

Melbourne Amendment C407 (Draft) Arden Structure Plan

David Barnes – Planning Evidence

Hansen Partnership
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Hansen Partnership

Level 4 136 Exhibition St

Melbourne VIC 3000

T 03 9654 8844

E info@hansenpartnership.com.au

W hansenpartnership.com.au

ABN 20 079 864 716

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Attachments

Attachment 1 Curriculum Vitae

1. Introduction

1. My name is David Barnes. I am a town planner and the Managing Director of Hansen Partnership Pty Ltd, Urban Planning, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture, located at Level 4, 136 Exhibition Street, Melbourne.
2. I hold the following qualifications:
 - Bachelor of Town and Regional Planning (Hons), University of Melbourne, 1980.
 - Master of Business Administration, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 1993.
3. I have practiced as a town planner for over 40 years, working in the public and private sectors. I have also worked overseas in Vietnam on a variety of statutory planning, strategic planning, institutional strengthening and tourism planning projects.
4. I am both a statutory and strategic planner. My planning experience covers many aspects of the planning process on a range of projects, including residential, tourism, commercial, industrial, retail, mixed use, hospitality and rural developments.
5. I have been engaged by Maddocks Lawyers on behalf of the Melbourne City Council to prepare an expert witness statement. I have been specifically instructed to address the matters raised in the Melbourne City Council in its submission to Draft Amendment C407, that relate to my expertise as a town planner.
6. Documents I have reviewed in preparing my evidence are referenced throughout my statement. Key documents include:
 - Draft Amendment C407 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme and all relevant background documents.
 - The existing Melbourne Planning Scheme.
7. I have been provided with and have prepared my evidence in accordance with Planning Panels Victoria's *Guide to Expert Evidence*.
8. I have made all the enquiries I believe are desirable and appropriate, and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been omitted from my report.
9. A copy of my Curriculum Vitae has been provided in Appendix 1.

2. Summary of opinions

10. My evidence focuses on the matters raised by the Melbourne City Council in its submission to the draft amendment.
11. I agree with Council that Arden represents a unique and significant opportunity to establish a world-leading urban renewal precinct and includes many positive elements. However, some of the elements of the amendment need to be reviewed to recognise the precinct's unique attributes and to implement the vision that has been identified for the precinct.
12. There is a considerable disconnect between the amendment documentation as exhibited and the 2021 Arden Structure Plan and supporting documentations that led to the preparation of that plan. This disconnect has the potential to prejudice the realisation of the ambitious vision for the precinct.
13. The proposed built form of the precinct has largely been derived by a yield analysis, to accommodate around 34,000 jobs and 15,000 residents.
14. Whilst the vision for the area and its employment and population potential have remained relatively consistent overtime, the development densities have increased, without any apparent strategic review or justification.
15. The structure and content of the policies and strategies proposed in the amendment vary from those contained in the Arden Structure Plan 2021, and lack the structure plan's detail. This exacerbates the disconnect between the structure plan and the amendment.
16. A comprehensive urban design or built form strategy has not been prepared that analyses the attributes of the precinct and its surrounds and derives a comprehensive built form response, that is consistent with the vision for the area. Such an approach is required to provide a balance to the development yield approach upon which the 2021 Structure Plan is based.
17. Density and building height will have a direct impact on the character and amenity that will emerge in the precinct, as well as the range of services and facilities that can be provided for the community.
18. I agreed with Council's concern that the density of development in the precinct is too high, lacks strategic justification and has the potential to prejudice the achievement of the vision for the precinct.
19. A noticeable increase in density (floor area ratios) occurred between the draft Structure Plan 2020 and the 2021 Structure Plan upon which the amendment is based. There is no apparent strategic justification for that change.
20. Floor area ratios should be expressed as mandatory controls in all sub-precinct. Building height should remain discretionary, as exhibited in the amendment.
21. Greater emphasis is required throughout the amendment documentation to support the establishment of a retail focal point in the Arden Central Innovation sub-precinct.
22. Greater emphasis is required to clearly identify the vision and intent for each sub-precinct, so that distinctive neighbourhoods can be established throughout the wider urban renewal area.
23. To better reflect the importance given to affordable housing and sustainable development in the Structure Plan, these matters should be included as requirements in Schedule 7 of the Special Use Zone, rather than as policies in Clause 22.28.

24. The Special Use Zone significantly under estimates the employment role of the precinct as identified in the Structure Plan. The provisions of the zone should be modified to provide the requirement for additional employment floorspace within the Arden Central Innovation and Mixed Use sub-precincts, and the Arden North sub-precinct.
25. The exemption from third party rights contained in the exhibited DDOs should be modified, to only apply for developments that meet the requirements of the DDOs. Developments that do not meet the requirements of the DDOs should be subject to third party rights.
26. If Melbourne Amendment C278 / 451 (Solar Access to Parks) is approved by the Minister, it would be appropriate to review the approach to over shadowing in the 2021 Arden Structure Plan and in the AmC407 amendment documentation, to align with the approach adopted in that amendment.

3. Key Plans

3.1. Context plan

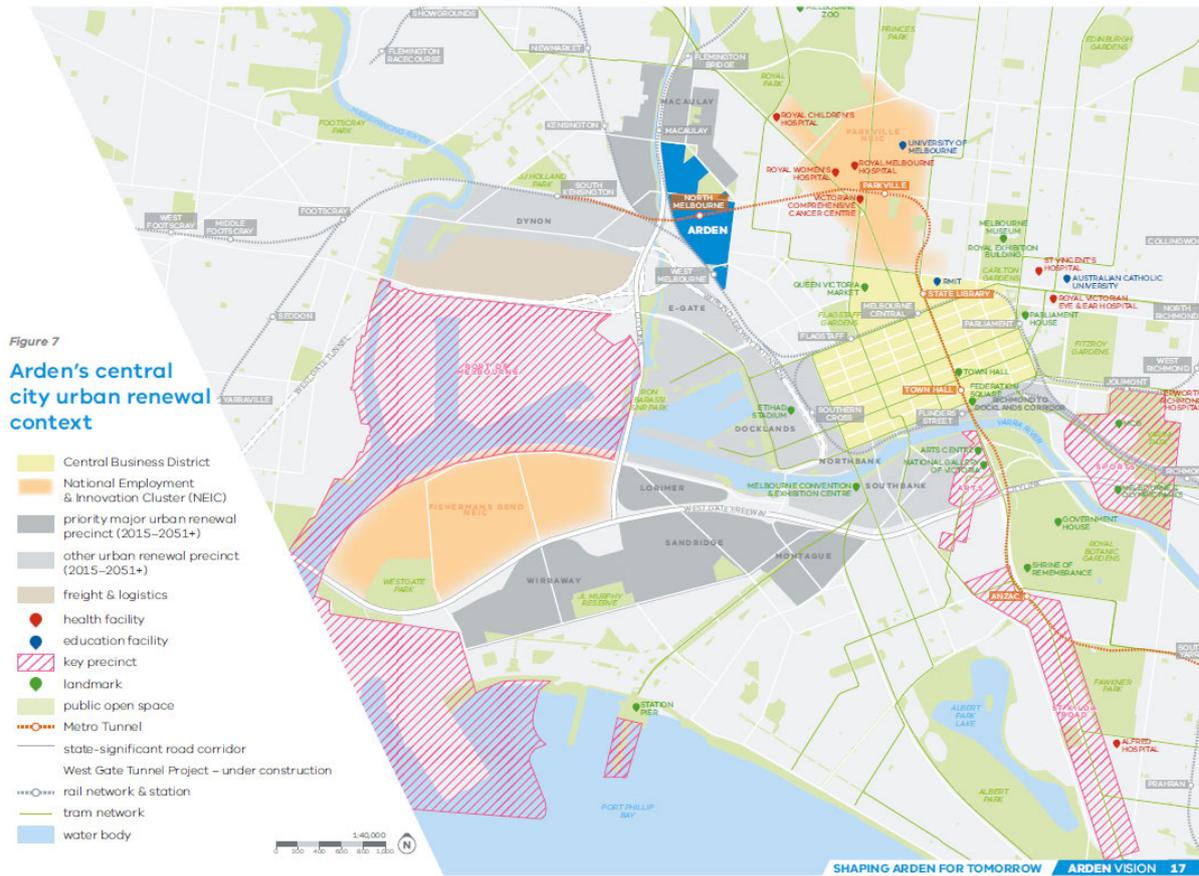


Figure 1 – Arden central city urban renewal context (Source: Arden Vision, page 17)

3.2. Aerial photograph of the study area



Figure 2 - Aerial photograph of Arden

3.3. Existing Zoning

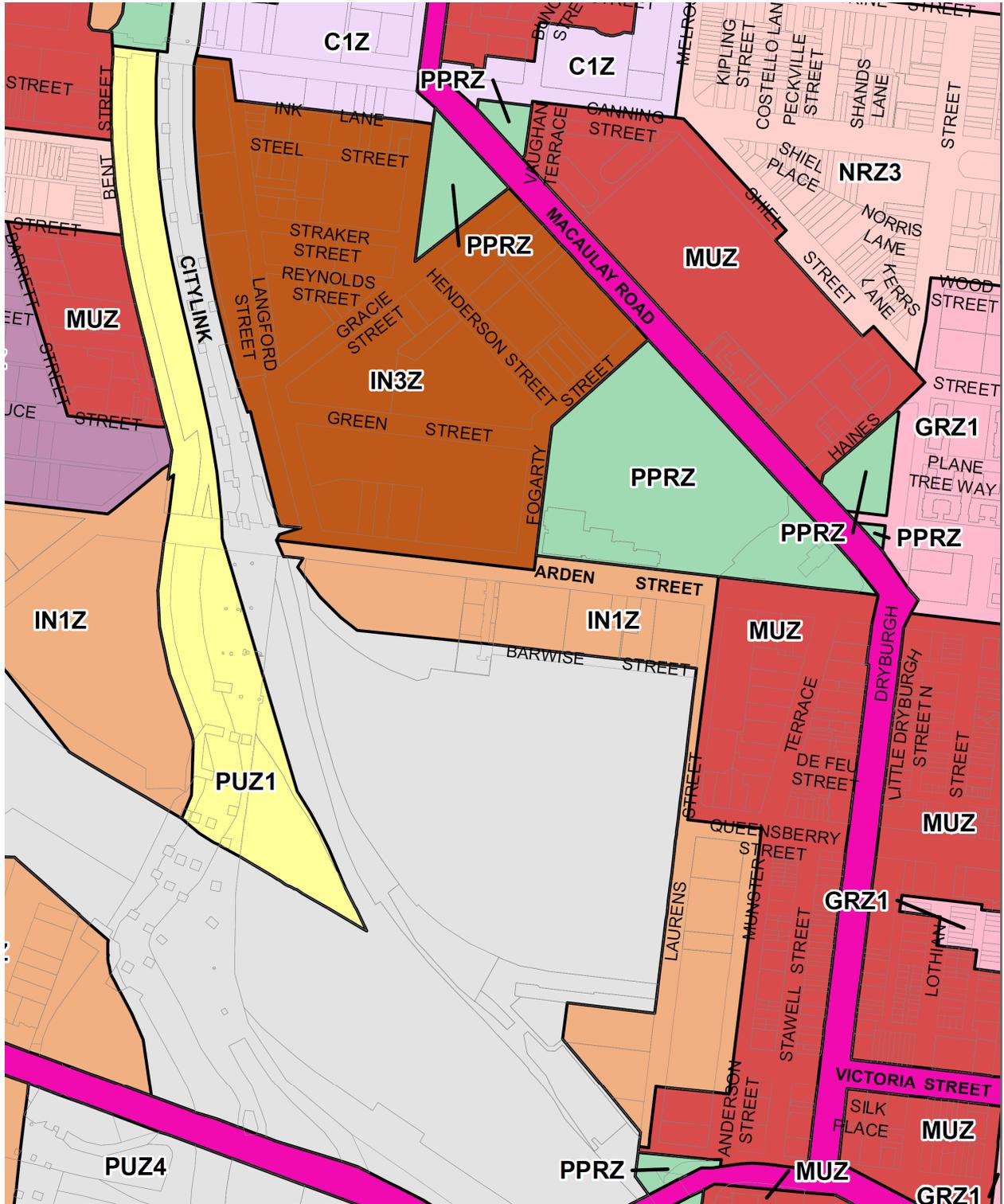


Figure 3 - Existing zoning

3.4. Existing DDOs

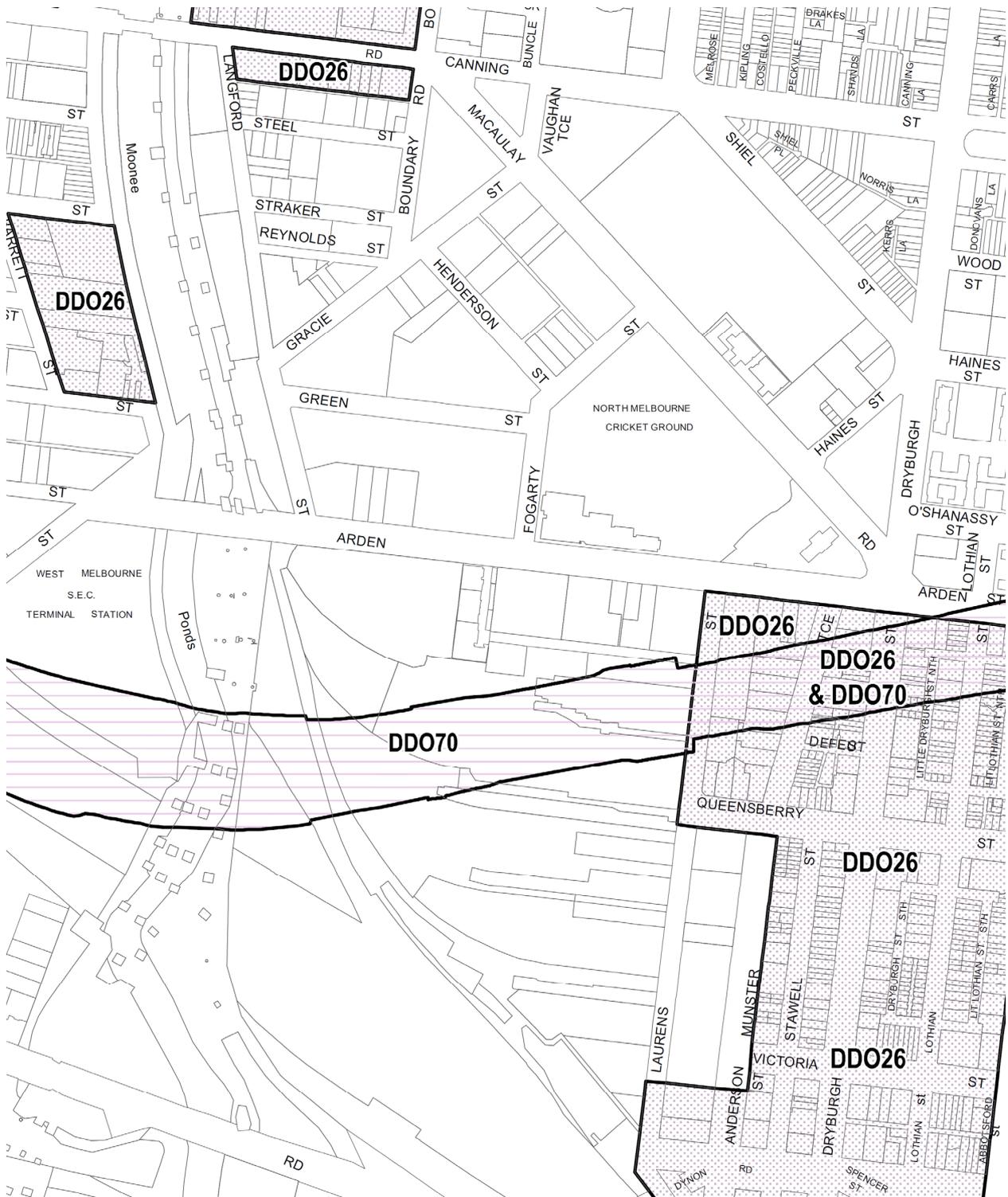


Figure 4 - Existing DDOs (page 1 of 2)

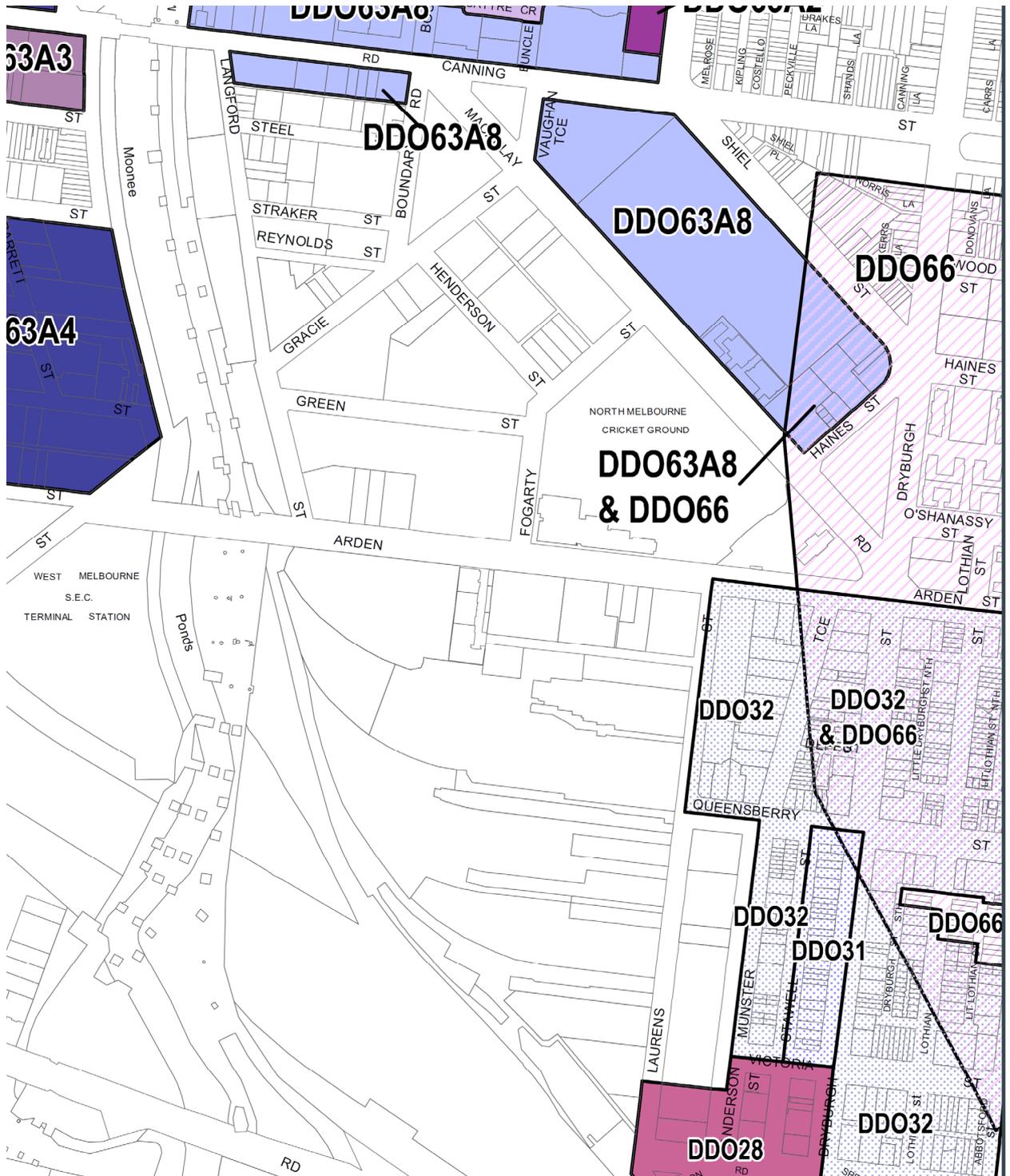


Figure 5 - Existing DDOs (page 2 of 2)

3.5. Existing Heritage Overlays

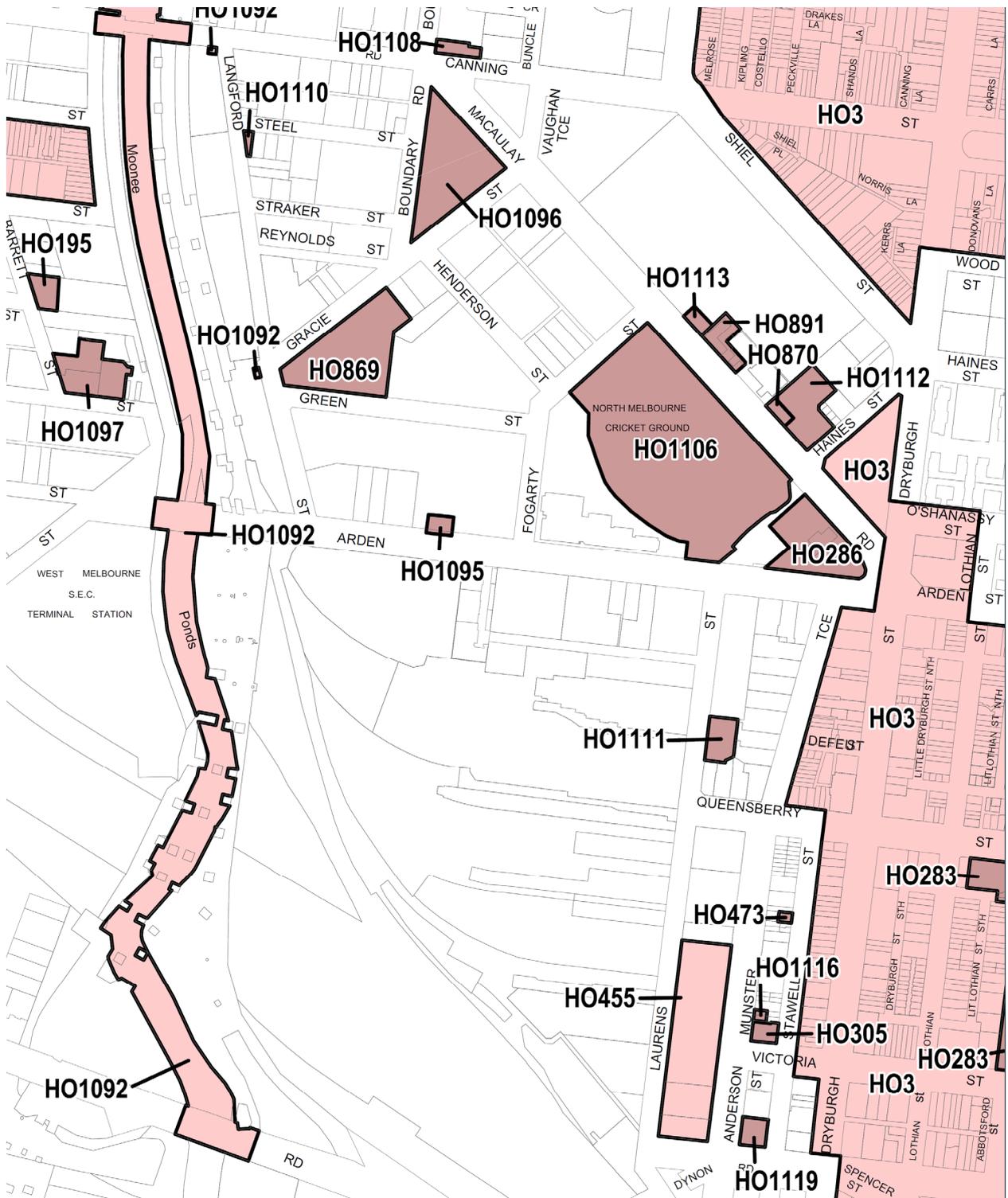


Figure 6 - Existing heritage overlays

3.7. Proposed zoning

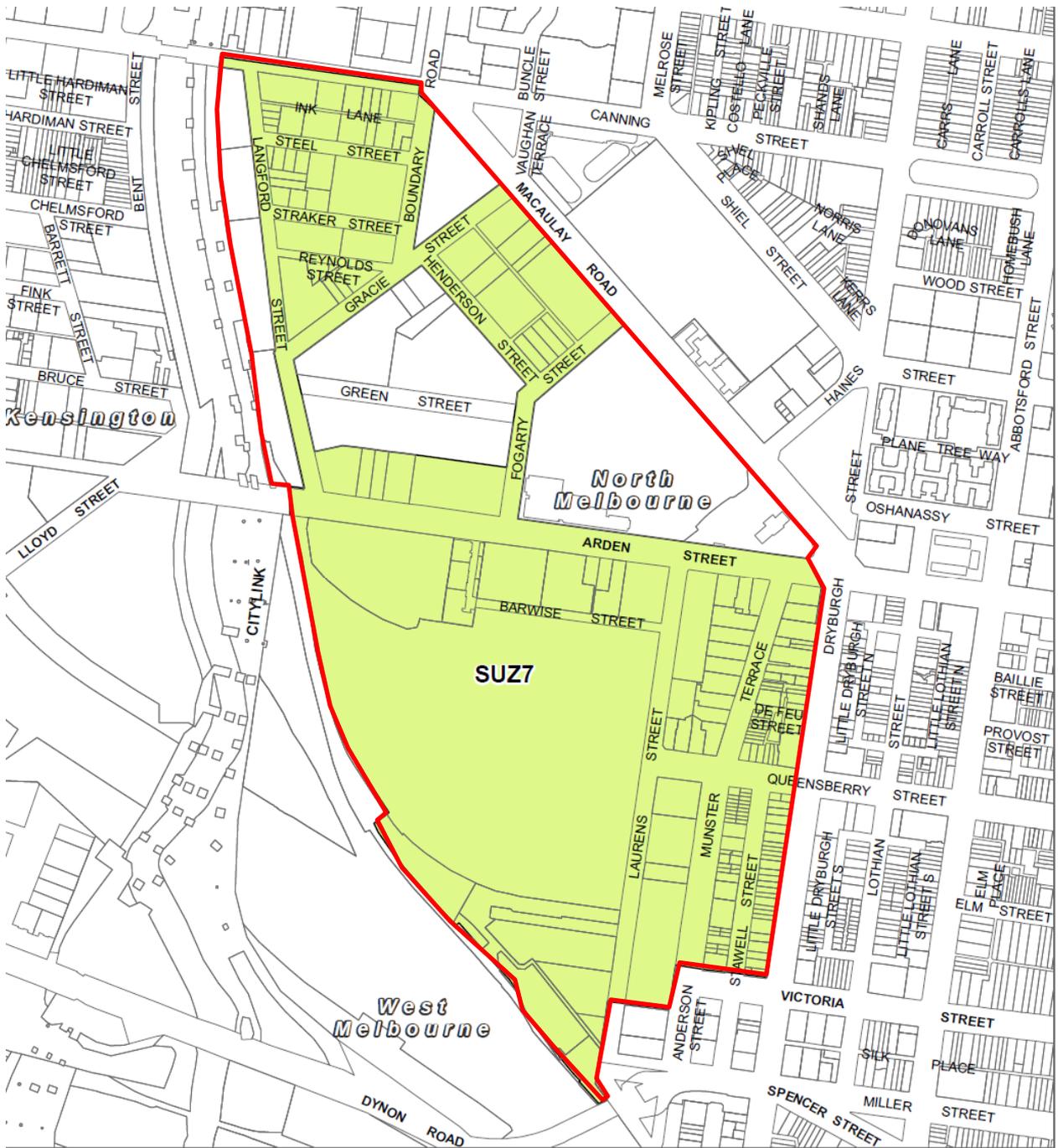


Figure 8 - Proposed Special Use Zone (Schedule 7)

3.9. Proposed Buffer Areas Overlay

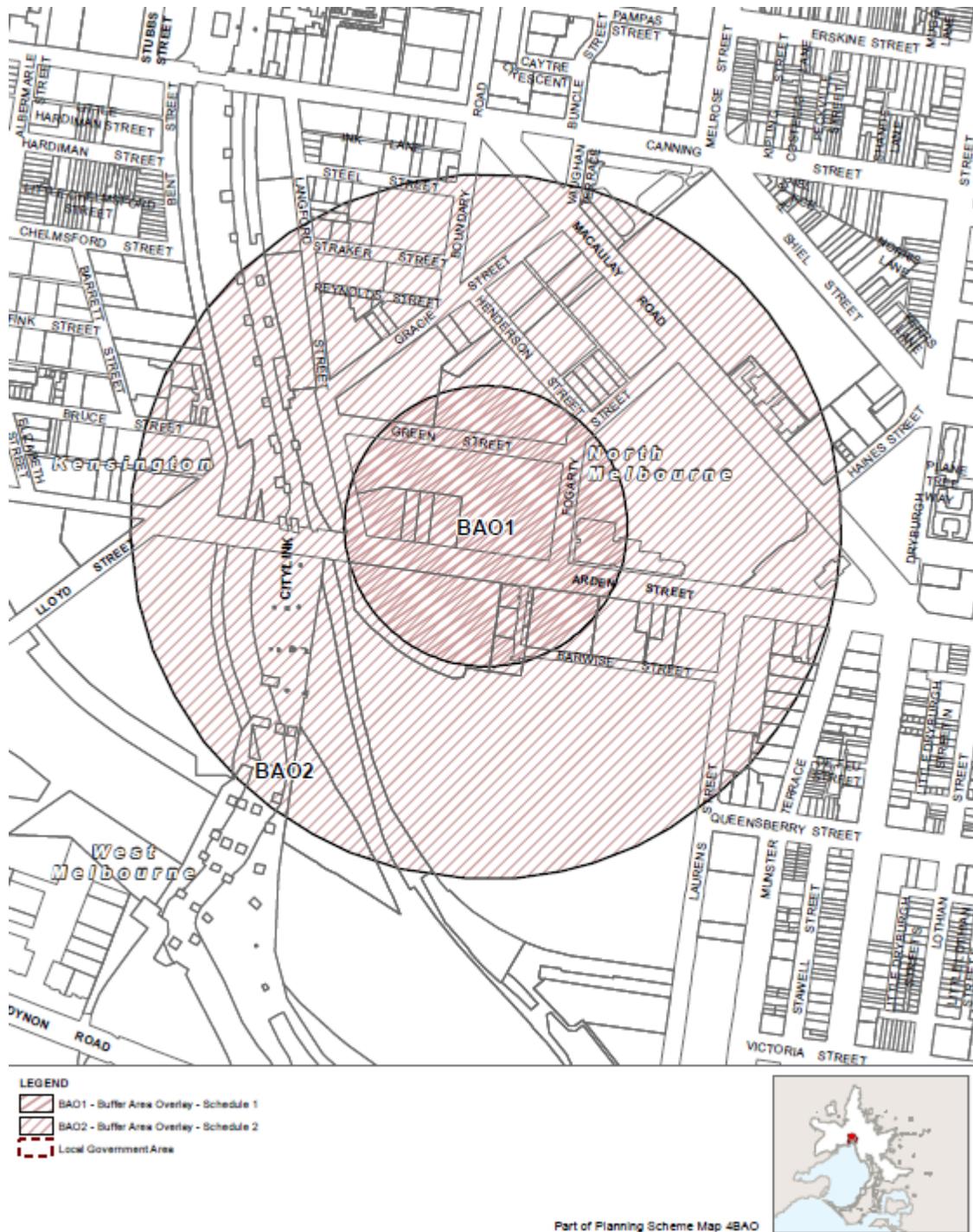


Figure 10 - Proposed Buffer Area Overlay

4. The Draft Amendment

27. As set out in the explanatory statement for the draft amendment:

The Amendment proposes to implement the Arden Structure Plan, August 2021 by introducing new planning controls into the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

28. The amendment proposes the following:

- *Amends the Municipal Strategic Statement at Clause 21.04 (Settlement) to show Arden as an urban renewal area that is separated from Macaulay.*
- *Amends the Municipal Strategic Statement at Clause 21.13 (Urban Renewal Areas) to include policy basis and objectives specific to Arden.*
- *Amends the Municipal Strategic Statement at Clause 21.14 (Proposed Urban Renewal Areas) to update references to Arden.*
- *Introduces a new local planning policy at Clause 22.28 (Arden Urban Renewal Policy) to provide guidance and assist with the exercise of discretion in the assessment of planning permit applications in Arden.*
- *Rezones land in the precinct from part Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z), Industrial 1 Zone (IN1Z), Industrial 3 Zone (I3Z), Mixed Use Zone (MUZ), and Public Use Zone 4 – Transport (PUZ4) to Special Use Zone (SUZ).*
- *Introduces a new Schedule 7 to Clause 37.01 (Special Use Zone) to ensure land use and development outcomes implement the Arden Structure Plan, August 2021.*
- *Deletes Clause 43.02 – Design and Development Overlay, Schedule 26 (DDO26), Schedule 31 (DDO31), Schedule 32 (DDO32) and Schedule 63A8 (DDO63A8) from the precinct.*
- *Introduces a new precinct specific Schedule 80 to Clause 42.03 (Design and Development Overlay) to align built form controls with the preferred character and vision for the Arden Central Innovation sub-precinct.*
- *Introduces a new precinct specific Schedule 81 to Clause 42.03 (Design and Development Overlay) to align built form controls with the preferred character and vision for the Arden Central Mixed-Use sub-precinct.*
- *Introduces a new precinct specific Schedule 82 to Clause 42.03 (Design and Development Overlay) to align built form controls with the preferred character and vision for the Arden North sub-precinct.*
- *Introduces a new precinct specific Schedule 83 to Clause 42.03 (Design and Development Overlay) to align built form controls with the preferred character and vision for the Laurens Street sub-precinct.*
- *Deletes Schedule 12 to Clause 45.09 (Parking Overlay) from the precinct.*
- *Introduces a new Schedule 14 to Clause 45.09 (Parking Overlay) (PO14) to encourage sustainable transport patterns and the provision of alternative forms of parking.*
- *Applies the new Public Acquisition Overlay (PA08) in favour of Department of Transport for the purposes of key road extensions on land at to various properties.*
- *Applies the new Public Acquisition Overlay (PA09) in favour of Department of Transport for the storage of water to mitigate the flooding risk of significant storm events to various properties*
- *Introduces a new Schedule 1 to Clause 44.08 (Buffer Area Overlay) to manage use and development within the moderate risk buffer area of the Citywide Asphalt Plant.*

- *Introduces a new Schedule 2 to Clause 44.08 (Buffer Area Overlay) to manage use and development within the medium risk buffer area of the Citywide Asphalt Plant.*
- *Amends Schedule 3 to Clause 45.06 (Development Contributions Plan Overlay) (DCPO3) to enable implementation of the Arden Development Contributions Plan, August 2021.*
- *Amends the boundary of the DCPO3 to apply the overlay consistent with the precinct boundaries.*
- *Deletes the DCPO3 from allotments south of Victoria Street, which are included in the West Melbourne precinct area.*
- *Applies the Environmental Audit Overlay to land in the precinct shown on Map 1.*
- *Amends the Schedule to Clause 66.04 to require referral of certain permit application to be given to the Environmental Protection Agency, Melbourne City Council and Secretary to the Department of Transport until 31 December 2026, and thereafter VicTrack.*
- *Amends the Schedule to Clause 66.06 to require notice of certain permit applications to be given to the gas pipeline licensee.*
- *Amends the Schedule to Clause 72.03 to reflect the introduction of the Planning Scheme Map4BAO and deletion of Planning Scheme Map 7DCPO.*
- *Amends the Schedule to Clause 72.04 to include a new incorporated document titled Arden Parking Precinct Plan, August 2021, Arden Precinct Cross Sections, August 2021 and Arden Development Contributions Plan, August 2021.*
- *Amends the Schedule to Clause 72.08 to include a new background document titled Arden Structure Plan, August 2021.*

5. Council's submission

29. My evidence focuses on the matters raised by the Melbourne City Council in its submission to the draft amendment, as it relates to my expertise as a planner. Council's submission is contained in Attachment 2 of the Report to the Future Melbourne Committee dated 5th October 2021.
30. As stated in its submission:
- Council is committed to working with the Victorian Government and its agencies to achieve the vision for Arden and to set a new standard for urban renewal.
 - The location of Arden, anchored by the development of the new Arden Station, the planned scale of transformation, the government landholdings and commitment to precinct curation, represent a unique and significant opportunity to establish a world-leading renewal precinct.
 - Whilst many of the elements within the Arden Planning Package seek to achieve this, some elements are not considered to adequately support and recognise the precincts unique attributes and opportunities.
 - There are a number of elements in the revised Structure Plan and draft amendment documentation that are supported by Council. They include:
 - The provision of new open space to support the growing community.
 - Strategies to green the public realm.
 - The proposed transport network which prioritises people walking, riding a bike and using public transport.
 - A target for zero net emissions by 2040.
 - The proposed future health and education uses will help create a thriving \ innovation precinct.
31. The following issues have been raised by Council as requiring further resolution. Those that are highlight in bold are the issues that are relevant to my expertise as a planner:

A disconnect between the Arden Vision, the draft Arden Structure Plan and the Arden Planning Package.

The opportunity to deliver significant affordable housing within the precinct that has not been realised.

The Victorian Government is pursuing a commitment to at least 10% social, affordable and / or key worker housing (refer attachment 3).

The development density is too high. The proposed density identified in the Floor Area Ratios (FARs) across Arden and the application of discretionary FARs lack strategic justification and are not supported.

The built form controls must establish strong criteria to ensure high quality, well designed and sustainable development. The proposed built form controls, including the high FARs, compromise a range of desired outcomes including high amenity and well-designed buildings, retention of precinct character, safeguarding a high quality public realm, protecting open spaces from overshadowing, and attracting innovation industries.

The proposed Special Use Zone Schedule 7 does not include adequate provisions to support the intended delivery of employment floorspace and desired innovation uses, risking excessive and unplanned residential development.

The exclusion of third-party notice and review rights is not supported where inadequate certainty of future land use and development outcomes is provided via the proposed planning controls.

The co-design process and governance agreement(s) for the planning, delivery, management and control of the Integrated Stormwater Management Open Space to ensure year-round community recreation use must be confirmed.

The Development Contributions Plan (DCP) will commit Council to the implementation and delivery of infrastructure well into the future. There is a significant funding gap of approximately \$47 million in the DCP. There is the need for greater clarity of the precinct's governance and implementation plan.

6. Policies for urban renewal areas

32. There is no doubt that Arden is a major inner city urban renewal area that has been earmarked to accommodate significant growth and development.
33. Relevant State, metropolitan or regional policies include the following:

11.01-1R - Settlement - Metropolitan Melbourne

Maintain Melbourne urban growth boundaries and create a more consolidated sustainable city.

Focus investment and growth in places of state significance, including:

- *Major Urban-Renewal Precincts.*

Create mixed-use neighbourhoods at varying densities, including through the development of urban-renewal precincts, that offer more choice in housing, create jobs and opportunities for local businesses and deliver better access to services and facilities.

Clause 16.01-1R

Manage the supply of new housing to meet population growth and create a sustainable city by developing housing and mixed use development opportunities in locations that are:

- *In and around the Central City.*
- *Urban-renewal precincts and sites.*

Clause 16.01-2S Housing affordability

Facilitating a mix of private, affordable and social housing in suburbs, activity centres and urban renewal precincts.

17.01-1R Diversified economy - Metropolitan Melbourne

Support the Central City to become Australia's largest commercial and residential centre by 2050, by planning for office, retail, residential, education, health, entertainment and cultural activity spaces.

Plan for the redevelopment of Major Urban-Renewal Precincts in and around the Central City to deliver high-quality, distinct and diverse neighbourhoods offering a mix of uses.

18.02-1S Walking

Design direct, comfortable and connected walking infrastructure to and between key destinations including activity centres, public transport interchanges, employment areas, urban renewal precincts and major attractions.

34. Local policies reinforce the importance of urban renewal precincts to accommodate future growth within the municipality. Local policies focus on accommodating growth within the central city and urban renewal areas, whilst managing growth in other parts of the municipality to protect established values. The following hierarchy is established in local policy to accommodate growth:
- The original city centre (the Hoddle Grid).
 - Urban renewal areas.
 - Proposed urban renewal areas.
 - Potential urban renewal areas.
 - Stable residential areas.
35. These directions are reinforced in local strategies which focus on going change in the central city and directing new growth to Docklands, Southbank and other urban renewal areas such as Arden

Clause 21.04-2 Growth

Objective 2 To direct growth to identified areas.

Strategy 2.1 Support the ongoing development of the Hoddle Grid.

Strategy 2.2 - Support ongoing urban renewal and Central City expansion in:

- *Southbank*
- *Docklands*
- *Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area*
- *City North Arden-Macaulay*

36. Arden is designated as an urban renewal area. Clause 21.04-1.2 Urban renewal areas, includes specific reference to the Arden and Macaulay areas:

Arden-Macaulay

Arden-Macaulay is an area in transition. Since the 1880's, Arden-Macaulay has been primarily an industrial area supporting the city's economy through manufacturing and production. The profile of business activity in the area has been changing with some degree of land under utilisation given its potential in relation to its proximity to the central City.

The Melbourne Metro station project to be located between Citylink and Laurens Street will lead to major change east of the Moonee Ponds Creek.

The Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan 2012 has been prepared and adopted by the City of Melbourne and will be implemented into the planning scheme via a planning scheme amendment. The directions of this plan for this local area are still to be inserted into the planning scheme.

Planning controls address the interface between on-going industrial and residential areas, and the interface between new development and existing residential areas and large manufacturing industry will be protected from sensitive uses by a land use buffer of non-residential development and/ or non-sensitive land uses (depicted within Figure 11 as "Commercial and Industrial Buffer"). The planning controls are being introduced in two stages (Stage 1 shown as Area 6A and Stage 2 shown as Area 6B on the Growth Framework Plan).

37. Local urban design strategies stress the importance of establishing a high quality built form in urban renewal areas and for them to complement and transition in scale to adjoining low scale areas:

21.06-1 - Urban Design

Objective 4 To ensure that the height and scale of development is appropriate to the identified preferred built form character of the area

Ensure the design, height and bulk of development in the Urban Renewal Areas creates a high quality built form.

Strategy 4.1 - Ensure development in Urban Renewal Areas provides a complementary transitional scale to adjoining low scale buildings in areas where the existing built form character should be maintained.

Strategy 4.2 - In areas where the existing built form is to be retained, ensure development is designed to maintain the generally low scale and character of those areas.

Strategy 4.3 - In the Hoddle Grid and Urban Renewal areas ensure occupancies in new tower buildings are well spaced and offset to provide good access to an outlook, daylight, sunlight and to minimise direct overlooking between habitable rooms.

38. Policies for housing identify urban renewal areas as the focus for most new housing growth within the municipality:

21.07-1 Residential development

To provide for new housing while preserving the valued characteristics of the existing neighbourhoods.

Strategy 1.1 - Encourage the most significant housing and population growth in the Central City and Urban Renewal areas.

39. Local policies emphasise sustainability as a key element of the development of urban renewal areas:

21.10-1 - Renewable energy and efficient water use

To develop integrated precinct utilities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to climate change.

Objective 1 - Encourage precinct wide integrated water management systems including water sourced from tri-generation power systems.

Strategy 1.1 - Encourage precinct wide integrated tri-generation systems to distribute power, heating, cooling and water.

22.19 Energy, Water and Waste Efficiency

The policy provides guidelines to ensure that the design, construction and operation of buildings and urban renewal areas:

- *Minimise the production of greenhouse gas emissions and maximise energy efficiency.*
- *Minimise mains potable water use and encourage the use of alternative water sources.*
- *Minimise waste going to landfill, maximise the reuse and recycling of materials and lead to improved waste collection efficiency.*

Clause 22.19-2 Objectives

To encourage the connection of buildings to available or planned district energy, water and waste systems in urban renewal areas in order to achieve additional energy, water & waste efficiency arising from a precinct-wide approach to infrastructure where appropriate.

22.19-6 Urban Renewal Areas

It is policy that:

In addition to the performance requirements set out at Clause 22.19-5, when developing land within any urban renewal area, the development should be capable of connecting to available and planned alternative district water supply, energy supply, waste collection and treatment systems.

Developers of precincts or large sites are encouraged to install alternative district water supply, energy supply, waste collection and waste treatment systems.

40. The parameters for development in urban renewal areas is to be identified by the preparation of local structure plans for those areas:

Clause 21.04-2 - Strategy 1.3 - Plan identified Urban Renewal Areas, and define their exact extent, through structure planning for the local area.

41. The ambition is that new urban renewal areas are to provide optimal living and work environments with an emphasis on sustainability:

Strategy 1.3 Plan and design Urban Renewal areas to provide optimal living and working environments, to be energy, water and waste efficient and adapted to predicted climate change.

7. Context

42. The policy context requires structure plans to be prepared to guide the future development of urban renewal areas and for those areas to achieve a balance between:
 - Accommodating significant growth.
 - Responding to respond their surrounds and inner urban context.
 - High quality built from and design outcomes.
43. Key considerations in relation to the location context of Arden include the following:
 - Is largely a former industrial area with an strong establish street pattern in the north, and a more informal development area in the south, which is the location of Arden Station which is presently under construction.
 - Contains significant areas of publicly owned land.
 - Is largely fully developed with industrial and commercial uses.
 - Abuts the Macaulay urban renewal area to the north and west.
 - Abuts West Melbourne to the south – For which a new planning scheme amendment has been prepared that identifies the potential for considerable infill redevelopment, at a scale that responds to the existing lower scale mixed residential, industrial / commercial land use pattern of the area, and provides a clear distinction to higher density CDB scale development to the south of Lonsdale Street.
 - Abuts North Melbourne to the east - Which is largely a low rise heritage residential / mixed use area identified for modest, incremental change.
 - Major existing transport infrastructure along the west side of the precinct, including the elevated City Link Tollway and an at grade railway line that serves the north suburbs of Melbourne.
 - The Moonee Ponds Creek to the west – Which provides a significant open space environmental amenity opportunity for Arden, but is somewhat disconnected from the precinct due to the intervening tollway and railway lines.
 - Various heritage buildings and existing parkland and community facilities.
44. The zoning of the Arden Precinct and surrounds in show in Figure 3.
45. The Urban Design and Built Form Analysis report prepared by the VPA, contains a map that shows existing DDOs and building height controls in and around the Arden Precinct (see Figure 11). I note that DDOs in West Melbourne are proposed to be changed upon approval of Amendment C309. That amendment will moderately increase the heights in DDOs 28 and 29, which exist to the south of Arden:
 - DDO33 – Flagstaff Precinct:
 - Floor area ratio 6:1
 - Preferred Maximum height 16 storeys
 - DDO28 – Station Precinct:
 - Floor area ratio of 5:1
 - Preferred maximum height 8 storeys
 - DDO29 – Adderley Precinct:
 - Floor area ratio of 3:1
 - Preferred maximum building height 4 to 6 storeys

- DDO72 Spencer Precinct:
 - Floor area ratio of 4:1 generally, and 5:1 if fronting Spencer Street
 - 7 to 8 storeys

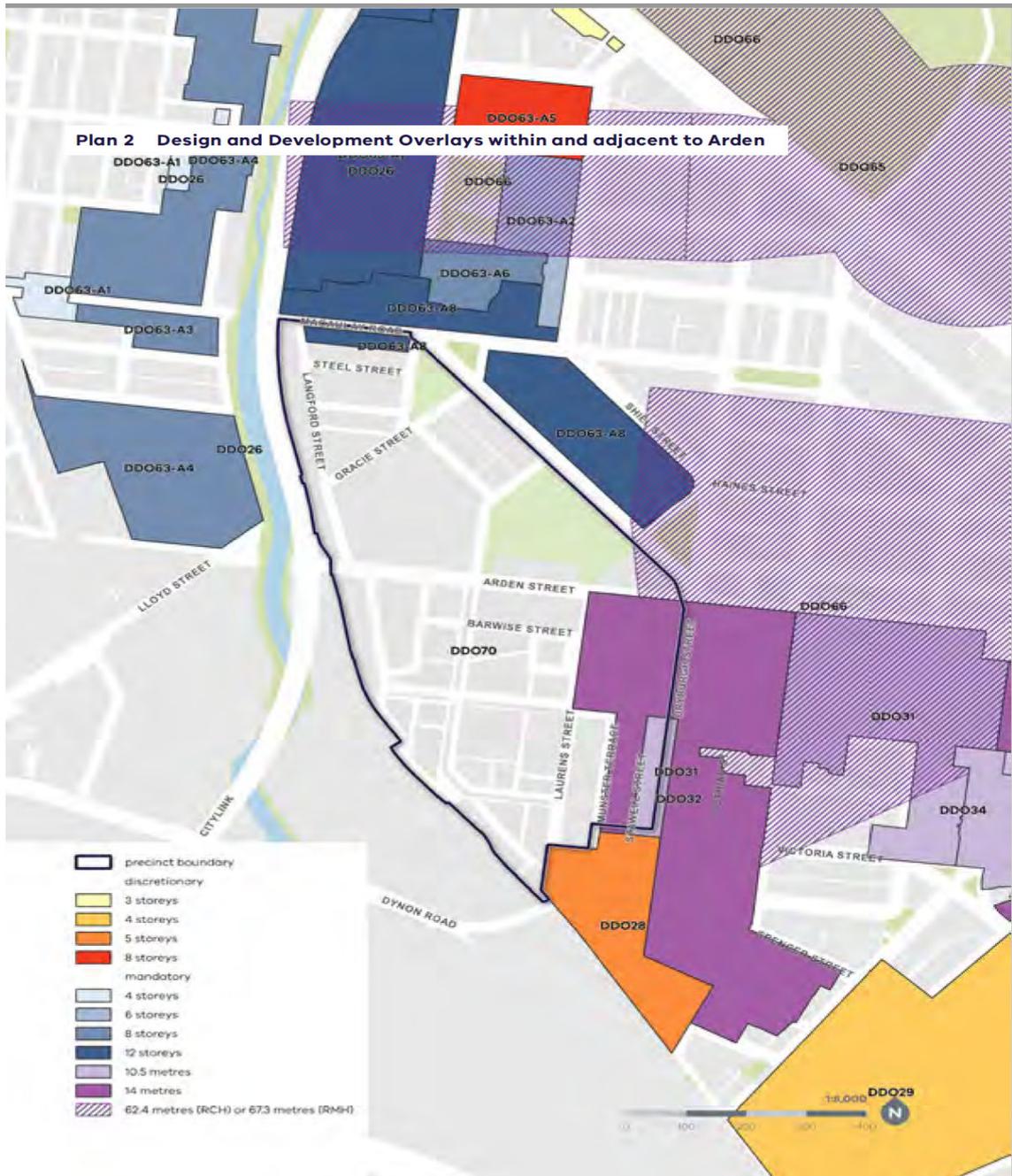


Figure 11 - Design and Development Overlays and building heights within and adjacent to Arden (Source: Arden Urban Design and Built Form Analysis, page 33)

8. Disconnect between the vision and the planning draft amendment package

46. The City of Melbourne is concerned that the vision identified for the Arden Precinct, as articulated in Arden Vision 2018 and repeated in part in the Arden Structure Plan 2021, is not reflected in the detailed objectives strategies and directions contained in the 2021 Structure Plan and in the amendment documentation that forms Draft Amendment C407.
47. Council's submission also identifies changes that occurred between the draft Structure Plan 2020 and the 2021 Structure Plan, that have further distanced the amendment from the vision for the precinct:

The 2020 draft Structure Plan provided a strong strategic framework (objectives and strategies) to realise the Vision, including direction on their implementation. This framework largely reflects the background studies and technical analysis commissioned to inform it and the significant cross government collaboration and negotiation to deliver greater outcomes for the precinct. However, CoM is concerned with the subsequent development of the revised Structure Plan and its reflection of the Arden Vision. For example, the proposed approach to affordable housing and the built form strategy in the revised Structure Plan no longer reflect the Arden Vision, do not reflect the findings and recommendations of background studies, and have been largely unresponsive to community feedback on the 2020 draft Arden Structure Plan (Appendix 3).¹

48. Council also raises issues regarding the drafting of Clauses 21,13 and Clause 22.28. It comments that the clauses do not reflect the language, specificity or the strategic intent contained in the revised Structure Plan 2021.²
49. Other specific issues raised in Council's submission are:
- Controls that do not provide adequate statutory impetus as identified by the revised Structure Plan.
 - Strategies that have no implementation mechanisms within the planning scheme amendment.
 - The proposed 15,000 residents and 34,000 jobs has evolved from a population estimate to an aspiration, to a delivery target that is being prioritised at the expense of other important policy objectives identified in the Arden Vision. These very high population targets for Arden will undermine a range of important objectives including the quality of the built form and the public realm.
 - The population targets are derived from a population projection developed in 2015, used as a background study to the Victorian Government Melbourne Metro Project Business Case in 2016. These targets are not the figures used to underpin the publicly released Business Case's transport or commercial feasibility testing, which were lower and based on an 800m catchment around Arden Station.

¹ City of Melbourne Submission to the Arden Planning Package, page 4

² Council Submission to Amendment, Page 12

8.1. Vision

50. The strategic directions for the Arden Precinct are proposed to be inserted into Clause 21.13-4 of the planning scheme. A more detailed local policy is proposed to be inserted in Clause 22.28.
51. The planning scheme amendment package does not state the actual vision for the Arden precinct, or the vision for each of the sub-precincts within the amendment documents. Clause 21.3-4 includes much abbreviated statements of intent for the wider study area for each sub-precinct.
52. Clause 22.28-1 refers to the vision for Arden “as set out in Arden Vision 2018”, but does not repeat the vision itself. The Arden Vision document is not proposed to be listed as a reference document in the planning scheme. Rather the amendment proposes to list the Arden Structure Plan as a background document. The Arden Structure Plan contains the same vision as expressed in the Arden Vision document.
53. I suggest that Clause 22.28 be modified to refer to the vision contained in the Arden Structure Plan, rather than the Arden Vision 2018.

8.2. Structure and content of the draft amendment

54. Arden is an existing, fully developed urban area in fragmented ownership, which contains considerable public land. It will largely be developed in an ad hoc, site by site basis by private developers and government agencies. The nature of the planning policies and controls that are applied in the amendment will be critical in successfully guiding the direction of new development in a way that realises the ambitious vision for the area and for each of the sub-precincts within Arden.
55. The vision for Arden is aspirational and multi-faceted. It seeks to promote the area as a major urban renewal precinct that complement’s Central Melbourne. It is to:
 - Provide for around 34,000 jobs and 15,000 residents.
 - Be largely focussed on the new Arden Metro station.
 - Have a distinctive character and feel.
 - Have high standards of urban design, amenity and sustainability.
 - Realise important economic and social goals such as a high level of employment in innovative and knowledge based industries, and provide for a diverse community and affordable housing.
 - Provide high levels of community facilities.
56. The Arden Structure Plan 2021 contains considerable detail in terms of the vision for the wider precinct and for each sub-precinct. For each of those directions the document includes a statement of objectives, strategies and in some cases design guidance.
57. The amendment package has taken elements from the Arden Structure Plan and placed them in various parts of the planning scheme. Considerable detail contained in the structure plan has been lost in the translation into a planning scheme amendment.
58. This is undesirable as it creates a disconnect between the vision expressed in the structure plan and the policies and controls contained in the planning scheme amendment. It limits the matters that can be taken into consideration when assessing planning permit applications for new development. This has the potential to make it difficult to ensure that new developments are consistent with the overarching vision for the precinct and sub-precincts, and the intent of the structure plan, which strives for excellence and best practice.

59. The structure of the policies and strategies proposed in Clause 21.13 and Clause 22.28 is different to the structure contained in the Arden Structure Plan and the strategic documents that preceded it. This makes it difficult to trace the continuity of policy between the documents and the amendment.
60. The structure of Clause 21.13-4 is based on themes commonly used in the policy framework of the VPPs, such as housing, economic development, built environment and heritage. This is generally consistent with the requirements of A Practitioner’s Guide to Victoria Planning Schemes.
61. The structure of Clause 22.28 is different again. As a consequence, the nuance and detail of the vision, objectives and strategies contained in the Arden Structure Plan is diminished. This reinforces a disconnect between the vision for the precinct and its implementation.
62. Table 1 compares the structure of the policies and strategies contained in the documents leading to the 2021 Structure Plan, to the ‘themes’ contained in Clause 22.28. In my opinion, it would be preferable if there was a more direct relationship between the ‘themes’ used in the Structure Plan and the themes used in Clause 22.28. This would provide a more direct connection between the planning controls in the scheme and the structure plan, and aid in the implementation of the vision inherent in the plan.

Table 1 - Structure of strategic documents compared to proposed local policy

Arden Vision 2018	Draft Arden Structure Plan 2020	Arden Structure Plan 2021	Local policy 22.28
Transforming Arden	Transforming Arden	Transforming Arden	Innovative, creative and anchor enterprises
Designing a distinctive place	Designing a distinctive place	Designing a distinctive place	Affordable housing
Embedding sustainable change	Embedding sustainable change	Embedding sustainable change	Community and diversity
Accommodating diverse communities	Prioritising active transport	Prioritising active transport	Sustainable transport
Prioritising active transport	Celebrating Water	Celebrating water	Environmentally sustainable design
Investing in community infrastructure	Creative diverse open spaces	Creating diverse open space	Industrial land use transition
Celebrating water	Accommodating diverse communities	Accommodating diverse communities	Aboriginal heritage
Creating diverse open spaces	Investing in community infrastructure	Investing in community infrastructure	Design excellence
Delivering Arden	Delivering Arden	Delivering Arden	

63. Options to improve the continuity between the vision and the Arden Structure Plan 2021 and amendment package, include:
 - Rewriting Clause 22.28 – to better align with the themes, objectives and strategies contained in the Arden Structure Plan.
 - Directly referring to the Arden Structure Plan throughout the amendment package, making it clear that all aspects of the plan should be taken into consideration in the assessment planning permit applications.

- Including the Arden Structure Plan as an incorporated document in the planning scheme, rather than as a background document. The Arden Structure Plan is written in such a way that it would generally be appropriate to include as an incorporated document, with relatively little modification. This is generally consistent with the approach taken in relation to precinct structure plans in urban growth areas.
64. The approach I recommend in relation to draft Amendment C407 depends on the approach to the amendment recommended by the Panel. If the panel recommends that the amendment:
- Is appropriate to approve with relatively minor changes that do not require re-exhibition of the amendment, I would recommend relatively minor changes to the amendment such as:
 - Modifying Clause 21.13 and Clause 22.28 to refer to implementing the Arden Structure Plan 2021, not just to the vision as set out in Arden Vision, as proposed in the exhibited version of Clause 22.28.
 - Referring to the Arden Structure Plan 2021 in the purpose statements of Schedule 7 of the Special Use Zone.
 - Referring to the Arden Structure Plan 2021 in the decision guidelines for use, buildings and works and subdivision in Schedule 7 to the Special Use Zone.
 - Referring to the Arden Structure Plan 2021 under the heading ‘general’ in the decision guidelines of the four DDOs that are proposed.
 - Requires more substantial change that would require re-exhibition, I would recommend redrafting the policies to better reflect the structure and content of the 2021 Strategy Plan.
65. In my opinion, merit existing in including the structure plan as an incorporated document in the planning scheme. I consider that such would be consistent with A Practitioner’s Guide to Victorian Planning Schemes and Planning Practice Note 13 – Incorporated and Background Documents. From a place making perspective I see little benefit in preparing a structure plan that includes detailed directions, objectives and strategies, if those details are not carried through to the assessment of planning permit applications and development proposals by inclusion in the planning scheme.
66. I note however, that the 2021 Structure Plan would need to be updated to include any recommended changes as a consequence of this panel hearing, if this was to be the case.

Implementing a precinct structure plan in the planning scheme

The UGZ requires a precinct structure plan to be incorporated in the planning scheme before urban development in accordance with the plan can start. The detailed use and development provisions required to implement the precinct structure plan must also be set out in the schedule to the zone.

It may also be appropriate for parts of the precinct structure plan to be included in the scheme as objectives or strategies in the Municipal Strategic Statement, local planning policy, or decision guidelines.

Figure 12 - Source Planning Practice Note 47 - Urban Growth Zone

8.3. Retail focal point

67. Council's submission:

The PSA provides no direction to enable the achievement of other land use outcomes identified in the revised Structure Plan that are key to Arden's liveability and vibrancy, a key factor of success for innovation districts defined in Victorian Government policy. For instance, the PSA does not reflect the ambition for Barwise Street as Arden's primary retail street or facilitate the delivery of commercial car parking rather than individual site parking.³

68. Whilst the Arden Central Innovation sub-precinct is intended to a vibrant mixed use hub with a wide mix of uses and activities, a critical element of the success of the precinct is likely to be the establishment of a primary retail area (or a shopping street) as an identifiable focal point for the precinct. Council's submission suggests Barwise Street.

69. The Arden Retail Demand study identify the potential for a compact supermarket-based neighbourhood centre, along the Queensbury Road Extension and Fogarty Street extension:

The retail floorspace at Arden Central should include a supermarket-based neighbourhood centre close to Arden Street of about 6,000 sqm with the balance (14,000 sqm) comprising street or laneway based tenancies spread along the two intersecting roads through the precinct – the Queensberry Road extension and Fogarty Street extension. Some residual space would be developed around the station entry and peripheral roads.

Retail and other services along the two internal roads will create a compact, accessible and legible town centre which culminates at the junction and central point which opens to the proposed open space or town square.⁴

70. It is uncertain how the amendment proposes to achieve this. The 2021 Structure Plan references a future retail uses as follows:

***Arden Central – Innovation** will create and attract investment from large anchor tenants, institutions and small businesses to showcase the precinct as a globally competitive location. A potential hospital campus will act as an anchor for innovation and education. Barwise Street will be the retail focus surrounding the station, with residential at upper levels through the sub-precinct.⁵*

***Arden Central – Innovation** will be defined by ... A major activity centre for Arden around the station and major intersections of Queensberry Street, Fogarty Street and Laurens Street.⁶*

71. The only reference a retail focal point in the amendment documentation includes the following, noting that there is no reference to Barwise Street:

Arden Central (Innovation) provides a mix of land uses and aims to facilitate a predominant mix of innovative commercial land uses, including life sciences, health, digital technology, and education uses to support the Parkville NEIC, anchored off the Arden Station and the proposed Hospital as

³ Council submission to Amendment C407, page 14

⁴ Arden Retail Demand, Deep End 2018, page 2

⁵ Arden Structure Plan 2021, page 8

⁶ Arden Structure Plan 2021, page 28

well as complimentary mix of retail uses that activate the street frontages. Residential land uses are supported where they do not compromise the primary commercial function of the precinct and are located at upper levels of buildings.⁷

72. The Table of uses in Clause 1.0 of Schedule 7 to the Special Use Zone addresses retail uses as follows:

Retail Premises (Other than Adult sex product shop, Gambling premises, Landscape gardening supplies, Motor vehicle, boat, or caravan sales, Supermarket, Trade supplies).	Must not exceed 250 square metres of leasable floor area in Arden Central Mixed Use or Laurens Street Sub-precincts shown on Plan 1 to Schedule 7 to Clause 37.01.
Supermarket	Must be in Arden Central Innovation Sub-precinct shown on Plan 1 to Schedule 7 to Clause 37.01. Must not exceed 6,000 square metres.

Figure 13 - Excerpt from proposed Schedule 7 to the Special Use Zone

73. The Structure Plan would benefit from more detail, and potentially a sketch showing the location and indicative configuration of a retail focal point within the Arden Central Innovation Precinct. The location needs to be clarified and a decision made as to whether Barwise Street also has a role to play.
74. The amendment package would benefit from a number of modifications to manage ground level uses to encourage retail uses and shops to establish within the proposed retail node. Consideration could be given to the following :
- Include specific reference to the establish a retail focal point in the Arden Central Innovation sub-precinct, around the station and the major intersections of Queensberry Street, Fogarty Street and Laurens Street, in the Clause 22.28 (once the location has been resolved).
 - In the Table of Uses in Schedule 7 of the Special Use Zone, modify the condition opposite the use Retail Premises in Section 1, to add that it must not exceed 250 sqm in the Arden North Precinct, as well as the Arden Central Mixed Use and Laurens sub-precincts.
 - Modify relevant plans contained within the amendment documents to show a retail focal point.
 - In the Table of Uses in Schedule 7 of the Special Use Zone, potentially add a condition opposite the use 'office', that it must not be at street level within the proposed retail focal point (once it has been resolved), other than to provide access to upper levels.
 - In Clause 2.0 of Schedule 7, Use of Land, add a decision guideline for the use Retail premise, whether it will adversely impact on the ability to establish a retail focal point in the Arden Central Innovation sub-precinct.
75. To ensure that other uses that require a planning permit are consistent with the Arden Structure Plan, an additional 'Application requirement' should be included in 'Clause 2.0 Use of Land' of Schedule 7, requiring a planning permit application for discretionary uses to include of statement about how the proposal responds to the Arden Structure Plan.

⁷ Proposed Clause 21.13-4

8.4. Distinction between sub-precincts

76. The Arden Structure Plan identifies that each sub-precinct is to have its own unique purpose and character:

*Arden is divided into four sub-precincts, each with a unique purpose and character.*⁸

77. The planning scheme amendment documentation does not clearly identify the vision or intent for each sub-precinct:

- Clause 21.13-4 – Arden Urban Renewal Area, includes an abbreviated statement about each sub-precinct.
- The local policy (Clause 22.28) refers to a vision and provides objectives and strategies for the whole precinct. It does not provide a vision or statement for each sub-precinct.
- Schedule 7 to the Special Use Zone includes a plan that shows the sub-precincts. The Table of uses includes conditions regard sub-precincts in which some uses as of-right. However it does not include a statement that describes the intended purpose of each sub-precinct or decision guidelines that distinguish between land uses preferences within for each.
- There is a DDO for each of the four sub-precincts which includes design objectives and controls for built form. However they have no relevance to the land use.

78. The purpose and character of each sub-precinct is identified on pages 28 and 29 of the Arden Structure Plan 2021. It includes both a general description of each sub-precinct and key matters that will define each sub-precinct. I consider that a detailed statement of purpose for each sub-precinct should be included in the proposed local policy at Clause 22.28. This will enable those considerations to be taken into account when planning permit applications are assessed. Specific reference to the Arden Structure Plan in the decision guidelines of the Special Use Zone, will also enable the more detailed matters referred to in the Structure Plan document, to be taken into account in making land use decision on planning permit applications.

⁸ Arden Structure Plan 2021, page 28

8.5. Affordable housing and sustainability

79. State, regional and local planning policy provides particular support to pursue elevated standards of design, amenity, infrastructure provision, affordable housing and sustainability in designated urban renewal areas.
80. Both sustainability and accommodation diversity (which includes housing affordability) have been key directions that have informed the vision from Arden since early planning. The Arden Structure Plan 2021 contains specific objectives and strategies in relation to both of these issues:
 - Section 4 – Embedding sustainable change (page 44)
 - Section 8 – Accommodating diverse communities (page 78)
81. The way in which the amendment package seeks to implement these two matters is via policy:
 - Affordable housing – Clause 22.28-3.2
 - Environmentally sustainable design – Clause 22.28-3.5
82. Implementing such issues as policy, rather than as requirements in a planning control, diminishes their importance and makes implementation more difficult.
83. Planning’s response to these two important issues is in a state of evolution. In a designated urban renewal area, which has undergone considerable detailed planning and in which particular attention is given to the need for affordable housing and sustainable development, the implementation of these initiatives should be by way of planning controls rather than planning policy.
84. The document A Practitioners Guide to Victorian Planning Schemes explains the relationship between zones and overlay controls and local policies. It identifies that planning controls such as zones and overlays are the primary mechanism to implement policies in the planning scheme, and that where they are effective in doing so there is no need for a local policy”:

Local policy provides the detailed policy directions for a municipality. The role of local policy in the PPF differs from the MPS, which provides higher level strategic policy direction. Local policy helps a council to implement state policy in a way that is relevant to their vision for the municipality.

Zones, overlays and particular and general provisions are the primary implementation mechanism of the strategic policy directions in a planning scheme. Where a zone, overlay, particular provision or general provision provides all the direction required to make a decision, a local policy is not needed. Similarly, where statewide or regional policy provides all relevant direction required for decision making, a local policy is not required.⁹

85. I note the comments made by the Panel in relation to the implementation of initiatives for affordable housing in West Melbourne:

The Panel supports locating the affordable housing requirements in the zone, rather than in a local policy. This gives them greater weight. Further, there is no obvious home for the requirements in the Municipal Strategic Statement or elsewhere in the local policy framework.

⁹ A Practitioners Guide to Victorian Planning Scheme, page 79

To ensure that forms of affordable housing other than social housing are seen to be assessed and managed in a clear, transparent and consistent manner, Council could consider developing guidance material setting out how such contributions will be assessed and secured to ensure that the housing remains affordable going forward.¹⁰

86. In my opinion:
- Requirements for housing diversity and affordable housing should be contained in Clause 2.0 (Use of land) of Schedule 7 to the Special Use Zone.
 - Requirements for sustainable buildings should be contained within Clause 4.0 (Buildings and works) of Schedule 7 to the Special Use Zone.
87. As identified by the Panel for West Melbourne, any requirement for affordable housing included in the zone control, should be worded to provide for some discretion, consistent with the State government's current approach to requirements for affordable housing.
88. My comments in this section of my report only address the method of implementation of sustainability and affordable housing in the amendment package. I make not comment on the actual standards to be applied. That is a matter for specialist expertise.

¹⁰ Panel Report, Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C309, West Melbourne Structure Plan, page 3

8.6. Solar access

89. Amendment C407 generally proposes to protect public parks from overshadowing by including a requirement in the proposed DDOs that seeks to prevent overshadowing of listed parks, beyond the shadow cast by a designated street wall height. The controls are both mandatory and discretionary, and apply at both the winter solstice and the equinox, depending on the park. Proposed controls are as follows:
- Discretionary controls between 11am and 2pm on the September equinox:
 - Queensbury Street linear park
 - North Melbourne Recreation Reserve
 - Clayton Reserve
 - Integrated stormwater management open space
 - Arden Station forecourt
 - Mandatory controls between 11am and 2pm on the September equinox:
 - Capital City Open Space
 - Discretionary controls between 11am and 2pm on the winter solstice:
 - None
 - Mandatory controls between 11am and 2pm on the winter solstice:
 - Neighbourhood parks in all precincts.
90. Amendment C278 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme seeks to introduce a new approach and a higher standard for the protection of public parks from over shadowing throughout the municipality (other than in the Capital City Zone and Docklands Zone). The amendment proposed to:
- Introduce winter sun access protection to all parks.
 - Increase sunlight protection hours to 10am to 3pm in winter, from the current 11am to 2pm in spring and autumn.
 - Introduce a mandatory 'no additional overshadowing' control.
 - Allow limited additional overshadowing of parks in growth areas to balance sunlight access to parks with the need to support development intensification.¹¹
91. The amendment is to be implemented by DDO8, that will apply to land around all parks outside of the Capital City Zone and Docklands Zone, to protect them from over shadowing.
92. The panel that heard submissions to the amendment generally supported the approach, in particular the mandatory nature of the controls and the controls being based on the winter solstice. I gave planning evidence in support of the amendment for the City of Melbourne at the panel hearing.
93. The amendment has been forwarded to the Minister for approval (now Amendment C415). If the amendment is approved by the Minister, it would be appropriate to review the approach to over shadowing in the 2021 Arden Structure Plan and in the AmC407 amendment documentation, to align with the approach adopted in

¹¹ Source: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/amendmentc278/amendment-overview>

Amendment C278 / C451. As part of such a review, building heights, street wall heights and floor area ratios applying to land upon which buildings could be constructed that might overshadow public parks, would need to be assessed. It may be necessary to review floor area ratios and preferred building heights as a consequence of such a review.

8.7. Detailed design and built form

94. Council raised a number of issues to do with how and where guidance regarding detailed design and built form should be included in the amendment documentation. It also expressed concern that some of the detailed objectives and strategies contained in the 2021 Structure Plan in relation to good design and built form had been lost in the preparation of the amendment documentation:

Many of the built form objectives are contained in the separate local policy for Arden reducing their statutory weight. They should be within the DDO. Many of the discretionary controls within the local policy are inconsistent with CoM's preferred framework of using the DDO for assessing urban design considerations as established by Amendment C308 Urban Design for Central Melbourne.

The built form framework does not provide sufficient guidance to require decision makers to consider unique attributes of local character and heritage in Arden, which will be tested by applications seeking to realise the overly high FARs proposed.¹²

95. Council is concerned that spreading objectives and guidance about good design and built form between local policy at Clause 22.28 and the DDOs, reduces the statutory weight given to design and built form matters when planning permit applications are being considered.
96. Council has recently had amendment C308 approved. That amendment deleted a previous local policy about urban design within the Capital City Zone and introduced a new more detailed DDO1 - Urban Design in Central Melbourne, into the planning scheme. The panel that considered that amendment commented on the benefit of including such requirements in a DDO rather than a policy.

The Panel concludes that the extra weight of a permit trigger in a Design and Development Overlay is warranted to regulate urban design in Central Melbourne, and there is no impediment to a Design and Development Overlay expressing a mix of qualitative and quantitative controls. The Panel finds the proposed mandatory controls justified subject to recommended changes.¹³

97. The local policy at Clause 22.28 is best used for land use related matters that cannot be readily included in the Special Use 7 Zone or other planning controls. Matters to do with design and built form can and should be contained in the proposed DDOs to give them more statutory weight.
98. This is consistent with A Practitioners Guide to Planning Schemes in Victoria, which identifies that planning controls such as zones and overlays are the primary mechanism to implement policies in the planning scheme, and that where they are effective in doing so there is no need for a local policy:

Local policy provides the detailed policy directions for a municipality. The role of local policy in the PPF differs from the MPS, which provides higher level strategic policy direction. Local policy

¹² City of Melbourne Submission to the Arden Planning Package, page 7

¹³ Panel Report for Melbourne Amendment C308, Executive Summary

helps a council to implement state policy in a way that is relevant to their vision for the municipality.

Zones, overlays and particular and general provisions are the primary implementation mechanism of the strategic policy directions in a planning scheme. Where a zone, overlay, particular provision or general provision provides all the direction required to make a decision, a local policy is not needed. Similarly, where statewide or regional policy provides all relevant direction required for decision making, a local policy is not required.¹⁴

¹⁴ A Practitioners Guide to Victorian Planning Scheme, page 79

9. Development density is too high

99. A key element raised by Council in its submission about the disconnect between the vision for the precinct and the amendment package, was that:
- The density of development proposed is too high.
 - The density changed between the draft Structure Plan and the final 2021 Structure Plan, without any strategic justification.

9.1. Relationship between built form and character

100. A fundamental aim of the 2021 Structure Plan is to design Arden as a distinctive place that is anchored by the valued characteristics of North and West Melbourne, that make it special to its residents and to workers:

Arden will be shaped by exemplary urban design and built form, anchored by the valued characteristics that make the suburbs of North and West Melbourne special to its residents and workers. Public areas will respond to the existing environment and strengthen the evolving identity of the precinct. – Arden Vision, 2018.¹⁵

101. In making the area distinctive, the structure plan refers to including a variety of building types, heights and densities that fit well within the surrounding context, while helping to create a new and distinct character:

The place-based approach to Arden identified through the four sub-precincts of Arden Central – Innovation, Arden Central -Mixed-use, Arden North and Laurens Street will include a variety of building types, heights and densities that fit well within their surrounding context, while also helping to create a new and distinct character.¹⁶

102. Density and building height have a direct impact on the character and amenity that will emerge in the precinct. It will impact on matters such as:

- The typology of buildings established and the type of uses that they provide for.
- The availability of sunlight and daylight to parks, streets, lanes and other incidental open areas, as well as to uses and activities within buildings.
- The pedestrian experience at street level experience.
- The balance between built form and landscaping.
- The sense of openness, enclosure or predominance of built form and the visibility of the sky from streets, parks and other incidental outdoor spaces, as well as from within buildings.
- Spaces between buildings,
- Views from and between buildings and views to and from the precinct.

¹⁵ Arden Structure Plan, page 31

¹⁶ Ibid., page 31

103. Increased densities have a positive influence on matters such as:
- Diversity, interest and levels of activity, especially at street level.
 - The range of services and facilities that can be provided such as transport, education, health, community and higher land uses and experiences.
104. The link between density, built form and character is not linear or quantifiable and is highly subjective. But there is no doubt that the character of an area progressively changes as density and built form increases. The amenity implications of this will depend on the overall vision for the precinct.
105. The vision for Arden includes statements such as:
- Establishing a new destination for Melbourne.
 - Setting the standard for urban renewal.
 - Contributing to a future Melbourne that is not only the world's most liveable city but also one of the most forward-looking.
 - Becoming an international innovation and technology precinct.
 - Becoming a new employment hub that will advance Melbourne's strengths as a progressive, innovative and connected local and global city.
 - Having its own civic heart.
 - Remaining connected to its Aboriginal and industrial heritage as it changes to support a diverse resident and worker population.
 - A new neighbourhood of Melbourne with quality and affordable housing, a thriving network of open spaces, active transport links, and adaptable community facilities, schools and workspaces.
 - At the forefront of sustainable development, embracing new ways to live, learn, work and travel in an energy efficient district.
 - Water will be safely managed to become a visible feature in the landscape, while green spaces, trees and water will help the precinct become a cooler, greener version of the city.
 - The Moonee Ponds Creek corridor will be revitalised as a new green spine for Melbourne.
106. Other initiatives throughout the Structure Plan refer to:
- A distinct and thriving integrated inner-city neighbourhood in Melbourne's inner north-west.
 - Consistent, high quality and context sensitive urban design outcomes, while encouraging innovation, research and sector based uses with complementary uses.
 - Creating conditions that attract and retain global talent in the life-sciences, education, health and digital technology sectors and foster interaction, collaboration and knowledge sharing between enterprise, government, and education.
107. All of these suggest that Arden must be designed as a high quality, high amenity and as a special place.
108. Arden does not benefit from the natural place making features benefitting Docklands and parts of Southbank, such as the Yarra River and the waterfront. The Arden Central sub-precinct in particular, is heavily influenced by existing transport infrastructure such as the elevated City Link Tollway and railway line, and its transport and industrial past.

- 109. Whilst the opportunity exists to enhance the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor, it will remain separated from Arden by an at grade railway line and in places, an elevated tollway.
- 110. The outstanding character, built form and amenity sought for Arden will need to be established from scratch, particularly within the higher density Arden Central sub-precincts, which do not benefit from the existing street network and open space that Arden North has. High quality built form outcomes that complement a high quality public realm, will be essential to making the precinct a success. Building density and building height will be critical to realising the vision for the precinct.

9.2. Density changes between the draft Arden Structure Plan 2020 and the Arden Structure Plan 2021

- 111. A noticeable increase in density occurred between the draft Structure Plan 2020 and the 2021 Structure Plan, upon which the amendment is based.

- 112. Both documents divide the precinct into a multitude of 'blocks' and identified different floor area ratios and building heights for each block.

- 113. A floor area ratio is the most accurate indicator of density / development potential in terms of floor space potential. By multiplying the floor area ratio by the site area, the potential floor area of a site, sub-precinct or of the whole precinct can be estimated.

- 114. Figure 14 shows key locations in which a change has been made between the floor area ratios in draft Arden Structure Plan 2020 and the 2021 Structure Plan.

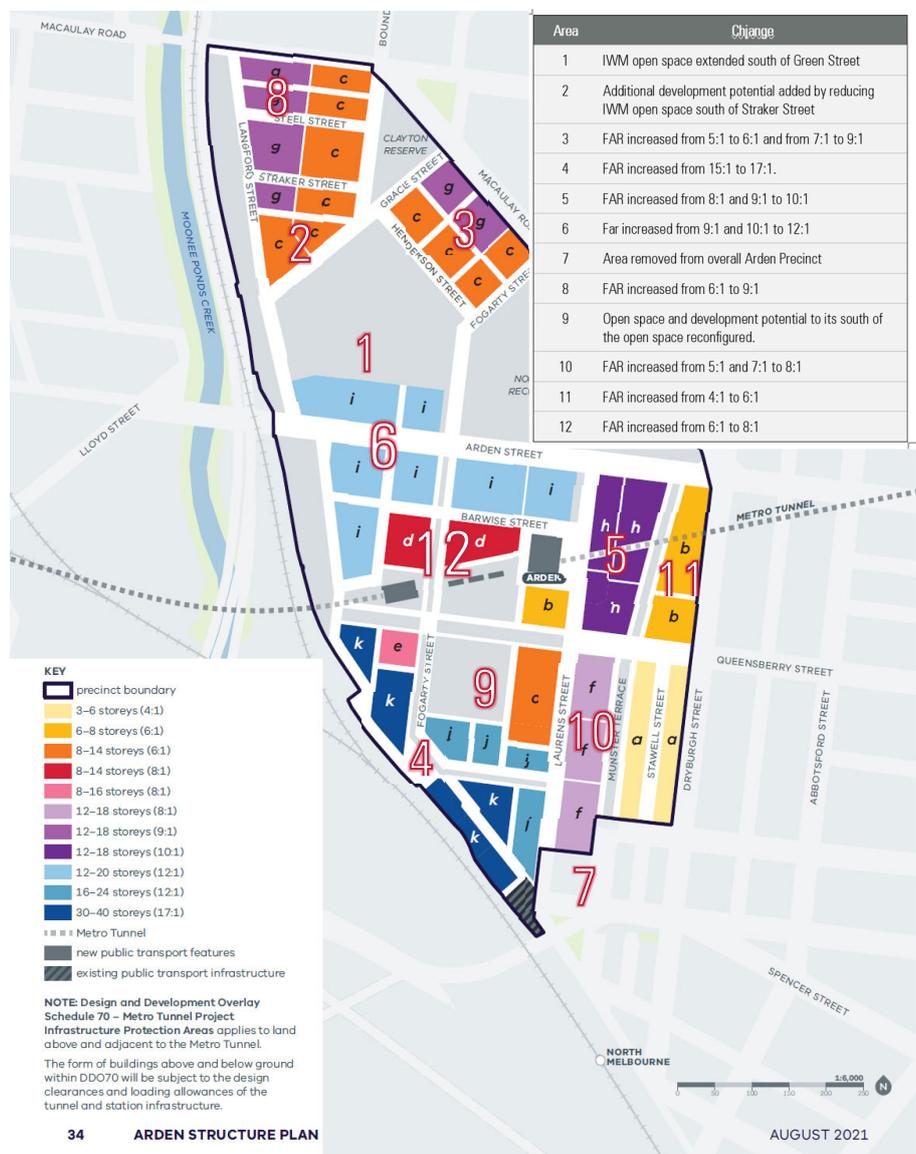


Figure 14 - Change in densities between the Draft Structure Plan 2020 and the Structure Plan 2021

115. Table 2 (below) provides an estimate of the change in total potential floor space within the Arden Precinct and each sub-precinct, between the two structure plans. From that table it is apparent that:

- The total land area of the wider Arden Precinct has been reduced by 10% due to the removal of an area of land from the southern part of the precinct, south of Victoria Street.
- Despite a reduction in the total land area of the precinct, the development potential of the precinct (i.e. total potential floor space) has increased by 10%.
- The greatest increase in development density occurred in the Arden Central sub-precincts, where potential floorspace increased by over 25%.
- Potential floorspace in the Arden North precinct decreased by 13%. That was largely due an increase in the size and the reconfiguration of the integrated water management open space feature, which was extend to the south of Green Street. Floor area ratios in that area have been increased, presumable to compensate for that change
- Development potential in the Laurens sub-precinct remained similar. However, that is largely due to the deletion of land from the south part of that precinct, south of Victoria Street. The density of the part of the area that remains within the precinct, also increased.

Table 2 – Change in potential floor space between the draft and final structure plans¹⁷

Sub-precinct	Draft Structure Plan 2021 Floor area sqm	Structure Plan 2021 Floor area sqm	Difference Floor area sqm	% Change Floor area sqm
Arden North	343,274	297,279	-45,995	-13%
Arden Central Innovation	N/A	534,018		
Arden Central Mixed Use	N/A	346,700		
Arden Central (combined)	698,652	880,718	182,066	26%
Laurens	335,049	339,980	4,931	1%
Total potential floor space	1,376,975	1,517,977	141,002	10%
Total land area of Arden Precinct	497,663	446,869	-50,794	-10%

116. Between the preparation of the draft Arden Structure Plan and the 2021 Arden Structure Plan, two background reports were prepared that addressed built form issues:

- Arden Built Form Testing by Hayball
- Arden Urban Design and Built Form Analysis by the VPA

117. As discussed in the following section of this report, I do not consider that either of those reports justify the changes made to the floor area ratios and densities between the two versions of the structure plan.

¹⁷ Basis of calculation: Site area of each FAR cell, multiplied by the FAR. Assumes all land is redeveloped. No allowance for heritage buildings etc. No allowance for discretionary FAR's to be exceeded.

9.3. Comparative floor area ratios

118. Detailed urban design evidence will be required to assess the appropriateness of the floor area ratios proposed to be applied in the amendment documentation. From a planning perspective I have compared floor area ratios applied in other parts of the municipality.
119. The amendment proposes:
- Mandatory floor area ratios in the Arden North and in the eastern part of the Laurens sub-precinct.
 - Discretionary floor area ratios in the Arden Central Innovation and Mixed Use sub-precincts and in the western part of the Laurens sub-precinct.
120. Floor area ratios and plot ratios are used in a number of locations within the City of Melbourne. They are also used in a number of different ways:
- They are both mandatory and discretionary.
 - They may or may not be associated with an floor area uplift.
 - They may or may not be associated with preferred or maximum buildings heights.
121. Other locations in the municipality to which floor area ratios apply include the following:
- Capital City Zone 1 (Outside the retail core), where DDO10 (General Development Area) applies.
 - Capital City Zone 2 (Retail Core), where DDO10 applies.
 - Capital City Zone 3, (Southbank) where DDO 10 applies.
 - DDO2 – Special Character Areas – Built Form (Hoddle Grid)
 - DDO40 Special Character Areas – Built form (River Environs)
 - DDO60 Special Character Areas – Built Form (Southbank)
 - River Environs
 - Sturt Street
 - Dorcas Street
 - DDO62 Special Character Areas Built Form (Bourke Hill)
 - DDO74 – Fishermans Bend Employment Precinct
 - DPO11 Queen Victoria Market Precinct

122. The Macaulay urban renewal area that adjoins Arden to the north and west, does not presently utilise floor area ratios. However, the refreshed Macaulay Structure Plan 2021 which has been endorsed by Council, proposes the introduction of floor area ratios of between 2.5:1 to 4:1. The introduction of floor area ratios to manage development in that precinct were at the suggestion of the Minister for Planning¹⁸:

*Floor Area Ratios identified for Macaulay respond to the areas local context. The FARs range from 2.5:1 at sensitive interfaces with residential areas to 4:1 in areas where increased density and taller built form is appropriate.*¹⁹

123. The adjoining West Melbourne area to the south, between Arden and the Hoddle Grid, is proposed to have floor area ratios applied by Amendment C309. The ratios and associated building heights contained in the four precincts that cover that area include:
- DDO28 – Station precinct – Floor area ratio 5:1, preferred maximum height of 8 storeys.
 - DDO29 – Adderley Precinct – Floor area ratio of 3:1, preferred maximum height of 4 to 6 storeys depending on location.
 - DDO30 – Flagstaff precinct – Floor area ratio of 6:1, preferred maximum of 16 storeys.
 - DDO72 – Station Precinct – Floor area ratio of 4:1 or 5:1 depending on location, preferred maximum height of 7 to 10 storeys depending on location.

¹⁸ Macaulay Structure Plan 2021, page 119

¹⁹ Ibid., page 29

124. Table 3 provides a summary of floor area ratios used throughout Melbourne. It also identifies building heights associated with different floor area ratios. From that table it is apparent that:
- Floor area ratios through the precinct are generally quite high.
 - The floor area ratios for Arden Central sub-precincts range from 12:1 to 17:1 (other than for central areas close to the station and park) are considerably higher than the floor area ratios applied elsewhere within Melbourne, other than land covered by various schedules to the Capital City Zone.
 - A floor area ratio of 17:1, which is proposed along the west edge of the two Arden Central sub-precincts, approaches the ratio applied to the 'general development area' within the Hoddle Grid and to the higher density areas in Southbank, away from the river, which is 18:1.

Table 3 – Example of floor area ratios throughout Melbourne

Floor area ratio	West Melbourne	CCZ 1,2,3 – Where DDO10 applies	CCZ – Special Character Areas – Hoddle Grid	CCZ Special Character Areas Southbank	CCZ Special Character Areas – Bourke Hill	Arden
	4 DDOs	DDO10	DDO2	DDO60	DDO62	
3:1	4 to 6 storeys 13.9 to 20.5 metres					
4:1	7 storeys 23.8metres		15 metres			13-25 metres
5:1	8 to 10 storeys to 27.1 to 33.7 metres					
6:1	16 storeys (53.5 metres)		20 metres	24 metres		25-33 metres 33-51 metres
7:1			30 metres			
8:1			30 metres			33-57 metres 33-65 metres 49-64 metres
9:1						49-64 metres
10:1			40 metres	40 metres	40 metres	49-64 metres
12:1			80 metres			49-81 metres 65-83 metres
13:1			60metres	60 metres	60 metres	
15:1					100 metres	
17:1						121-134 metres
18:1		No maximum height specified				

9.4. Building heights

125. As identified in the preceding section, the Arden Structure Plan and DDOs align preferred maximum building heights with floor area ratios.
126. Building heights are proposed to be discretionary in all cases. Building heights are expressed as a range, in both metres and storeys in the Structure Plan, and as metres only in the DDOs. Given they are expressed as a “Preferred Maximum Building Height” in the DDOs, I consider it confusing that a range of heights is stated rather than a single height. I suggest that a single height be included for each area in the DDOs.
127. In relation to building heights associated with various floor area ratios I make the following observations:
 - There is no one building height that relates to a defined floor area ratio. Both measures can be varied in numerous ways to achieve different built form outcomes across a site.

- Preferred heights contained in Draft Amendment C407 include a height range rather than a single preferred maximum height. In most cases, there is a reasonable level of consistency between the lower height specified and the height associated with a particular floor area ratio on other parts of Melbourne. However, the greater height is generally considerably more than applied in elsewhere throughout the municipality.

128. In terms of building heights generally:

- Building heights exceeding 80 metres and especially 100 metres, are particularly high in terms of the height of high-rise buildings in a non-Capital City Zone or Dockland context in the City of Melbourne. A building of 100 metres is about 30 storeys.
- Buildings of up to 134 metres as provided for by the amendment, are quite extreme in a non-Capital City Zone or Dockland context. A building of 134 metres is about 41 storeys.

129. In my opinion, buildings of these heights should not be contemplated outside the Central City Zone or Docklands, without very strong strategic justification and without a detailed analysis of the impacts of such the built form on the vision, character and amenity sought for the Arden Precinct. I do not consider that such justification has been provided.

130. I note that the 2021 Arden Structure Plan 2021 categorises building height as follows:

- Low rise – 6 storeys or less.
- Mid-rise 7 to 15 storeys.
- High rise 16 or more storeys.²⁰

131. The floor area ratios and building heights set out in the table that accompanies the built form outcomes contained in the Structure Plan, adopts this categorisation (Figure 15).²¹ However, the heights listed in the table contradict the classification adopted in the Structure Plan:

- Mid-rise development is identified being 18 storeys rather than 15 storeys.
- Highrise development is identified as starting at 12 storeys rather than 16 storeys.

132. These contradictions reinforce my opinion that the density and building height requirements contained in the 2021 Structure Pan have evolved over time in an ad hoc manner, without sound strategic justification.

Proposed floor area ratios and building heights

ID	MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)	BUILDING HEIGHT RANGE
Low-rise		
a	4:1	3–6 storeys (13–25 metres)
Mid-rise		
b	6:1	6–8 storeys (25–33 metres)
c	6:1	8–14 storeys (33–51 metres)
d	8:1	8–14 storeys (33–57 metres)
e	8:1	8–16 storeys (33–65 metres)
f	8:1	12–18 storeys (49–64 metres)
g	9:1	12–18 storeys (49–64 metres)
High-rise		
h	10:1	12–18 storeys (49–64 metres)
i	12:1	12–20 storeys (49–81 metres)
j	12:1	16–24 storeys (65–83 metres)
k	17:1	30–40 storeys (121–134 metres)

Figure 15 - Proposed floor area ratios and buildings heights (Source Arden Structure Plan 2021, page 35)

²⁰ Arden Structure Plan 2021, page 36

²¹ Arden Structure Plan 2021, page 36

133. From a planning perspective, having regard to the policy context and the urban form context of Arden and its surrounds, I generally support the 'pattern' of building heights (and floor area ratios) throughout the precinct (i.e. the areas identified for taller or lower buildings). However, I agree with Council's submission that the magnitude of the heights and ratios is excessive and is lacking strategic justification.

9.5. Discretionary nature of the floor area ratios

134. The DDOs that will be applied to the Arden Precinct:

- Propose mandatory floor area ratios and associated discretionary building heights in the Arden North and the Laurens sub-precincts.
- Discretionary floor area ratios and discretionary building heights in the Arden Centre Innovation and Mixed Use sub-precincts.

135. The panel that considered submissions to Amendment C309 – West Melbourne Structure Plan, supported the use of mandatory floor area requirements in West Melbourne:

Mandatory floor area ratios are a legitimate tool to use in response to this development pressure, and can assist in delivering the built form and character outcomes sought for West Melbourne in the Structure Plan. Working with the built form controls, they also have the potential to deliver a range of beneficial outcomes relating to sustainable development, and vibrant, social streetscapes that provide a high quality pedestrian and public realm and foster community.²²

136. In supporting mandatory floor area ratios the Panel commented that such were particularly beneficial when aligned with discretionary building heights:

Given the Amendment also proposes discretionary heights, mandatory floor area ratios will assist in limiting the scale of new development so that it is more consistent with the existing character of the area. This will help deliver the Structure Plan's vision. Page 82

On balance, having considered the criteria set out in PPN59, the Panel considers that mandatory floor area ratios are justified. Combined with discretionary heights and other built form controls, they strike an appropriate balance in terms of delivering certainty and maintaining flexibility.²³ Page 82

137. The context is somewhat different in Arden compared to West Melbourne:

- West Melbourne is not a designated urban renewal area.
- An aim of the West Melbourne Structure Plan was to balance development pressures and respond to the existing character of the area, and to make a clear distinction between built form in the Hoddle grid to the south of Lonsdale Street and West Melbourne. The development context in Arden is more ambitious than that in West Melbourne, particularly in the Arden Central sub-precincts.
- The background documents that provided the strategic justification for the floor area ratios and building heights in West Melbourne, were generally considered by the panel to provide a sound strategic basis for the controls proposed. This is not the case in Arden.

²² Melbourne Amendment C309, West Melbourne Structure Plan, Page 2

²³ Melbourne Amendment C309, West Melbourne Structure Plan Report, page 8

138. *Planning Practice Note 59* sets out criteria to be used to decide whether mandatory provisions may be appropriate in planning schemes. Comments made throughout that document include the following:
- Planning schemes being predominately performance based and based on the principle that the majority of cases should be considered on their merits, and should be tested against objectives.
 - There will be cases where mandatory controls will be appropriate to provide certainty and to ensure preferable and efficient outcomes.
 - Mandatory provisions where used, should be the exception to the norm.
 - Mandatory provisions will only be considered in circumstances where it can be clearly demonstrated that discretionary provisions are insufficient to achieve desired outcomes.
139. The practice note sets out the following criteria to assess whether mandatory controls are appropriate to apply:
- Is the mandatory provision strategically supported?
 - Is the mandatory provision appropriate to the majority of proposals?
 - Does the mandatory provision provide for the preferred outcomes?
 - Will the majority of proposals not in accordance with the mandatory provisions be clearly unacceptable?
 - Will the mandatory provision reduce administrative costs?
140. Having regard to those criteria I am satisfied that the application of mandatory floor area ratios in the Arden Precinct, including in the higher density precincts within Arden Central, as a general principle is consistent with *Planning Practice Note 59*. Although I acknowledge that such was not recommended in preceding background documents. However, I consider that further urban design evidence and analysis is required to derive the quantum of the ratios, to better reflect the vision for the Arden precinct.
141. Floor area ratios have two key functions:
- To control the density and amount of development that occurs.
 - To encourage creativity in the design and massing of a development.
142. Traditional building height and setback controls encourage developers and architects to design to the maximum height and to the minimum setbacks, in order to maximise development potential. This can result in a poor design response and adverse amenity and character outcomes. With a mandatory floor area ratio control, the total floorspace permitted on a site is predetermined and cannot be varied. There is no imperative for developers and architects to push a building up and out to minimum standards. Rather, site yield is set and the design exercise focuses on modulating building locations and articulation on a site. This is especially the case when combined with discretionary building heights and setback.
143. If a floor area ratio is discretionary and can be varied, these benefits are largely lost. Rather than modulating a building form within a given yield, discretion can be sought to vary the ratio, thus providing for a move back towards the more traditional approach of maximising development yield based on minimum setbacks and maximum permitted heights.
144. Where concerns exist that the density of development in Arden is already too high, discretion to vary floor area ratios exacerbates this concern.
145. In my opinion it is appropriate floor area ratios be mandatory in all precincts in Arden. If the Panel is concerned that this may unreasonably impact on development potential or yield, the numerical values of the ratio should be reviewed, not the mandatory nature of the ratio.

10. Strategic justification for the vision and built form controls

10.1. Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan 2012

146. The original structure plan prepared by Melbourne City Council related to both the Arden and Macaulay areas. It included various comments in relation to the development capacity of the combined area. It identified a potential capacity for the whole area of around 22,500 jobs (on top of 5,564 existing jobs in 2011) and 20,500 residents (on top of 2,670 existing residents in 2011).²⁴
147. It identified the potential of the Arden Central area, in the vicinity of a proposed new station, to accommodating some 14,000 jobs, 4,000 residents and 12,000 students:
- A new extension to Melbourne's capital city is proposed in the south eastern end of Arden-Macaulay. This will bring significant investment and employment opportunities to the area. Arden Central will accommodate 14,000 jobs, 4,000 residents and 12,000 students within an active, mixed use precinct. The viability of this centre is dependent upon the extension of a high quality rail service connecting Arden Central directly to Melbourne.*²⁵
148. Stage 1 of the Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan was implemented for the Macaulay area only by Amendment C190 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme. That amendment included a DDO that generally supports a mid-rise form of urban development of between 6 to 12 storeys.
149. The 2012 structure plan identified a proposed new metro rail station as a catalyst for development within the Arden Central precinct. It identified Arden Central as Stage 2 of the development, and that to support the establishment of a new station around 30,000 jobs would be required within a 10 minute walk of the station, as well the requirement for dwellings:
- To support the establishment of a Metro, a significant density of jobs (in the order of 30,000 jobs within a 10 minute walk) and dwellings are required.*²⁶ 2012 Structure plan (page 45)
150. In relation to land use and built form the structure plan set out a number of objectives to be achieved in terms of:
- Creating a vibrant central city district around Arden Central.
 - Developing built form controls that establish compact walkable environments.
 - Increasing densities.
 - Creating streets for people.
 - Integrate new development with character and scale of adjacent suburbs.

²⁴ Arden Macaulay Structure Plan 2021, page 5

²⁵ Ibid., page 8

²⁶ Ibid. page 45

- Investigate additional buildings for inclusion in heritage overlays to protect Arden-Macaulay’s industrial heritage.
 - Establish built form controls to ensure new development is adaptable over the long term.
 - Create high quality, liveable dwellings that include housing choice.
 - Activate public open space through building design.²⁷
151. As a consequence of the above objectives, general built form principles were identified that resulted in a building height of between 20 to 30 metres (6 to 9 storeys).²⁸
152. A minimum residential density of some 100 dwellings per gross hectare was envisaged (including the street network and open space).²⁹

10.2. Central City Narrative SGS 2016

153. The Central City Narrative was prepared by SGS for the Metropolitan Planning Authority and Melbourne Metro Rail Authority in 2016. The report described the demand for employment and residential development in the Central City and planned urban renewal areas and assessed the capacity of those areas to accommodate future growth to 2031 and 2051.
154. Estimates were based on general assumptions about densities per hectare and levels of redevelopment that were occurring with a central city context. The assessment did not take into account a detailed consideration of opportunities and constraints in areas like Arden, or the overall built form character that would be appropriate to realise a yet to be established vision for Arden.
155. The report identified that the Arden Precinct was likely to have the capacity for some 29,000 additional jobs and 15,000 additional residents:
- This precinct is projected to accommodate 15,000 additional residents between 2031 and 2051 and 29,000 additional jobs.*³⁰
156. Those figures equated to a total of 34,000 jobs and 15,000 residents, having regard to the existing number of jobs (3,000) and residents (500) in the area in 2011.³¹
157. The report did not consider built form, character or amenity considerations in terms of how the area may develop in the future.

²⁷ Arden Macaulay Structure Plan 2021, Section 3

²⁸ Ibid., page 50-54

²⁹ Ibid., page 46

³⁰ Central City Narrative, Page 31

³¹ Ibid., page 28 and page 24 respectively

10.3. Melbourne Metro Business Case, February 2016

158. The business case for the Melbourne Metro referred to a population potential for the wider Arden Macaulay Precinct of some 43,000 jobs and 25,000 people:

The Victorian Government and Local Government identified Arden-Macaulay Precinct as a key urban renewal site that could catalyse a new CBD-fringe mixed-use office precinct with a potential to accommodate 25,000 residents and in excess of 43,000 jobs.³²

159. The estimates were derived from the Central City Narrative Final Report (September 2015), referred to above.
160. The document stated that a further detailed business case was required to be undertaken for the proposed new Arden Station.
161. The report made no comment about built form, character or amenity considerations in terms of how the area may develop.

10.4. Arden Vision 2018

162. Arden Vision 2018 built on the strategic vision identified for the area by the Arden Macaulay Structure Plan (2012) and additional strategic work undertaken in the interim.
163. The overall vision for the area as identified in the 2021 Arden Structure Plan and the amendment documentation, is derived from this document.
164. Arden Vision summarised the highlights of the precinct as being:
- A new destination in Melbourne.
 - More than 34,000 jobs and 15,000 residents by 2051.
 - A major transport hub around North Melbourne Station (now Arden Station).
 - An enhanced Moonee Ponds Creek.
 - Two new urban boulevards.
 - Building on Parkville's role as a technology, life sciences, health and education precinct.
 - Providing at least 6% of affordable housing for low to moderate income households.
 - Creating a new character for the precinct.
 - To be developed under urban design guidelines that build on Arden's emerging character.
 - Making better use of water and expand spaces for recreation and biodiversity.
 - Delivering innovative community hubs and two to four new schools.³³

³² Melbourne Metro Business Case, February 2016, Page 60

³³ Arden Vision 2018, page 12

165. The document was framed around the following key directions:

- Transforming Arden.
- Designing a distinctive place.
- Embedding sustainable change.
- Accommodating diverse communities.
- Prioritising active transport.
- Investing in community infrastructure.
- Celebrating water.
- Creative diverse open space.
- Delivering Arden.³⁴

166. Each key direction contained:

- A discussion.
- Objectives.
- Planned outcomes.

167. No assessment or quantitative guidance was provided in the Arden Vision document in relation to the built form, character or amenity of the area that would be required to accommodate the level of redevelopment envisaged or the stated in the vision for the precinct.

10.5. Arden Concept Plan Urban Renewal Precinct, MGS Architects, September 2018

168. MGS Architects was commissioned by the Victorian Planning Authority in June 2018 to prepare a concept plan for the Arden Precinct. The concept plan was to include testing of prior assumptions and high-level engagement with key stakeholders.

169. The document states that the overall design principles and land use priorities outlined in the Government endorsed Arden Vision document were confirmed through the process, and that the scale and intensity of development was identified as being generally consistent with international benchmark precedents for similar renewal precincts.³⁵

170. The plan largely involved a detailed yield assessment. It documented a number of things that had changed since earlier work had been undertaken, which reduced the development potential of the precinct. Those things included:

- Flood mitigation.
- The inability to substantially build over the new station.

³⁴ Ibid., page 12

³⁵ Arden Concept Plan, page 6

- Solar access to parks.
 - A reduced development area.³⁶
171. The yield analysis contained in the document resulted in estimates of future floor space to accommodate the forecast level of redevelopment and identified required floor area ratios throughout the precinct, ranging between 2.1 and 14.9, as shown in Figure 16. It noted that the floor area ratios provided are based on gross land areas which include existing and proposed roads.
172. Whilst the document contained a brief global benchmarking exercise of other innovation precincts, it did not set out any principles or guidelines for the future built form within the precinct.
173. Arden Vision identified the potential for 34,000 jobs and 15,000 residents in the precinct. The Arden Concept Plan varied that marginally to 35,100 and 12,300 residents.
174. However, the plan did identify ‘challenges’ in achieving the number of jobs and residents estimated for the precinct in the Arden Vision document. In particular it identified difficulties in achieving job numbers in excess of 19,300:

The current yield study has identified some potential challenges in achieving the jobs and resident figures identified in the Arden Vision. Specifically, the additional job numbers above the 19,300 jobs identified by SPP would be difficult to deliver with certainty if these need to be located in the Laurens St and Arden North neighbourhoods. This is due to the fragmented landholdings, existing development patterns and increased area needed within Arden North for stormwater management.

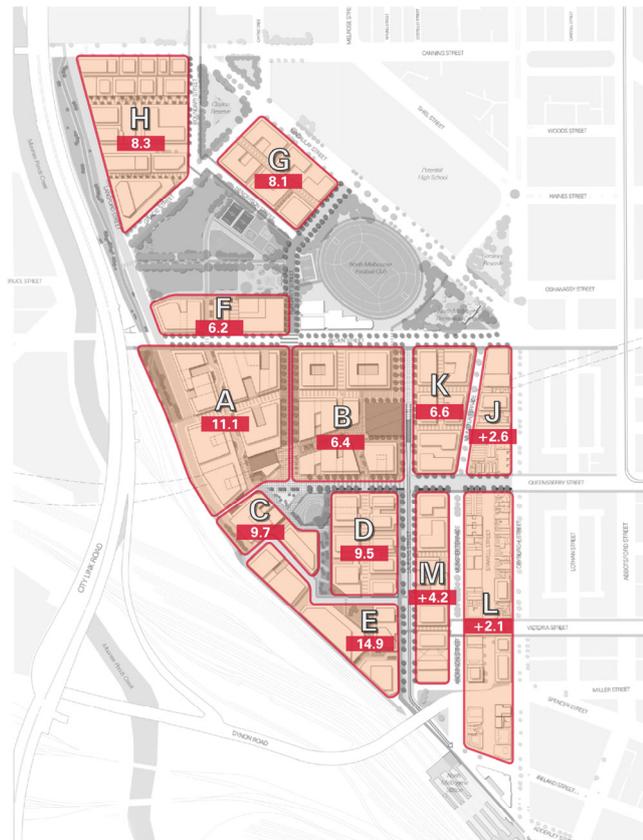


Fig 21. Estimated Floor Area Ratios

Figure 16 - Arden Concept Plan, MGS Architects, page 41

³⁶ Ibid., Page 31

175. The study suggested:

In order to deliver a yield more consistent with the published Arden Vision figures the current concept plan is premised on a stronger focus on employment within the Arden Central area.

176. Potential built form outcomes for the precinct required to accommodate yields, were identified (Figure 17). The heights shown on that plan are considerably lower than shown in the 2021 Structure Plan and the planning scheme amendment.

177. I note that the Arden Central area referred to in this document, relates to both the Arden Central Innovation and Arden Central Mix Use sub-precincts as identified in the 2021 Structure Plan and planning scheme amendment documentation.

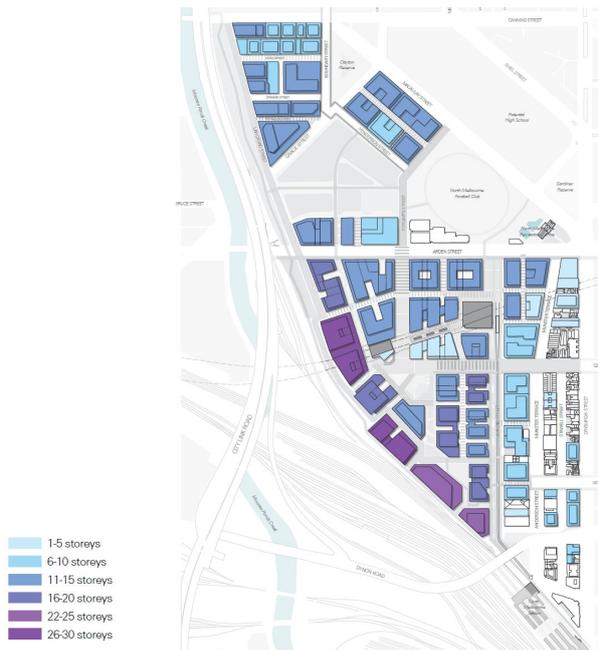
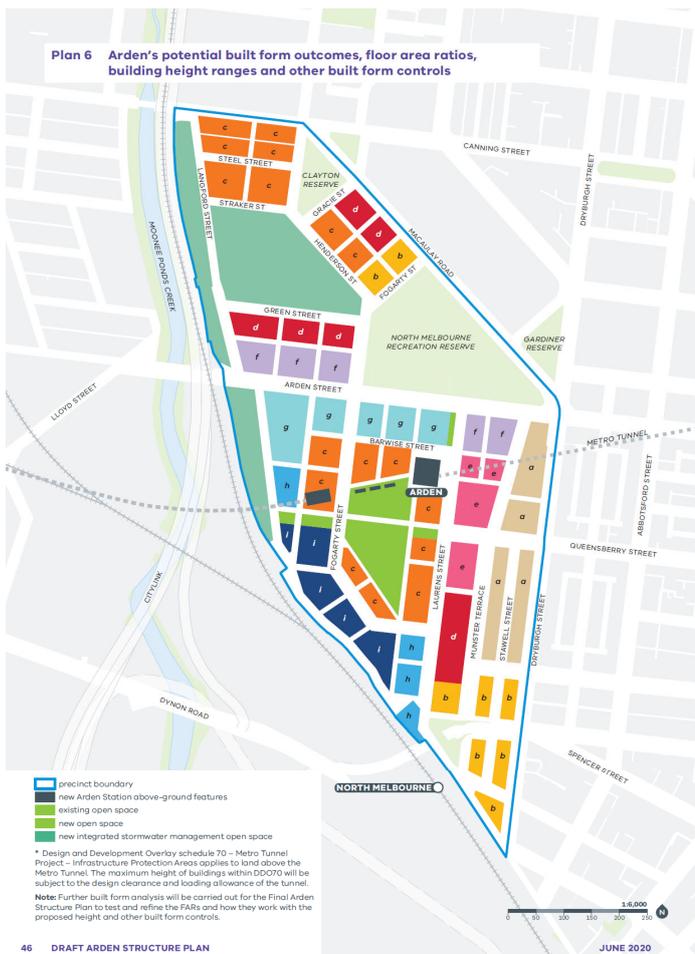


Fig 22. Built Form Height Outcomes

Figure 17 - Arden Concept Plan, MGS Architects, page 42

10.6. Draft Arden Structure Plan, June 2020

178. The draft Arden Structure Plan translated the vision for the Arden precinct into more detailed objectives and strategies to guide how the precinct should develop.
179. The document continued to provide an “aspiration to accommodate around 34,000 jobs and 15,000 residents by 2051.”
180. The plan repeated the vision from the Arden Vision document and built on the eight key directions contained in Arden Vision 2018.
181. The plan identified detailed building heights, floor area ratios and setbacks from the street wall throughout the Arden Precinct. It did not provide an commentary regarding other building form controls such setbacks from other boundaries, building separation or the like.
182. The building height and floor area ratios varied considerable from the Arden Concept Plan prepared by SGS, particularly in the Arden Central sub-precincts. I am not aware of the any publicly available urban design strategy or built form strategy having been prepared that supported or justified the building heights and floor area ratios contained in the document.



	DESIRED OUTCOME	MAXIMUM POTENTIAL FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)	POTENTIAL BUILDING HEIGHT RANGE	OTHER POTENTIAL BUILT FORM CONTROLS
a*	Launess Street Low rise, mid-density development to respect adjacent existing heritage area	4:1	3–6 storeys	• Setback above 4 storey street wall
b	Arden North – adjacent to North Melbourne Recreation Reserve Launess Street – Interface with West Melbourne Structure Plan as per C309 controls Mid-rise, mid-density development with overshadowing controls for North Melbourne Recreation Reserve	5:1	4–8 storeys	• Setback above 4 storey street wall
c*	Arden North & Arden Central – core around new open space Mid-rise development with overshadowing controls for Clayton Reserve and the new open spaces proposed in Arden North and Arden Central	6:1	6–15 storeys	• Setback above 6 storey street wall adjacent to open space
d	Arden North Launess Street Mid to high rise development, mixed typologies including hybrid development (e.g. perimeter block with tower) Overshadowing controls of North Melbourne Recreation Reserve and proposed Munster Terrace linear park	7:1	12–18 storeys (Arden North) 8–16 storeys (Launess Street)	• Setback above 4 storey street wall along Munster Terrace • Front, side and rear setbacks
e*	Launess Street Predominantly mid-rise development, transitioning from Munster Terrace to Arden Central	8:1	10–16 storeys	• Setback above 4 storey street wall along Munster Terrace • Front, side and rear setbacks
f	Arden North Launess Street High-rise development fronting Arden Street	9:1	12–20 storeys	• Setback above 6 storey street wall along Arden Street • Setback above 4 storey street wall along Fogarty Street and Munster Terrace • Front, side and rear setbacks
g	Arden Central Mid to high rise development, mixed typologies for innovation uses including hybrid development (e.g. perimeter block with tower).	10:1	8–25 storeys	• Setback above 6 storey street wall along Arden Street and Fogarty Street extension • Front, side and rear setbacks
h*	Mid to high rise development, mixed typologies including hybrid development (e.g. perimeter block with tower)	12:1	20–35 storeys	• Setback above 6 storey street wall along Fogarty Street extension. • Front, side and rear setbacks
i	High rise development, mixed typologies including hybrid development (e.g. perimeter block with tower)	15:1	30–40 storeys	• Setback above 6 storey street wall. • Front, side and rear setbacks

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Figure 18 - Built Form Outcomes (Draft Structure Plan 2020)

10.7. Arden Structure Plan August 2021

183. The version of the Arden Structure Plan exhibited with Draft Amendment C407 is the 2021 version.
184. The plan continued with a strategy to facilitate development to deliver on the aspiration of approximately 34,000 jobs and 15,000 residents in the precinct, consistent with the previous draft Structure Plan and Arden Vision document. This is despite the density of development being increased in the 2021 version of Structure Plan:

Deliver a highly liveable, mixed-use precinct of Melbourne that aspires to accommodate approximately 34,000 jobs and around 15,000 residents with innovation at its heart.³⁷

185. The 2021 plan repeated the vision contained in the Arden Vision document and is based on the same eight key directions from Arden Vision. As with the draft Structure Plan, for each key direction it set out:

- Objectives.
- A discussion.
- Strategies.

186. Whilst the themes remain the same, the objectives are strategies have varied from those contained in the draft Structure Plan.

187. A major area of difference compared to the draft structure plan are the floor area ratios identified. The floor area ratios are generally higher than those identified in the draft structure plan.

188. Between the preparation of the draft Structure Plan and the 2021 Structure Plan, two reports were prepared that addressed built form (see discussion below). Neither of those reports provided strategic justification for the built form changes that occurred between the two versions of the structure plan.



Proposed floor area ratios and building heights

ID	MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)	BUILDING HEIGHT RANGE
Low-rise		
a	4:1	3-6 storeys (13-25 metres)
Mid-rise		
b	6:1	6-8 storeys (25-33 metres)
c	6:1	8-14 storeys (33-51 metres)
d	8:1	8-14 storeys (33-57 metres)
e	8:1	8-16 storeys (33-65 metres)
f	8:1	12-18 storeys (49-64 metres)
g	9:1	12-18 storeys (49-64 metres)
High-rise		
h	10:1	12-18 storeys (49-64 metres)
i	12:1	12-20 storeys (49-81 metres)
j	12:1	16-24 storeys (65-83 metres)
k	17:1	30-40 storeys (121-134 metres)

Figure 19 - Built Form Outcomes (Arden Structure Plan 2021)

³⁷ Arden Structure Plan 2021, Objective 3, page 12

10.8. Built Form Testing, Hayball April 2021

189. The Hayball report was prepared to test the built form directions contained in the draft Structure Plan.
190. The report did not provide an overall urban design or built form strategy for the precinct. Rather it tested the combination of building heights and floor area ratios derived from the draft structure plan in relation to a number of individual sites. It made assumptions regarding other built form parameters, as the detailed built form controls proposed in the amendment had not been determined at that time.
191. The report does not in my opinion provide an overall strategic justification for the building heights and floor area ratios contained in the 2021 Arden Structure Plan and amendment package, or for the changes that were made between the draft Structure Plan 2020 and the 2021 Structure Plan.

10.9. Arden Urban Design and Built Form Analysis, VPA September 2021

192. This document was prepared by the VPA after the 2020 draft Structure Plan had been prepared:

The Arden Urban Design and Built Form Analysis has been undertaken by the Victorian Planning Authority to inform and complement work undertaken by other contributors following the Arden Vision and the Draft Arden Structure Plan (the Draft Plan).³⁸

193. It focussed on determining individual elements of built form controls such as street interfaces, podium heights, setbacks, solar protection wind effects and the like, to complete the full suite of built form controls appropriate to be included in a planning scheme amendment. It is the first document I am aware of that provided this level detail about built form controls for the precinct.
194. However, document did not provide an overall built form strategy for the Arden Precinct, nor did it provide strategic justification for the increase in density apparent between the draft Structure Plan and the 2021 Structure Plan. Rather it reviewed examples of individual buildings built within the precinct and surrounding area, built form controls from elsewhere throughout the municipality, and suggested a range of detailed built form controls for Arden.

³⁸ Urban Design and Built Form Analysis, VPA, page 4

10.10. Conclusions

195. From my review of publicly available background documents supporting and leading to the Arden Structure Plan 2021 and accompanying planning scheme amendment, it is apparent that:

- The proposed built form outcomes have largely been derived from a yield analysis to accommodate around 34,000 jobs and 15,000 residents.
- Whilst the vision for the area and its employment and population estimates have stayed consistent since the Arden Vision document in 2018, development densities and building heights have increased considerably, without any apparent strategic review or justification.
- The 2018 Arden Concept Plan prepared by MGS Architects was largely a development yield study. The Hayball study in 2021 largely tested the application of floor area ratios and building heights from the draft 2020 structure plan on individual sites. The 2021 VPA Urban Design and Built Form Analysis focussed on expanding the built form controls to include a full suite of controls necessary to include in a planning scheme amendment.
- I am not aware of a comprehensive urban design or built form strategy prepared for the area, that sets out urban design and built form principles, upon which to base future development in the area, having regard to the attributes of the area and its surrounds, and the vision identified for the precinct.
- Such a strategy should not be sole driving force behind determining built form. However, it is an important strategy that is needed, to be balanced against a development yield approach. Finding an appropriate balance between character and yield is critical if the ambitions of the vision for Arden are to be realised:

Arden will be shaped by exemplary urban design and built form, anchored by the valued characteristics that make the suburbs of North and West Melbourne special to its residents and workers. Public areas will respond to the existing environment and strengthen the evolving identity of the precinct. – Arden Vision, 2018.³⁹

- To date the balance is skewed toward yield, rather than exemplary urban design and built form outcome.

196. Given the weight placed on yield in the evolution of the planning controls, additional expert economic input should have been required in the preparation of the final 2021 Structure Plan. This is needed to confirm the land use mix inherent in the structure plan / amendment, and the implications of the revised density controls on the ultimate yield and mix of uses provided for. I note that a retail assessment was undertaken between the preparation of the draft Structure Plan and the 2021 Structure Plan, but not a further overall economic assessment that addresses all potential land uses.

³⁹ Arden Structure Plan, page 31

11. Proposed Special Use Zone Schedule 7 does not adequately support employment and innovation uses

197. Council's submission:

The mechanism to manage land use, SUZ7, does not provide provisions to ensure the appropriate mix of employment and residential space is delivered, risking Arden being primarily residential.

The proposed PSA does not provide sufficient controls to deliver floorspace to accommodate 34,000 jobs. Despite the land use table triggering the assessment of accommodation in Arden Central – Innovation and Arden North, the proposed decision guidelines and local policy provisions provide ambiguous and unquantifiable guidance that are unlikely to mitigate the market delivering development according to "highest and best use" principles, resulting primarily in residential development. This fails to meet the core purpose of Arden's urban renewal and the early investment in Arden Station to create "opportunities to provide accessible and affordable office space, and to strengthen and expand the knowledge economy by developing urban renewal sites" outlined within the Melbourne Metro business case and Plan Melbourne.

CoM submits that accommodation should also be a Section 2 use in Arden Central – Mixed Use, and the discretion guidance in the local policy should be relocated to the decision guidelines of the SUZ7 and strengthened with quantitative controls to establish clear limits to the extent of residential development.

Strategies within the revised Structure Plan outlining the types of land uses, and the facilities and spaces required to support them, have not been implemented in the PSA.

198. A key objective of the Structure Plan is to:

Deliver a highly liveable, mixed-use precinct of Melbourne that aspires to accommodate approximately 34,000 jobs and around 15,000 residents with innovation at its heart.⁴⁰

199. The Structure Plan identifies that:

The Special Use Zone will deliver the land use framework vision for Arden to facilitate its transformation to an employment focussed and amenity-rich innovation precinct. Zoning needs to manage conflicting land uses and activities to ensure that this mix of uses creates the platform for innovation and activation and liveable places and spaces.

To be successful, Arden needs to deliver approximately two-thirds of its development for employment uses and one-third for residential uses.

200. Planning can only control the types of uses that occur in a sub-precinct, if the uses are either conditional Section 1 uses or are Section 2 uses, i.e. permit required. If a use is a Section 2 use, a responsible authority can refuse a permit application if there is a policy basis to do so. A planning policy responding to the mix of employment compared to residential uses in a sub-precinct, would provide the basis for such to occur. If a use

⁴⁰ Arden Structure Plan 2021, Page 27

- is a Section 1 use (i.e. no permit required), a planning permit cannot be refused for a use (however any condition opposite the use must be complied with).
201. Accommodation uses are as-of right in all sub-precincts within Arden. The only restriction on accommodation uses proposed, is that in the Arden Central Innovation and the Arden North sub-precincts, a planning permit is required for accommodation uses on the first 6 levels of a building. This condition provides the opportunity to refuse a planning permit for accommodation uses on the lower 6 levels of a building.
 202. I have estimated the total potential floor area that would result if the lower 6 levels of all potential development within the Arden Central Innovation and Arden North precincts was used for non-residential uses. I have also included an assessment for Arden Central Mixed Use, to determine the potential that would exist in that area if a similar condition was imposed:
 - Arden Central Innovation - 286,938 sqm
 - Arden North - 249,900 sqm
 - Arden Central Mixed Use – 166,128 sqm
 203. The resultant total potential floor area for non-residential uses in Arden Central Innovation and Arden North would be 536,838 sqm. This would be increased to 702,966 sqm if the Arden Central Mixed Use sub-precinct had the same condition.
 204. I have estimated the total potential floor area within the overall Arden Precinct to be 1,518,000 sqm. Two thirds of that floor area is 1,012,000 sqm. A floor area of 536,838 would equate to only about 1/3 of total potential floor of the precinct. This would be increased to around 46% if a similar requirement was imposed in the Arden Central Mixed Use sub-precinct. This is still well below the two thirds referred in the structure plan.
 205. Based on the above, it is my opinion that there is strong merit in Council's concern regarding the mechanism provided in Schedule 7 of the Special Use Zone, to manage the balance between commercial and residential floor space.
 206. I would support the proposed mechanism being extended to at least apply the Arden Central Mixed Use sub-precinct. Such would be consistent with the mixed use land use intent of that zone.
 207. Requiring the first 6 levels of a building to be used for non-residential uses is a relatively crude measure, that does not respond to the size of individual buildings. For example, it would apply to the whole of a 6 level building, or only to the bottom 6 levels of a 40 storey building.
 208. An option would be to reword the condition to relate to a percentage of the total floor area of a building. As an example I estimate that:
 - Approximately 60% of the potential floor area of buildings in the above three precincts would be required to be non-residential, to deliver the same amount of floor space as would result from a requirement relating to the lower 6 levels of a building.
 - Approximately 85% would be required to deliver two thirds of the total potential floor area within the precinct, as required by the Structure Plan.
 209. This demonstrates the order of magnitude of non-residential development envisaged to be needed to be established in the precinct to realise its employment visions. I consider that existing provisions of the Special Use Zone significantly underestimate the magnitude of the task.

12. Exclusion of third-party notice and review rights

210. Council's submission:

CoM does not support the proposed exclusion of third party notice and review rights. It is inappropriate to apply this exclusion where the proposed controls, including future built form and land-use, do not provide sufficient certainty or mechanisms to achieve the revised Structure Plan and where future community members affected by these proposals have not participated in the planning process.⁴¹

211. The following exemptions from third party rights are proposed from the various planning permit triggers contained in the amendment package:

- Land Use – Clause 2.0 of Schedule 7 to the Special Use Zone – All uses exempt, other than for a number of hospitality uses within the Arden North and Laurens Precinct – Agree with this exemption.
- Subdivision – Clause 3.0 of Schedule 7 to the Special Use Zone – All subdivision is exempt – Agree.
- Buildings and work – Clause 4.0 of Schedule 7 of the Special Use Zone – All buildings and works exempt under the zone controls – Agree.
- Buildings and works – Clause 2.10 of the schedules to each of the DDOs. Disagree.

212. A benefit of undertaking a detail strategic planning process prior to the introduction of planning controls, is to facilitate development consistent with that work, once an amendment has been implemented into the scheme. This can be done by removing the opportunity for third party rights for development that complies with the strategic directions identified in the preceding work. This is justified on the basis that the community has had the opportunity to comment on the planning controls implemented, as part of the amendment process.

213. I generally agree with this proposition.

214. In situations where the planning controls provide discretion, the level of certainty about the land use and built form that may eventuate is considerably reduced. This justifies the alignment of exemptions with compliance with preferred or discretionary requirements specified in planning controls.

215. The existing exemptions proposed in Schedule 7 of the Special Use Zone relate to most but not all land uses, to buildings and work under the zone controls and to subdivision. I support the retention of those exemptions.

216. The permit trigger provided for buildings and works in the DDOs will be the principle planning tool that influences built form i.e. building height, floor area ratios, setbacks etc. Those parts of the DDO most relevant to exemptions if the requirements are met are Clause 2.4 Street Wall Height, Clause 2.5 Building Setbacks and Clause 2.6 Building Heights and Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

217. In my opinion, it would be appropriate to vary the exemption in the four DDOs, to exempt buildings and works that comply with the above clauses of the DDOs, but require third party involvement for developments that do not comply with the requirements.

⁴¹ City of Melbourne Submission to the Arden Planning Package, Page 12

13. Conclusion

218. Arden represents a unique and significant urban renewal opportunity, to establish a world-leading renewal precinct.
219. Whilst the vision for the precinct is sound, over time a disconnect has emerged between the vision the planning policies and controls that have emerged to implement the vision. The latest Structure Plan and planning scheme amendment in particular, have stepped away for the vision for the precinct.
220. Detail has been lost, the emphasis on the implementation of key elements of the Structure Plan has diminished, and the overall density of development has been driven by yield and increased, without commensurate attention being given to the built form required realise the ambitious vision for the area.
221. The structure identified for the area and many its features such as a new metro station, the focus on water, the greening of the area, open space, new boulevards, the enhancement of the Moonee Ponds Creek, health and education facilities, a carbon zero outcome, as well as a major activity centre and a range of other community services and facilities, will certainly assist in distinguishing the area. What is required is for the built form that fills in the gaps between these areas, to complement them in an appropriate way.
222. This can be achieved with a realignment of planning scheme amendment with the vision for the area.



David Barnes

Town Planner BTRP(Hons), MBA, FPIA

Attachment 1 Curriculum Vitae

David Barnes

Managing Director

email dbarnes@hansenpartnership.com.au | phone +61 3 9664 9818 | mobile + 61 419 327 556

Summary of Experience

David has been a town planner since 1980. With an MBA to supplement his planning qualifications, David is both a strategic planning specialist and an experienced statutory planner. As a statutory planner, David has been involved in obtaining planning approvals for a wide range of projects including residential, retail, commercial, industrial, rural, tourism, entertainment, sports, recreation and community development projects. He has extensive experience representing clients at planning appeals and panel hearings as both an advocate and as an expert witness.

As a strategic planner, David's experience encompasses policy formulation and implementation; preparation of strategy plans, structure plans, urban design frameworks, development plans, planning schemes and amendments; community consultation; preparation of infrastructure funding strategies and development contributions plans; and preparation of commercial, industrial and residential market assessments.

In addition, David has experience in Asia, preparing urban management plans, strategy plans, structure plans, master plans and detailed plans, planning and development controls, and in relation to institutional strengthening programs and professional training programs.

Current Position

Hansen Partnership

Managing Director
January 2012 – present

Past Positions

Hansen Partnership

Director (September 1997 – December 2011)

Henshall Hansen Associates

Director (July 1995 – Aug 1997)
Associate Director (1992 – July 1995)
Senior Planner (April 1988 – November 1989)
Associate (1989-1992)

WBCM Consultants Limited

Senior Urban Planner (July 1985 – April 1988)

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works

Statutory Planner (February – June 1985)
Planning Officer (April 1982 – February 1984)

Estate Office, Victorian Railways

Town planner (November 1980 – April 1982)

Qualifications

- Master of Business Administration, RMIT University (1993)
- Bachelor of Town and Regional Planning (hons), University of Melbourne (1980)

Affiliations

- Property Council of Australia, Victoria Division (2012 – 2016; 2009-2010) - Member of planning committee
- Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) (2007 – present) - Fellow
- Victoria Planning and Environmental Law Association (2009 – present) - member
- Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) (1996-2007) - Member
- Royal Australian Planning Institute - Vice President and Treasurer (1996-1997)

Specialisations

- Strategic planner
- Statutory planner
- Town planning advocate
- Town planning expert witness
- Infrastructure funding and development contributions
- International planning – urban management, institutional strengthening, training

Key Project Experience

Structure Planning

- Review of Bayswater / Bayswater North Industrial Precinct, with the AEC Group, State Development Business and Innovation (2014)
- Bendigo Hospital Surrounds Structure Plan, the City of Greater Bendigo (2013)
- Birregurra Structure Plan Review, Otway Shire Council (2013)
- Chapel Vision Structure Plan Review, Stonnington City Council (2013)
- Warrnambool – North Dennington Structure Plan and Development Control Plan, Warrnambool City Council (2012)
- Hamilton Structure Plan and Town Centre Urban Design Framework, for South Grampians Shire (2010)
- Traralgon Town Centre Structure Plan and Urban Design Framework, for Latrobe Valley Shire (2010)
- Ringwood Transit City Development Contributions Plan, for Maroondah City Council (2009)
- Frankston Safe Boat Harbour Planning Scheme Amendment, for Frankston City Council (2008)
- Clifton Springs Town Centre Structure Plan, for the City of Greater Geelong (2008)
- Warrnambool and Moyne Development Program, for Warrnambool City Council and Moyne Shire Council (2008)
- Spring Creek Urban Growth Framework Plan and Precinct Structure Plan, for the Surf Coast Shire (2008)
- Newhaven, Cape Woolamai and San Remo Structure Plan, for Bass Coast Shire Council (2007)
- Ocean Grove Structure Plan, for the City of Greater Geelong (2006)
- Jackass Flat Structure Plan, Greater Bendigo City Council (2006)
- Burwood Heights Activity Centre Structure Plan, Whitehorse City Council, (2004)
- Torquay / Jan Juc Population and Residential Development Review, (2004)
- West Melbourne Structure Plan, for the City of Melbourne (2003)
- Highett Structure Plan, for the Cities of Bayside and Kingston (2002-2003)

Character Studies

- Barwon Heads Residential and Landscape Character Study (2017)
- Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, Otway Shire Council, (2011)
- Romsey Neighbourhood Character Study, for Macedon Ranges Shire, (2010)
- Boroondara My Neighbourhood – Prized Residential Character Areas, for

Boroondara City Council (2008)

- Dandenong Neighbourhood Character Study, for the City of Greater Dandenong (2007-2008)
- Queenscliffe Urban Character Study, for the Borough of Queenscliffe (2000)

Strategy Planning and Studies

- Mitchell Rural Land and Activities Review, for the Shire of Mitchell (2019)
- Eastern Region Metropolitan Land Use Framework Plan, for the Department of Land Water Environment and Planning (2017-2019)
- Garden Area Review, for the Department of Land, Water Environment and Planning, (2018)
- Avalon Corridor Framework Plan, for the Cities of Greater Geelong and Wyndeham, and the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (2017)
- Baw Baw Rural Land Use Strategy, for the Baw Baw Shire Council (2016)
- Community Plans for Nerrim South, Labatouche, Jindivik and Trafalgar, for the Shire of Baw Baw (2016)
- Ballarat Growth Areas Review, for the Greater City of Ballarat (2016)
- Frankston Native Vegetation Control Review, for the City of Frankston (2015)
- La Trobe University Bendigo Campus Vision, for La Trobe University (2014)
- La Trobe University Boroondara Campus Vision, La Trobe University (2012)
- Mildura Settlement Strategy, Mildura Rural City Council (2013)
- New Gisborne Development Plan, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, (2011)
- Traralgon Growth Areas Review, for LaTrobe City Council (2011)
- Sweetwater Creek, Strategic Justification for Development / Environmental Overlays, for Frankston City Council (2010)
- Shepparton East Outline Development Plan, for the City of Greater Shepparton (2009)
- Fishermans Bend Industrial Land Review, with Charter Keck Cramer, for Port Phillip City Council (2009)
- Melbourne Industrial Land Supply and Demand Study, with Charter Keck Cramer, for Melbourne City Council (2009)
- LaTrobe University Strategy Planning Review, for LaTrobe University (2008/2009)
- Review of Referral Requirements under the Victoria Planning Provisions, for the Department of Planning and Community Development (2008)
- Whitehorse Student Accommodation – Strategic Review and Planning Scheme Amendment, for Whitehorse City Council (2007)
- Geelong Region Strategy Plan, for the G21 Geelong Regional Alliance (2005-2006)

- Bell Street Strategy Plan and Urban Design Framework, Darebin City Council (2005)
- Kingston Retail and Commercial Development Strategy, with Charter keck Cramer, for the City of Kingston (2004)
- Willoughby Industrial Strategy, Willoughby City Council (2003)
- Yarra Industrial Strategy, for Yarra City Council (2003)
- Moorabool Rural Housing Study, for Moorabool Shire Council (2003)
- Ballan Township Strategy Plan, for Moorabool Shire Council (2003)
- Blackrock Shopping Centre Study, for the Cities of Bayside and Kingston, (2002-2003)
- Geelong Western Wedge Strategic Framework Plan and Railway Station Master Plan, for the Department of Infrastructure (2002)
- Bayside Industrial Areas Study, for the City of Bayside (2002)
- Moreland Industrial Areas Review, for the City of Moreland (2002)
- Geelong Industrial Land Use Study, for the City of Greater Geelong, with MacroPlan (2001)
- Anglesea Population Review and Review of Township Boundaries, for Surf Coast Shire Council (2000)
- Torquay Population and Residential Strategy Review, for Surf Coast Shire Council (2000)
- Torquay Industrial Area Review, for Surf Coast Shire Council (2000)
- Bayside Height Control Study, for the City of Bayside (1999)
- Geelong CAA Revitalisation Program, for the Greater City of Geelong (1998)
- Sydenham Activity Area Policy Review, for the City of Brimbank (1998)

Management plans

- Melton North Green Wedge Management Plan, Melton Shire Council (2014)

Infrastructure reviews

- Ringwood Transit City Development Contributions Plan, for the Maroondah City Council (2007)
- Development Contributions Plan for Plenty and Yarrambat, for the Nillumbik Shire Council (1998-1999)
- Car Parking Rate Review, for the Department of Infrastructure (1999)

Sustainability

- Port Phillip Bay Coastal Climate Change Planning Project, for the Municipal Association of Victoria (2017 to 2019)
- Strengthening Victoria's Food Bowl, with PSI Delta, for Moira Campaspe, Swan Hill and Mildura councils (2011)
- Utilising Victoria's Planning Framework to Support Sustainability, Municipal Association of Victoria (2009-2010)
- Sustainability in the Planning Process, for the municipalities of Moreland, Port Phillip and Darebin (2007-2008)
- Doncaster Hill Energy Plan, for Manningham City Council and Sustainability Victoria (2008)

Urban Design Frameworks

- Torquay Town Centre Urban Design Framework and Investment Facilitation Plan, for Surf Coast Shire (2017)
- Urban Design Frameworks for Longwarry, Nerrim South and Trafalgar, for the Shire of Baw Baw (2016)
- Ringwood Town Centre Urban Design Framework, for the City of Maroondah (2002-2003)
- Knox Central Urban Design Framework, for the City of Knox (2002-2003)

Design Guidelines

- Yarra Ranges Residential Design Guidelines, for Yarra Ranges Shire (2018 / 2019)
- Knox Residential Capacity and Design Guidelines Project, Knox City Council (2010)
- Aireys Inlet Activity Centre Urban Design Guidelines, for Surf Coast Shire, (2008-2009)
- Kingston Residential Design Guidelines, for the city of Kingston (2000)
- Kingston Residential Design Guidelines, for the city of Kingston (2000)
- Miller Street and Gilbert Street Preston Design Guidelines, for Darebin City Council (2009)
- Station Street Fairfield Design Guidelines, for Darebin City Council (2008)
- Victoria Street Urban Design Framework and Streetscape Plan, for the City of Yarra (2002)
- Hastings Foreshore Urban Design Framework, for Mornington Peninsula Shire (2000)
- Carrum Urban Design Framework, for the City of Kingston (2000)

International planning

- Thai Binh Economic Zone Master Plan, with the Vietnam Institute for Urban and Rural Planning, for a private development company (2019)
- Con Dao Tourism Master Plan, for the Ba Ria Vung Tao People's Committee, Vietnam (2014 to 2016)
- Ben Dam Detailed Master Plan and Urban Management System, for the Ba Ria Vung Tao People's Committee, Vietnam (2013).
- Long Thanh International Airport Master Plan – Vietnam, with the Vietnamese Institute of Architecture Urban and Rural Planning, for the Dong Nai People's Committee (2009-2012)
- Three Delta Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project – Vietnam, with Gutteridge Haskins and Davey, for AusAide, (2002-2003)
- Capacity 21 Project – Environment Issues in Investment Planning in Vietnam – Quang Ninh Provincial Pilot Project, Ha Long Bay Vietnam, UNDP Project VIE 97/007, prepared for Colenco~Holinger (2000)
- HCMC UNDP Public Administration Reform Project, preparation of Proposal for Consultancy Team, (1999)
- Hanoi Planning and Development Controls, Hanoi, Vietnam, as part of Hanoi Planning and Development Control Project (1995-1997)