

Part 1

The Basin Background Report

MAY 2016

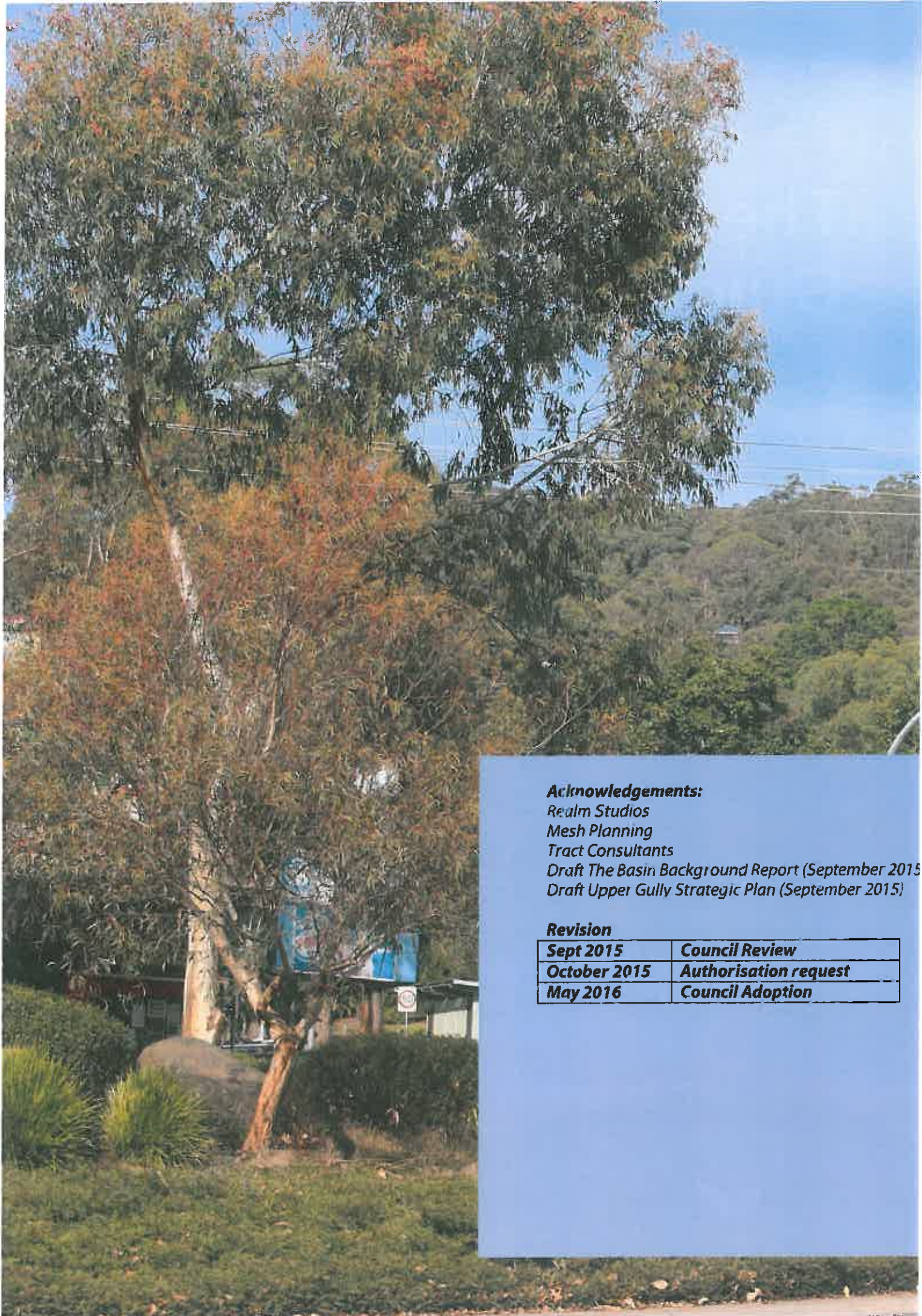


Part 2

The Basin Built Form Guidelines

MAY 2016





Acknowledgements:

Realm Studios

Mesh Planning

Tract Consultants

Draft The Basin Background Report (September 2015)

Draft Upper Gully Strategic Plan (September 2015)

Revision

Sept 2015	Council Review
October 2015	Authorisation request
May 2016	Council Adoption

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Basin Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC) is nestled at the base of the Dandenong Ranges.

The study area comprises existing commercial and public use areas. It is surrounded by predominantly residential areas that include overlay provisions that aim to protect the foothills character and vegetation cover. These controls place limitations on the scale and intensity of development and reinforce a relatively low density of residential housing. In relation to the commercial and public zoned areas of The Basin, an absence of enough clarity regarding scale, led (in 2014) to a three year interim application of a 7.5 metre height limit to enable sufficient time to undertake the necessary strategic work to determine appropriate permanent built form controls.

In November 2014, the Minister for Planning approved an interim Design and Development Overlay (DDO10) through Amendment C130 to the Knox Planning Scheme with a mandatory height limit of 7.5 metres on the condition that further strategic work was undertaken and a full Planning Scheme Amendment

Strategic work has been undertaken for the centre. This included an analysis of the planning policy framework, demographics, existing land uses and a built form and view analysis including built form modelling. Community engagement to discuss built form outcomes in The Basin was also undertaken in April-June 2014. For further details on the strategic analysis and community engagement, refer to the *The Basin Background Report, May 2016* (the Background Report).

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of *Part 2 Built Form Guidelines* is to provide clear direction on built form outcomes for future development in The Basin. These *Built Form Guidelines* build on the strategic work undertaken in the Background Report and will result in Planning Scheme Amendment C137 being prepared for both The Basin and Alchester Village.

1.3 The study area

The study area is confined to the commercial and public use zone areas of The Basin which provide opportunities for limited change with a mixture of uses, including residential, office and retail.

The Basin is a local service and convenience centre located in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges in the north eastern corner of the Knox municipality in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The Basin is designated as a Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC) within Knox.

The Basin, along with the neighbourhood centres of Alchester Village, Ferntree Gully and Upper Ferntree Gully, represents one of Knox's gateway centres en route to the Dandenong Ranges, a State Significant landscape as identified in Plan Melbourne. As seen in Figure 1, the Boronia Activity Centre, located 2.5 km to the south west of The Basin, is the closest major centre and railway station. In the context of these major and neighbourhood centres, The Basin is positioned as a local shopping centre providing everyday necessities.

The study area covers an area of 3.7ha and comprises existing commercial areas to the west of Forest Road and to the east of Mountain Highway (see Figure 2). The 'Basin Triangle' is located at the heart of the study area, bound by Forest Road, Mountain Highway and Basin Olinda Road and comprises public uses.

The study area is predominantly surrounded by low density residential uses with extensive farmland to the north of the centre. The Basin study area is set within a treed environment with views of the Dandenongs and basin paddocks (Salvation Army land) contributing significantly to a unique village atmosphere.

Built form within The Basin is low scale, allowing the hills and vegetated backdrop to dominate the built form. There are a small number of shops and restaurants set amidst a village atmosphere.

The Basin is a gateway centre en route to the Dandenong Ranges. It has a number of roles, including providing everyday necessities and specialties to locals, as well as a tourism role. Mountain Highway between The Basin and Olinda is a popular and challenging route for cyclists and groups of cyclists frequently stop at The Basin for refreshments at one of the cafes or the park, particularly on weekends. The Basin is a lively village, playing host to a number of community groups including The Basin Theatre Group, Senior Citizens and The Basin Scout Group. The Basin Music Festival is held annually each March.



Figure 01- The Basin catchment area



Figure 02 - The Basin study area

1.4 Planning policies and controls

The Basin is identified as a Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC) within the Knox Planning Scheme. Strategically, The Basin is not anticipated to accommodate much of the demand for alternative forms of housing, as this is expected to occur within larger local centres, such as Boronia located outside of the Dandenong Foothills policy area. Additionally, population and household forecasts for The Basin indicate that there are limited opportunities and demand for alternative forms of housing in the centre. The Knox Planning Scheme Municipal Strategic Statement – Clause 21.01 Settlement specifies that *“Urban consolidation objectives must not outweigh the environmental and landscape objectives for the foothills”*. Despite this, some opportunities do still exist for some shop top housing within the centre, but is not the purpose of the centre.

The following statutory planning controls apply to The Basin:

Zoning

- Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z)
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone Schedule 1 (NRZ1) – 1325 Mountain Highway
- Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) (within The Triangle)
- Public Use Zone 6 (PUZ6) *The Basin* Kindergarten and Maternal Child Health Centre
- Public Use Zone 7 (PUZ7) The Basin Country Fire Authority

Overlays

- Design and Development Overlay Schedule 10 (DDO11) – interim 7.5 metre height control
- Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1 (DDO1)
- Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedules 2 and 3 (VPO2, VPO3)
- Environmental Significant Landscape Overlay Schedules 2 and 3 (ESO2, ESO3)
- Significant Landscape Overlay Schedules 2 and 3 (SLO2, SLO3) height limits of 7.5 metres
- Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO)
- Heritage Overlay Schedule 51 (HO51) (The Triangle)

Local planning policies

- Clause 21.04 Urban Design
- Clause 21.05 Housing
- Clause 21.07 Economic Development
- Clause 22.01 Dandenong Foothills Policy
- Clause 22.12 Residential Land and Development in the Commercial 1 Zone

1.5 Heritage

The automotive garage, The Basin Preschool and Maternal Child Health Centre and the post office were highlighted as significant to the community of The Basin during community consultation. As a result, heritage assessments have been undertaken for these sites, as well as the Progress Hall (see Figure 3). The assessment revealed that only the Progress Hall was significant enough to have the Heritage Overlay applied. While the HO51 applies to the whole of the Basin Triangle land, the schedule does not specifically identify the Progress Hall as a significant building. This will be addressed within Amendment C137 to the Knox Planning Scheme. The assessment also revealed that the shops on the eastern side of Mountain Highway (including the Post Office) should be retained, in particular the remaining metal framed windows and tiled shopfronts as these elements contribute to the character of The Basin.



Figure 03 - The Basin Progress Hall

1.6 Bushfire Risk

The CFA's Community Information Guide for The Basin identifies the township as having 'extreme' bushfire risk. This classification is based on high fuel loads in the bordering forest, the hilly terrain, a lack of accessibility with narrow dead-end roads and homes nestled into bushland. The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) applies to the study area east of Forest Road and is located within a designated Bushfire Prone Area under the Building Act. Bushfire risk must be considered from a strategic perspective in the preparation of the built form design guidelines.

1.7 Potentially Contaminated Land

Ministerial Direction No. 1 (Potentially Contaminated Land) requires planning authorities to satisfy themselves that the environmental conditions of land proposed to be used for a 'sensitive use' – such as residential, or a child care centre – are, or can be remediated to be, suitable for that use. It is recommended that the Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) be applied to 1300 Mountain Highway, The Basin (see Figure 4) based on its previous land use as a service station, which may have allowed industrial activity on the site. The EAO ensures the requirement for an environmental audit is met before the commencement of any sensitive uses.



Figure 04 - 1300 Mountain Highway

1.8 Built form analysis

This section represents a summary of a full built form analysis carried out in the Background Report, which provides the basis for these *Built Form Guidelines*.

Built form within The Basin is low scale, allowing the hills and vegetated backdrop to dominate the built form and create a village atmosphere (See Figure 7). Existing heights within the centre are generally single storey ranging between 3.5 and 5 metres.

Most buildings within the centre were constructed between the 1960s and late 1990s. Building stock is in good condition, with excellent occupancy rates across the centre and minimal permit activity and turnover of uses within the last ten years.

Setbacks within the centre vary. On the eastern side of Mountain Highway shops are constructed to the front boundary, with a continuous awning, creating a 'hard edge' and active frontages. Setbacks on the western side of Forest Road are more eclectic and varied as seen in Figure 5.



Figure 05 - Western side of Forest Road

Building materials throughout the centre vary but are generally a mixture of brick, timber and colourbond in muted colours that reflect the centre's location within a treed environment. The Mountain Highway shops have narrow, tiled shopfronts with metal framed windows (see Figure 6). Many original shopfronts are still intact and these features, coupled with recent mural additions, contribute greatly to the character of The Basin.



Figure 06 - Shops on the eastern side of Mountain Highway

The centre is connected by pedestrian pathways along retail frontages and through the Basin Triangle. The centre is highly accessible by vehicle due to its location on the juncture of Mountain Highway, Forest Road and Basin-Olinda Road. The Mountain Highway shops can be accessed by a laneway to the rear. Public car parking exists in front of shops and within the Basin Triangle. There is opportunity to also provide rear loading for the retail properties on the western side of Forest Road to ensure a hard edge of built form along the street frontage.

Sensitive residential interfaces exist to the west of the shops along Forest Road. Buildings should be setback from the western boundary to ensure residential amenity is protected.

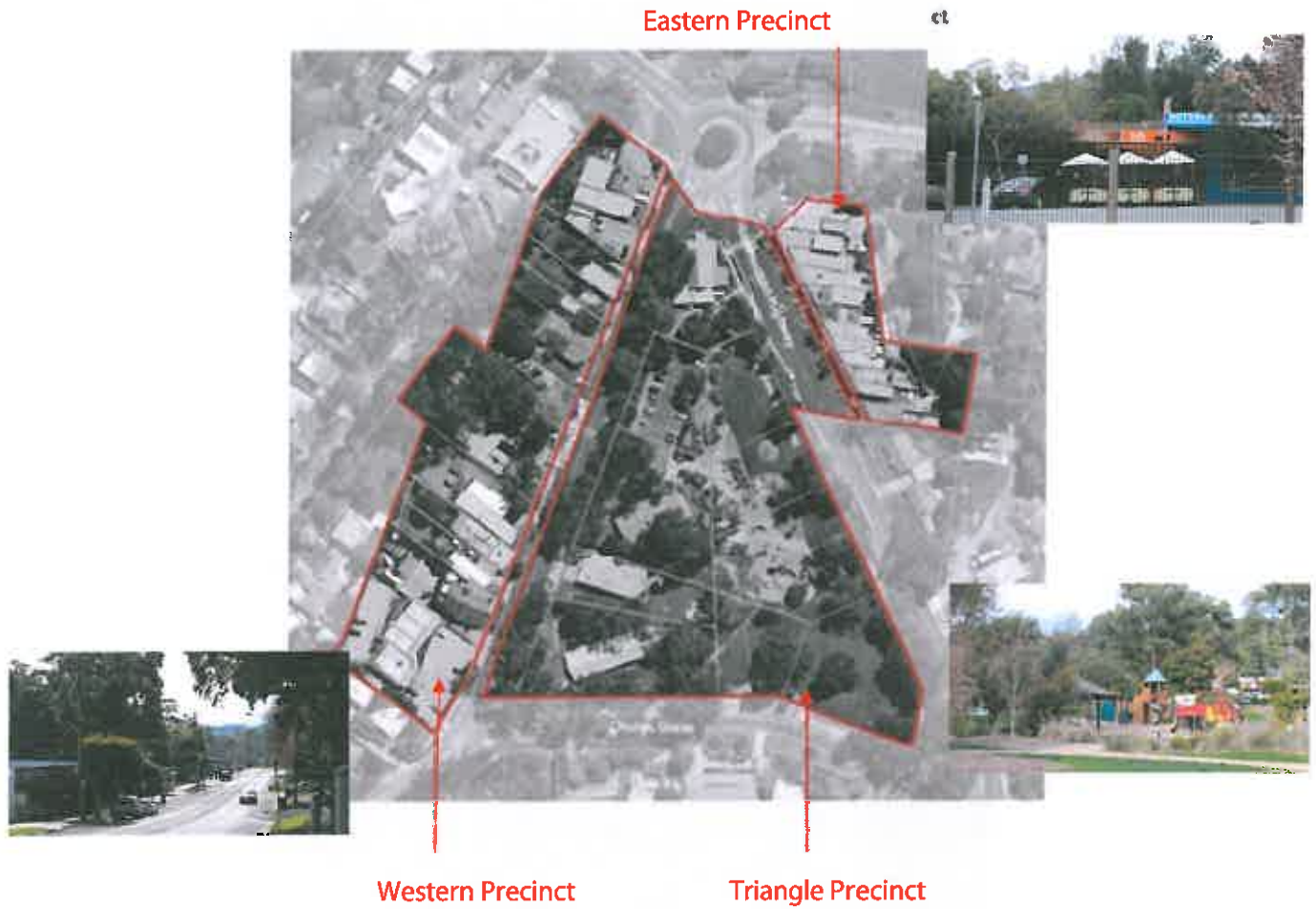


Figure 07. Precinct definition

2. Built Form Priorities

The *Part 1: The Basin Background Report* summarises the following as key built form priorities affecting The Basin. Please see the *Background Report* for a full discussion of these issues.

2.1 Maintain the connection to the highly vegetated Dandenong Foothills landscape

The Knox Planning Scheme provides clear emphasis on the aesthetic, environmental and landscape values and vistas of the Dandenong Foothills and seeks to ensure that development responds positively to this local context (Clause 21.04-2). Clause 22.01 *'Dandenong Foothills'* directs that development within the *'Dandenong Foothills, Foothills Backdrop and Ridgeline Area'* should enhance the visual dominance of vegetation.

The study area is predominantly surrounded by low density residential uses within a heavily treed environment with extensive paddocks (Salvation Army land) to the north of the centre. The Basin NAC has a strong visual connection to the Dandenong Ranges and the basin paddocks. The basin paddocks are registered with the National Trust, a non-statutory body with an interest in preserving local and state cultural heritage. These views of the Dandenongs and basin paddocks (Salvation Army land) contribute significantly to a unique, semi rural village atmosphere as illustrated through Figure 8.

View analysis carried out in the *Background Report* shows that the visual connection to the continuous canopy tree cover which surrounds The Basin contributes to its character and identity as a centre located within the Dandenong Foothills, and to its role as a gateway centre to the Dandenong Ranges.

Accordingly, the *Built Form Guidelines* seek to encourage development which maintains the sense of visual dominance of the centre's canopy tree backdrop.



Figure 08 - Views to the Eastern and Triangle precincts demonstrating visual dominance of canopy tree backdrop

2.2 Protection of key views to the Dandenong Ranges and foothills landscape

The views analysis carried out in the *Background Report* investigated significant views from public spaces within the centre to the surrounding Dandenong Foothills and the basin paddocks as well as to the Dandenong Ranges ridgeline. The analysis ultimately selected two key views as significant views from the public realm which require protection, as shown in Figure 9.

Unlike the other view points within the centre, the two perspectives shown in the following diagram are able to capture visually dominating views of the Dandenong Ranges backdrop, and are the main viewpoints from which users of The Basin are able to form a sense of the Foothills identity of the centre.



Figure 09 - Key views to be retained and entry perspectives to be enhanced

The *Built Form Guidelines* seeks to maintain these two key view lines from public spaces. Built form modelling carried out in the *Background Report* demonstrates that allowing infill development at a two storey scale within the Western Precinct, while restricting built form in the Eastern precinct to a predominantly single storey height, will allow key views to the Dandenong Ranges ridgeline to be preserved.

Roof forms in new development should also be considered, as variation in the building skyline will be able to better respond to the undulating land form of the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills. Pitched roof forms, as opposed to flat roofs, will be able to draw sight lines upwards towards the Dandenong Ranges or canopy tree backdrop.

2.3 Retain the ‘village’ atmosphere

A recurring theme which emerged from the community engagement process was the value the community placed on the ‘village feel’ of the centre. This can be attributed to:

- The compact footprint of the centre which provides an intimate experience;
- The single storey, low scale built form;
- The concentration of community and public uses within the centre; and
- The treed backdrop and views to the Dandenong Ranges and the basin paddocks.

In order to preserve this ‘village’ atmosphere, the *Built Form Guidelines* seek to encourage future development within The Basin to incorporate:

- Providing visual consistency in facades;
- Providing active surveillance and orienting development towards Forest Road in order to encourage a vibrant public realm;
- Avoiding any loss of commercial shop fronts by prohibiting residential development at the ground levels along key shopping areas; and
- Avoiding any erosion of the commercial function of the centre by encouraging adaptable spaces which could be adapted from residential to commercial uses (discussed further at Section 2.4 below).

2.4 Retain and enhance the ‘every day’ service offering of the centre

The *Built Form Guidelines* seek to ensure and enhance the continuing commercial function of the centre and raise the overall design quality of built form. Analysis within the *Background Report* found that internal ceiling heights across the centre are higher than the average 2.4 metres height, the minimum allowed under current building regulations.

The ability of internal spaces, particularly those at ground floor fronting onto key pedestrian areas, to be flexible and change uses over time is important to ensure the continuing commercial role of the centre into the future.

Generous floor to ceiling heights can enable adaptability and flexibility of uses in buildings over time – providing the ability for buildings to change from residential to retail or commercial uses.

Figure 10 demonstrates the principle of adaptive re-use - an under-utilised level of car parking at the Queen Victoria Centre, Lonsdale Street Melbourne, was able to be converted to high quality apartments due to the existing building fabric having appropriate floor to ceiling dimensions.

‘Future proofing’ buildings by providing sufficient internal dimensions to allow adaptation of redundant spaces between commercial, retail or residential uses enables buildings to better respond to fluctuation in property markets.



Figure 10 - Car parking to residential conversion, Queen Victoria Centre, Melbourne

It is important to ensure that future development within The Basin allows for the continuing commercial function of the centre, particularly given the community's value on the 'everyday' range of services and goods on offer and tourism functions. To allow for future scenarios where developments constructed for residential purposes are converted to or from commercial uses, the ground levels of development should be constructed with minimum 3.6 metres internal ceiling height to allow for adaptation between uses.

In order to maintain high levels of commercial and pedestrian activity, the *Built Form Guidelines* also seek to restrict residential uses at ground floor premises fronting onto key pedestrian and retail areas (in line with the provisions of the Commercial 1 Zone which limit as of right residential uses to 2 metres of frontage at ground floor).

Residential uses at first floor level (i.e. shop top housing) can be supported in order to improve the vitality and surveillance of the centre outside of business hours. However, to allow for future scenarios where residential dwellings at first floor could be converted to commercial uses, such as offices, retail or hospitality, the upper levels of development should be constructed with minimum 2.7 metres internal ceiling height to allow for adaptation between uses.

Figure 11 illustrates an indicative building design that could be achieved under the interim building height controls of 7.5 metres. The diagram shows that floor to ceiling heights for at the ground and upper levels are restrictive and will not allow for generous spaces commonly associated with retail/commercial uses.

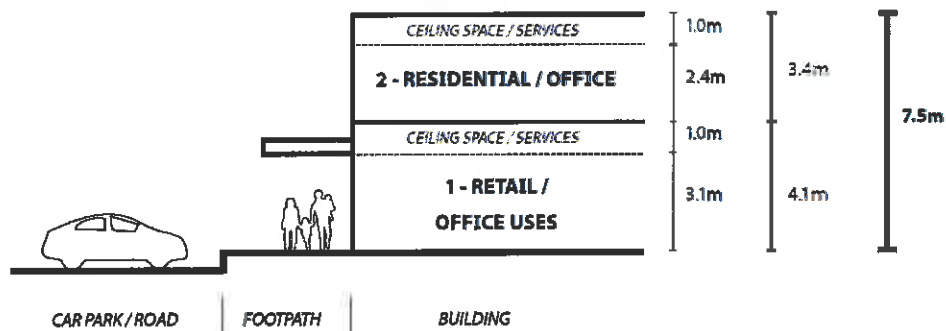


Figure 11 - Existing 7.5 metre height limit

In contrast, Figure 12 below shows that provision of generous 3.6 metre internal heights at ground level and above standard 2.7 metre height at upper levels could allow for adaptation between residential, retail and restaurant uses.

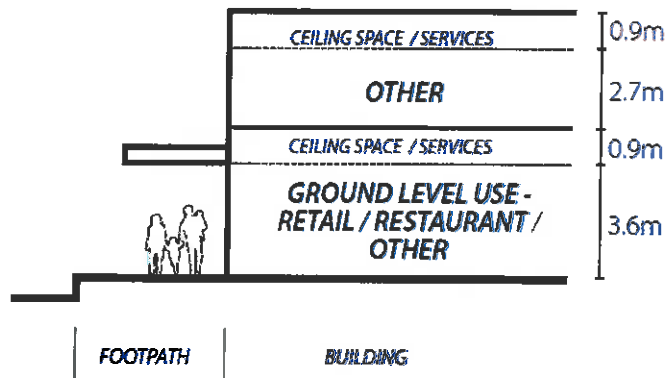


Figure 12 - Increased ceiling heights

2.5 High amenity internal spaces

The *Built Form Guidelines* seek to enhance the overall design quality of development at The Basin. A key consideration in determining building heights is the level of amenity of internal spaces. Analysis within the *Background Report* found that internal ceiling heights across the centre are generally above the average 2.4 metres height, the minimum allowed under current building regulations.

Building heights at Section 4 of this report are based on internal ceiling heights of a minimum 3.6 metres finished floor level (FFL) to finished ceiling level (FCL) at ground floor and a minimum 2.7 metres at first floor. This dimension exceeds the 2.4 to 2.7 metre standard ceiling height permitted under Victorian building regulations for residential spaces.

Providing more generous ceiling heights allows for:

- Adaptability between uses (as discussed at Section 2.4 immediately above).
- Greater sunlight penetration and building ventilation within internal spaces, which contributes to improved internal amenity of developments and a lifting of overall design quality within The Basin. Built form analysis and community engagement for the centre at the Background Report both indicated that an upgrade of the appearance and design of the centre is important to maintain attractiveness of the centre to users.
- Figure 13 compares a standard floor to ceiling height (2.4 metres FFL to FCL) to a more generous floor to ceiling dimension (2.7 metres). The figure shows that additional sunlight will be provided to rooms if more generous floor to ceiling height is provided.

Sunlight access for a standard 2.4m floor to ceiling height room Sunlight access for a standard 2.7m floor to ceiling height room



Figure 13 - Sunlight access into internal spaces

- At the ground level, generous floor to ceiling heights also allow for improved entrance design and a greater sense of openness for occupants, which is important for retail and restaurant uses.

Accordingly, potential building heights discussed in Section 4 of this report are based on internal ceiling heights of a minimum 3.6 metres finished floor level (FFL) to finished ceiling level (FCL) at ground floor and a minimum 2.7 metres at first floor.

2.6 Enhance The Basin as a comfortable place to visit

The *Built Form Guidelines* seek to enhance the pedestrian experience across the centre through activation of building frontages and weather protection.

Active Surveillance

Greater active surveillance should be promoted at key pedestrian circulation areas, which includes shopping areas, pedestrian pathways onto Forest Road and Mountain Highway, as well as throughout The Basin Triangle. Figure 14 below demonstrates the principle of active surveillance as applied to ground level pedestrian interfaces. Premises should be encouraged to provide clear glazing and customer service areas towards the street, in order to promote a sense of activity, surveillance and therefore safety within the public realm. At upper levels, balconies should be provided to provide surveillance of the street and the centre.

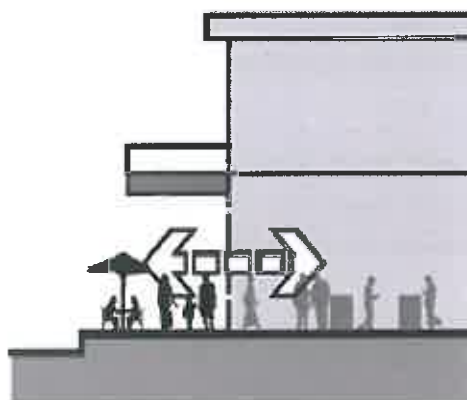


Figure 14 - Ground level pedestrian interfaces

Weather protection

Comparison with other town centres provides valuable precedent learning, as shown in Figure 15 below. Variation in the height and form of verandahs can look disorganised (see Alchester Village example); however, the Kalamunda precedent shows that too much consistency can lead to a bland, unactivated streetscape. At Olinda, varied awnings at a consistent height frame the shopfronts and increase the character of the village. The precedent demonstrates that a variety of awning formats can be provided as long as a continuous height is maintained to provide visual consistency.

There is a lack of continuous weather protection along Forest Road in the Western Precinct to encourage pedestrian movement. Consistent provision of verandahs and awnings should be encouraged to provide valuable weather proofing and enhance the useability of a centre.



Figure 15 - Weather protection precedent

2.7 Respond to wider trends and strategies to increase housing diversity, particularly around existing activity centres

The *Knox Housing Strategy (2015)* reflects the significance of the Dandenong Ranges as a backdrop to the whole municipality, and identifies that the residential areas surrounding The Basin are preferred to remain low-scale neighbourhoods to best complement the significant biological and landscape values of the Dandenong Foothills.

Population forecasts for The Basin demographic area indicate that population increases over the next 10 years will be minimal. Additionally, the centre is identified as a township of 'extreme' bushfire risk by the CFA. As a result, the *Built Form Guidelines* seek to support limited provision of housing diversity within the commercial areas of The Basin, but also aims to encourage a scale and form of development which retains key views to the Dandenong Ranges and the Foothills context.

2.8 Heritage and built form character

The automotive garage, the kindergarten and maternal child health centre, the progress hall and the post office were buildings highlighted as significant to the community of The Basin during community engagement. Heritage assessments of these places revealed the following buildings are key contributors to the character of The Basin:

- The Progress Hall; and
- The intact shopfront facades of the existing Mountain Highway shops.

The *Built Form Guidelines* seek to protect these key characteristics by encouraging the retention of façade features such as metal framed windows and tiling in the Mountain Highway shops. The guidelines aim to ensure that alterations to The Basin Progress Hall building and development on adjoining sites is undertaken to respect the significance of the heritage building.

Additionally, Amendment C137 to the Knox Planning Scheme will include an amendment to Heritage Overlay Schedule 51 to include specific reference to The Basin Progress Hall.

3. Built form vision

3.1 Built Form Vision

The following key priorities are drawn from the community consultation process, the planning policy framework for The Basin, as well as built form analysis of the centre (see *Part 1 Background Report* for full details):

Community engagement

- Preserve views to the Dandenong Ranges and basin paddocks
- Preserve the 'village' feel of the centre
- Provide for onsite car parking where possible
- Consistency of colours and materials
- Preserve and enhance the convenience of visiting the centre
- Preserve heritage spaces

Planning policy framework

- Protect key views to the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills landscape
- Encourage adaptable internal spaces
- Encourage high amenity internal spaces
- Enhance users' comfort and enjoyment of the public realm
- Encourage development sympathetic to the centre's foothills location

Built form priorities

- Protect key views to the Dandenong Ranges and foothills landscape
- Encourage adaptable internal spaces
- Encourage high amenity internal spaces
- Enhance users' comfort and enjoyment of the public realm
- Encourage development sympathetic to the centre's foothills location
- To encourage development to make provision for onsite car parking accessed from the rear.

The vision statement expresses the key elements of The Basin Neighbourhood Activity Centre that Council believes should guide future development.

Vision

For The Basin to strengthen its unique local identity, enhance its role as a contained village at the base of the foothills and support development that reinforces the low scale, semi-rural village feeling with spectacular views to the Dandenong Ranges and basin paddocks.

3.2 Built Form Objectives

To assist in achieving the vision for The Basin, the following built form objectives are to be achieved. They have been developed through community consultation and reflect the planning policy framework and built form analysis of The Basin detailed in *The Basin Background Report, May 2016*:

Priorities	Built Form Objectives
Maintain the centre's location and setting within the Dandenong Foothills landscape, which is a highly valuable part of its appeal and character.	To require that building heights and the scale of development is managed to respond to the low scale built form of the centre and adjoining residential and rural areas to maintain the centre's sense of containment within the Dandenong Foothills and to enhance the visual dominance of the Dandenong Ranges.
Retain the centre's 'local,' 'village' atmosphere.	To retain and enhance key views to the Dandenong Ranges from within The Basin and surrounding areas.
Protect views to the Dandenong Foothills and basin paddocks.	To support development that contributes positively to the streetscape through the use of innovative architectural responses and by presenting visually interesting and appealing façades and activates street frontages.
	To promote an intimate, engaging and personal scale in the built form and public realm.
	To support buildings that respect the valued foothills setting.
	To reinforce the existing pattern of fine-grain shopfronts across the Activity Centre.
	To support roof forms that contribute to creating an appealing and varied skyline within the centre.
	To provide continuous weather protection along key pedestrian routes of the Activity Centre.
	To require the adaptive re-use of buildings and provision of high internal amenity to support and enhance the retail and tourism roles of the centre.
Protect environmental sensitivities of the centre's setting.	To protect and maintain existing vegetation.
	To provide landscaping that is integrated with the design of the development and complements the landscaping of the adjoining public realm and its setting within the Dandenong Foothills.
The 'everyday' service offering of the centre is not compromised.	To facilitate the continuing commercial function of the centre.

	<p>To support business including complementary entertainment and tourism functions within the Activity Centre.</p> <p>To require the adaptive re-use of buildings and provision of high internal amenity to support and enhance the retail and tourism roles of the centre</p>
Protect existing heritage and locally significant buildings which contribute to the character of the centre.	<p>To require that new development complements existing heritage and locally significant buildings.</p> <p>To retain and protect buildings covered by a heritage overlay.</p>
Manage the location of the centre within a bushfire risk area.	To require that development in the Bushfire Management Overlay is sited and designed to ensure that the preservation of human life is prioritised.
Manage the location and extent of advertising signage.	To support signage that is designed and located to be compatible with the character of the centre and its location within the Dandenong Foothills.
Support Knox-wide demand for increased housing diversity.	<p>To support housing diversity within the commercial zones of the centre limited to second floor level to avoid loss of retail areas</p> <p>To support housing that is designed to provide universal access at the ground floor and can be easily adapted for a range of users at its entrances and internally.</p>
Improve the centre's presence from road approaches.	To require development provides appropriate massing and design from centre arrival approaches.
Improve accessibility across the centre.	<p>Support universally accessible design within premises, at their entrances, and across the centre</p> <p>To require pedestrian entry points, access, paths and walkways to be prioritised to improve walkability and the pedestrian experience.</p>
Manage car parking within the centre.	<p>To support development to make provision for onsite car parking accessed from the rear.</p> <p>To minimise the visual impact of car parking and access from the street so that it does not adversely affect streetscape character.</p>
Retain public uses within the Triangle.	

4. Built Form Guidelines

These *Part 2 - The Basin Built Form Guidelines (May 2016)* have been prepared to encourage future development to contribute to the character of the Activity Centre, to provide a high level of amenity for visitors, employees and neighbours, and to set benchmarks in design quality. The guidelines will be used to inform the development of a Design and Development Overlay Schedule 11 (DDO11) and local planning policy for The Basin Neighbourhood Activity Centre.

Any buildings and works in the centre should meet the following design guidelines:

4.1 Building Heights and Setbacks

This element provides guidance on building setbacks, the height of buildings and requirements for floor to ceiling heights.

Design Objectives:

- ***To retain and enhance key views to the Dandenong Ranges and connection with the Foothills landscape from within The Basin Village Neighbourhood Activity Centre.***
- ***To require development in The Basin Village Neighbourhood Activity Centre to be of a scale to maintain the centre's sense of containment within the Dandenong Foothills, and retain the visually dominant backdrop of the Dandenong Ranges and the basin paddocks.***
- ***To require development to contribute to a high quality public realm and pedestrian experience.***
- ***To support development that maximises opportunity for commercial activity.***
- ***To support the adaptive re-use of buildings and provision of high internal amenity within developments in order to maintain and enhance the commercial vitality of the Neighbourhood Activity Centre.***
- ***To avoid unreasonable detriment to the amenity of existing residential areas outside the Neighbourhood Activity Centre.***
- ***To support safe pedestrian movement within and to the Neighbourhood Activity Centre.***

The low scale of the centre allows for views to the Dandenongs from the park across Mountain Highway and views of the basin from Forest Road. The scale of the centre also contributes to the centre's 'village' atmosphere and intimate environment. In order to maintain and enhance the centre's containment and to protect views, heights should be limited to: 2 storeys (8.5 metres) along the western side of Forest Road; single storey (with the exception of the CFA site which may go to 2 storeys) (8 metres)

within the Triangle and single storey (5.4 metres) along Mountain Highway (with the exception of the northern most end of the shops which may go to two storey (8.5 metres)).

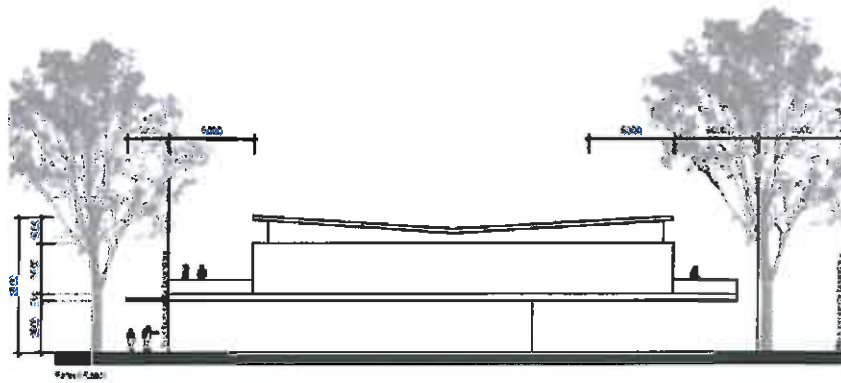
The proposed maximum building heights of 8.5 metres (two storeys), above natural ground level, is greater than the existing interim building height controls of 7.5 metres (two storeys). The proposed 8.5 metre height limit provides scope for increased floor to ceiling heights on both the ground floor level and upper level of buildings, which would enable retail or commercial uses on both levels and the flexibility to use the upper level for commercial or residential uses. Articulated roof forms and architectural features are not included in the 8.5 metres.

Generous floor to ceiling heights will allow for adaptable designs and enable buildings to accommodate commercial uses at ground level and a range of uses at first floor. They also allow a greater level of amenity for occupants by allowing more light to enter the building, improved natural ventilation and reduced heat gain. At the ground level, generous floor to ceiling heights allow for improved entrance design and a greater sense of openness for occupants, which is important for retail or restaurant uses.

The provision of roof forms has also been considered in determining the built form recommendations. Feedback during the consultation phases indicated that the community preferred variation in the building skyline. This is currently provided in the centre through a mix of flat, skillion and pitched roof forms across the single storey built form.

The recommended setbacks focus on reinforcing the street edge with built form to provide for a strong presence of activity along the retail street frontages of the centre. This is particularly necessary along Forest Road, where setbacks and built form are varied and eclectic (See Figure 16). This will be achieved through zero front and side setbacks across the majority of the centre, with the exception of public uses within The Basin Triangle where buildings are expected to be setback from the road frontage to ensure they are framed by vegetation (See Figure 17).

Rear setback along Forest Road will encourage rear loading and car parking to the rear of properties and also protect the amenity of residences to the west. Upper levels along Forest Road should be setback 6 metres to enable expansive views to the basin paddocks while travelling north along the road. The upper level setback also supports opportunities for useable balcony spaces.



Section a-a
Built form dimensions for lots west of Forest Rd

Figure 16 - Built form dimensions on lots west of Forest Road

Any redevelopment of the automotive garage site on the corner of Mountain Highway and Forest Road that does not reuse the existing built form should be stepped and setback at both the ground and upper level to retain the openness of the intersection and views to the basin paddocks.

Building Heights and Setbacks

- Building heights in the centre **must** be restricted to ensure view lines to the Dandenong Ranges are retained and the low rise character of the centre and its surrounds are protected by:
 - Applying a two storey height limit of 8.5 metres to properties on the western side of Forest Road;
 - Applying a single storey height limit of 8 metres to all Council land within The Basin Triangle;
 - Applying a double storey height limit of 8 metres to 362 Forest Road (CFA site);
 - Applying a single storey height limit of 5.4 metres to the properties on the eastern side of Mountain Highway;
 - Applying a two storey height limit of 8.5 metres to 1301 to 1305 Mountain Highway; and
 - Applying a minimum floor to ceiling height of 3.6 metres at ground and 2.7 metres at first floor levels (FFL to FCL).
- New development of commercial properties must be built to the street edge (zero setback) at ground level;
- New development of 1300 Mountain Highway should be stepped and setback at both the ground and upper level to retain the openness of the intersection and views to the basin paddocks;
- Second storey levels of new development to the west of Forest Road should be setback 6 metres behind the street boundary. Balconies are supported to protrude into this setback;

- Second storey level of new development at 1301 to 1305 Mountain Highway is not required to be setback from ground level. If a setback is provided, a balcony should occupy this setback;
- Second storey level of new development at 362 Forest Road (CFA site) must be setback 3 metres from the front facade of the building. Balconies may protrude into this setback; and
- New development on the western side of Forest Road must be setback a minimum of 6 metres from the rear boundary to enable shared vehicular access, rear loading and car parking. Vehicular crossovers to Forest Road which do not achieve this will be actively discouraged.

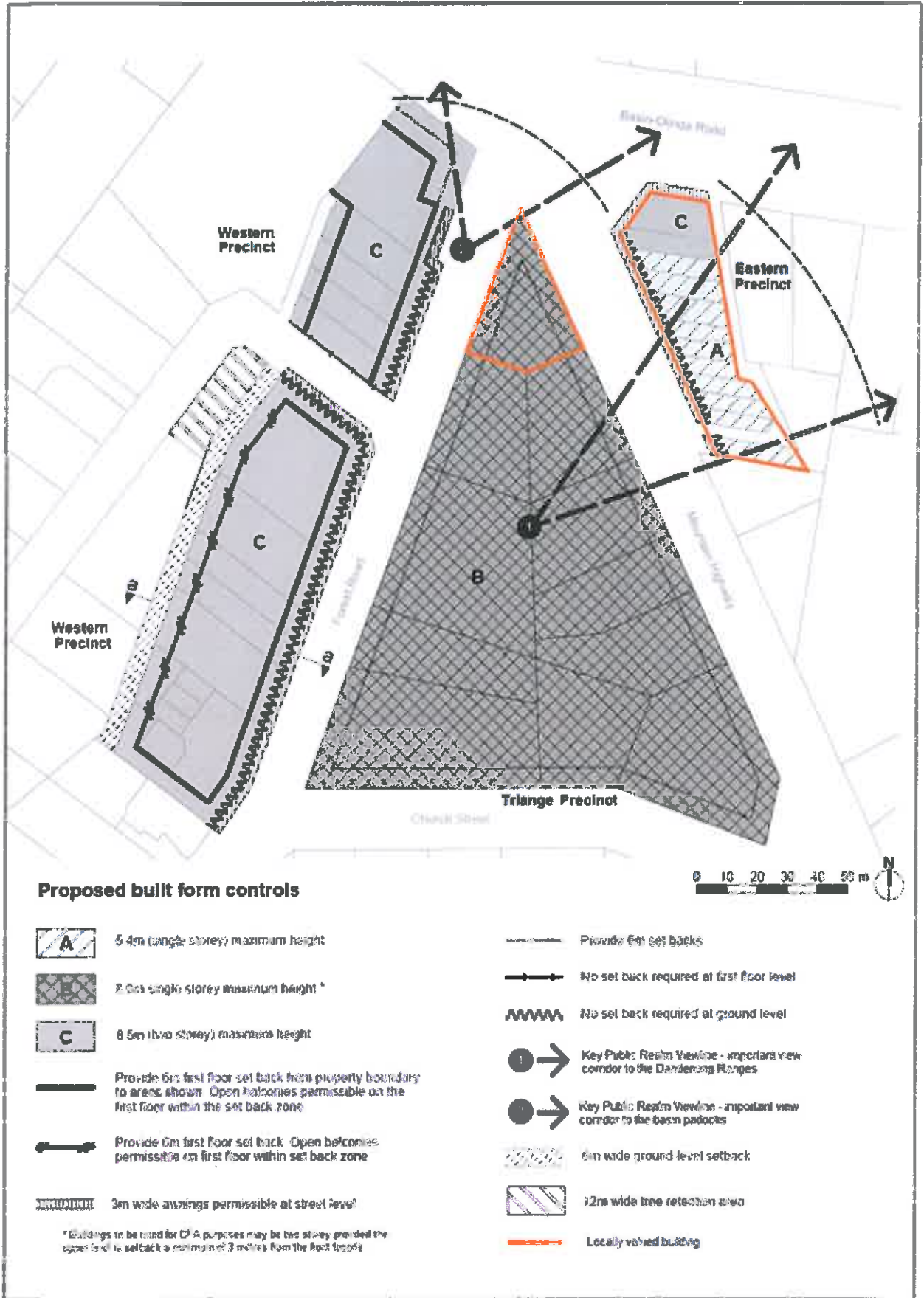


Figure 17 - Height and setbacks

4.2 Building Design

This element provides guidance on façade articulation, roof forms, the street level interface, materials and colours, and environmentally sustainable design.

Design Objectives:

- **To require development to contribute to a high quality public realm and pedestrian experience.**
- **To require development to provide a high standard of universally accessible design to and within buildings in order to support people of all abilities.**
- **To avoid unreasonable detriment to the amenity of existing residential areas outside the Neighbourhood Activity Centre.**

The key built form characteristics in The Basin that contribute to the streetscape are:

- The intact facades of shops on the eastern side of Mountain Highway which have experienced minimal changes. Of particular note are the metal framed windows, tiled facades, narrow fine grain shopfronts and continuous awnings; and
- The use of materials such as timber, colourbond, stone cladding and weatherboard in colours which complement the surrounding treed environment.

The guidelines in this section focus on ensuring built form is responsive to the existing streetscape and foothills character through reducing visual bulk, fine-grain façade articulation, varied roof forms and the use of materials and colours that integrate with the foothills landscape.

For larger sites, the guidelines recommend that fine grain articulation of façades is provided to ensure this valued characteristic of the existing shops is continued. Articulated roof forms are encouraged on larger sites to reduce the visual bulk of buildings.

New development is to adopt a palette of colours derived from the Dandenong Foothills indigenous plant materials palette. Grey greens, cool greys and warm greys are to be used for general areas of colour. Highlights such as doors, window frames and architectural features can include highlight colours selected from the colours of the foliage and flowers of the natural vegetation of the Foothills. Natural materials such as stone, timber and render are to feature in the new built form, demonstrating a solid permanent character.

The aim of these guidelines is to promote an enjoyable and comfortable pedestrian experience, and support the experience of The Basin as an engaging, local meeting place. These guidelines aim to support built form which is responsive to the existing streetscape and maintains the intimate scale of the Village. Larger sites should maintain the existing fine grain articulation of façades. Articulated roof forms are encouraged on larger sites to reduce the visual bulk of buildings.

The guidelines identify the primary retail areas (eastern side of Mountain Highway and western side of Forest Road) where verandahs are required to provide shade for pedestrians and protection from the rain. This will create a Neighbourhood Activity Centre that is a pleasant place to enjoy. Given the cool winters of the region and higher

levels of precipitation associated with the centre's proximity to the Dandenong Ranges, continuous weather protection is vital to ensure pedestrian comfort. Lack of visual uniformity in verandah heights and appearance has been identified as reducing the attractiveness of the centre. Verandahs and awnings should be encouraged to be consistent with adjoining properties.

This element also addresses opportunities for designing buildings for universal access and opportunities to incorporate best practice Environmentally Sustainable Development in buildings and landscaping.

Building Design

- Maintain a pattern of fine grain articulation on larger sites through the use of vertical architectural detailing and proportions of buildings and incorporation of windows;
- Support the provision of activated north facing facades and north facing pavement areas;
- Require second storeys to be recessive elements in the streetscape, yet incorporate balconies and habitable room windows within these upper setbacks to encourage passive surveillance of the public realm;
- Buildings should incorporate techniques to improve opportunities for views between public and private areas, such as utilising clear glazing and avoiding reflective, tinted or obscured window coverings;
- Ground levels of shop fronts should be provided as clear glazing with customer service areas facing the street. Upper levels should locate clear windows or balconies towards the street;
- Require the provision of continuous awnings for weather protection;
- Built form is to comply with the dimensions demonstrated to provide for quality light-filled internal volumes in the new spaces;
- Buildings should provide pitched roof forms to provide a visual connection to the undulating ridgelines of the Dandenong Ranges;
- Provide vertical articulation to visually break up the appearance of building frontages on wider allotments and reflect the existing pattern of fine-grain shopfronts. This vertical articulation should reflect the standard width of shopfronts (5-7 metre width). Roof forms should also be divided into distinct sections in order to minimise visual bulk and respond to the roof proportions of existing buildings;
- New buildings are to incorporate best practice Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles, such as designing for passive solar design, incorporation of green walls and roofs where possible and feasible, and the use of sustainable materials;
- External building walls should utilise muted tones, finishes and colours that contribute to the landscape setting of the Foothills, and should avoid excessive use of colours that contrast strongly with the dominant colours of the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills.
- Roofs should be coloured in dark, muted tones and be of low reflectivity;

- Screen waste, storage, loading or service areas within view of the street; and
- External walls which may be vulnerable to graffiti should incorporate vertical landscaping or other integrated deterrent measures.

4.3 Heritage and Built Form Character

This element provides guidance on development of heritage and contributory buildings.

Design Objectives:

- **To require that new development complements existing heritage and locally significant buildings.**

Key buildings within the centre are:

- The Progress Hall is affected by the Heritage Overlay 51. The guidelines aim to ensure that alterations to this heritage building and development on adjoining sites is undertaken to respect the significance of the heritage building; and
- The intact shopfront facades of the existing Mountain Highway shops have been identified as contributing greatly to the character of The Basin. These elements should be retained and enhanced.

Heritage and Built Form Character:

- Require the retention of the Progress Hall building. Any future development of this building and The Basin Triangle must be respectful and contribute positively to the historic characteristics of the building; and
- Support retention of metal window frames and tiled façades of shopfronts on the eastern side of Mountain Highway.

4.4 Landscaping

This element provides guidance on landscaping in new developments within the centre.

Design Objectives:

- ***To retain and enhance key views to the Dandenong Ranges and connection with the Foothills landscape from within The Basin Village Neighbourhood Activity Centre; and***
- ***To require development to contribute to a high quality public realm and pedestrian experience.***

The key landscaping characteristics within the centre are:

- A mixture of native and exotic canopy vegetation within, predominantly located within public spaces; and
- Vegetation frames the centre, particularly road frontages and approaches.

The guidelines aim to ensure development is designed to retain existing trees where possible. This will strengthen the valued landscape setting of the centre.

Landscaping

- Require landscaping to be well integrated with the design of the development;
- Facilitate landscaping which complements the vegetation of the adjoining public realm and Foothills landscape; and
- Require development to be designed to ensure retention of existing significant vegetation on or adjoining the property.

4.5 Signage

This element addresses the design and location of signage across the centre.

A key driver for the guidelines are to ensure signage is uncluttered, integrated with the design of the building and does not dominate the streetscape.

Design Objectives:

- ***To require advertising signs to complement views to and visual dominance of the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills, and to contribute to a high quality public realm.***

Signage

- Require all signage is of a scale, design and location that complements the design and proportion of the building, the streetscape setting, and the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills landscape setting;
- Signage is kept to a minimum by consolidating information;
- Signage be designed to avoid visual clutter and not incorporate animation, flashing, bright or reflective surfaces;
- Signage be limited to one suspended sign per frontage, perpendicular to the façade, located below the verandah and one sign on the awning facing the road;
- Signage must not interrupt key views defined at Figure 17 in these guidelines; and
- Major Promotion signs and sky signs are actively discouraged within the centre.

5. Implementation

Statutory implementation of the *Built Form Guidelines* will be achieved by preparing Amendment C137 to the Knox Planning Scheme. Amendment C137 will make the following changes to the Knox Planning Scheme:

Change	Reason
Amend Clause 21.05 (Housing)	Amend to make references to the <i>Built Form Guidelines</i> for The Basin NAC.
Amend Clause 21.07 (Economic Development).	Amend to provide direction on economic development for The Basin NAC and reference the <i>Built Form Guidelines</i> for the centre.
Amend Clause 21.09 (Reference Documents)	Amend to include <i>The Basin Built Form Guidelines, Knox City Council, May 2016</i> as a reference document.
Amend Clause 22.01 (Dandenong Foothills Policy).	Amend to avoid conflicting height controls. The policy is to be amended so that the 7.5m height controls of the policy no longer apply to The Basin NAC. All other aspects of the policy will continue to apply.
Amend Clause 22.12 (Residential Land Use and Development in the Commercial 1 Zone).	Amend to include direction on housing for The Basin NAC and reference the <i>Built Form Guidelines</i> for the centre.
Apply the Design and Development Overlay Schedule 11 (DDO11) to the centre (excluding the rear of 1325 Mountain Highway).	The current interim 7.5 metre height controls in Design and Development Overlay Schedule 10 (DDO10) will be replaced with a new permanent control for The Basin (DDO11). This will support development consistent with the outcomes sought in the built form guidelines. Maximum (mandatory) height limit in the centre is proposed at 8.5 metres (2 storeys) above natural ground level. This maximum height does not apply to roof forms, architectural features and detailing. The DDO11 will also provide direction on built form outcomes for The Basin relating to setbacks, materials and colours, weather protection and signage.
Delete Design and Development Overlay Schedule 10 (DDO10) (interim height controls).	The overlay can be deleted as it will be replaced by the new DDO11 (described above).
Apply the Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) to 1300 Mountain Highway, The Basin.	Ministerial Direction No. 1 (Potentially Contaminated Land) requires planning authorities to satisfy themselves that the environmental conditions of land proposed to be used for a 'sensitive use' – such as residential – are, or can be remediated to be, suitable for that use. Based on its previous land use as a service station, it is recommended that the Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) be applied to 1300 Mountain Highway, The Basin. The EAO ensures the requirement for an environmental audit is met before the commencement of any sensitive uses.
Delete the Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1 (DDO1) from where it	The overlay is unnecessary within the commercial and public land use areas of the centre.

<p>applies within the centre (with the exception of 1325 Mountain Highway, The Basin).</p>	<p>The overlay should continue to apply to the rear portion of 1325 Mountain Highway, as this land is used for residential purposes and should retain the same planning controls as adjoining residential land.</p>
<p>Delete the Design and Development Overlay Schedule 2 (DDO2) from 385-387 Forest Road, The Basin (The Basin Pre-School and Maternal Child Health Centre).</p>	<p>The overlay is unnecessary within the centre, as the new DDO11 will provide built form guidance for these sites.</p>
<p>Amend Schedule 51 to Clause 43.01 Heritage Overlay (HO51) to specifically include The Basin Progress Hall.</p>	<p>A heritage assessment of the centre revealed that while the HO51 applies to the whole of the Basin Triangle land, the schedule does not specifically identify the Progress Hall as a significant building.</p>



Acknowledgements:

Realm Studios

Mesh Planning

Draft Upper Gully Strategic Plan (September 2015)

Revision

Sept 2015	Council Review
October 2015	Authorisation Request
May 2016	Council Adoption



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Basin is designated as a Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC) within Knox located at the base of the Dandenong Ranges. The study area comprises existing commercial and public use areas.

The centre is surrounded by predominantly residential areas that include overlay provisions that aim to protect the Dandenong Foothills character and vegetation cover. These controls place limitations on the scale and intensity of development and reinforce a relatively low density of residential housing.

In relation to the commercial and public zoned areas of The Basin, an absence of enough clarity regarding building scale, led (in 2014) to a three year interim application of a 7.5 metre height limit to enable sufficient time to undertake the necessary strategic work to determine appropriate permanent built form controls.

In November 2014, the Minister for Planning approved, through Amendment C130 to the Knox Planning Scheme, an interim Design and Development Overlay Schedule- 10 (DDO10) with a mandatory height limit of 7.5 metres on the condition that further strategic work, and a following full Planning Scheme Amendment were undertaken to include permanent built form controls into the scheme.

This Background Report outlines the strategic assessment done and recommends built form guidelines be prepared for the centre and a subsequent amendment to the Knox Planning Scheme to apply design guidance for the centre, including heights. The study area is confined to the commercial and public use zone areas of the NAC. The study area does include a small portion of residentially zoned land, arising from the part commercial and part residential zoning of 1325 Mountain Highway.

2.1 Purpose of Background Report

Part 1: The Basin Background Report has been prepared by Knox City Council to provide built form analysis to inform *Part 2: The Basin Built Form Guidelines*. These documents will form the strategic basis for permanent built form controls for The Basin Activity Centre: a new Schedule 11 to the Design and Development Overlay (DDO11) which is to be included in the Knox Planning Scheme through Amendment C137.

The *Built Form Guidelines* aim to encapsulate community values and Council aspirations and will provide clear direction about future development opportunities and design outcomes within The Basin to protect the centre's valued village character into the future.

The project scope deals solely with built form outcomes within the centre.

2. Setting the Scene

– The Basin

2.1 The Basin study area

The Basin is a local service and convenience centre located in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges in the north eastern corner of the Knox municipality in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

The Basin, along with the neighbourhood centres of Alchester Village, Ferntree Gully and Upper Ferntree Gully, represents one of the gateway centres en route to the Dandenong Ranges, a State Significant landscape as identified in Plan Melbourne, the State Government's primary planning document for Melbourne.

As seen in Figure 1, the Boronia Activity Centre, located 2.5 km to the south west of The Basin, is the closest major centre and railway station. In the context of these major and neighbourhood centres, The Basin is positioned as a local shopping centre providing everyday necessities. The NAC also services the suburbs of The Basin, Boronia and Sassafrass and has an approximate pedestrian catchment area of 500m.

The study area covers an area of 3.7ha and comprises existing commercial areas to the west of Forest Road and to the east of Mountain Highway. The 'Basin Triangle' is located at the heart of the study area, bound by Forest Road, Mountain Highway and Basin Olinda Road and comprises public uses.

The study area is predominantly surrounded by low density residential uses within a heavily treed environment with extensive paddocks (Salvation Army land, referred to as 'basin paddocks' in this report) to the north of the centre. The basin paddocks are a pastoral landscape of rolling green hills, containing indigenous and exotic trees, creeks and the close backdrop of the heavily vegetated hills of the Dandenong Ranges National Park. The basin paddocks are registered with the National Trust, a non-statutory body with an interest in preserving local and state cultural heritage.

In October 2011, Council endorsed *The Salvation Army Site (The Basin) Planning Study (May 2011)* to commit to continuing to protect this important landscape. These views of the Dandenongs and basin paddocks (Salvation Army land) contribute significantly to a unique, semi rural village atmosphere.

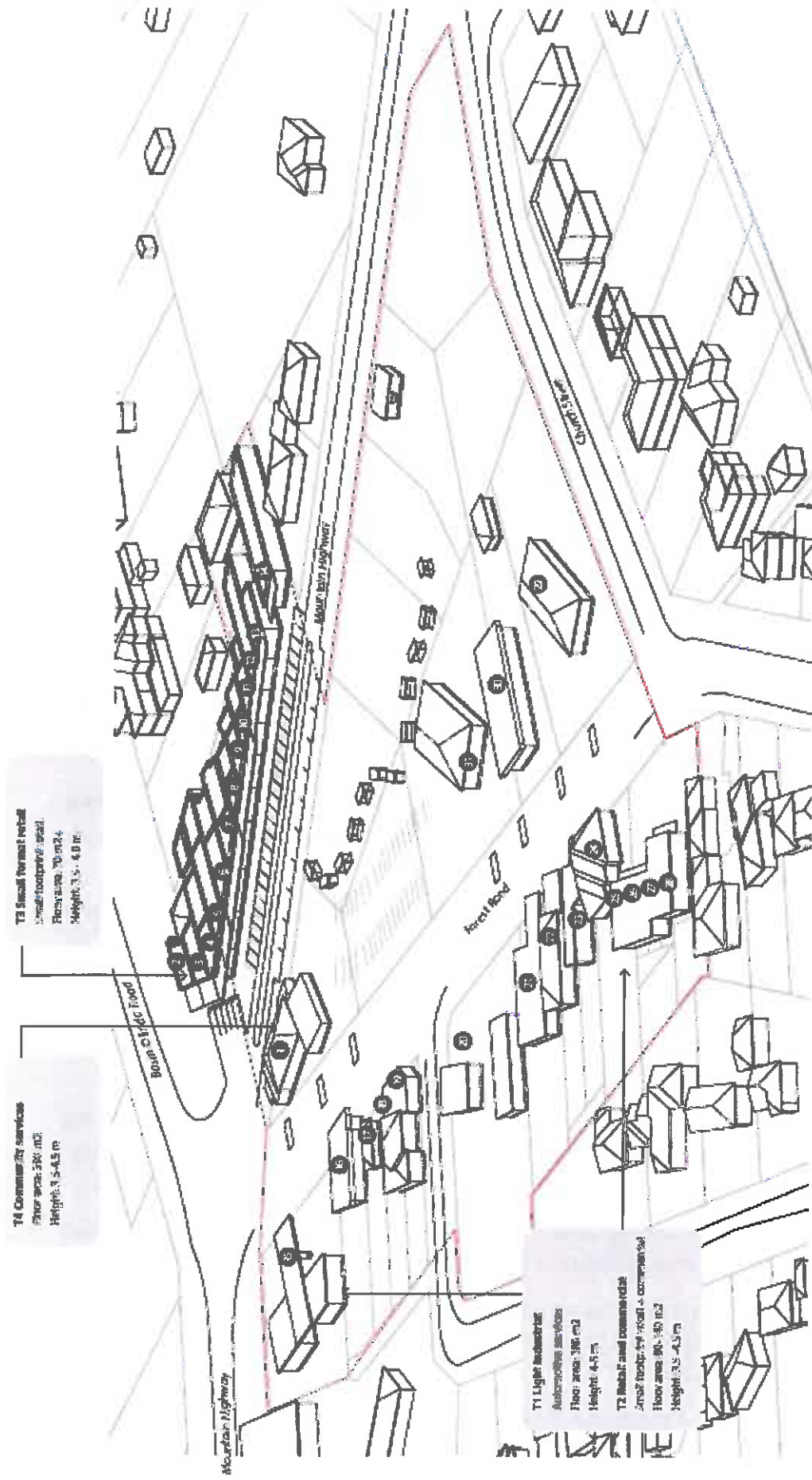
Built form within The Basin is low scale, allowing the hills and vegetated backdrop to dominate the built form. These characteristics, accompanied by a small number of shops and restaurants and a generous amount of public uses within the 'heart' of the centre, contribute greatly to the centre's 'village' like atmosphere (refer to Figure 2). The Basin is a lively village, playing host to a number of community groups including The Basin Theatre Group, Senior Citizens and The Basin Scout Group.

The Basin Music Festival is held annually each March. Mountain Highway between The Basin and Olinda is a popular and challenging route for cyclists and groups of cyclists

frequently stop at The Basin for refreshments at one of the cafes or the park, particularly on weekends.



Figure 01 – Study Area



- Existing conditions and uses**
1. The Basin Frog as a Hair
 2. Bairy Day Book Shop
 3. Post office
 4. The Basin Wood Business
 5. The Basin News Agent
 6. The Basin Liquor Store
 7. The Basin Fruit Market
 8. The Basin Bakery
 9. The Wedding Brand Company
 10. The Chocolate Dragonfly Cafe
 11. The Basin Meat Supply
 12. The Basin Fish and Chip Shop
 13. Pirritto Cycles
 14. Passion for Cake and Coffee
 15. HiFlow motors and bikes
 16. Black Dog
 17. Pirritto clothing
 18. New & easy-toe fashion boutique
 19. Mubochi designers of hair
 20. The Basin Pre-School
 21. Hand me downs
 22. The Square Restaurant
 23. Resposable motors
 24. A man of forest
 25. En Bon-Santa Massage Therapy
 26. Whippers hair design
 27. Busbud
 28. Oak Tree Tavern
 29. The Basin Scouts
 30. The Basin Voluntary Fire Brigade
 31. The Basin's Seniors Centre
 32. Toilet block
- Typology inventory**
- T1 Light industrial
 - T2 Retail and commercial
 - T3 Small format retail
 - T4 Community services
 - T5 Light industrial
 - T6 Retail and commercial
 - T7 Small format retail
 - T8 Community services

Figure 02 – Land uses within the centre

2.2 Demographics

The demographic catchment area for The Basin covers the suburbs of The Basin and Sassafrass, covering a total area of 573ha. The Basin NAC covers 3.7ha of this area.

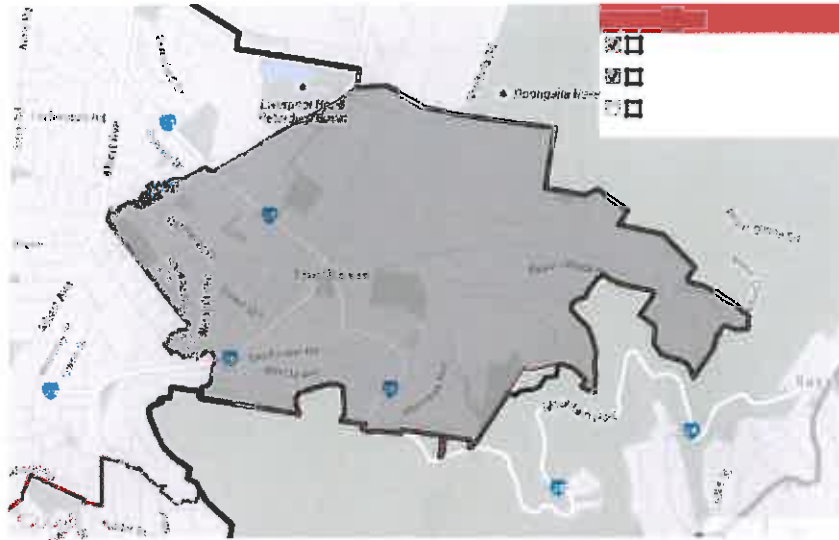


Figure 03 – The Basin demographic catchment area

Demographic analysis shows the following context for The Basin demographic catchment:

Population forecast - In 2011, the total population of The Basin was estimated to be 4,523 people. It is expected to decrease by over 150 people to 4,364 by 2026, at an average annual growth rate of -0.24%.

Age - An even spread of age groups across The Basin suggests that provision is required for all age groups and that affordable housing opportunities are required as younger people enter the housing market.

Household - In 2011, the dominant household type in The Basin was couples and families with dependents, which accounted for 39.0% of all households. The largest increase between 2011 and 2026 is forecast to be in couples without dependents, which will increase by 62 households and account for 31.4% of all households. In contrast couples and families with dependents is forecast to decrease by 55 households, to comprise 34.4% of all households in 2026, compared to 39.0% in 2011.

More broadly, the Knox Housing Strategy notes that couple only households will represent 32% of all households by 2021, indicating future opportunity and demand for varied housing typologies and sizes within Knox, particularly located in activity centres.

Economy - There are equally weighted numbers of employed and non-employed persons, suggesting a need for daytime services, shops and recreational spaces.

Education, healthcare services, manufacturing, construction and retail are the dominant employment sectors across The Basin, indicating a working population which moves out of the area during the day.

Dwellings - There is limited dwelling diversity across The Basin, with low density detached houses forming the highest percentage of dwelling types and very small

percentages of flats, units or apartment structures occurring in the area. Occupied private dwellings are the predominant form.

Housing projections for The Basin indicates that the number of dwellings in The Basin will increase from 1,662 in 2011 to 1,708 in 2036 representing a growth rate of 2.8% over 25 years.

When read in conjunction with age and household trends, demographic analysis suggests that there is limited current capacity and future demand for increased housing diversity within the study area.

2.3 Development Activity

Assessment of planning and building permits issued between 2005 and 2016 in the Basin NAC shows only minor upgrades to commercial premises and occasional signage upgrades, changeover of uses to cafe or convenience restaurants and liquor license approvals. No extensions to the fabric of the Village or increase in floor space have occurred in recent history.

Council's Place Program team has been active in The Basin since 2005 years, prefacing any future improvement works by engaging with traders and the broader community to find out what short, medium and long term initiatives will have an impact on the overall performance and success of The Basin.

Council initiatives for the Village include:

- Mountain Highway Shops – new pedestrian pavement, street tree planting, park upgrade;
- Installation of pedestrian crossings on Mountain Hwy adjacent to roundabout and on Forest Road adjacent to Conyers Street;
- Installation of footpaths in The Basin Triangle to improve access to the Forest Road Bus stop and car park area;
- Installation of custom built community group badge signage (north of Mountain Highway);
- Removal of public toilets (north of Mountain Highway) and installation of a new public toilet facility in The Basin Triangle Park;
- The Basin Triangle Park – preparation of masterplan and progressive implementation. Includes playground, plantings and sound shell;
- The Basin Progress Hall – ongoing refurbishment;
- Activity Centre Entry signage; and
- The Basin Seniors Hall – refurbishment (Planning underway).

2.4 Existing Land Use

There is a diverse range of land uses within the study area, ranging from retail through to recreational services, community facilities through to light industrial.

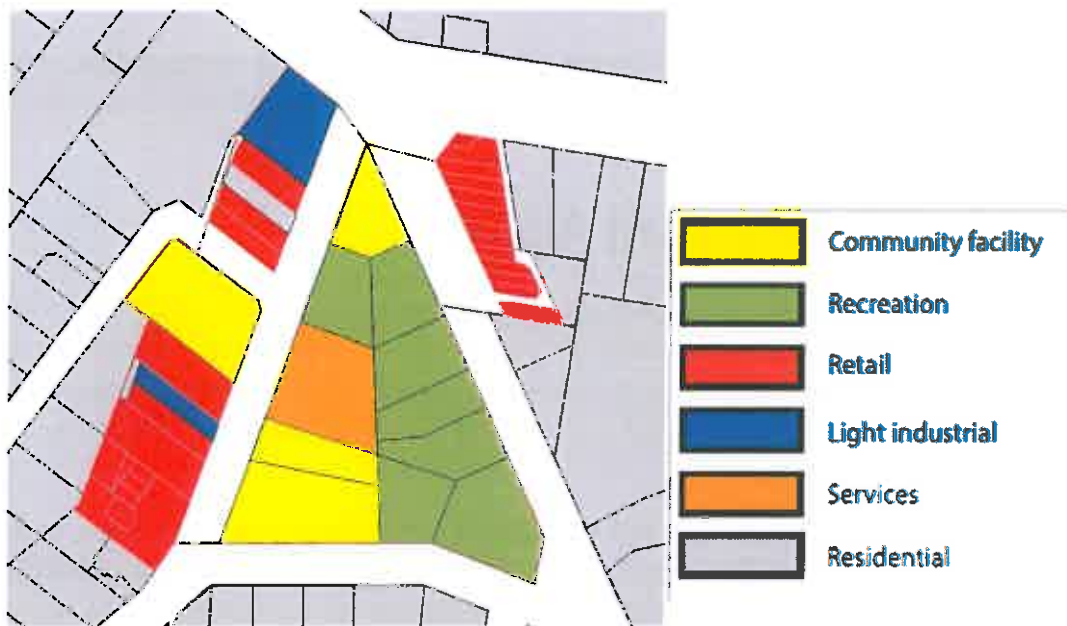


Figure 04 – Land Uses

2.5 Strategic Planning Policy Framework

Several policies exist for guiding development in The Basin, from the State to the municipal level. These relevant policies are outlined below.

2.5.1 State Government Policy

Plan Melbourne

Plan Melbourne was released in May 2014. The document is Melbourne's metropolitan planning strategy for the next 40 years and will guide Melbourne and its suburbs' development and growth, including matters such as infrastructure, housing, employment, transport and environment.

Directions relevant to The Basin in Plan Melbourne include:

- Direction 2.2 – Reduce the cost of living by increasing housing supply near services and public transport.
- Direction 4.1 – Create a city of 20 minute neighbourhoods.
- Direction 4.2 – Protect Melbourne and its suburbs from inappropriate development.
- Direction 4.5 – Make our city greener.
- Direction 5.1 – Use the city structure to drive sustainable outcomes in managing growth.
- Direction 5.2 – Protect and restore natural habitats in urban and non-urban areas.

The *Basin Built Form Guidelines* and the Knox Planning Scheme must be consistent with State Government strategies and policies such as Plan Melbourne.

2.5.2 Knox Planning Scheme

State Planning Policy Framework

Clause 11 Settlement - Provides strategic direction for future land uses within The Basin. The Basin is identified in the hierarchy of Activity Centres as a Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC).

Clause 13 Environmental Risk - Encourages future planning and design in The Basin to appropriately respond to hazards and minimise risks from landslip, bushfire and flooding.

Clause 15 Built Environment and Heritage - Encourages the future planning and design in The Basin to provide high quality urban design - design that responds to the needs of the community and the intrinsic qualities of the place.

Clause 16 Housing - Encourages future planning and design in The Basin to provide for potentially increased housing supply and diversity within the NAC.

Clause 17 Economic Development - Provides the strategic direction to ensure future planning and design for The Basin provides a range of land uses within the NAC that provide for both local and tourist needs.

Clause 18 Transport - Encourages future planning and design in The Basin provides a range of integrated and sustainable transport systems to make it easy and safe for people to get around.

Clause 19 Infrastructure - Encourages the location of community resources that are highly accessible by public transport and walking and cycling paths. It also encourages the provision of water supply, sewerage and drainage services to efficiently and effectively to meet State and community needs and protect the environment.

Local Planning Policy Framework

The Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF), at Clauses 21 and 22 of the Knox Planning Scheme, sets a local and regional strategic policy context for a municipality.

Clause 21.01 Settlement - specifies that *“Urban consolidation objectives must not outweigh the environmental and landscape objectives for the foothills”*.

Clause 21.04 Urban Design - Provides the strategic direction for the provision of built form that is ecologically sustainable and site responsive.

A key objective of this clause is to *“Protect and enhance the aesthetic, environmental and landscape values and vistas of the Dandenong Foothills, Dandenong Creek Valley, local and national parklands”*.

Clause 21.04-2 seeks to ensure that development responds positively to the local context including and encouraging new development to be adaptable and flexible.

The clause also notes that built form is a major contributor to long-term sustainability objectives through the use of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles.

Clause 21.05 Housing – Provides direction for the provision of housing in The Basin. In particular, Clause 21.05-1 seeks to support residential development in accordance with the Knox Housing Strategy 2015, which identifies a scaled approach to residential development, including directing housing growth towards Local Living and Activity Areas.

Clause 21.07 Economic Development - Provides direction for The Basin in terms of its economic activity and its broader economic role within the municipality, including its role as a gateway to the Dandenong Ranges.

In particular, Clause 21.07-2 seeks to support appropriate development in the Dandenong Foothills that responds positively to the landscape and environmental sensitivities of the area, is well designed and respects and complements the local character, including height. It seeks to ensure that development and use in shopping centres is appropriate to the role and function of the centre.

Clause 22.01 Dandenong Foothills - Provides direction for The Basin in terms of the design of buildings in order to retain key views and aims to protect and enhance the landscape significance of the Dandenong Foothills.

The policy designates the study area as being located within the 'Dandenong Foothills, Foothills Backdrop and Ridgeline Area' (refer to Figure 5).

Design responses for development in this area are that:

- The design and siting of buildings, works and landscaping minimises the threat associated with bushfire.
- The design and siting of buildings, works and landscaping protects and enhances the visual dominance of vegetation, including canopy trees and native understorey plants, to ensure that:
 - There is a continuous vegetation canopy across residential lots and roads.
 - Development blends with vegetation on the hillsides to maintain and enhance the appearance of the area as an extension of the Dandenong Ranges National Park.
 - There is effective screening of development and use of suitable colours and materials to maintain distant views and the appearance of a heavily vegetated natural hillside.
- Development does not rise above the tree canopy height to maintain the significant landscape character of the area and near and distant view lines.
 - The significant landscape character of the area is protected and enhanced by retaining existing vegetation and planting indigenous canopy and understorey vegetation.
 - Buildings and works located on sites at high points and along ridges are designed, finished and sited so that they are not highly visible from the valley area below.

Clause 22.12 Residential Land Use and Development within the Commercial 1 Zone - Provides direction for the provision for residential land use and development within activity centres is consistent with the role of the centre and that development is appropriate within its context. Within Dandenong Foothills Centres, development should maintain the low-rise character of the surrounding area and ensure that the landscape character of the Foothills area is protected. This policy applies only to residential development in a Commercial 1 Zone where locally specific design guidance has not been adopted.

It is envisaged that the proposed Clause 22.12 will only guide activity within The Basin until such time as *Built Form Guidelines* are incorporated into the Knox Planning Scheme and provide tailor made, locally specific guidance to residential development within the Centre.

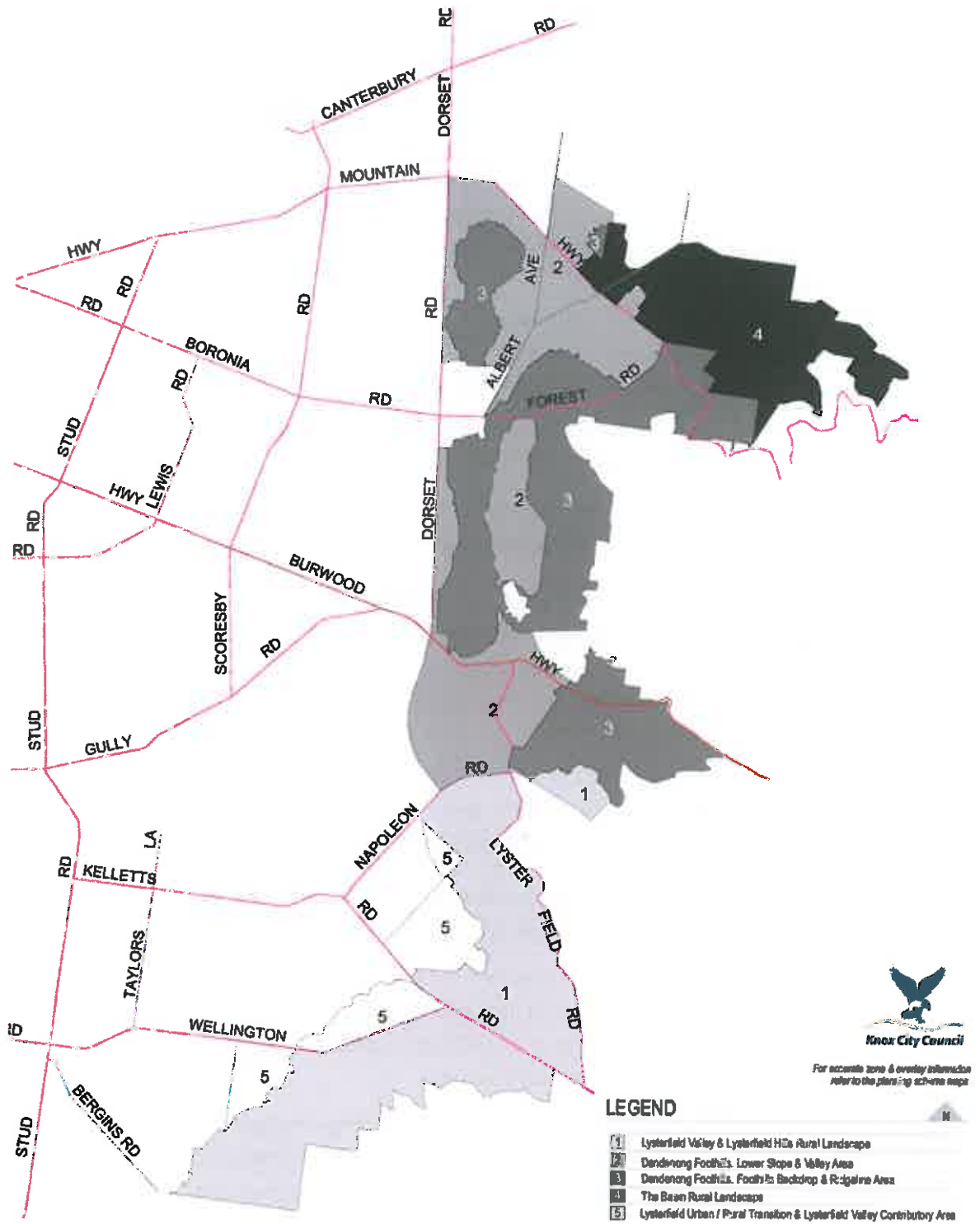


Figure 05 – Dandenong Foothills Policy map

2.5.3 Knox studies and strategies

Knox Vision and City Plan (adopted June 2013)

The Knox Vision provides a shared vision for the future of Knox that will deliver the lifestyle, jobs and industry, health and wellbeing desired by members of the Knox community. The vision is outlined under five themes, each containing a description of the ideal future, and identifying the features that will be in place when that future is achieved:

- Healthy, Connected Communities
- Prosperous, Advancing Economy
- Vibrant and Sustainable Built and Natural Environments
- Culturally Rich and Active Communities
- Democratic and Engaged Communities

These themes are used as indicators to monitor the community's wellbeing and achievement toward the broader Vision for Knox.

Knox Housing Strategy 2015

The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* (the Housing Strategy) aims to balance the changing housing needs of current and future residents while ensuring that important aspects of Knox are retained and enhanced. The major trends which the Housing Strategy aims to respond to include:

- An aging population;
- Growing lone person households; and
- Growing couple only households and small drop in households with children.

The significance of the Dandenong Ranges as a backdrop to the whole municipality is also reflected in the Housing Strategy.

The Housing Strategy utilises a scaled approach to housing development, setting out the preferred types of housing in four different areas. The surrounding residential areas of The Basin are considered part of the Bush Suburban category, i.e. areas which have significant biological and landscape values.

The Housing Strategy indicates that the surrounding residential area will continue to be low-scale neighbourhoods, characterised mostly by detached houses, where significant indigenous and native vegetation is retained and complemented. It also indicates that the preferred housing types in this area are detached dwellings and dual occupancies.

Amendment C131 to the Knox Planning Scheme, gazetted in March 2016, to implement the Knox Housing Strategy, included a new policy at Clause 22.12: Residential Land Use and Development within the Commercial 1 Zone. This proposed policy seeks to ensure that residential land use and development within activity centres is consistent with the role of the centre and that development is appropriate within its context. This policy applies only to residential development in a Commercial 1 Zone where locally specific design guidance has not been adopted. It is envisaged that this policy will only guide development for a short while until the built form guidelines are incorporated into the Knox Planning Scheme.

Planning Scheme Amendment C130 – Interim Building Height controls

Amendment C130 was approved on 20 November 2014 and applied interim controls to the commercial zoned areas of The Basin, Alchester Village and Upper Ferntree Gully. The Amendment introduced mandatory building height controls of 7.5 metres which aim to ensure that new development responds to the low-scale character of the centres, and that height and visual bulk of new development is minimised in order to maintain views between properties to the Dandenong Foothills.

The interim controls are to allow Council time to undertake detailed planning work for these centres.

2.5.4 Zones

There are a number of zones within the study area. The predominant private land zoning is Commercial 1 Zone (shown on the map as C1Z). On the edge of the centre (1325 Mountain Highway, The Basin) is residentially zoned property (NRZ1) containing a single storey shopfront with residence to the rear. In addition there is a Public Park and Recreation (PPRZ) and Public Use (PUZ6 and PUZ7) zones providing for various community facilities.

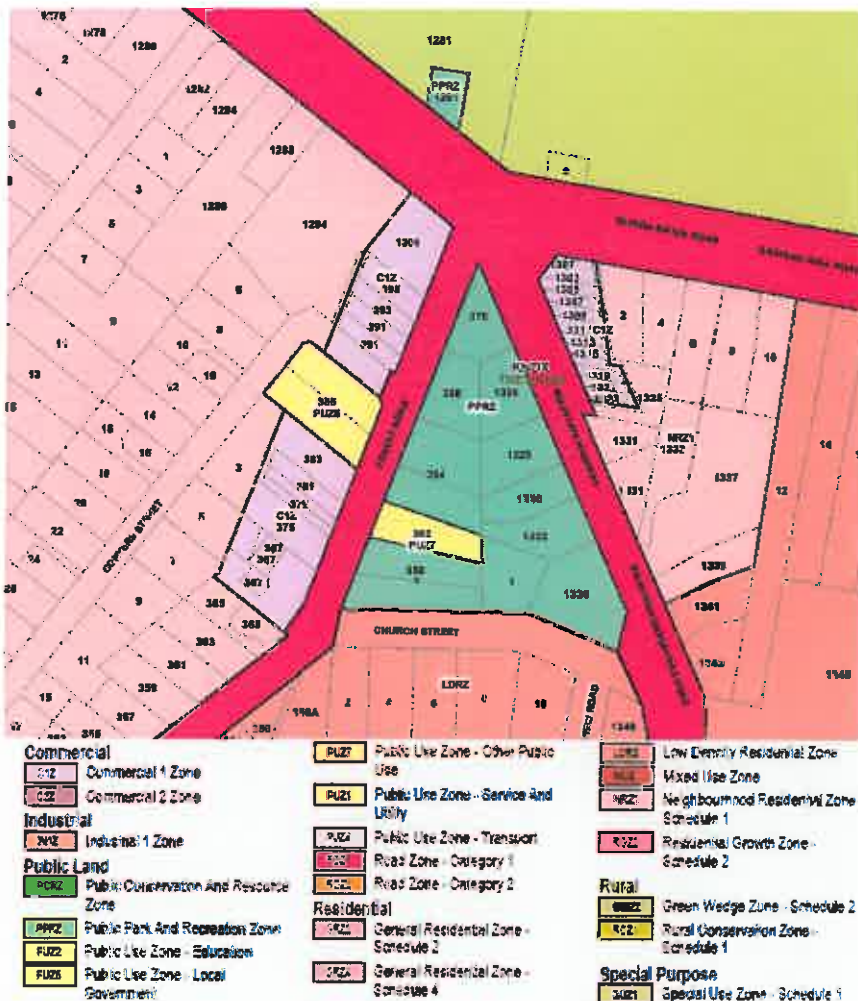


Figure 06 – Zoning

2.5.5 Overlays

The study area is subject to a number of overlays, many of which aim to protect the foothills character. Overlays comprise:

- Design and Development Overlay Schedule 10 (DDO10) applies to the whole study area and enforces a mandatory 7.5 metre interim height limit to protect views of the foothills and ensure new buildings are compatible with the scale and character of the Village.
- Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1 (DDO1) applies to land east of Forest Road and Design and Development Overlay Schedule 2 (DDO2) applies to the west of Forest Road. These overlays contain minimum subdivision requirements and maximum site and impervious surfaces coverage requirements.
- Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedules 2 and 3 (VPO2 and VPO3) and Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 2 and 3 (ESO2 and ESO3) protect existing vegetation and/or habitat.
- Significant Landscape Overlay Schedules 2 and 3 (SLO2 and SLO3) seek to protect and enhance the visual, natural and cultural values of the foothills landscape with requirements around height, materials and colours, vegetation and fencing.
- Heritage Overlay Schedule 51 (HO51) applies to The Basin triangle including the Progress Hall.
- The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) applies to land east of Forest Road within the study area and seeks to manage development within high bushfire risk areas.

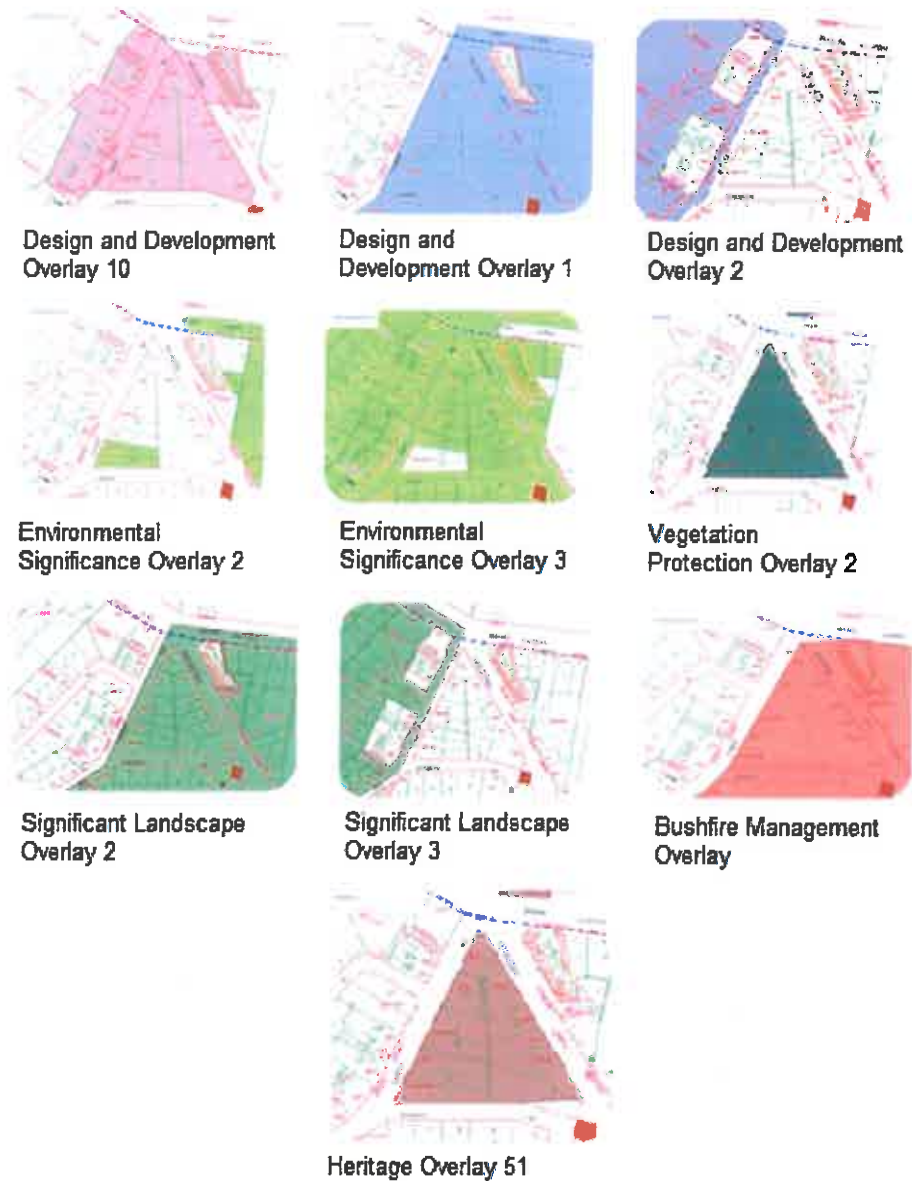


Figure 07 – Overlays

Summary of Policy Framework for The Basin:

The Basin is a low scale centre located at the base of the Dandenong Ranges. Future planning of the centre will need to achieve a balance between providing additional scope for development to ensure the centre continues to thrive economically and the desire to retain the low scale character and views. The centre's location within a bushfire prone area also requires careful consideration.

Opportunities exist within the centre for flexible commercial spaces to cater for office, retail, restaurants, performance and gallery spaces.

Strategically, The Basin is not anticipated to accommodate the demand for alternative forms of housing, as this is expected to occur within larger local centres, such as Boronia, located outside of the Dandenong Foothills policy area.

Additionally, population and household forecasts for The Basin indicate that there are limited opportunities and demand for alternative forms of housing in the centre. Despite this, some opportunities do still exist for some shop top housing within the centre.

2.5.6 Other considerations

Bushfire risk

The CFA's Community Information Guide for The Basin identifies the township as having 'extreme' bushfire risk. This classification is based on high fuel loads in the bordering forest, the hilly terrain, a lack of accessibility with narrow dead-end roads and homes nestled into bushland.

The Community Information Guide also states that there are no designated 'Neighbourhood Safer Places – Places of Last Resort' in The Basin. It is currently unlikely that a refuge area will be provided within The Basin given its risk status and topography and its close proximity to places not at risk of bushfire.

The Bushfire Management Overlay applies to the study area east of Forest Road and is located within a designated Bushfire Prone Area under the Building Act. Bushfire risk must be considered from a strategic perspective in the preparation of the built form design guidelines. In consultation with CFA, it is considered that bushfire risk for the study area is mitigated by:

- The centre's separation from the nearest hazards, with bitumen surfaces and residential development between the hazards and the centre;
- Fire protection and escape standards under the Building Regulations associated with commercial developments;
- Sound road infrastructure, with sealed pavements and multiple access and egress points to the centre;
- Reticulated water supply, including fire hydrants within the area; and
- The proposed *Built Form Guidelines* and subsequent Design and Development Overlay Schedule 11 (DDO11) will not result in a significant increase in development potential to what presently exists; rather it will provide certainty and built form guidance for future development.

Heritage

The automotive garage, the kindergarten and maternal child health centre and the post office were highlighted as significant to the community of The Basin during community consultation. As a result, heritage assessments have been undertaken for these sites, as well as the Progress Hall. The assessment revealed:

Automotive Garage – the building is not significant at either a state or local level and as such a Heritage Overlay cannot be applied.

The Basin Progress Hall – The Triangle is protected under the Heritage Overlay to the Knox Planning Scheme (HO51), and has been determined to have local significance to the City of Knox. The Progress Hall was separately recommended as a place of local significance (McInness,1993) but was not included in the citation for The Triangle. It is recommended that the Heritage Overlay Schedule for The Triangle be updated to specifically include the Progress Hall and its trees as a key feature of the site.

Shops on eastern side of Mountain Highway (including Post Office) – While the buildings are not significant enough at a state or local level to have a Heritage overlay applied, the retention of the Basin Shops, in particular the remaining metal framed shopfront windows, at 1301-1323 Mountain Highway should be encouraged to be retained where possible. Any changes to the verandah should take account of its consistency throughout the row of shops. Restrained signage should be encouraged.

Kindergarten and Maternal Child Health Centre – the buildings are not significant enough at a state or local level to have a Heritage Overlay applied.

Potentially Contaminated Land

Ministerial Direction No. 1 (Potentially Contaminated Land) requires planning authorities to satisfy themselves that the environmental conditions of land proposed to be used for a 'sensitive use' – such as residential or child care centre – are, or can be remediated to be, suitable for that use. It is recommended that the Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) be applied to 1300 Mountain Highway, The Basin - based on its previous land use as a service station, which may have allowed industrial activity on the site. The EAO ensures the requirement for an environmental audit is met before the commencement of any sensitive uses.

3. Built Form Analysis

The built form analysis considers the context of existing built form and land use patterns and identifies key views through the centre to the basin paddocks and Dandenongs. Potential building heights have been modelled to consider the impact of future development on these key views. This section provides the context from which *Part 2 - The Basin Built Form Guidelines* will be developed.

3.1 Role of The Basin

The Basin is a gateway centre en route to the Dandenong Ranges. It has a number of roles, including providing everyday necessities and specialties to locals, as well as a tourism role. Mountain Highway between The Basin and Olinda is a popular and challenging route for cyclists and groups of cyclists frequently stop at The Basin for refreshments at one of the cafes or the park, particularly on weekends. The Basin is a lively village, playing host to a number of community groups including The Basin Theatre Group, Senior Citizens and The Basin Scout Group. The Basin Music Festival is held annually each March.

3.2 Existing built form and land use patterns

Built form within The Basin is low scale (principally single storey), allowing the hills and vegetated backdrop to dominate the built form and create a village atmosphere.

Vegetation

The study area maintains a good coverage of tree canopy due to the location of the park within the centre, as seen in Figure 8. Vegetation within private lots is sparse given the commercial nature of these properties. Vegetation within the centre consists primarily of native plantings with some remnant trees located within the park. There is an opportunity to improve the tree canopy by additional planting within the road reserves, particularly along Forest Road and Mountain Hwy.

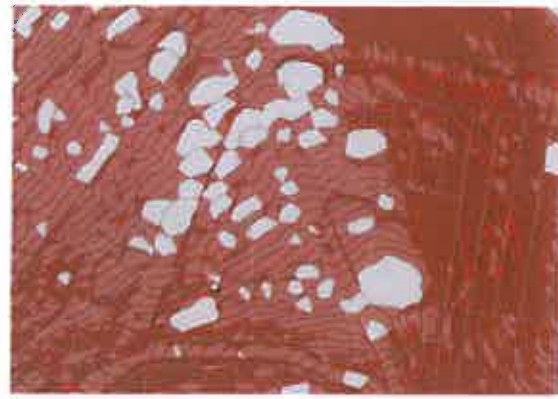


Figure 08 – Existing Canopy Tree Cover

Topography

The topography in the study area is north facing and at a steady gradient of 5% (refer to Figure 9). Flatter zones across the site represent building platforms, carparks or modified groundplane.

Generally, areas to the west of Forest Road fall away from the centre and can visually accommodate increased building height without significant impact.



4-7% is the mean slope across the study area

Figure 09 – Topography across study area

Transport and access

The centre is connected by pedestrian pathways along retail frontages and through The Basin Triangle. The centre is highly accessible by vehicle due to its location on the juncture of Mountain Highway, Forest Road and Basin-Olinda Road. The Mountain Highway shops can be accessed by a laneway to the rear (refer to Figure 10). Public car parking exists in front of shops and within The Basin Triangle. There is opportunity to also provide rear loading for the retail properties on the western side of Forest Road to ensure a hard edge of built form along the street frontage.



Figure 10 – Vehicle access and public car parking

The Basin is serviced by one bus route (route 755) which connects the site to Boronia (8-12 minutes) and Bayswater (13 minutes) and the adjacent suburban and industrial areas (refer Figure 11). Boronia and Bayswater are both serviced by heavy rail and the Melbourne CBD can be accessed in approximately 45 minutes.

Mountain Highway, between The Basin and Olinda, is a challenging and popular bicycle route for cyclists.



Figure 11 – Bus route no. 755

3.3 Precinct Analysis

The study area can be broken into three distinct precincts separated by roads: the western precinct; the Triangle precinct and; the eastern precinct (refer to Figure 12).

Eastern Precinct

The eastern precinct comprises a group of shops on the eastern side of Mountain Highway which were built in the 1940-1950s (see Figure 14). Key characteristics include:

- Single storey buildings, height 3.5-4 metres;
- Small building footprints built to the front boundary;
- Narrow, tiled shopfronts with metal framed windows. Many original shopfronts are still intact and these features, coupled with recent mural additions, contributes greatly to the character of The Basin;
- Continuous awnings and signage features to front facades;
- Existing ceiling heights are varied, as some of the internal spaces of the shops have been modified over time. However, original ceiling heights are higher than the standard 2.4 m;
- Rear loaded access via private laneway;
- A mixed use property at the southern end of the group of shops containing a shop fronting Mountain Highway and a residence to the rear of the property, accessed via the laneway; and
- Views to Dandenong Ranges over single storey form from the Triangle precinct.



Figure 12 – Precinct definition



Figure 13 – Retail on Eastern side of Mountain Highway

Triangle Precinct

The Triangle precinct is central to the study area and is bound by Forest Road, Mountain Highway and Church Street. This public space contains a number of services including the CFA, Progress Hall, The Basin Scout Hall, The Basin Senior Citizen Centre, a soundshell and a playground (see Figure 16). Built form characteristics include:

- Single storey buildings, heights between 3.5 and 4.5 metres;
- Progress Hall, a 1929 timber building in fairly original condition (see Figure 14). Highly visible within the centre, the building is located on the roundabout and is considered a contributory building to the character of The Basin; and
- CFA, Senior Citizens and Scout hall - all brick buildings setback from the road and framed by large canopy trees (see Figure 15). These buildings are orientated to Forest Road (setback between 6.5 and 12 metres) and have a poor address to the park.



Figure 14 – The Basin Progress Hall



Figure 15 – The Basin CFA



Figure 16 - Playground

Western Precinct

The western precinct consists of an eclectic and inconsistent range of small retail premises, motor vehicle repairs, restaurants and The Basin Pre-School and Maternal Child Health Centre (see Figures 17, 18 and 19).

Built form characteristics include:

- Inconsistent building setbacks on the low side of the centre have created a lack of 'edge' to this side of the centre.
- The kindergarten is a weatherboard building with an open adventure playground at the rear and was seen to be a quite progressive design when constructed in 1958. The Maternal Child Health Centre is a brick building circa 1950s.
- Building heights vary between 3.5 and 5 metres.
- Buildings are generally constructed of a mixture of brick and timber with colourbond roofs in muted tones and colours.



Figure 17 – Retail on western side of Forest Road



**Figure 18 –1300 Mountain Highway
(former service station)**



**Figure 19 – View to the north on
Forest Road**

Condition of buildings

Most buildings within the centre were constructed between the 1960s and late 1990s. Building stock is in good condition, with excellent occupancy rates across the centre and minimal permit activity and turnover of uses within the last ten years. Commercial uses are largely independent with minimal franchises represented in the centre.

3.4 Views Analysis

Key view lines have been identified as important to maintain the village atmosphere of The Basin, capturing the association between built form, the Dandenong Ranges and the existing canopy trees and the park. In particular, it is noted that:

- Despite close proximity to the Dandenong Ranges, views are limited and filtered;
- Built form on Mountain Highway is oriented away from the Dandenong Ranges and provides a low-scale consistent edge to the village;
- Views into the Triangle and playground significantly contribute to the village character;
- Views to the basin paddocks are important in establishing the semi-rural feel of the centre;
- The retail strip on Mountain Hwy is a consistent frontage framed by a backdrop of trees and views through to the Dandenong Ranges; and
- Significant views to the Dandenong Ranges from the park are important to the character of the village and the park as part of the village.

View 1 – Views to Dandenong Ranges



The view towards the Dandenong Ranges backdrop is significant. Canopy trees in the foreground and middle distance provide the sense of location within the Dandenong Foothills.

View 2 – Views to the basin paddocks



The view to the basin paddocks is significant and creates a semi rural presence for the centre.

View 3 – Views to Eastern precinct retail



From street level, while quite filtered, there are significant ridgeline views of the Dandenong Ranges ridgeline over the Eastern precinct. This backdrop provides a strong sense of the Village’s location within the Dandenong Foothills.

View 4 – Views to The Basin Triangle



Views to The Basin Triangle provides a strong civic heart to the centre. Canopy vegetation and low scale buildings frame the open public space.

View 5 – View north up Forest Road



Entry into The Basin from the south on Forest Road captures distant views of the Dandenong Ranges ridgeline. From this perspective, the centre is seen as nestled within the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges.

Summary of views analysis:

- Key views 1 and 2 as seen in Figure 20 below are selected as significant views from public places which require protection.
- Unlike the other view points within the Village, these two perspectives are able to capture visually dominating, views of the Dandenong Ranges backdrop and the basin paddocks and are the main viewpoints from which users of The Basin are able to form a sense of the foothills identity of the centre.



Figure 20 – Significant views

3.5 Summary of built form analysis

Built form within the centre is contained and comprises low scale single storey built form.

There are opportunities to redevelop properties in the western precinct, along Forest Road, to create a defined hard edge to the streetscape and provide access and parking to the rear of buildings.

Conversely, the eastern precinct is a well established group of shops with narrow, fine grain frontages, metal frame windows and continuous awnings. These elements should be retained and complemented. There may be opportunity for double storey built form at the northern end of the precinct.

Limited opportunities exist for redevelopment in the Triangle precinct which plays an important community use function and is a civic ‘heart’ for The Basin centre. Future redevelopment may include a new fire station or ancillary buildings for existing community uses.

Particularly, future development within the centre should consider the following design elements to complement and enhance the contained, village like atmosphere of the centre:

- Identify opportunities for appropriately scaled gateway or landmark buildings, such as the northern end of the eastern precinct (above the post office);
- Ensure buildings address multiple street frontages;

- Ensure buildings within the western precinct create a 'hard edge';
- Use materials and colours innovatively to reduce the apparent scale of larger buildings. A non reflective and natural colour and material palette should be adopted to complement the surrounding natural environment;
- Ensure the scale and setbacks of buildings protect identified key views;
- Improve activation of retail uses at ground level;
- Include and maintain a variety of awnings within a structured framework;
- Include parapets to single storey built form to maintain edge to street;
- Maintain existing trees and include substantive tree planting to promote scale;
- Provide for tree planting where possible to soften built form;
- Maintain pavement widths to achieve a tighter streetscape;
- Clearly mark traffic and other movement lanes to slow traffic and to create a more intimate scale;
- Encourage rear lane access to shops in western precinct; and
- Integrate servicing and car parks to the rear and integrate them into a building's design.

4. Engagement

Community engagement to inform the development of *Built Form Guidelines* for The Basin was undertaken in April-June 2014 under the following methodology:

Stage 1 - A mail out survey to 1,929 surrounding land owners and occupiers to reveal issues surrounding built form at The Basin NAC.

Stage 2 - Key themes arising from the survey were put to community groups who attended three consultation meetings held from April to June 2014, each of which explored and refined the community's responses.

Stage 3 - The final consultation session included testing of built form scenarios and demonstrating the impact of those scenarios.

Research, precedents and built form modelling options were presented to the community. Issues such as form, height and depth, views, traffic and parking, were explored in the context of the current and future prevailing conditions.

Of important note was the desire to see a built form that was appropriate to the village like setting of The Basin, distinguishing it from a regular suburban form through provision for articulated roofs, better internal spaces with better access to natural light and ventilation, increased internal volumes and greater opportunity to maximise on the views to the Dandenongs.

Specific outcomes included:

- Single storey (existing condition) to remain for the eastern strip of shops on Mountain Highway to protect the views to the Ranges from the park;
- 2 storeys were supported to northern end of the Mountain Highway shops to frame the view of the Ranges and to take advantage of the northern sunlight opportunity;
- 3 storey option was not supported anywhere within the centre;
- 2 storeys was supported for the sites west of the Forest Road but with increased floor to ceiling heights to provide flexibility for future uses;
- There was no support for increased built form volume in the Triangle;
- The centre should have a consistent (but not uniform) colour palette where colours are consistent across a colour range sympathetic to the foothills treed setting;
- Traffic investigation and management required to slow traffic through the centre and increase pedestrian movement;
- Where possible, provide for onsite parking, accessed from the rear of properties; and
- The garage site requires further exploration to determine opportunity for development whilst maintaining views to the basin from the park area, and retaining the valued histories.

5. Built form scenarios

5.1 Built form assumptions

Community engagement, the planning policy framework for the centre, and analysis of key views in Section 3.1 of this report highlight that views to the surrounding Dandenong Ranges and foothills landscape are a high priority in contributing to the identity and attractiveness of The Basin.

Built form modelling has been undertaken to test built form scenarios at different heights throughout the centre. The view cones were selected to best demonstrate the impact of increased height and bulk both looking into and out of the village. These views are different to the 'key views' at Section 3.1 and were chosen to consider the impact of future development on both key views and the village atmosphere of the centre. *(Please note that the visualisations are used to demonstrate an indicative built form and do not represent intended land use)*

The models are based on the following parameters and assumptions:

Building height

Development from a single storey up to a three storey scale. Scenarios are limited to three storeys given the lower scale of existing residential dwellings surrounding the centre.

Building heights assume increased internal ceiling heights of a minimum 3.6 metres finished floor level (FFL) to finished ceiling level (FCL) at ground floor and a minimum 2.7 metres at first floor to provide greater amenity to internal spaces, and to allow for adaptation between uses.

Building heights at different scales are based on:

- Existing single storey heights of 5.4 metres;
- Double storey buildings at approximately 8.5 metres height, excluding allowances for architectural features and roof forms;
- Three storey buildings at approx. 12 metres height, excluding allowances for architectural features and roof forms;

Roof forms

A mix of roof forms were modelled in accordance with *the Built Form Guidelines*. Flat roof forms were integrated within the above floor to floor heights and pitched roof forms extended above the floor to floor heights.

Methodology

The 3D topographic models were developed using 0.5 metre interval Lidar contours for the Activity Centre and immediate surrounds, drawn from Council mapping information. VicMap contours at 1 metre intervals (State Government mapping information) were used for the surrounding areas. A Nearmap aerial photo was then draped over the 3D topographic model to provide the base images for the 3D modelling.

The surrounding topographic model was elevated by 15 metres to account for the existing tree canopy on the Dandenong Ranges foothills and ridgelines.

Photos and Google Maps Streetview images have been selected to show the existing view from approximately the same area as the modelled viewpoints. The photos and Streetview images may vary slightly from the modelled viewpoints in some instances, but this does not affect the accuracy of the 3D modelling.

Viewpoints

A range of viewpoints have been selected to reflect key publicly accessible viewing locations in The Basin, refer to Figure 21. The viewpoints were selected by Knox City Council officers. Analysis of these viewpoints is provided at Figures 22-28.

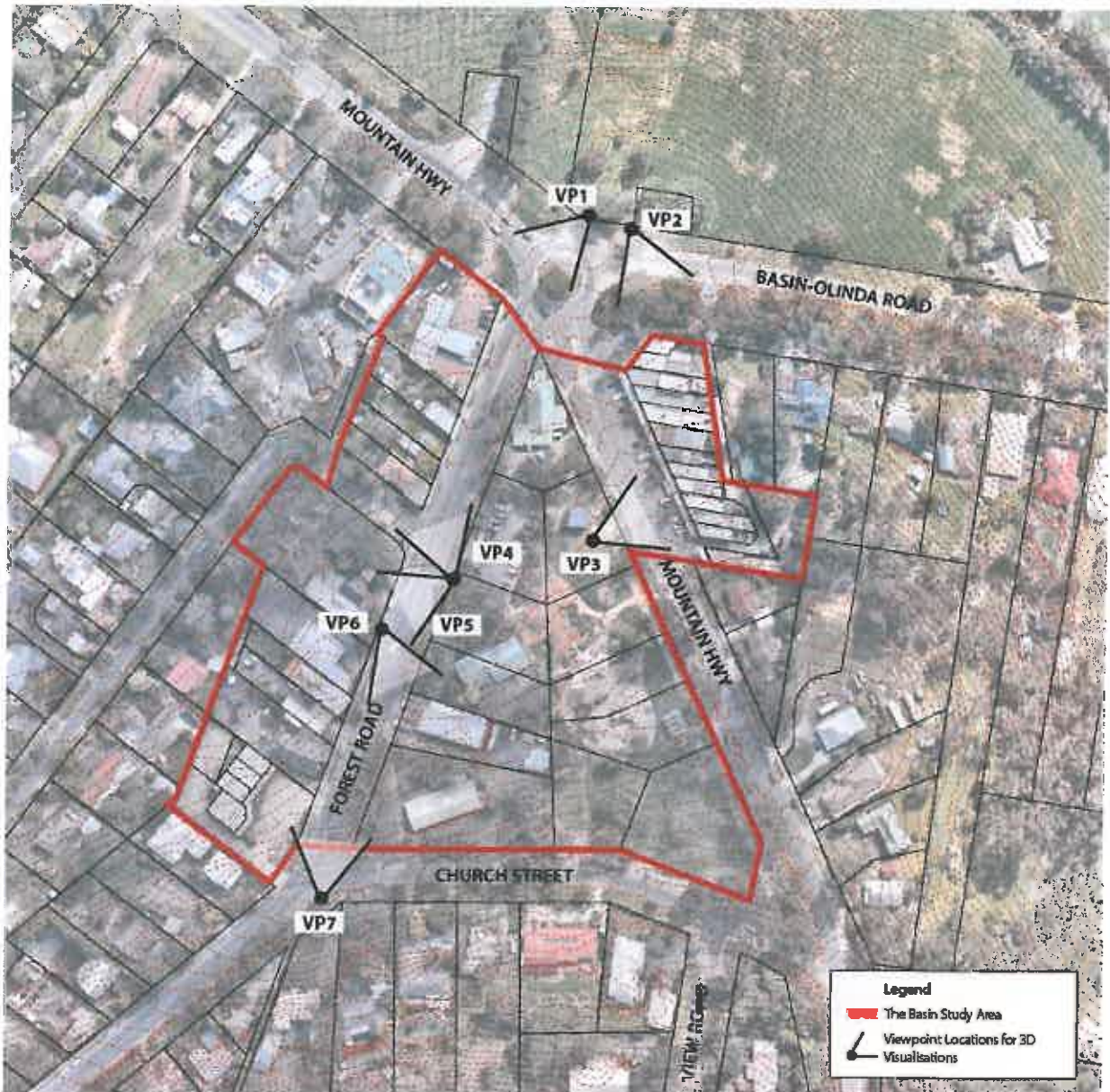


Figure 21 – Viewpoint plan

Figure 22 – View 1: From roundabout looking southwest



VIEWPOINT 1 - FROM BASIN-OLINDA ROAD LOOKING SOUTH WEST:
 (EXISTING SCENARIO - STREET VIEW)



VIEWPOINT 1 - FROM BASIN-OLINDA ROAD LOOKING SOUTH WEST:
 (ONE AND TWO STOREY SETBACKS FROM ROAD AND FIRST FLOOR SETBACK ON THE EAST SIDE OF FOREST STREET & 6th FLOOR SETBACK ON THE WEST SIDE OF FOREST STREET)



VIEWPOINT 1 - FROM BASIN-OLINDA ROAD LOOKING SOUTH WEST:
 (TWO AND THREE STOREY SETBACKS FROM ROAD AND FIRST FLOOR SETBACK ON THE EAST SIDE OF FOREST STREET & 1st & 2nd FLOOR SETBACK ON THE WEST SIDE OF FOREST STREET)

Analysis:

- Two storey built form to the Western Precinct represents a low-impact change scenario.
- Three storey built form significantly detracts from the visual dominance of the surrounding tree canopy and represents unreasonable visual bulk within the centre.
- Upper levels along Forest Road should be setback to enable expansive views to the basin paddocks while travelling north along the road. An upper level recessed by 6.0m increases the views to the paddocks and retains a stronger sense of openness than the scenario with no upper level setback. The upper level setback also supports opportunities for upper level useable balcony spaces.
- Built form of two storeys to the Western Precinct improves visibility of the Centre to surrounding roads. However, building frontages should avoid long, unarticulated facades to road frontages which might reduce attractiveness of the Centre and incorporate awnings.

Figure 23 – View 2: From the roundabout looking southeast at the Post office/bookshop corner



VIEWPOINT 2 - FROM THE MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY / BASIN-OLINDA ROAD ROUNDABOUT LOOKING SOUTH EAST:
EXISTING GOOGLE STREETVIEW



VIEWPOINT 2 - FROM THE MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY / BASIN-OLINDA ROAD ROUNDABOUT LOOKING SOUTH EAST:
ONE AND TWO STOREY ULTRAVIEW



VIEWPOINT 2 - FROM THE MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY / BASIN-OLINDA ROAD ROUNDABOUT LOOKING SOUTH EAST:
TWO AND THREE STOREY ULTRAVIEW

Analysis:

- Two storey built form to the northern end of the Eastern Precinct represents a low-impact change scenario. Views to, and the visual dominance of, the Dandenong Ranges remain intact. Three storey built form significantly detracts from the visual dominance of the Dandenong Ranges backdrop.
- Increased built form helps to provide a greater street presence to mark the centre from further afield. Development should activate any blank walls facing the road.
- Stronger built form provided to the northern end of the Eastern Precinct could provide this 'landmark' presence without detracting from views of the Dandenong Ranges from within the centre.

Figure 24 – View 3: From park on Forest Road looking east



VIEWPOINT 3 - FROM PARK ON FOREST STREET LOOKING EAST:
EXISTING (GOOGLE STREETVIEW)



VIEWPOINT 3 - FROM PARK ON FOREST STREET LOOKING EAST:
ONE STOREY SCENARIO



VIEWPOINT 3 - FROM PARK ON FOREST STREET LOOKING EAST:
TWO STOREY SCENARIO

Analysis:

- Two storey built form to the Eastern Precinct (excluding the northern end) represents an unacceptable impact on views to the Dandenong Ranges. Future development should be constrained to the existing height of 5.4 metres so as not to impact on this important view.

Figure 25 – View 4: From Forest Road near Conyers Street looking northwest



VIEWPOINT 4 - FROM FOREST ROAD NEAR CONYERS STREET LOOKING NORTH WEST:
EXISTING (FOURTH STREET FRONT)



VIEWPOINT 4 - FROM FOREST ROAD NEAR CONYERS STREET LOOKING NORTH WEST:
TERRACE STREET (WEST SIDE) WITH PROPOSED BUILDING (TERRACE)



VIEWPOINT 4 - FROM FOREST ROAD NEAR CONYERS STREET LOOKING NORTH WEST:
TERRACE STREET (WEST SIDE) WITH PROPOSED BUILDING (FOURTH STREET FRONT)

Analysis:

- Two storey built form to the Western Precinct represents a low-impact change scenario. Views to, and the visual dominance of, the Dandenong Ranges in the distance, remain intact. Built form of 3 storeys overwhelms the public realm and diminishes the intimate dimensions of the centre.
- Any redevelopment of the automotive garage site on the corner of Mountain Highway and Forest Road should be stepped and setback at both the ground and upper level to retain the openness of the intersection and views to the basin paddocks.

Figure 26 – View 5: From Forest Road near Conyers Street looking southwest



VIEWPOINT 5 - FROM FOREST ROAD NEAR CONYERS STREET LOOKING SOUTH WEST
EXISTING (GOOGLE STREET VIEW)



VIEWPOINT 5 - FROM FOREST ROAD NEAR CONYERS STREET LOOKING SOUTH WEST:
TWO STOREY SCENARIO WITH FIRST FLOOR SETBACK



VIEWPOINT 5 - FROM FOREST ROAD NEAR CONYERS STREET LOOKING SOUTH WEST:
THREE STOREY SCENARIO WITH FIRST & SECOND FLOOR SETBACK

Analysis:

- Two storey built form to the Western Precinct represents a low-impact change scenario. Views to, and the visual dominance of, the Dandenong Ranges in the distance, remain intact.
- Built form of 3 storeys, even with generous setbacks, overwhelms the public realm and diminishes the intimate dimensions of the centre.

Figure 27 – View 6: from Forest Road looking southeast



VIEWPOINT 4 – FROM FOREST ROAD LOOKING SOUTH
EXISTING SCENES (2017 PHOTO)



VIEWPOINT 6 – FROM FOREST ROAD LOOKING SOUTH
ONE STOREY MAXIMUM HEIGHT (2017 RENDER)



VIEWPOINT 6 – FROM FOREST ROAD LOOKING SOUTH
TWO STOREY MAXIMUM HEIGHT (2017 RENDER)

Analysis:

- Two storey built form to the Triangle precinct impacts upon views to the Dandenong Ranges. A flexible, single storey height limit of 8 metres should be applied to all land within the Triangle, with the exception of the CFA building, as this area is limited to public uses and facilities and a flexible single storey limit would allow for other ancillary buildings and works to existing public uses. A two storey height limit of 8 metres should be applied to the CFA site for future redevelopment of the site for CFA purposes (this will allow for a second storey training room or a new fire station etc). Any second storey of the CFA building should be setback a minimum of 3 metres from the facade of the building to ensure development does not dominate the streetscape. It is important to note that the modelled built form represents a ‘worst case’ scenario and given that land within the Triangle is under public ownership and will continue to be used for public uses into the future, a single storey height limit of 8 metres will allow for instances such as a new fire station without creating an outcome such as that shown above.

Figure 28 – View 7: from Forest Road looking north



VIEWPOINT 7 - FROM THE CHURCH STREET / FOREST STREET INTERSECTION LOOKING SOUTH
 PHOTO: GUY CARROLL



VIEWPOINT 7 - FROM THE CHURCH STREET / FOREST STREET INTERSECTION LOOKING SOUTH
 TWO AND THREE STOREY BUILT FORM WITH ONE AND A HALF FLOOR SETBACK ON THE EAST SIDE OF FOREST STREET AND FIRST FLOOR SETBACK ON THE WEST SIDE OF FOREST STREET



VIEWPOINT 7 - FROM THE CHURCH STREET / FOREST STREET INTERSECTION LOOKING SOUTH
 TWO AND THREE STOREY BUILT FORM WITH ONE AND A HALF FLOOR SETBACK ON THE EAST SIDE OF FOREST STREET AND FIRST & SECOND FLOOR SETBACK ON THE WEST SIDE OF FOREST STREET

Analysis:

- Two storey built form to the Triangle precinct impacts upon view to the Dandenong Ranges. A flexible, single storey (and two storey for the CFA site only) height limit of 8 metres should be applied within the Triangle as this area is limited to public uses and facilities and a flexible single storey limit would allow for a new fire station in the future or other ancillary buildings and works to existing public uses.
- Three storey built form to the Western Precinct results in excessive visual bulk and detracts significantly from the character of the centre. It also has an impact upon distant views to the Dandenong Ranges.

5.2 Summary of Built Form Scenarios

The 3D built form scenarios enable the following conclusions to be drawn about future development within The Basin:

- Single storey heights to the Eastern and Triangle precincts enable views to the Dandenong Ranges to be protected and the centre to retain its compact, intimate feel;
- Two storey development to the western precinct enables additional development within the centre while continuing to sit below the surrounding canopy tree height; and
- Three storey built form results in an unacceptable level of visual bulk which detracts from the sense that the Village forms part of the Dandenong Foothills landscape.

6. Conclusion

The Basin Neighbourhood Activity Centre has a mixture of community service, tourism, entertainment and commercial roles. Drawing from the planning policy framework at Section 3, community consultation, and built form analysis at Sections 4 and 5, the following priorities have been identified for The Basin NAC.

Built form priorities for The Basin:

- The centre's location and setting within the Dandenong Foothills landscape is a highly valuable part of its appeal and character;
- Retain the centre's 'local,' 'village' atmosphere;
- Views to the Dandenong Foothills and basin paddocks are protected;
- The environmental sensitivities of the centre's setting are protected;
- The 'everyday' service offering of the centre is not compromised;
- The protection of existing heritage and locally significant buildings which contribute to the character of the centre,
- The location of the centre within a bushfire prone area;
- The location and extent of advertising signage is managed appropriately;
- Support Knox-wide demand for increased housing diversity,
- Support Knox-wide trends towards an ageing population;
- Improve the centre's presence from road approaches;
- Improve accessibility across the centre;
- Manage car parking within the centre; and
- Retain public uses within the Triangle.

This *Part 1 - Background Report* forms the strategic basis for *Part 2 - The Basin Built Form Guidelines, May 2016*. The *Built Form Guidelines* will then be implemented through Planning Scheme Amendment C137 which will introduce a Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 11 (DDO11) to include height, setback and design controls for the centre. This will ensure the centre maintains a contained and low scale village feel, set within the treed environment of the Dandenong Foothills, while allowing the centre capacity to develop and grow into the future.