, create new streets, open spaces and laneways in addition to those identified in the Plan.

Redevelopment adjacent to pocket parks or where the development site is large enough should provide for expansion of the public open space network via the thoughtful placement of buildings which allow the spaces to be provided as well as interfaced with high quality design and casual surveillance opportunities.

Development will be required to transition to their rear interfaces through greater setbacks than ResCode given the interface with the General Residential Zoned area. The overall form should be sensitive to the potential for overshadowing given the configuration of east-west streets.

It will be important to manage the visual massing where interfacing sites contain detached dwellings with large open spaces. It is likely that a quantum of single storey houses will remain during the transition and further consideration of how the existing amenity of rear gardens can be given a degree of protection is required.

This sub-precinct contains two notable strategic redevelopment opportunities as outlined below.

Strategic Site — 80 Tyler Street

The former school site, of 1.4ha area, should be redeveloped to incorporate the following:

- A mid block pedestrian connect should be provided to improve walkability as at its longest (east/west) dimension the site is over 153m in length.
- Incorporate a north/south connection at the boundary between property at 125 Blake Street (Darebin Health) and 111 Blake Street (East Preston Mosque).
- A high degree of visual interest and variation across the site through built form height, scale, and materials.
- High quality communal spaces that are lined with building fronts and with generous provision for deep root planting of canopy trees.
- Delineation of public and private spaces without the use of high fences.

- A transition in built form and height to the surrounding area, especially along sensitive interfaces, in particular to the east.
- Incorporate mix of uses at ground level in locations where an active frontage condition can be achieved, e.g. along Tyler Street and Crevelli Street.

Strategic development at park edges Public Open Space Edges

To create a better interface between existing development and C.H Sullivan Memorial Park and the Darebin Creek parklands further investigation of new development formats is to be considered.

The area around the existing C.H. Sullivan Memorial Park features properties where the rear boundary of Seston Street and Clingin Street sites adjoin the park, effectively ‘turning their back’ on the landscaped outlook and amenity of the park. Reconfiguration of open space areas could complete the urban block and create a new development frontage overlooking the park areas and providing casual surveillance could overcome the poor sense of safety experienced by both the residents and the park users.

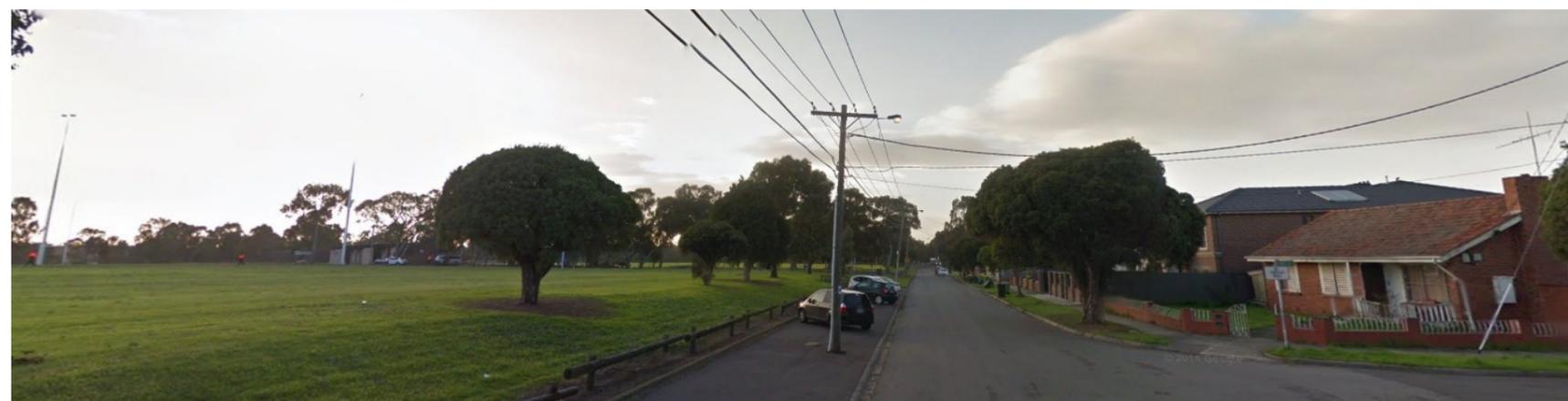
This could be achieved in a similar way that properties fronting Blake Street are separated from the parkland by a new street. Refer Figure 6.

This option would not only significantly increase the number of residents around the park and near a key bus service along Seston Street, but the development would yield sufficient funds to totally refurbish and revitalise the facilities at C.H. Sullivan Memorial Park. Two quality rugby union fields could be developed along with a new change room and clubhouse facility, as well as new facilities adjacent to the existing oval.

Figure 6 shows existing patterns of ownership, and from this it is clear that the Government has a significant role to play in redeveloping this area, improving the housing stock, achieving a better “fit” with housing demand, and improving the area generally.



Figure 6: Strategic redevelopment adjoining parkland: concept plan



Blake Street is lined with houses which overlook C.H Sullivan Memorial Park

4. Precinct Structure Plan

Northland Residential Precinct C—Albert Street Corridor

The Albert Street strategic corridor is identified in the Plan as a primary boulevard which will intensify over time with Garden Apartments and is strongly encouraged for lot consolidation to form large development parcels. Refer Figure 5.

Garden Apartment forms with a preferred height of four storeys will line the corridor ensuring that cumulatively over time development provides a cohesive new cohesive reaches the maximum possible yield within the typology. The corridor takes in some lots which have primary address to the side streets, and these are encouraged to form consolidated lots of over 1,000sqm for re-development.

New development will provide a robust presentation to the corridor with improved casual surveillance opportunities to enhance the interaction between the public and private realm. Front building setbacks of 5m will provide a degree of separation from the front boundary which can provide gardens and low fencing to enhance the relationship along this important north-south pedestrian route. Corner development will be required to prioritise presentation towards the Albert Street corridor.

Where sites are significantly larger and will not impact on adjacent residential properties in terms of overlooking, visual bulk and overshadowing there is potential for heights of 4-6 storeys. Such development will be required to take a tri-partite approach to streetscape presentation with a defined building base, middle and top as outlined in the *Darebin Residential Built Form Guidelines*. The principles of the Garden Apartment typology will be applicable to determining the suitability of any development above four storeys.

Development along the corridor will be required to minimise proliferation of vehicle crossovers to Albert Street and ensure that all vehicles can enter and exit properties in a forwards direction. A range of approaches can be employed to manage the potential impact of new development on the function and safety of Albert Street for all modes of transport.

An area of incremental change on the east side of Albert Street is identified between Wood Street and Tyler Street. These sites are identified for a lesser degree of change in respect of the Howard Park heritage site and the constrained nature of the subdivision pattern which cannot offer consolidation potential and are unlikely to be able to achieve apartment forms above three storeys.

Strategic Opportunity—Vehicle accessways

Consolidation of two or more typical lots will provide more efficient development parcels to accommodate the Garden Apartment typology. Such development should provide for new vehicle accessways along the rear of the corridor as shown in Figure 7.

Through-links for vehicles to create a rear laneway condition that supports the removal of crossovers from Albert Street will be strongly encouraged. Similarly, vehicle access via the side streets is also preferable to improve safety of the corridor. These can be achieved for corner lots by incorporating the first lot facing the side street. Such an approach that offers up the opportunity for adjacent corridor lots to gain access over the through-link can be given dispensation from providing a 3m rear landscaped setback (as per the Garden Apartment guidelines) where the site adjoins a General Residential Zone.

Where access is only available via Albert Street other alternative vehicle access approaches such as shared driveways between developments are also encouraged if access can only be provided from Albert Street.

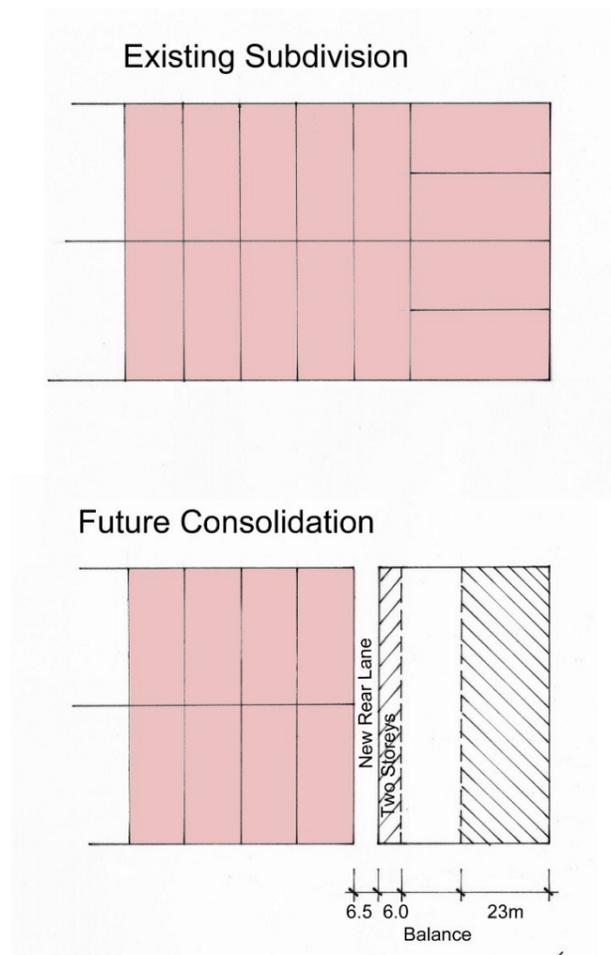


Figure 7: Potential rear laneway / common driveway opportunities

5.1 Statutory Implementation Actions

There are several priority actions to implement this Plan including the following:

1. Setting a clear direction for growth in the Local Planning Policy Framework
2. Rezoning of land within the Northland Residential Neighbourhood as follows:
 - Applying Schedule 2 to the Residential Growth Zone to areas identified as Garden Apartment with a preferred height limit of four storeys.
 - Applying Schedule 3 to the Residential Growth Zone to areas identified as Garden Apartment with a mandatory height limit of four storeys.
 - Applying Schedule 5 to the Residential Growth Zone to areas identified as Urban Apartment with a preferred height limit of four storeys.
 - Applying Schedule 2 to the General Residential Zone to areas identified as incremental change.
 - Applying Schedule **19** to the Design and Development Overlay to areas proposed to be included in the Residential Growth Zone.
3. Introducing guidelines and the Garden and Urban Apartment Typology as per *Darebin Residential Built Form Guidelines* into the Darebin Planning Scheme to guide high quality design and urban outcomes.

5.2 Strategic Precinct Actions

1. Develop a redevelopment strategy and guidelines for all public housing land in partnership with the Department of Human Services.
2. Pursue negotiations with East Preston Islamic College for Council to formally acquire or obtain long term lease over the portion of their land that is in the Public Use Zone, adjacent to the Darebin Creek. This will enable Council management of creekside land and provision for a cycling and pedestrian pathway along the west side of Darebin Creek between Tyler Street and Wood Street.
3. Work in partnership with the East Preston Islamic College and Melbourne Water to investigate options for a WSUD facility on school land adjacent to the Steane Street drain outlet (see precinct map) which will reduce direct flows into the Darebin Creek and provide stormwater harvesting for use on parkland and sports grounds in the local area.
4. Investigate the Darebin Parklands and C.H. Sullivan Memorial Park interface potential for new development which creates a new urban edge overlooking the park.



6. Glossary

20 minute neighbourhood: A concept used in *Plan Melbourne* where homes, jobs, shops, schools, parks and community facilities are conveniently located within a 20 minute distance of each other.

Active frontage: Refers to street frontages where there is an active visual engagement between those on the ground floors of buildings. Ground floor uses which accommodate activities and provide a level of interaction between pedestrians and the building uses including cafes/restaurants, shops, library etc. Active frontages/edges increase casual surveillance and improve the vitality and safety of an area

Alternative development forms: Development forms, other than Garden or Urban Apartments, on single lots, which may include modest apartment buildings, or townhouse development

Amenity: The overall quality of the built form impacts on the level of human enjoyment including on-site and off-site and public and private spaces. Other elements of amenity include landscape amenity, noise levels, air quality and sunlight

Basement: A storey below ground level, or that projects no more than 1.2m above ground level

Battle-axe layout: Rooms with reduced access to daylight and ventilation due to the length of their external wall being less than that of the facing internal facing wall

Borrowed light: A room whose only source of light is borrowed from another room

Brownfield: Areas that were formerly used for industrial purposes and are experiencing renewal.

Building envelope: The exterior skin of the building, formed by the roof and exterior walls

Building footprint: The area of the building which meets the ground, defined by its perimeter walls

Building height: The vertical difference from natural ground level to the roof or parapet at any point

Building separation: The minimum distance between buildings measured from the external wall, window or the edge of a balcony. Screens, planter boxes and architectural façade elements may be located within the building separation

Built form: Building design, including height, roof form, distance from property boundaries, and setbacks of upper levels

Clear to the sky: An unroofed area, or area roofed with material that transmits 90 per cent of light

Cluster housing: groups of three or more dwellings configured in an open space setting.

Consolidated site: Consolidating two or more parcels of land into one new, larger parcel of land

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

(CPTED): All elements of design, including buildings and landscaping, at the street level maximise safety for pedestrians and cyclists by ensuring people can see and be seen. This can be achieved through foot-path dining, community events, balconies and avoiding hidden places

Development potential: The configuration of future development on a site, in terms of the number of dwellings accommodated, the form of the building, its positioning and arrangement

Development yield: The number of dwellings that can be accommodated on a lot, may also include commercial units for mixed-use development

Dual aspect apartment: Apartments which have at least two major external walls facing in different directions, including corner, cross over and cross through apartments

Existing multi-unit development: Lots that have been redeveloped to accommodate more than one dwelling. These may take the form of dual occupancy development, villa units, townhouses or apartment buildings

Floor to ceiling height: The height dimension measured from finished floor level to finished ceiling level

Frontage: The street alignment at the front of the lot. If a lot abuts two or more streets, the one to which the building, or proposed building, faces

Frontage width: The width of the lot frontage, at the street edge. Influences the arrangement of vehicle and pedestrian entrances, and the amount of street facing dwellings that can be provided

Garden Apartment: Apartment buildings which locate the mass of the building envelope towards the street frontage, and away from rear boundaries. Dwelling outlooks are primarily orientated towards the front or rear of the lot. Spaces are provided around the building footprint to allow for landscaping and a garden setting

Ground level: The natural level of a site at any point

Habitable rooms: Any room of a dwelling or residential building other than a bathroom, laundry, toilet, pantry, walk-in wardrobe, corridor, stair, lobby, photographic darkroom, clothes drying room and other space of a specialised nature occupied neither frequently nor for extended periods

Human scale development: Buildings that provide an appropriate scale and level of detailing that relates to human physical attributes, and the pedestrian environment

Internal amenity: The internal quality of a dwelling, assessed in terms of outlook, solar access, ventilation, space, noise levels etc

Light well: Unroofed external space, provided within the volume of a building, to allow light and air to the windows that open on to it

Lot: A part (consisting of one or more pieces) of any land (except a road, a reserve, or common property) shown on a plan, which can be disposed of separately and includes a unit or accessory unit on a registered plan of strata subdivision and a lot or accessory lot on a registered cluster plan

Mixed use: A development which has a range of uses accommodated within the same building or site. As an example, mixed use development can have shops on the ground floor with residential apartments above (vertical mix) or an office next to a residential apartment building within the same development (horizontal mix)

Parapet: A horizontal low wall or barrier at the edge of a balcony or roof

Primary outlook: The view from main living areas of apartments

Propensity for redevelopment: The likelihood of redevelopment on a particular site, which relates to the relative ease and appeal of undertaking development. This is influenced by site factors such as the presence of existing multi-unit development

Public realm: Any publicly owned street, path, right of way, or park

Private open space: That part of private open space primarily intended for outdoor living activities which enjoys a reasonable amount of privacy

Secondary outlook: The view from bedrooms and studies of apartments, and the view from commercial occupancies

Sensitive rear interface: Rear lot boundary that adjoins a residential site with an area of private open space, creating greater potential for the adverse impact of visual bulk

Setback: The minimum distance from any lot boundary to a building

Side-facing dwelling: Dwellings with primary outlooks orientated towards side lot boundaries

Solar access: The ability of a dwelling to receive sunlight without obstruction from buildings, foliage or other impediments

Undercroft parking: A ground level car parking area that occupies most of the footprint of the building, with dwellings positioned above

Urban Apartment: A sub-set of the Garden Apartment, which responds to a more urban road character with a slightly amended frontage condition. A shallower front setback, lower fence height, and taller ground floor ceiling height provides for potential commercial uses along the street interface