



Fairfield Village, Fairfield

Darebin Amendment C161

Expert Urban Design Evidence

Julia Bell

October 2018

Instructed by
City of Darebin

Date of site inspection(s)
12 July 2018



**DAVID LOCK
ASSOCIATES**
TOWN PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN

Contents

1.0 Introduction.....	4
2.0 Context	5
2.1 The study area.....	5
2.2 Existing Character	7
2.3 Emerging Character	12
2.4 Planning Policy Context.....	14
3.0 Overall Building Heights.....	17
3.1 Building height application (mandatory versus discretionary)	18
3.2 Minimum lot size trigger	22
3.3 Summary of overall building height recommendations	25
4.0 Street Wall and Upper Level Setback Requirements	26
4.1 Street wall heights.....	26
4.2 Upper level (front) setback requirements – Area 1.....	28
4.3 Upper level (front) setbacks – Area 2.....	33
4.4 Summary of street wall and upper level setback recommendations	35
5.0 Setbacks and Interface Responses.....	36
5.1 Side setback requirements.....	36
5.2 Rear setbacks and interface requirements	36
5.3 Summary of setback and interface response recommendations.....	37
6.0 Detailed Design.....	38
7.0 Area boundaries	39
8.0 Submissions	42
8.1 Overall Heights.....	42
8.2 Setbacks	42
8.3 Residential interface	42
9.0 Conclusion	43
Appendix A: Summary of Experience & Personal Details	45

1.0 Introduction

- [1] I am an Associate Urban Designer and Planner at David Lock Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd, a town planning and urban design consultancy. I hold qualifications in urban design and planning. I have over 10 years professional experience in planning and urban design. Further details of my qualifications and experience are outlined in Appendix A.
- [2] In July 2018, I was instructed by the City of Darebin ('Council') to provide an independent urban design assessment of proposed Amendment C161 to the Darebin Planning Scheme, which proposes to implement built form and heritage controls for Fairfield Village ('the study area').
- [3] The *Fairfield Village Built Form Guidelines, 2017* (the 'Built Form Guidelines') are proposed to be implemented into the Darebin Planning Scheme (the 'Planning Scheme') through Amendment C161 and the proposed Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 21 'Fairfield Village Neighbourhood Centre' (DDO21). As DDO21 contains the most pertinent urban design guidance, my assessment of the proposed new planning provisions focuses on this control.
- [4] I have also considered the submissions to the exhibited amendment with urban design implications to inform my assessment.
- [5] I have organised my assessment under the following headings:

Section 2.0 A summary of the physical and strategic context of the Fairfield Activity Centre

The following chapters assess DDO21 as it relates to:

Section 4.0 Overall building height requirements

Section 5.0 Street walls and upper level setback requirements

Section 6.0 Setbacks and interface responses (side and rear)

Section 7.0 Detailed design requirements

Section 8.0 Area boundaries

Section 9.0 A summary of the submissions received that raise urban design issues and my response

Section 10.0 Conclusion

2.0 Context

- [6] This section summarises the physical and strategic planning context associated with the Fairfield Village Neighbourhood Centre (study area).

2.1 The study area

- [7] Fairfield Village is a Neighbourhood Centre located in Melbourne's inner north-east and connected to Melbourne CBD via Fairfield Station which forms part of the Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN).
- [8] The study area contains land located within Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z) and generally comprises properties fronting Station Street, Wingrove Street (to the north of the railway) and Railway Place (to the south of the railway) and includes additional lots in streets adjacent to those listed above. The balance of the centre runs on a north-south axis.
- [9] Specifically, the lots located within the study area include:
- 66-157 Station Street, Fairfield;
 - 1-31 Railway Place and 36 Railway Place, Fairfield;
 - 254-294 Wingrove Street, Fairfield;
 - 41 Hanslope Avenue, Fairfield (Fairfield Railway Station and surrounding reserve); and
 - 85-87 Gillies Street, Fairfield.

Refer below.

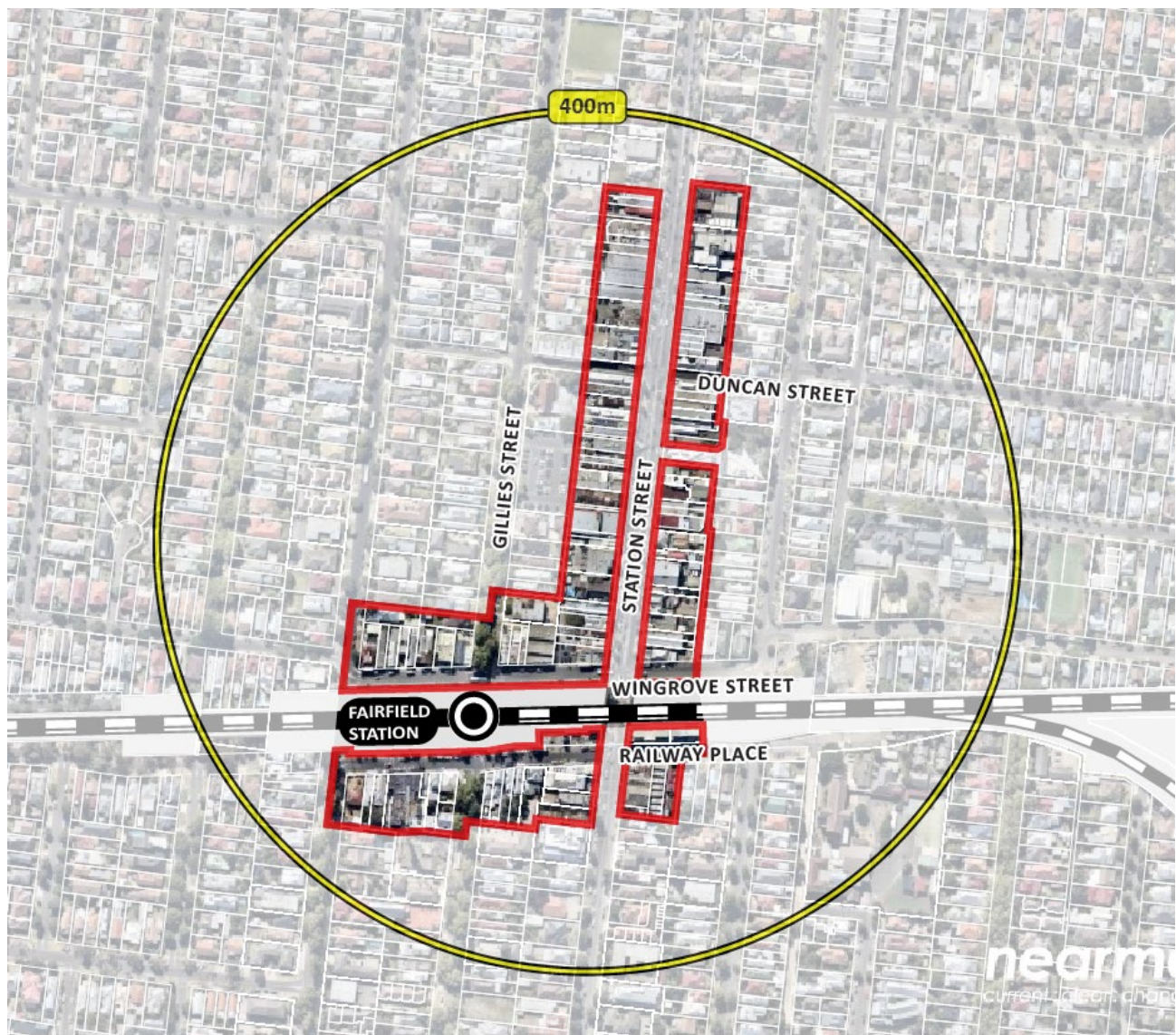


Figure 1: The study area (source: Nearmap)

- [1] The study area is generally bound by residential land in the General Residential Zone Schedule 2 (GRZ2), with land to the south along Station Street within the Residential Growth Zone Schedule 3 (GRZ3). The Fairfield Library at 121 Station Street forms part of the study area but is excluded due to its Public Use Zone (PUZ4) designation.
- [2] In terms of interfaces, the study area directly abuts the rear boundary of residential properties in most instances except for properties located on the eastern side of Station Street to the north of Wingrove Street (property no. 111-234) which have access to a rear service lane.

2.2 Existing Character

- [3] Station Street has a 'village' character, comprising a traditional main street environment of fine grain shop fronts generally of 1 to 2 storeys forming a fairly consistent streetscape elevation, excluding some isolated more recently developed higher built form. Station Street consists of a mix of considerable amount of old and moderately detailed building facades, which are interspersed with more contemporary forms. Generally, the facades include parapets that vary in height and style and add to the distinct eclecticism of the village. Refer to photos 1-8.
- [4] Land to the south of the railway station on Railway Place also contains some older buildings and varies between 1-2 storeys with a fine grain, hard edge character. Newer built form of up to 5 storeys is emerging within the streetscape and in peripheral residential zones. Refer to photos 9-16.
- [5] Wingrove Street contains a row of commercial buildings lining the northern side of the street, with the railway line and historic Station buildings on the southern side. Lots are generally of a fine grain and 1-2 storeys in height. Some built form variation consists due to previously residential properties that have been converted to commercial uses. These properties generally include small front setbacks rather than a hard edge. The historic railway station buildings and wide native vegetation strip form part of the distinct Wingrove Street character. Refer to photos 17-24.
- [1] Lots within the study area are consistently at 36m-40m in depth. Many lots have narrow frontages, reinforcing the fine grain character. Larger parcels are interspersed throughout but are generally located closer to the periphery of the study area.

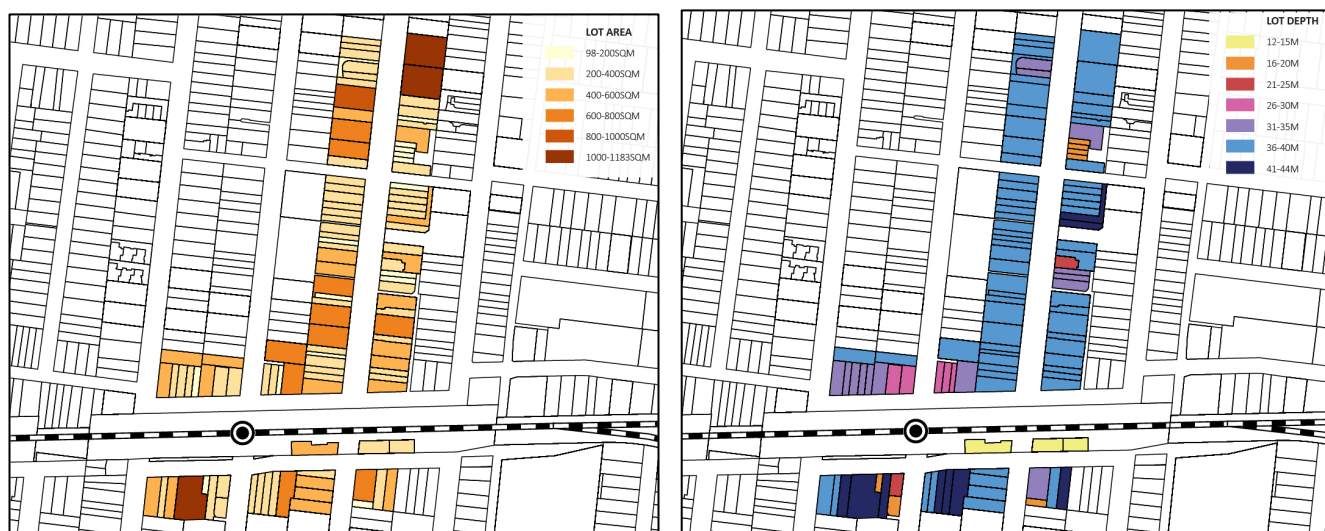
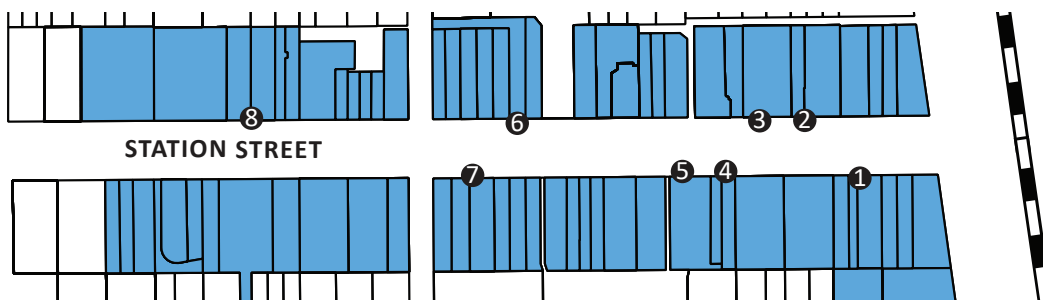
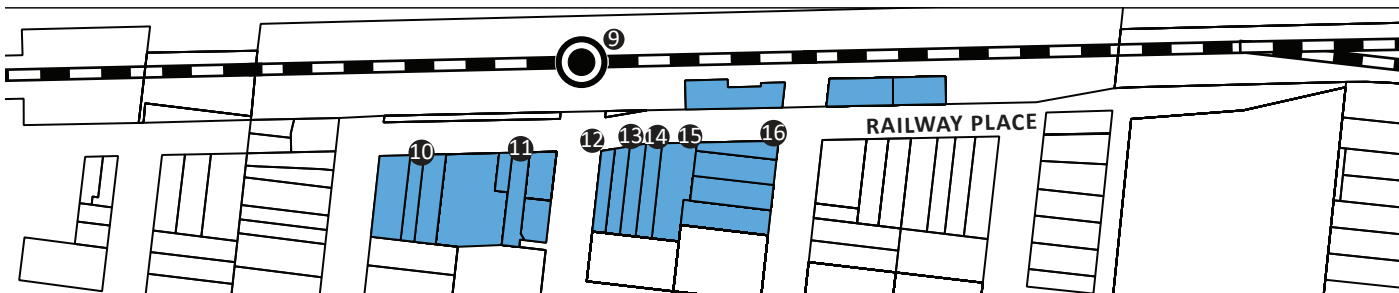
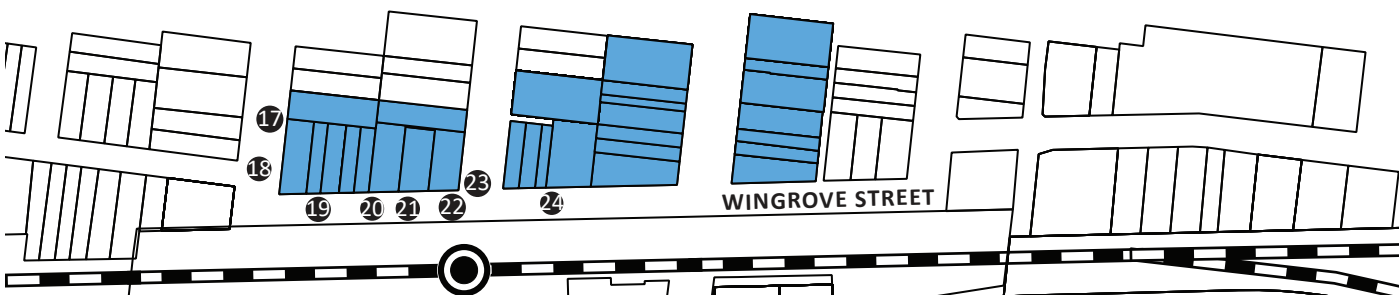


Figure 2: Lot areas (left) and lot depths (right) within the Study Area

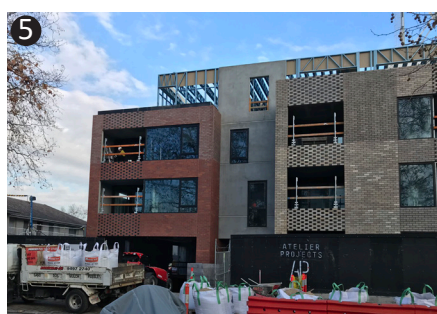






2.3 Emerging Character

- [2] Based on the Fairfield Village being an activity centre, there is an emergence of newer, taller built form within the study area (and the immediate periphery) including the following:
- 151-153 Station Street (constructed) – 4 storey overall height (photo 1);
 - 7-9 Railway Place ‘Greenwich Fairfield’ (under construction) – includes 2 buildings at 4-5 storey overall height (photo 2 and photo 5);
 - 72A Station Street ‘Nightingale’ (under construction) – 5 storey overall height (photo 3);
 - 2 Duncan Street (constructed) - 4 storey overall height (photo 4);
 - 66 Station Street (under construction) – 4 storey overall height;
 - 64 Station Street (constructed) – 4 storey overall height (photo 6);
 - 29 Railway Place ‘Greenfield’ (approved) – 4 storey overall height;
 - 91 Gillies Street (under construction) – 4 storey overall height
- [3] New residential and mixed use developments of up to 4 storeys are also emerging within the surrounding residential edge of the study area.
- [4] It is evident that a 4-5 storey built form is emerging within the study area. My observations are that 4 storey building form is generally located closer to the core of the study area, whilst 5 storey buildings are emerging on the periphery or on lots with unique attributes such as a large lot size (72A Station Street, for example).



2.4 Planning Policy Context

- [5] Plan Melbourne provides the overarching policy guidance for the future growth of Metropolitan Melbourne and shows clear support for urban consolidation in established centres that are well-placed and in proximity to existing services, jobs and public transport.
- [6] With respect to the State and Regional Planning Policy Framework, Clause 11.03-1S encourages activity centres to provide for a range of uses that are accessible to the community. Clause 11.03-1R reinforces that NACs, such as Fairfield, are to accommodate new uses and development in a manner and scale that meets the local needs of the community.
- [7] Clause 15.01-1S, 15.01-1R and 15.01-5S seeks to ensure new development responds to the existing context in terms of neighbourhood character, cultural identity and surrounding landscape conditions through high quality design outcomes.
- [8] Clause 16.01-2S reinforces housing growth in well-served locations. The clause also supports identification of new opportunities for increased density to help consolidate growth. Clause 16.01-2R identifies well-served NACs as opportunity areas for housing and other mixed use development.
- [9] Clause 17.02-1S seeks to maintain the stronghold of commercial uses in activity centres, including small scale shopping opportunities and community facilities that service local residents and workers.
- [10] Clauses 18.02-2S supports growth in locations that are connected to the existing public transport network by *‘facilitating greater use of public transport and promote increased development close to high-quality public transport routes’*.
- [11] With respect to Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), Clause 21.01-6 encourages urban intensification of NACs to an appropriate scale. Notably, The Junction – South Preston and Summerhill Village are NACs that are expressly identified as Strategic Redevelopment Precincts. Revitalisation is encouraged through new shops and services, improved pedestrian links, higher-density housing and public realm improvements.
- [12] Clause 21.02-3 seeks buildings to be constructed at a scale that supports the function of the centre whilst promoting visual and physical improvements to the public realm.

- [13] Clause 21.03-1 identifies Fairfield NAC within a Substantial Change Area which is aimed at supporting increased residential density that results in a change in character over time.
- [14] The clause identifies all MACs and NACs as Substantial Change Areas and acknowledges that the scale and intensity of growth differs across each location.

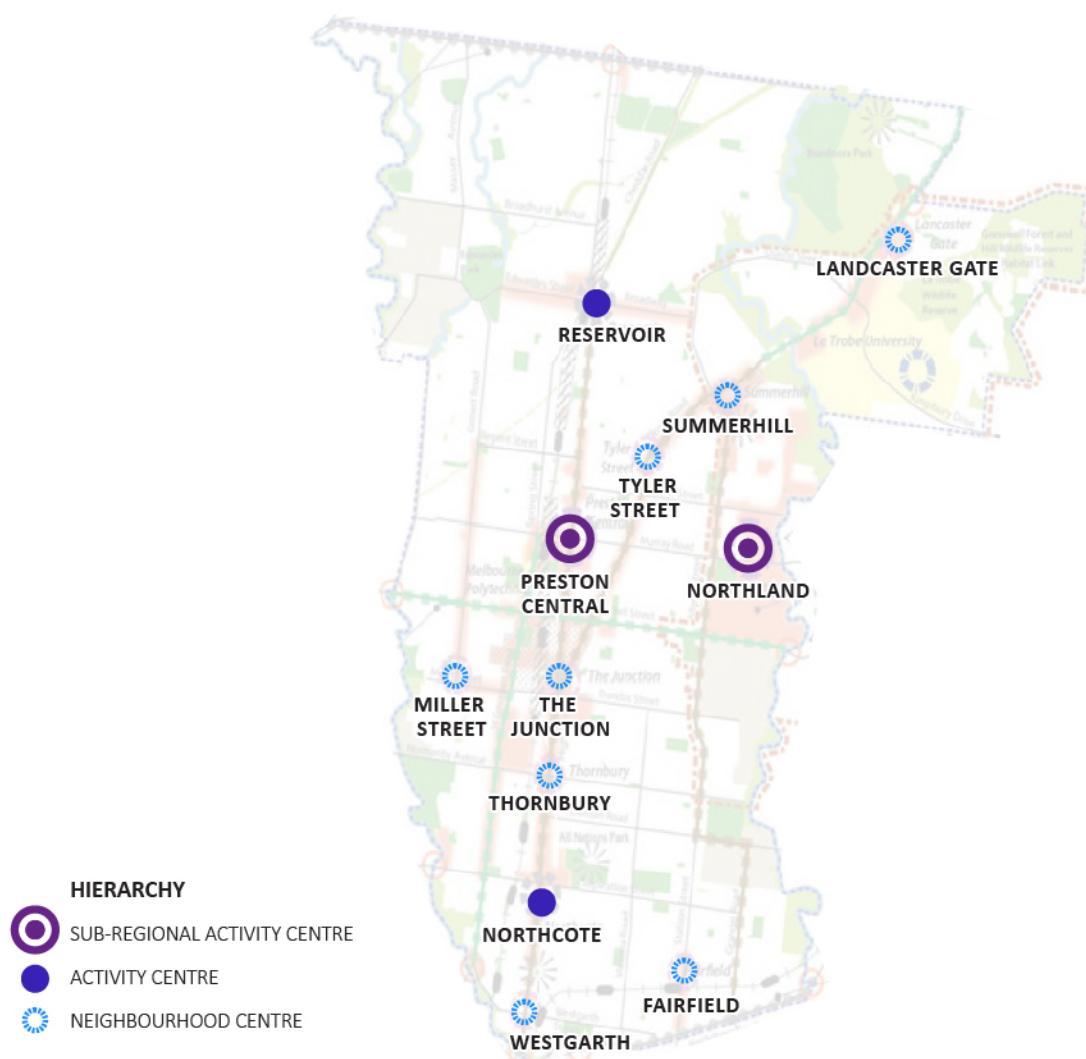


Figure 3: Darebin Hierarchy Structure (Source: Clause 21.01 Strategic Framework Plan, with emphasis added)

- [15] Of note, Clause 21.03 identifies land that qualifies as Strategic Opportunity Sites for urban intensification where the following characteristics apply:
- *Over 1,000sqm in lot size;*
 - *In a zone that permits residential use;*
 - *Not constrained by a Heritage Overlay; and*
 - *Within 500m of a train station or within a designated activity centre.*
- [16] There is also local policy at Clause 22.06 for 'Multi-Residential and Mixed Use Development' that supports the consolidation of lots to increase development opportunity provided it is maintaining high quality design and amenity outcomes.
- [17] Finally, Clause 34.01 'Commercial 1 Zone' applies to the study area and supports high level objectives of the Planning Scheme, whereby a vibrant mix of commercial and community uses are supported and residential uses are provided at a density to complements the role and scale of the centre.
- [18] In summary, the Planning Scheme clearly identifies NACs with good access to public transport, services and amenities, such as Fairfield Village, to cater for increased urban intensification of a scale that fits within the urban structure and provides for the local servicing needs of the community. However, policy also seeks for growth and new built form to be respectful of distinct character traits and identity of the area. Respecting surrounding amenity impacts is also a consideration.

3.0 Overall Building Heights

- [19] The following sub-sections provide an assessment of the proposed overall building height limit in Areas 1 and 2, the nature of the controls (mandatory versus discretionary) and the minimum lot size trigger.
- [20] DDO21 proposes mandatory building heights across the entirety of the Fairfield Village Neighbourhood Centre (Areas 1 and 2) as outlined at Section 7.0 of the schedule. The overall height of any new building must not exceed 14.5m and 4 storeys for land under 1000sqm. For land greater than 1000sqm, new building height must not exceed 17.5m and 5 storeys. Table 1: Building height of DDO21 also lists a series of ‘Built form objectives’ that need to be addressed to achieve the maximum building height of 5 storeys. See below exert.

Area	Maximum height limit	Built form objectives
Land under 1000sqm	14.5m and 4 storeys	
Land 1000sqm or greater (may comprise multiple consolidated lots)	17.5m and 5 storeys	<p>Additional height is sufficiently recessed to be unobtrusive from surrounding streets and adjacent residential zoned properties, as evidenced by a visual study.</p> <p>Overall building form is designed to integrate with the streetscape and will not detract from the prominence and character of the existing street wall.</p> <p>Where an existing front facade is removed, the replacement building is articulated to respect the fine grain character of the street.</p> <p>There is an appropriate transition in form to lower rise adjacent buildings.</p>

Figure 4: Building heights proposed (source: Exhibited DDO21)

3.1 Building height application (mandatory versus discretionary)

[21] DDO21 is proposed to apply to land within the C1Z within the Fairfield Village Neighbourhood Centre. DDO21 distinguishes between Area 1 (Fairfield Village Heritage Precinct) and Area 2 see below.



Figure 5: Fairfield Village Neighbourhood Centre (source: Exhibited DDO21)

[22] The Fairfield Village Heritage Precinct was recommended by the *Fairfield Village Heritage Assessment* prepared by Heritage Intelligence Pty Ltd, which recommend a Heritage Overlay Precinct be applied to Area 1.

[23] Along with its heritage values, Area 1 also holds the following strong and consistent character values:

- A traditional main street environment consisting of fine grain shop fronts generally of 1 to 2 storeys, forming a fairly consistent streetscape elevation;
- A considerable amount of old and moderately detailed building facades, which are interspersed with more contemporary simple forms; and
- A 'village' atmosphere reinforced by the built form and the diversity of small shops servicing local needs.

Overall building height

[24] Generally, I am supportive of the proposed overall building heights of 4 to 5 storeys. I consider the proposed heights to be responsive to the valued character and historically modest scale of Fairfield Village Neighbourhood Centre. Fairfield Village has characteristics such as its relatively narrow main street and modest provision of local shops, that further support an emerging scale that is moderated whilst still accommodating some intensification. I find the heights proposed to be appropriate to their location and context.

[25] The overall building heights are also consistent with the planning policy framework and the designation of Fairfield Village as a neighbourhood centre. I note within the City of Darebin, the hierarchy of centres applied through the planning scheme also directs high density housing to larger centres/ urban renewal precincts or centres with limited heritage or character value, to achieve its housing targets. For example, the Junction, which is a neighbourhood centre, is seeking heights of up to 18 storeys. Parts of High Street Activity Centre are also experiencing heights of 8-10 storeys. These locations not only have good access to public transport, they also have an increased level of services and in parts a more robust character.

[26] I consider that Fairfield Village holds more highly valued characteristics from a heritage and streetscape point of view than other centres in Darebin. Therefore the building heights proposed are responsive to this.

[27] However, the nature of the controls proposed in relation to building heights and the application of the mandatory controls across the study

area do not appear to respond to the strategic work completed. Based on this, I recommend changes to DDO21 to create clearer, more flexible and responsive controls. These revisions are explained in the following paragraphs.

Discretionary versus Mandatory Provisions

- [28] Planning Practice Note 59 – The Role of Mandatory Provisions in Planning Schemes (PPN59) describes the criteria used to decide whether mandatory provisions may be appropriate in planning schemes. PPN59 must also be read in conjunction with Planning Practice Note 60 Height and setback controls for activity centres (PPN60).
- [29] PPN59 refers to circumstances where a mandatory provision will provide certainty and ensure a preferable and efficient outcome. These may include areas of high heritage value and strong and consistent character themes.
- [30] PPN60 states that mandatory height and setback controls will only be considered where they are supported by robust and comprehensive strategic work or where:
- *Exceptional circumstances exist; or*
 - *Council has undertaken comprehensive strategic work and is able to demonstrate that mandatory controls are appropriate in the context; and*
 - *They are absolutely necessary to achieve the preferred built form outcomes and it can be demonstrated that exceeding these development parameters would result in unacceptable built form outcomes.*
- [31] In relation to robust and comprehensive strategic work, PPN60 states that where mandatory controls are proposed, a Council will be assessed against all of the following:
- *Consistency with state and regional policy: A council will need to be able to demonstrate that any proposed controls are visionary in nature and propose a preferred future character for the activity centre that aligns with the aspirations of the metropolitan planning strategy and state and regional policies included in the VPP.*
 - *Currency of work: Any supporting structure plan or comprehensive built form analysis should be no more than five years old. A council will need to be able to demonstrate that the built form analysis undertaken to support any proposal for mandatory height or*

setback controls is contemporary, takes account of recent trends and has been subject to a program of public consultation.

- *Capacity to accommodate growth within the activity centre: Planning for the activity centre must ensure sufficient opportunity is provided for commercial (retailing, office, fringe retailing and other uses such as entertainment) activities needed over at least a 15-year time frame and then into the 30-year horizon as well as anticipated housing growth over the same timeframes. This should include:*
 - *The role of the activity centre in the broader activity centre network for the municipality.*
 - *The location of the centre and its access to services, such as public transport.*
 - *Potential for redevelopment having regard to urban form, lot sizes and topography.*
 - *Any existing and proposed land uses and identification and analysis of key sites within the activity centre that can accommodate more intense development when compared with the remainder of the activity centre.*

[32] Council has undertaken comprehensive strategic work to support the Amendment in its current form. This includes the *Darebin Housing Strategy 2015*, which identifies the Fairfield Village as a Neighbourhood Centre in the overall hierarchy, but also as an area of urban intensification. Within the hierarchy of activity centres in the City of Darebin, a higher provision of housing is demanded in sub-regional and major centres, or centres with less character and heritage value.

[33] I assess the built form analysis undertaken to inform the Amendment to be comprehensive. The *Fairfield Village Built Form Guidelines 2017* clearly articulate the parts of Fairfield Village where, in particular, the valued existing character and heritage influence necessitate a more prescriptive control is applied.

[34] Area 1 as defined by DDO21 can be described as having a consistent fine grain street wall character of 1-2 storeys. Its facades are narrow, detailed and contribute to the 'village atmosphere' experienced in Fairfield Village Neighbourhood Centre. The significant heritage places within Area 1 further support its character.

[35] Based on the assessment explained above, I support the proposed mandatory building height control to be applied to Area 1 (Fairfield Village

Heritage Precinct). In relation to Area 2, I find the built form analysis to not be compelling enough to warrant mandatory controls. Whilst there is a higher imperative to respond to the valued existing character in Area 1, Area 2 has less heritage and character value. In Area 2, there should be an allowance for more flexibility and design optimisation subject to meeting a set of built form objectives.

- [36] Based on this, I recommend the first paragraph under Building Height Requirements (p.2) of DDO21 states the following:

The overall height of any new building must not exceed the maximum height limit and must meet built form objectives specified in Table 1 to this schedule. In Area 1, the maximum height limit cannot be varied with a permit.

3.2 Minimum lot size trigger

- [37] DDO21 proposes the use of a minimum lot size trigger. The purpose of a minimum lot size trigger is to incentivise amalgamation of lots, which enables more efficient use of land and enables a higher quality development outcome. The mechanism is used in areas where the building height that is appropriate from a character perspective cannot be accommodated without unreasonable off-site amenity impacts, due to small lots sizes.
- [38] Within the City of Darebin, a minimum lot size trigger has not previously been implemented into the planning scheme. However, DDO3 (The Junction – South Preston), DDO16 (St Georges Road Corridor) and DDO17 (Plenty Road Corridor) all both include a minimum frontage width to create favourable conditions for high quality development outcomes. I note, a minimum frontage width has the same effect as a minimum lot size, stimulating lot amalgamation for greater height which in turn allows for a development that is more responsive to its context. This could be for example, side setbacks at the top floor, which reduce the appearance of the additional level above the existing street wall condition and reduce oblique views to blank walls.
- [39] In relation to the application of the minimum lot size trigger in these circumstances, I find that it isn't the most targeted control. From an assessment of the study area, I found the lot depths to be fairly consistent at 36-40m. As the lot depth is fixed and based on the study area, a landowner would only amalgamate from the side. They would not amalgamate to the rear. Therefore, the lot width is the determining factor for amalgamation, rather than minimum lot size.

[40] From my understanding, the aim of a minimum lot size is to ensure the proposal can better respond to character. From my assessment, what will ensure any additional levels better respond to the valued character is the application of side setbacks. The application of side setbacks at the upper levels will help to retain the openness of the streetscape and the moderate scale. It will provide spacing between upper levels and therefore views to the sky whilst ameliorating the contrast experienced between the additional scale as seen obliquely.

[41] Based on applying a side setback of 3m to each side boundary of the additional level (5th storey) and achieving a useable floorplate dimension (approximately 18m wide), the minimum width of the frontage should be in the order of 24 metres. Based on the average lot depth of 36-40m within the study area, this would equate to a minimum lot area of 864 sqm. From this analysis, I find the application of a mandatory 1,000 sqm as a minimum lot area to be an inappropriate tool. Rather, I recommend a minimum frontage width. To reflect this in DDO21, Table 1: Building Height should be revised as follows:

Frontage and side setbacks	Maximum Height Limit	Built form outcomes
Minimum frontage width of less than 24m	14.5m and 4 storeys	
Minimum frontage width of 24m and side setbacks of 3m (5 th storey)	17.5m and 5 storeys	<p>Any additional height must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sufficiently recessed to be unobtrusive from surrounding streets and adjacent residential zoned properties, as evidenced by a visual study. • designed to integrate with the streetscape and will not detract from the prominence and character of the existing street wall. • ensure there is an appropriate transition in form to lower rise adjacent buildings.

3.3 Summary of overall building height recommendations

[42] In summary:

- I support the proposed heights of 4 to 5 storeys overall.
- I support the proposed mandatory building height control to be applied to Area 1 (Fairfield Village Heritage Precinct).
- I do not support mandatory building height controls in Area 2 based on insufficient evidence of strong heritage and character.

[43] I recommend the following changes:

- Revise paragraph 1 under Building Height Requirements within DDO21 as follows:

The overall height of any new building must not exceed the maximum height limit and must meet built form objectives specified in Table 1 to this schedule. In Area 1, the maximum height limit cannot be varied with a permit.

- Apply side setbacks of 3.0 metres to the 5th storey.
- Apply a minimum lot width requirement.
- Amend Table 1 as outlined at paragraph 41.

4.0 Street Wall and Upper Level Setback Requirements

[44] The following section provides an assessment of the exhibited built form controls in relation to street walls and upper level setbacks in both Area 1 and Area 2, and the use of mandatory controls.

4.1 Street wall heights

[45] DDO21 seeks a mandatory maximum street wall height of 8.5m or the height of an adjacent street wall, whichever is greater for Area 1, and a mandatory maximum street wall height of 11.5m for Area 2.

[46] The most relevant design objective in DDO21 in relation to street wall heights is to *‘ensure development complements the established traditional streetscape of the centre by contributing to consistency of form, scale and façade articulation’*.

[47] PPN59 states that mandatory provisions may apply to areas of *‘high heritage value and strong and consistent character themes’*. PPN59 identifies that a balance must be struck between the benefits of mandatory provisions in the achievement of an objective and any resulting loss of opportunity for flexibility in achieving the objective.

[48] Station Street, Wingrove Street and Railway Place have an established traditional streetscape character that includes a highly consistent form, scale and façade articulation. DDO21 requires the retention of existing valued heritage fabric to a depth of 4m where it is identified as significant or a contributory building. DDO21 has also identified buildings with *‘valued street facades’* which make a contribution to the character due to their form, grain and detailing. DDO21 requires the retention of *‘valued street facades’* within Areas 1 and 2. Refer overleaf.

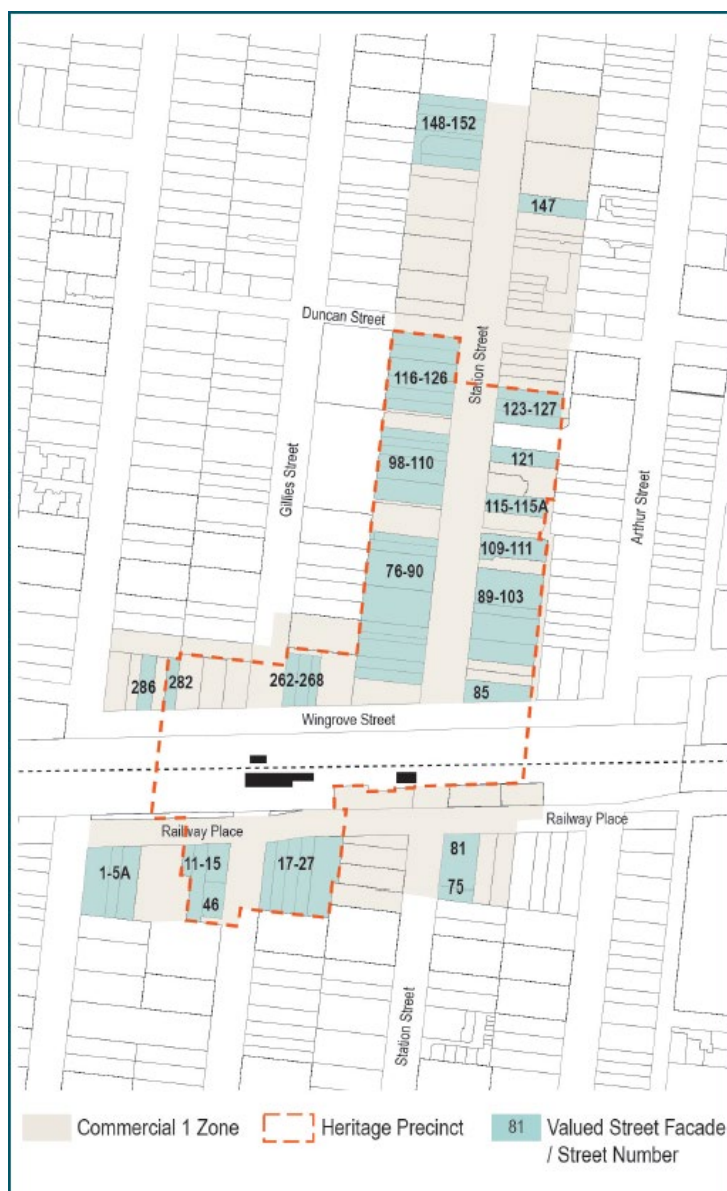


Figure 7: Valued street facades (source: Exhibited Fairfield Built Form Guidelines)

- [49] With respect to Area 1, DDO21 proposes a mandatory street wall height of 8.5m, or height of adjacent street wall, whichever is greater, for all new development. Therefore, new developments will be new insertions into the valued existing streetscape. To complement and reinforce the prevailing street wall character, I consider mandatory maximum street wall heights are appropriate. Discretionary requirements may be insufficient to achieve the desired outcome and objective, which is a consistent street wall that responds to the village character.
- [50] With respect to Area 2, a mandatory maximum street wall height of 11.5m is proposed which is the equivalent of 3 storeys. Firstly, I consider this height acceptable on the edges of the study area, as it has more of an ability to cater for robust built form without impacting the existing heritage and character values pertaining to the balance of Fairfield Village. Secondly, I consider applying a mandatory maximum of 3 storeys will ensure a consistent form and scale and a comfortable street width to street wall ratio, particularly along Station Street. It is assumed in instances where a valued street façade is retained, that the mandatory provision applies to this and not the form behind it.
- [51] In summary, I support the use of mandatory maximum street wall heights in Area 1 and Area 2 as this will maintain the consistency of the existing valued streetscape character.

4.2 Upper level (front) setback requirements – Area 1

- [52] A design objective within DDO21 seeks to *‘ensure development complements the established traditional streetscape of the centre by contributing to consistency of form, scale and façade articulation’*.
- [53] DDO21 proposes discretionary minimum front setbacks (upper level setbacks) that apply to 3 development scenarios within Area 1.
- [54] Where a single storey street wall is to be retained in Area 1, upper level setbacks are proposed at 4m for the second storey and 8m for the 3rd and 4th storeys.

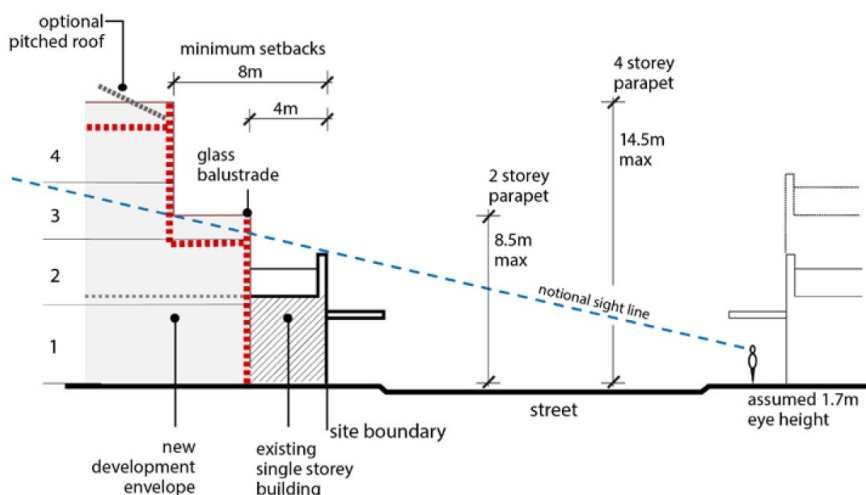


Figure 8: Front setbacks with retained single storey building in Area 1
(source: exhibited DDO21)

- [55] Where a double storey street wall is to be retained in Area 1, upper level setbacks are proposed at 4m for the 3rd storey and 8m for the 4th storey.

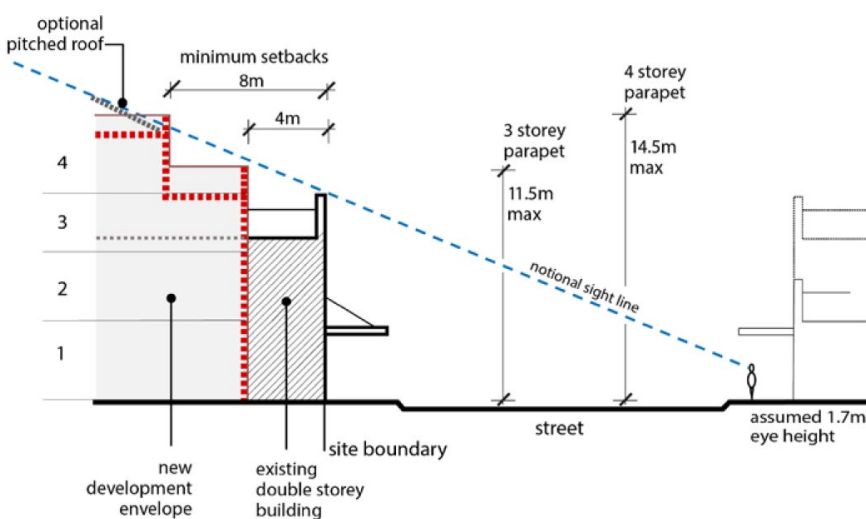


Figure 9: Front setbacks with retained double storey building in Area 1
(source: exhibited DDO21)

- [56] Where a new building is proposed with an 8.5m street wall, upper level setbacks are proposed at 4m for the 3rd storey and 8m for the 4th storey.

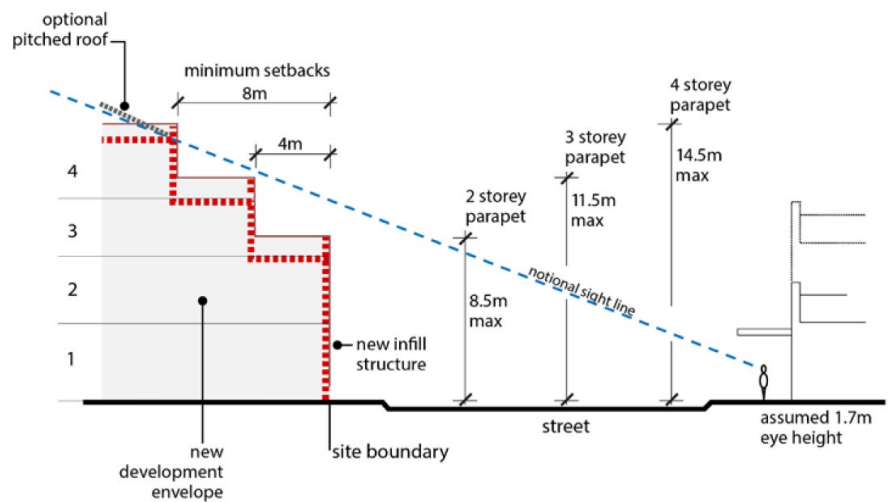


Figure 10: Front setbacks for new building in Area 1 (source: exhibited DDO21)

- [57] The intent of the generous upper level setbacks is to ensure that the heritage values and streetscape character of Fairfield Village isn't compromised. It is also to:
- Achieve consistent front form and setbacks relative to the street.
 - Ensure new development respects and emphasises heritage places and other retained valued street facades.
 - Limit overly prominent new buildings as seen from oblique views in the street.
- [58] In relation to the proposed upper level setbacks, I support the discretionary nature of the control and the intent. However, I have the following concerns:
- The different minimum setbacks per floor creates unnecessary stepping and a complicated overall building composition;
 - The upper setback requirement of 8m is unnecessarily large considering the depth of heritage retention required (4m) and the modest overall building height; and
 - The upper levels will be visible in oblique views with or without the stepping. A simpler upper form will be more useful in reducing prominence when viewed on the oblique. The prominence of the

upper form will also be reduced through the introduction of side setbacks to the top level, creating sky views between built form.

[59] Based on the above, I recommend the following revised upper level setbacks. The diagrams at Figures 11 – 13 include sight lines which helped to determine the extent of the upper level setback required to ensure that the view of the building from the opposite footpath occupied by the upper form was appropriately limited and subservient to the street wall. Further to this, the upper level setbacks proposed will also simplify the form as viewed obliquely. I note that site by site heritage considerations may lead to a different setback.

- For a single storey building to be retained in Area 1 introduce the following setbacks from the street wall:

→ Setback 4m up to the 3rd storey; and

→ Setback 8m up to the 5th storey.

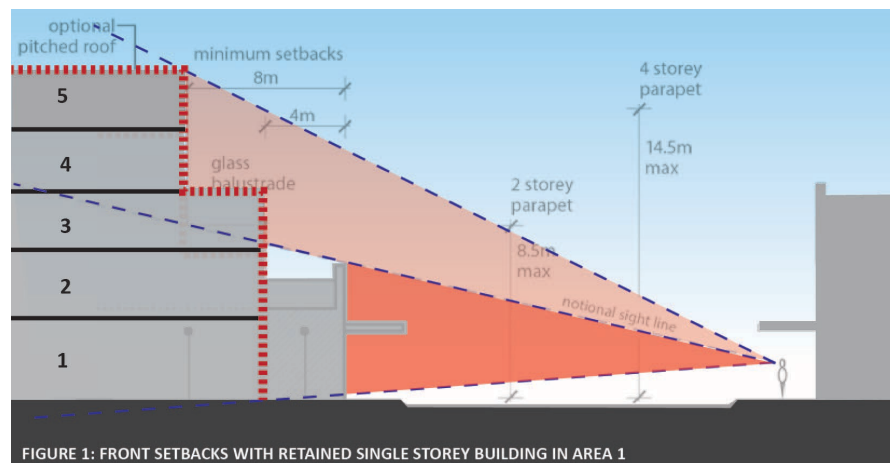


Figure 11: Proposed front setbacks with retained single storey in Area 1

[60] For a double storey building to be retained in Area 1 introduce the following setbacks from the street wall:

→ Setback 4m up to the 4th storey; and

→ Setback 8m at the 5th storey.

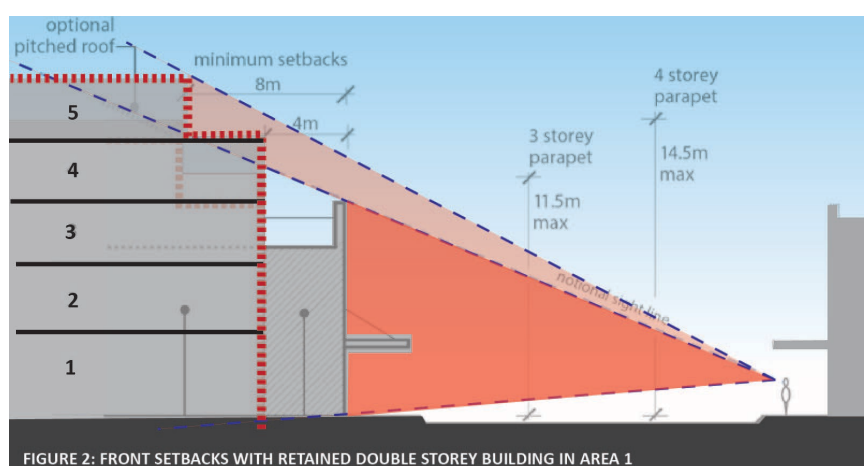


Figure 12: Proposed front setbacks with retained double storey building in Area 1

[61] For a new building with an 8.5m street wall in Area 1 introduce the following setbacks from the street wall:

- Setback 4m up to the 4th storey; and
- Setback 8m at the 5th storey.

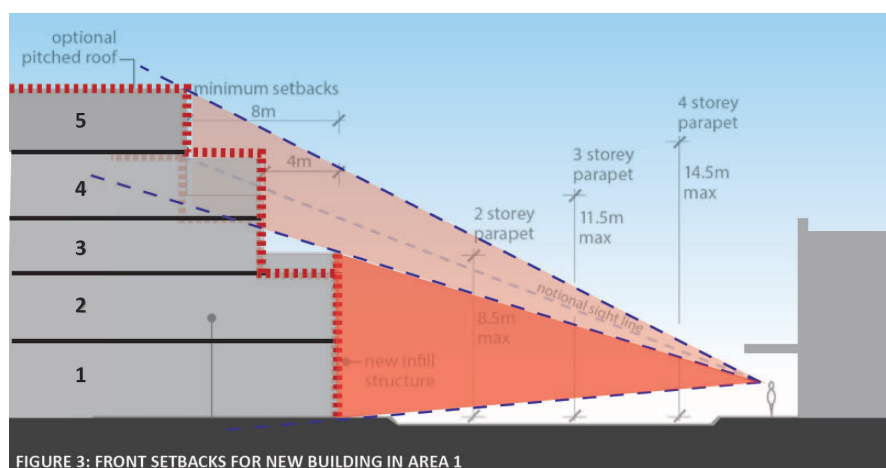


Figure 13: Proposed front setbacks for new building in Area 1

4.3 Upper level (front) setbacks – Area 2

- [62] Upper level setbacks have been proposed for 2 development scenarios within Area 2. Upper level setbacks are discretionary and vary between 2m and 4m as illustrated below.
- [63] Where a single or double storey street wall is to be retained in Area 1, upper level setbacks are proposed at 2m for the 2nd or 3rd storey and 4m for the 4th storey.

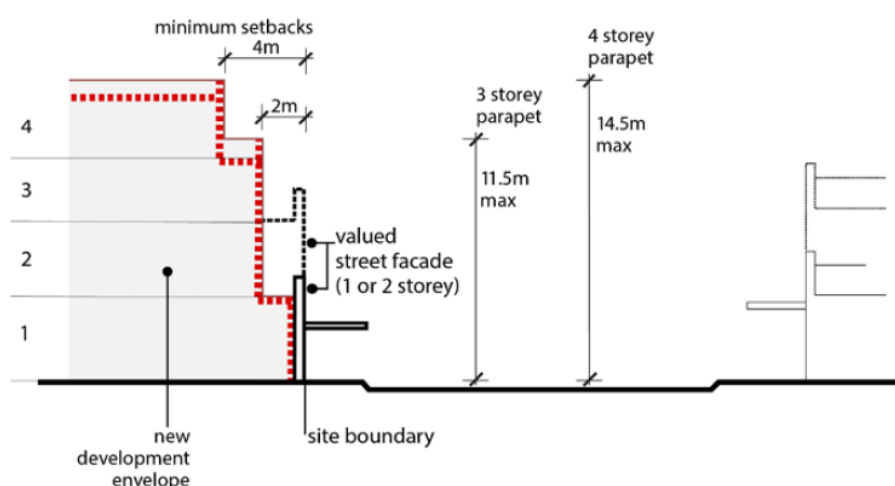


Figure 14: Front setbacks with retained in Area 2 (source: Exhibited DDO21)

- [64] Where a new building with a 11.5m street wall is proposed in Area 2, the upper level setback for the 4th storey is proposed at 4m.

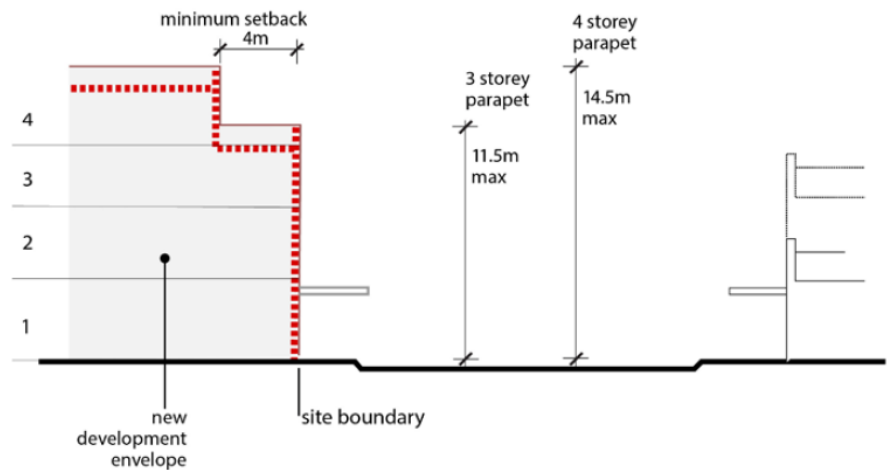


Figure 15: Front setbacks for new buildings in Area 2 (source: Exhibited DDO21)

- [65] Similarly to Area 1, I support the discretionary nature of the control but recommend the unnecessary stepping is simplified.
- [66] Based on the above, I recommend a 4m upper level setback for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th storeys and an 8m setback for the 5th storey of buildings to be retained in Area 2.

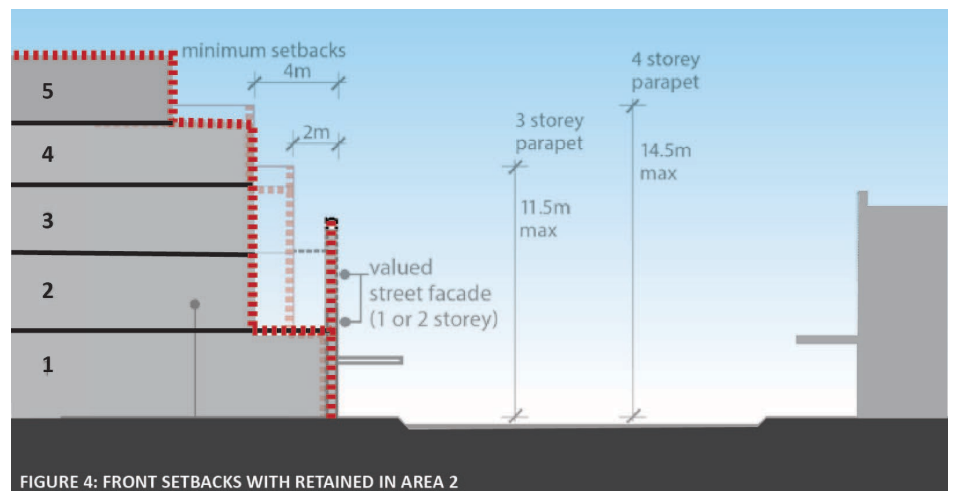


Figure 17: Front setbacks with retained in Area 2

- [67] I support the upper level setbacks for new infill buildings in Area 2 that are proposed.

4.4 Summary of street wall and upper level setback recommendations

^[68] In summary:

- I support the proposed street wall heights and their mandatory nature of the controls;

^[69] I recommend the following changes to the proposed upper level setbacks:

- For a single storey building to be retained in Area 1 introduce the following setbacks from the street wall:
 - Setback 4m up to the 3rd storey; and
 - Setback 8m up to the 5th storey.
- For a double storey building to be retained in Area 1 introduce the following setbacks from the street wall:
 - Setback 4m up to the 4th storey; and
 - Setback 8m at the 5th storey.
- For a new building with an 8.5m street wall in Area 1 introduce the following setbacks from the street wall:
 - Setback 4m up to the 4th storey; and
 - Setback 8m to the 5th storey.
- For a retained building in Area 2 introduce the following setbacks from the street wall:
 - Setback 4m at the 2nd, 3rd and 4th storeys; and
 - Setback 8m at the 5th storey.

5.0 Setbacks and Interface Responses

5.1 Side setback requirements

- [70] DDO21 does not require side setbacks in mid-block developments where adjoining sites to both sides can be built to a similar scale. It also states that side setbacks should not be relied upon to provide the primary outlook for a dwelling in a mid-block development. The primary outlook of dwellings should be to the front and rear site boundaries, with side setbacks providing for additional daylight access and amenity.
- [71] In relation to upper levels above 4 storeys, DDO21 falls silent in relation to side setbacks. However, applying side setbacks to the upper floors will help to retain the openness of the streetscape and the moderate scale as viewed from the street. It will provide spacing between the upper levels and therefore views to the sky. The spacing will also reduce the upper levels potential to dominate the heritage.
- [72] Based on this, I recommend that side setbacks of 3m are applied to the 5th storey and higher as per the table specified at paragraph 41 of my evidence.

5.2 Rear setbacks and interface requirements

- [73] A key design objective of DDO21 seeks to ensure development provides an appropriate transition to and limits adverse amenity impacts on residential zoned properties. It requires development to be setback from the rear boundary, where adjoining a residential zoned property, a minimum of 3 metres for the 1st and 2nd storeys. The envelope must sit behind a 45 degree rear setback thereafter. If there is a laneway abuttal, the rear setback requirement is measured from the boundary of the adjoining residential property.
- [74] I support the proposed rear setback requirements outlined at Figure 7 of DDO21. I agree the 3rd storey should be setback further than the minimum to avoid the 'wedding cake' profile. I also agree a 5th storey should be further setback behind the 45 degree envelope to avoid visual bulk experienced from backyards in the residential hinterland. For clarity however, I recommend the 5th storey is shown at Figure 7 behind the 45 degree setback envelope.

5.3 Summary of setback and interface response recommendations

[75] In summary:

- I support the principle of not relying on side setbacks for primary outlook for a dwelling in a mid-block development.
- I support the proposed rear setbacks and the 45 degree envelope used to avoid visual bulk.

[76] I recommend the following changes:

- Side setbacks of 3m are applied to the 5th storey to support a sense of openness to sky views.
- The 5th storey is shown at Figure 7 behind the 45 degree setback envelope.

6.0 Detailed Design

- [77] DDO21 outlines requirements in relation to street façade form and detailing, materials and finishes and landscaping.
- [78] A key objective of DDO21 is to ensure development responds to the valued character and amenity of the centre, by complementing it in façade articulation. DDO21 lists a series of design responses to apply that will achieve a modern interpretation of a traditional design. I support the façade and detailing requirements proposed, as they provide clear design detailing tools to achieve a responsive building design that is reflective of the proportions and grain existing within Fairfield Village.
- [79] On page 8 of DDO21 the first paragraph states the following:
- ‘Development in Area 1 (Fairfield Village Heritage Precinct) as shown on Map 1 at the Subclause 7.0 of this schedule may incorporate a light grey coloured hipped or gabled roof if the top of the building will be visible from across the street.*
- [80] I suggest that this requirement is overly prescriptive in relation to the colours. For example, a different colour other than light grey may be better in reducing the prominence of the top level depending on the composition of the rest of the building. I recommend the wording refer to the use of colours and materials that reduce the prominence of the top level.

7.0 Area boundaries

- [81] The proposed study area boundary for DDO21 and the Fairfield Village Neighbourhood Centre aligns with the C1Z. To distinguish between the 'core' streetscape that contains prominent heritage value and the 'periphery' of the study area which contains a lesser valued streetscape and more growth potential, DDO21 proposes two distinct Areas.
- [82] The Area 1 boundary aligns with the proposed Heritage Overlay precinct (HO313), which contains the majority of buildings identified with a valued street façade. The intent behind Area 1 in DDO21 is to ensure new built form 'fits' within the existing streetscape in a manner that strengthens the existing fabric through consistency in form.
- [83] Area 2 contains land in the remainder of the C1Z, on the northern and southern edges of the NAC and outside the proposed Fairfield Village Heritage Precinct. Area 2 still contains various buildings with valued façades but there are fewer.



Figure 18: Study area including Area 1 and Area 2 and properties to be included in Area 1 outlined in red

- [84] The Design Objectives of DDO21 seek to enhance the traditional streetscape and maintain consistency in built form. I note that the four parcels of land to the south of Duncan Street (129, 131, 133 and 135 Station Street) are proposed to be in Area 2 which seeks an 11.5m street wall. I note this is inconsistent with land on the opposite side of the road which is proposed to have an 8m street wall.
- [85] To meet DDO21 objectives, I recommend that these lots are incorporated into Area 1 to create a distinct edge between Area 1 and 2. This will maintain the scale and consistency in form on both sides of Station Street,

then transitioning to a more intensive form beyond Duncan Street. I consider this appropriate to uphold the design objectives of DDO21.

^[86] In summary, I recommend at 129, 131, 133 and 135 Station Street be included in Area 1.

8.0 Submissions

- [87] This section summarises the key urban design issues raised within submissions to the Amendment, and my responses.

8.1 Overall Heights

- [88] Two submissions raised that a 4 storey height limit on land less than 1,000m² is onerous and good quality design and setbacks will alleviate any impacts. Additionally, a precedent has been set out by other developments on lots less than 1,000m² of 5 storeys.
- [89] I discuss the minimum lot size trigger at Section 3.2 and recommend it is replaced with a minimum frontage width. A minimum frontage width tool will stimulate lot amalgamation for greater height which in turn allows for a development that is more responsive to its context.

8.2 Setbacks

- [90] One submission stated that the proposed 8m front setbacks are too onerous, and combined with a 5.5 rear setback, renders a development unviable. Another submitter has expressed concern that the setbacks proposed will result in 'wedding cake' outcomes which is inconsistent with the DDO intent.
- [91] I discuss front setbacks at Section 4.2 and make recommendations to reduce the stepping of the upper levels to avoid unnecessary stepping and to consolidate the overall building composition.
- [92] In relation to the viability of developments, based on an average lot depth of 38m, the setbacks I have supported at the front and the rear will allow for a useable floorplate and therefore a viable development for a 4-5 storey building.

8.3 Residential interface

- [93] One submission relates to the interface between development within the study area and surrounding residential land stating that residential interfaces are not protected.
- [94] I am supportive of the setbacks proposed from the rear that are generally consistent with Rescode B17 which is an acceptable tool to ameliorate off-site amenity to sensitive residential properties adjacent to the study area.

9.0 Conclusion

[95] In conclusion, I support the Exhibited Amendment and the preferred built form outcome for Fairfield Village in DDO21. However, I recommend the following changes:

[96] In relation to Building Heights:

- Revise paragraph 1 under Building Height Requirements within DDO21 as follows:

The overall height of any new building must not exceed the maximum height limit and must meet built form objectives specified in Table 1 to this schedule. In Area 1, the maximum height limit cannot be varied with a permit.

- Apply side setbacks of 3.0 metres to the 5th storey.
- Apply a minimum lot width requirement.
- Amend Table 1 as outlined at paragraph 41.

[97] In relation to upper level setbacks:

- For a single storey building to be retained in Area 1 introduce the following setbacks from the street wall:
 - Setback 4m up to the 3rd storey; and
 - Setback 8m up to the 5th storey.
- For a double storey building to be retained in Area 1 introduce the following setbacks from the street wall:
 - Setback 4m up to the 4th storey; and
 - Setback 8m at the 5th storey.
- For a new building with an 8.5m street wall in Area 1 introduce the following setbacks from the street wall:
 - Setback 4m up to the 4th storey; and
 - Setback 8m at the 5th storey.
- For a retained building in Area 2 introduce the following setbacks from the street wall:
 - Setback 4m at the 2nd, 3rd and 4th storey; and
 - Setback 8m at the 5th storey.

^[98] In relation to setbacks and interface responses:

- Side setbacks of 4m are applied to the 5th storey to support a sense of openness to sky views.
- The 5th storey is shown at Figure 7 behind the 45 degree setback envelope.

^[99] In relation to area boundaries, include 129, 131, 133 and 135 Station Street in Area 1.

Appendix A: Summary of Experience & Personal Details

Name and Address

Julia Chloe Bell
Associate Urban Designer
David Lock Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd
2/166 Albert Road
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205

Qualifications

- Member of the Planning Institute of Australia, 2008
- MA Urban Design, Oxford Brookes University, UK, 2013
- Diploma Urban Design, Oxford Brookes University, UK, 2013
- Bachelor of Urban Planning and Development, University of Melbourne, 2007

Professional experience

- Associate Urban Designer and Planner, David Lock Associates (Australia), March 2015 to present
- Senior Strategic Planner, Hume City Council (Australia), 2014 to 2015
- Strategic Planner, Hume City Council (Australia), 2010 to 2014
- Development Planner, GHD (Australia), 2005 to 2010

Area of Expertise

I have over ten years' experience in private and public practice with various planning and urban design consultancies in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania.

Expertise to prepare this report

I have been involved in the design and assessment of numerous activity centre and urban infill projects and planning scheme amendments in Victoria. These have included:

- Evidence for Amendment GC81 (Port Phillip City Council) Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Precinct.
- Evidence for Amendment C178 (Moreland City Council) Gronn Place Brunswick West.
- Evidence for Amendment C223 (Stonnington City Council) 110-122 Wattletree Road, Malvern – Malvern Central.
- Evidence for Amendment C194 (Whitehorse City Council) 517-521 Station Street, Box Hill.
- Evidence for Amendment C207 and C208 (Hume City Council) Sunbury South and Lancefield Road PSPs.
- Evidence for Amendment C175 (Whitehorse City Council) as it related to the land at 813 Whitehorse Road, Mont Albert.
- Evidence for Amendment C123 (Port Phillip City Council) for the implementation of the residential zones.
- Structure Plans for Hawksburn Activity Centre (Stonnington City Council) and Greensborough Activity Centre (Banyule City Council).
- Policy writing in relation to Activity Centres (Clause 21.07 – Hume Planning Scheme).
- Prepared Hume City Council's submission to the Reformed Zones.
- Representation of Council as an advocate at Planning Panels Victoria.
- Involved in the independent review of numerous inner urban development projects from an urban design perspective.

Other significant contributors

I was assisted by Jane Witham (Planner) in the preparation of this report.

Instructions which define the scope of this report

I was engaged by the City of Darebin.

I have received verbal and written instructions from the City of Darebin, and various documents relating to the proposal.

Facts, matters and assumptions relied upon

- Inspection of the Subject Land and surrounding area.
- Review of relevant existing and proposed planning provisions and guidelines.

Documents taken into account

In forming my opinion, I have relied on:

- The Darebin Planning Scheme and Reference Documents (including Plan Melbourne);
- Darebin Planning Scheme Amendment C161 documentation;
- 11 submissions;
- Various correspondences.

Summary of opinions

Refer to the conclusion of this statement.

Provisional Opinions

There are no provisional opinions in this report.

Questions outside my area of expertise, incomplete or inaccurate aspects of the report

This report is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and does not contain any provisional opinions except where noted.

I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and confirm that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Bell', with a stylized, cursive script.

Julia Bell