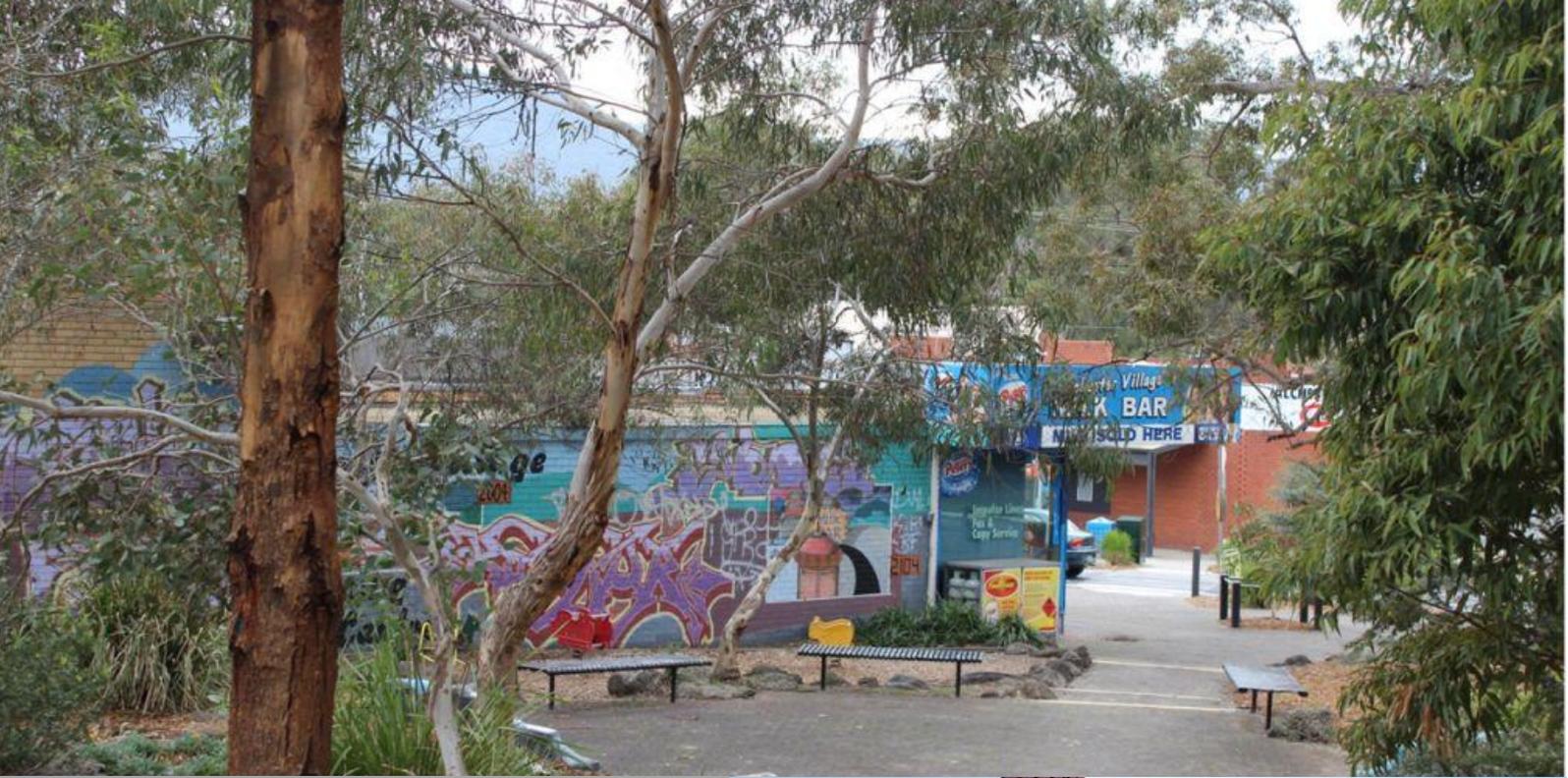


# Part 1

# Alchester Village Background Report

May 2016





**Acknowledgements:**

Realm Studios  
 Mesh Planning  
 Tract Consultants  
 Draft Upper Gully Strategic Plan (September 2015)

**Revision**

Sept 2015	Draft for Council Review
October 2015	Draft for Authorisation
May 2016	Council Adoption



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# 1. Introduction

Alchester Village is a local shopping centre located along Mountain Highway, Boronia. The Village contains everyday needs such as a full service supermarket, convenience restaurants, newsagent, and speciality stores such as a hardware store and butcher. The Village has a unique landscape setting within the Dandenong Foothills, with an attractive backdrop and views of the Dandenong Ranges' hills and ridgeline.

Alchester Village is recognised in the Knox Planning Scheme as a Foothills Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC) and one of the gateways to the Dandenong Ranges.

## 1.1 Background

There are currently no permanent controls in the Knox Planning Scheme that impose building height controls within Alchester Village. The existing planning controls were considered by Council to lack sufficient clarity about the scale of development that is appropriate in the centre. To address this, Council resolved in 2014 to request the Minister for Planning amend the Knox Planning Scheme, without public notice, to include an interim mandatory maximum height limit of 7.5 metres for at least 3 years to the commercial and public use zones in The Basin and Alchester Village and Upper Ferntree Gully NACs.

In November 2014, the Minister for Planning approved an interim Design and Development Overlay 10 (DDO10) through Planning Scheme 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 process was undertaken to include permanent built form controls into the scheme. .

## 1.2 Purpose of Background Report

*Alchester Village - Background Report (Part 1)* has been prepared by Knox City Council to provide built form analysis for the Alchester Village NAC, in order to fill gaps in strategic knowledge for Foothills NACs as identified by interim provisions in Amendment C130.

The *Background Report* will provide the strategic basis for *Built Form Guidelines (Part 2)*, which will in turn inform permanent built form controls – a new Schedule to the Design and Development Overlay (DDO11) - to be included in the Knox Planning Scheme through Amendment C137. The Amendment includes both the Alchester Village and The Basin activity centres, while Upper Ferntree Gully is undergoing a separate structure planning process through Amendment C141 to the Knox Planning Scheme.

The *Background Report* and *Built Form Guidelines* aim to encapsulate community values and Council aspirations for the Centre, and to provide clear direction about future development and design outcomes within Alchester Village to protect the centre's valued Dandenong Foothills, 'local village' character into the future.

The project scope deals solely with built form and does not include a review of land use within the centre. The study area is confined to the commercial and public use zone areas of Alchester Village

# 2. Setting the Scene

## 2.1 Introducing Alchester Village

### Location and Context

The Alchester Village precinct covers an area of approximately 0.92 hectares and approximately 23 commercial premises (2016). The study area (defined by the red boundary in Figure 1) comprises mainly of retail and commercial premises, as seen in further in this report.

Alchester Village draws from a catchment defined by travel distance, road hierarchy and topography. Figure 2 reflects the perceived catchments of 'belonging' for the resident community.



Figure 1 – Study Area

Alchester Village, along with the neighbourhood centres of The Basin, 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. The Boronia Activity Centre, located 2.5 km to the south west of Alchester Village, is the closest major centre and railway station to the Village. In the context of these major and neighbourhood centres, Alchester is positioned as a local shopping centre providing everyday necessities.

Alchester Village is surrounded on its southern, western and eastern sides by low density residential dwellings. To the north west of the Village, on the northern side of Mountain Highway, are significant industrial areas forming part of the Bayswater-Bayswater North Industrial Precinct. These industrial and employment areas are mostly fully developed. Melbourne's east will generally account for only 4% of all industrial expansion in the years to come, indicating that little structural change will occur for this industrial context.

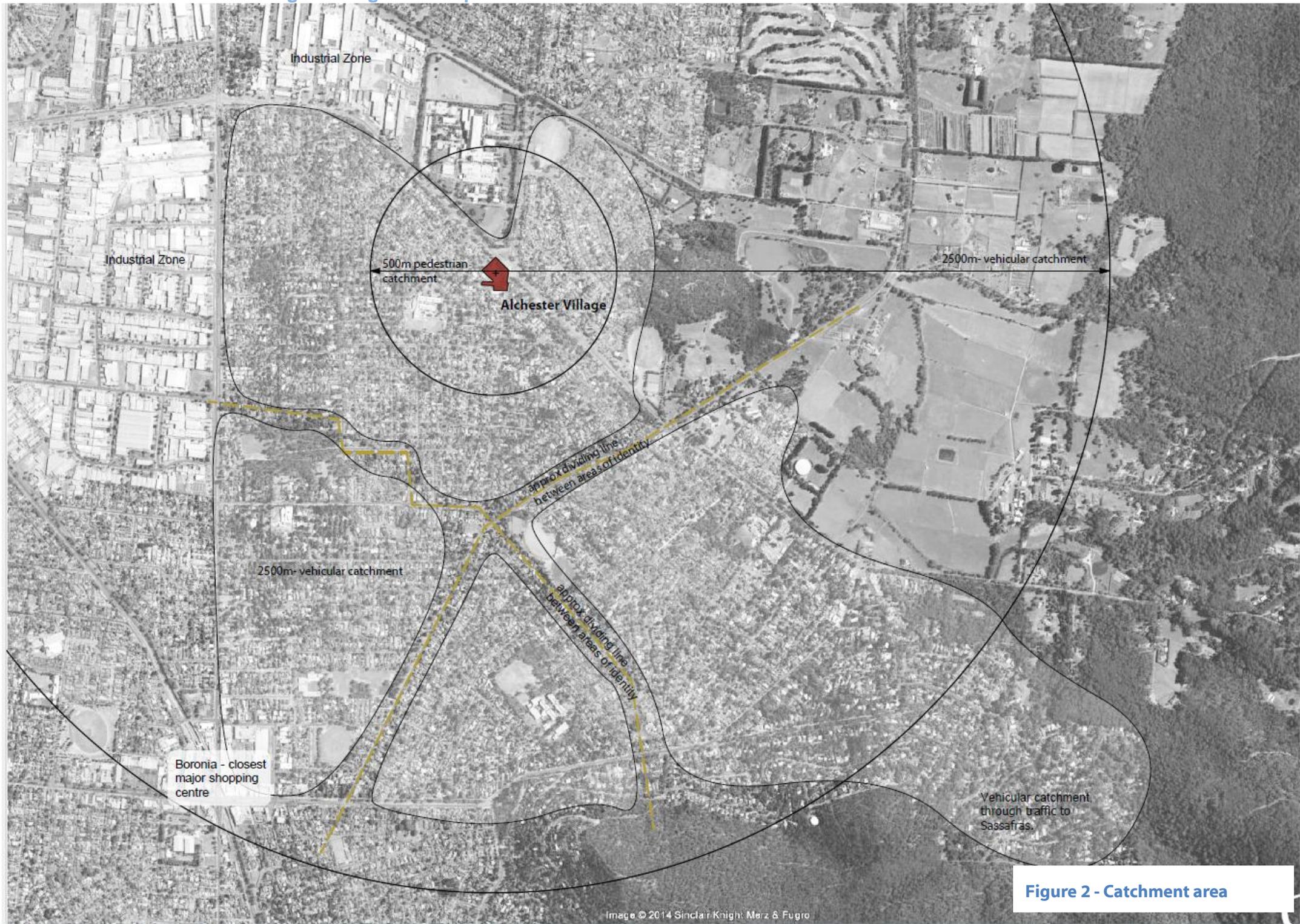
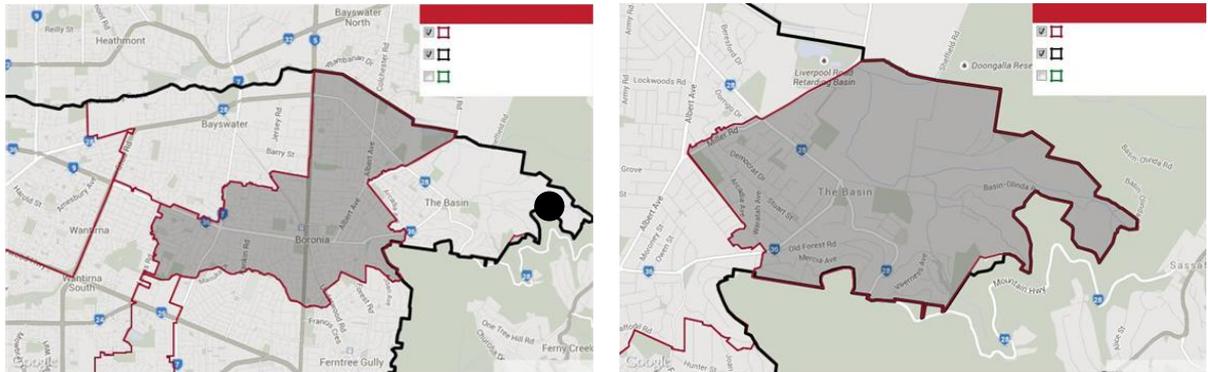


Figure 2 - Catchment area

## 2.2 Demographics

Alchester Village is located within the Boronia catchment area, but also captures through traffic to The Basin.



**Boronia catchment - 1,126 hectares / 20,887 persons**

**The Basin catchment – 573 hectares / 4,348 persons**

**Figure 3 – Boronia and The Basin catchment areas**

*Source: City of Knox 2011 Census, ID community profile*

Demographic analysis shows the following context for the Village:

**Population forecast** – The population of Boronia is expected to grow by 17% to 25,186 persons by 2026, while the population of The Basin is expected to decrease by 3%.

**Age** - An even spread of age groups across Boronia and The Basin suggest 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 types in Boronia and The Basin are couples with no dependents and families with dependents. The largest increase between 2011 and 2036 is forecast to be in couples without dependents and lone person households.

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 low dwelling diversity across Boronia and The Basin, with low density, detached houses forming the highest percentage of dwelling types and small percentages of flats, units or apartment structures occurring in the area. Occupied private dwellings are the predominant form.

When read in conjunction with age and household trends, demographic analysis suggests that, at present, there is limited capacity for housing diversity within and immediately surrounding Alchester Village, and that there is current and future demand for housing options in the region beyond the current detached dwelling form.

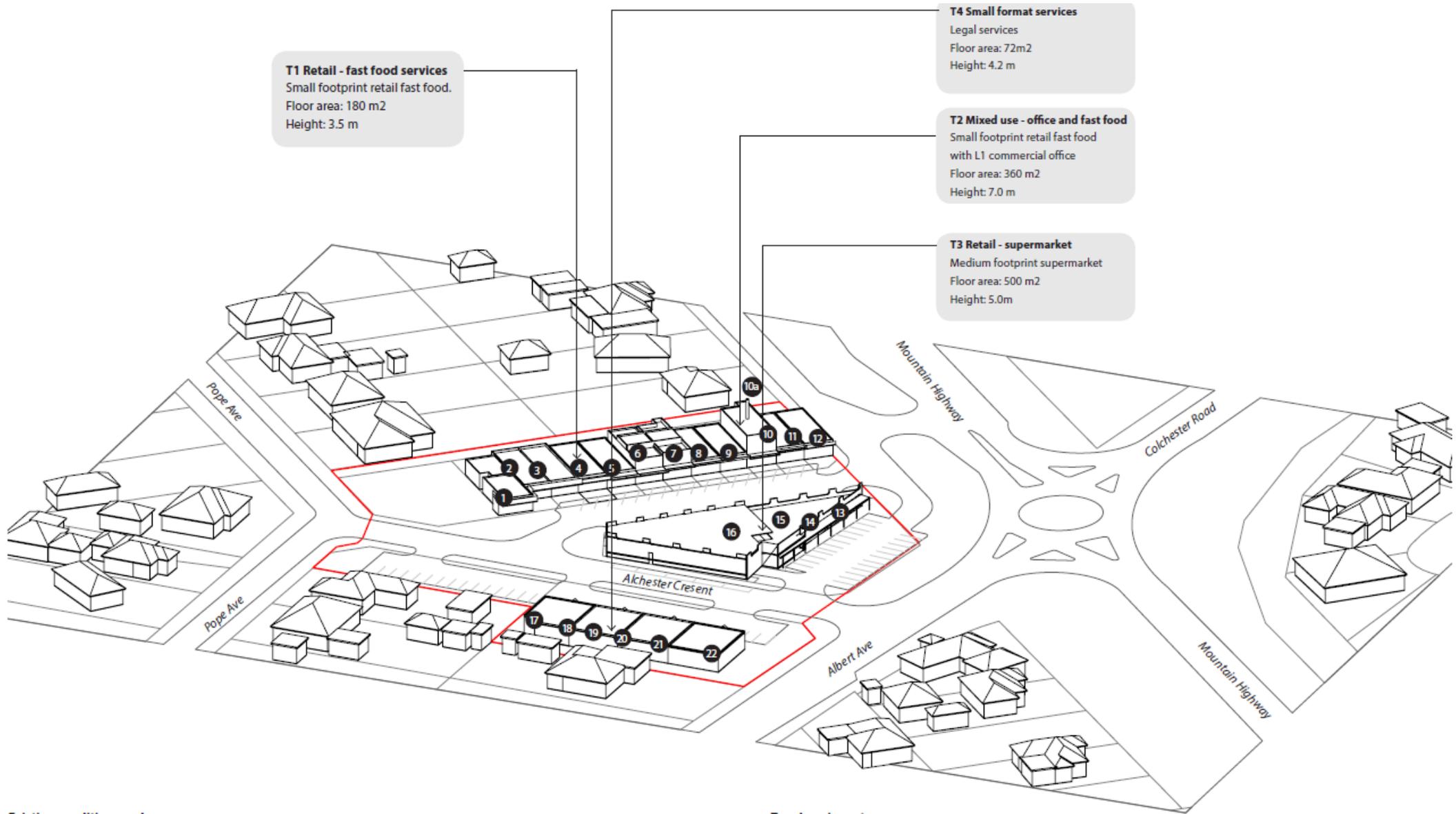
## 2.3 Development Activity

Assessment of planning and building permits between 2005 and 2016 issued in the Alchester Village shows only minor upgrades to commercial premises and occasional signage upgrades, changeover of uses to cafe or convenience restaurants, liquor license approvals, and installation of telecommunications infrastructure. 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 Alchester Village since 2013, 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 Village.

Council initiatives for the Village include:

- Safety audit of the Village (June 2014) (see Section 3.8 of the *Alchester Village Built Form Guidelines – October 2015* for further details).
- Federal Government \$100,000 grant awarded under the Safer Streets Program to upgrade the existing lighting at Alchester Village.
- Letter of support to Australia Post from the Ward Councillor to urge opening of a postal outlet in the Village.
- New toilet block approved for funding at the Village (location to be determined).
- Park upgrade funding approved (currently under planning, to be undertaken 2015-16).
- New mural to the southern wall of the IGA Supermarket completed in June 2015 by an artist working in conjunction with local students.



**Existing conditions and uses**

- |                               |  |   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. Alchester Village Milk Bar | 9. Butcher and meat supply   | 16. Alchester Village IGA               |
| 2. Koko Lime Cafe             | 10. Florist, Beautician (first floor) and telecommunications tower | 17. Denture Clinic                      |
| 3. Hair Salon                 | 11. Thai Restaurant  | 18. David Wilkisons Barristers          |
| 4. Alchester Noodles          | 12. Jacksons Hardware  | 19. Pizza                               |
| 5. Vacant                     | 13. Boronia Chicken  | 20. Tragz for Hair                      |
| 6. Fish and Chips             | 14. Liquor Store   | 21. Alchester Crescent Medical Centre   |
| 7. News Agent                 | 15. Pharmacy   | 22. Diamond Pavillon Chinese restaurant |
| 8. Alchester Village Bakery   |  |   |

**Typology inventory**

- T1. Small format retail
- T2. Small format mixed use
- T3. Medium format retail
- T4. Small format services

**Figure 4 - Existing conditions & uses**

## 2.4 Policy Framework

The policy framework which guides development in Alchester Village, from the State to the municipal level policy, is outlined below:

### 2.4.1 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 the development and growth of Melbourne's city centres and suburbs, including matters such as infrastructure, housing, employment, transport and environment.

Directions relevant to Alchester Village 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.

### 2.4.2 Knox Planning Scheme

#### **State Planning Policy Framework**

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

**Clause 13 Environmental Risk** - Encourages future planning and design in Alchester Village 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 Alchester Village 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 Alchester Village to provide for potentially increased housing supply and diversity within the Activity Centre.

**Clause 17 Economic Development** - Provides the strategic direction to ensure future planning and design for Alchester Village provides a range of land uses within the Activity Centre that provide for both local and tourist needs.

**Clause 18 Transport** - Encourages future planning and design in Alchester Village provides a range of integrated and sustainable transport systems to make it easy and safe or 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 efficiently and effectively to meet State and community needs and protect the environment.

### **Local Planning Policy**

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

**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 Alchester Village. 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 toward Local Living and Activity Areas.

**Clause 21.07 Economic Development** - Provides direction for Alchester Village 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 and is well designed and respects and compliments 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 Alchester Village 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’. Design responses for development in this area are:

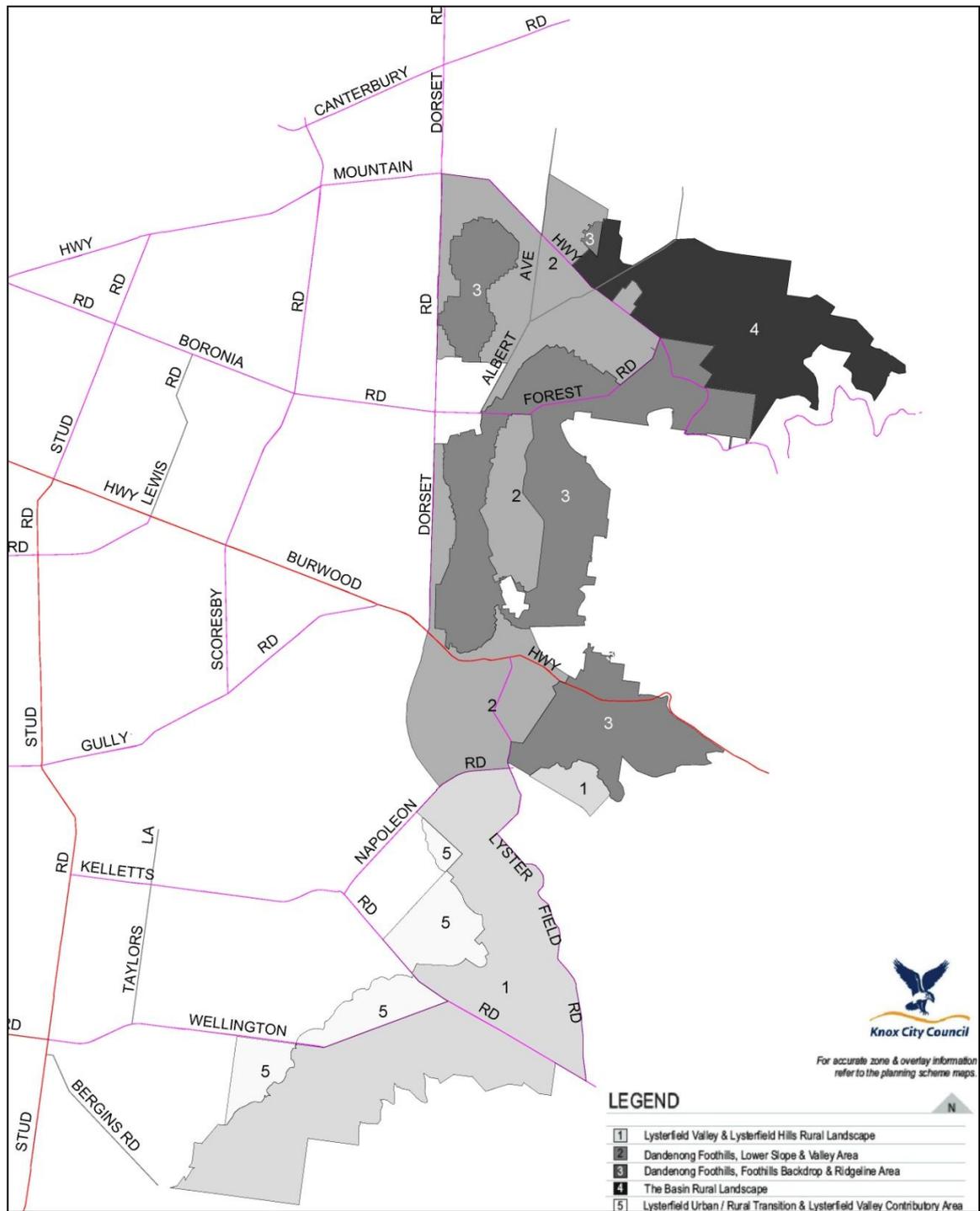
- The design and siting of buildings, works and landscaping minimises the threat associated with bushfire.
- The design and siting of buildings, works and landscaping protects and enhances the visual dominance of vegetation, including canopy trees and native understorey plants, to ensure that:
  - There 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 Alchester Village 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.



Map 1 – Dandenong Foothills Policy map

### 2.4.3 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; and
- 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 residential areas surrounding Alchester Village are considered part of the Bush Suburban category i.e. areas which have significant biological and landscape values.

The Housing Strategy indicates that residential area surrounding Alchester Village 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 limited dual occupancy opportunities.

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 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 the proposed Clause 22.12 will only guide activity within Alchester Village 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.

### Planning Scheme Amendment C130 – Interim Building Height controls

Amendment C130 to the Knox Planning Scheme 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 Zones and Overlays

Figure 5 illustrates the predominant Commercial 1 zoning of land within Alchester Village. The Village pocket park is affected by a Public Park and Recreation Zone. Mountain Highway, a Category 1 Road, is controlled by VicRoads, while the Mountain Highway service lane and surrounding roads are managed by Knox City Council.

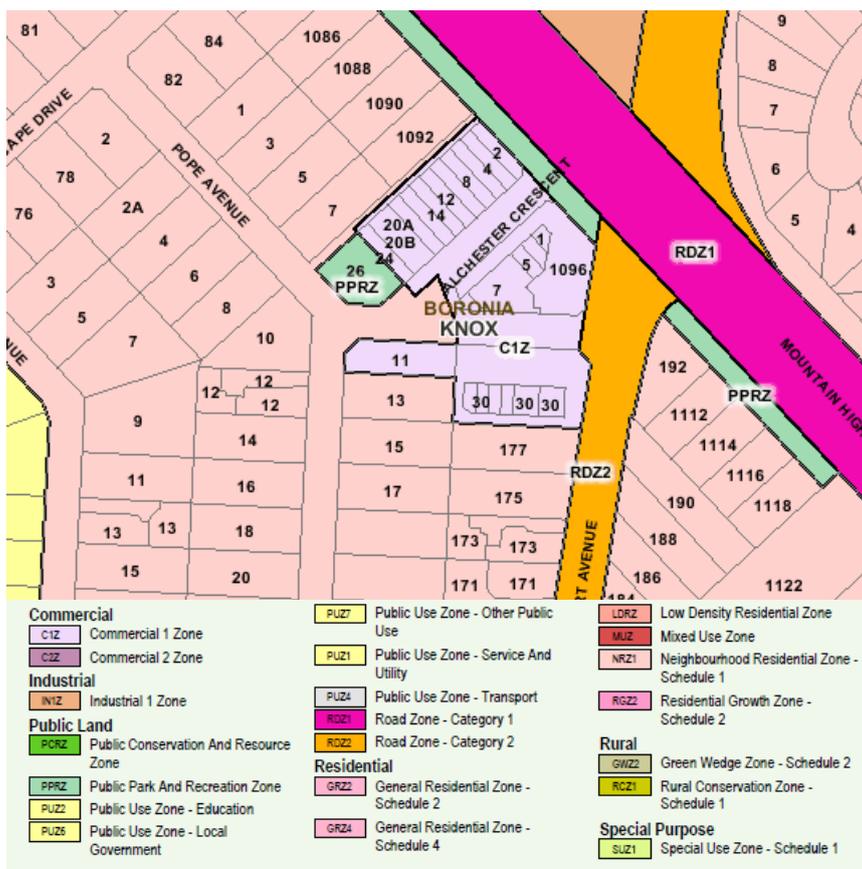


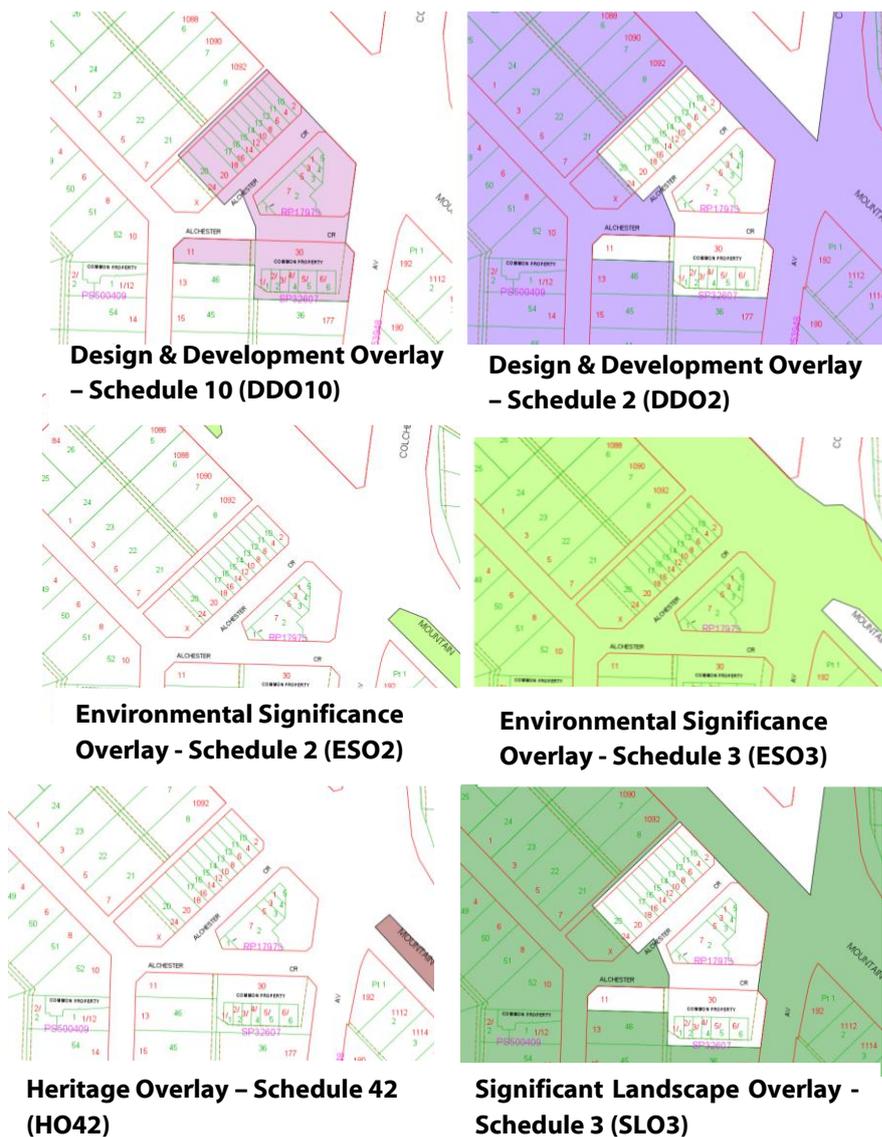
Figure 5 - Existing Zoning

Figure 6 illustrates the various overlays affecting the centre, including:

- Design and Development Overlay 10 (DDO10) - Applies interim maximum building heights of 7.5 metres prior to the introduction of permanent building controls.
- Residential areas immediately surrounding the Village are affected by a Design and Development Overlay 2 (DDO2) – Protection of the Foothills’ environmental and

landscape values by limiting building coverage to 40% of a site's area and impervious surface cover to 60%, applying a maximum 7.5 metre building height, and prohibiting subdivision of land into lots of less than 500 sqm.

- Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO3) which aims to protect the Foothills landscape by managing building scale, excavation and finishes, as well as protecting existing significant vegetation.
- Environmental Significance Overlays – Schedules 2 and 3 (ESO2 and ESO3) which work to protect sites of biological significance and vegetation indigenous to Knox.
- Heritage Overlay – Schedule 42 (HO42) which aims to protect a Hawthorn hedge located outside Alchester Village.



**Figure 6 - Existing Overlays**

### **Summary of Policy Framework for Alchester Village:**

- Support the role of Alchester Village as a gateway to the Dandenong Ranges.
- Support the economic role of Alchester Village within the local community.
- Ensure that development within Alchester Village continues to protect the aesthetic, environmental and landscape values and vistas of the Dandenong Foothills and Dandenong Ranges parklands.
- Increase housing diversity and supply within Alchester Village, while ensuring that residential development is consistent with its continuing commercial role.
- Encourage high quality urban design which is ecologically sustainable and site responsive.
- Encourage safe and convenient pedestrian movement to and around Alchester Village.
- Encourage sustainable transport options such as walking, cycling and public transport.

# 3. Built Form Analysis

This section provides the context from which built form design guidelines will be developed. The built form analysis considers the context of existing built form and land use patterns.

## 3.1 Existing Land Use and Built Form

### Topography

The topography in the study area is generally flat with a gentle slope of less than 4%, however outside of the study area the land rises to the south and west with some slopes in excess of 16%. The site rests in a drainage line, with potential opportunities for water harvesting in new developments.

As shown in Figures 7 and 8, the Village has a valley like quality which allows built form to sit below view lines from surrounding residential dwellings.

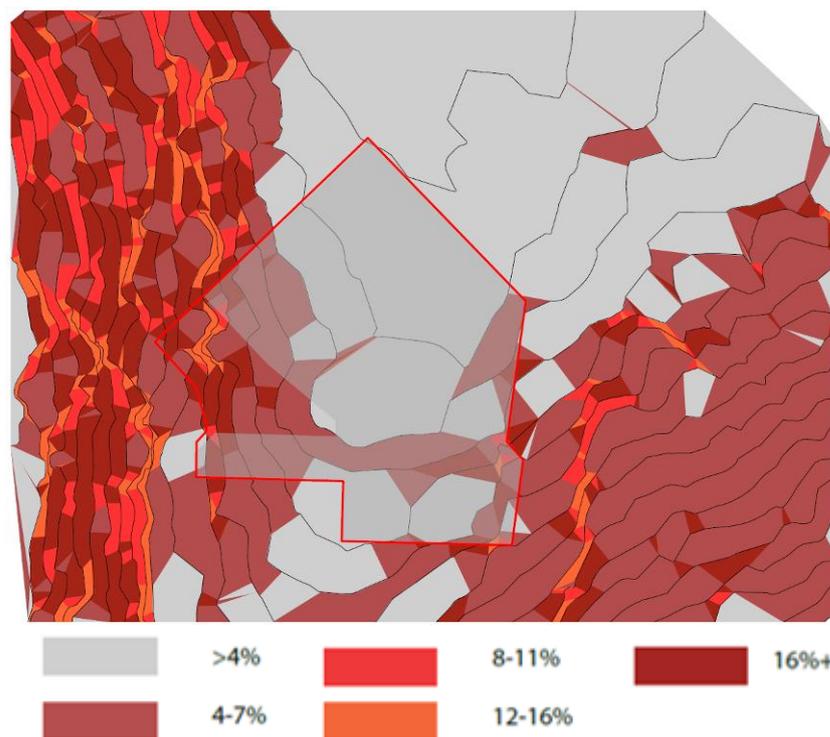
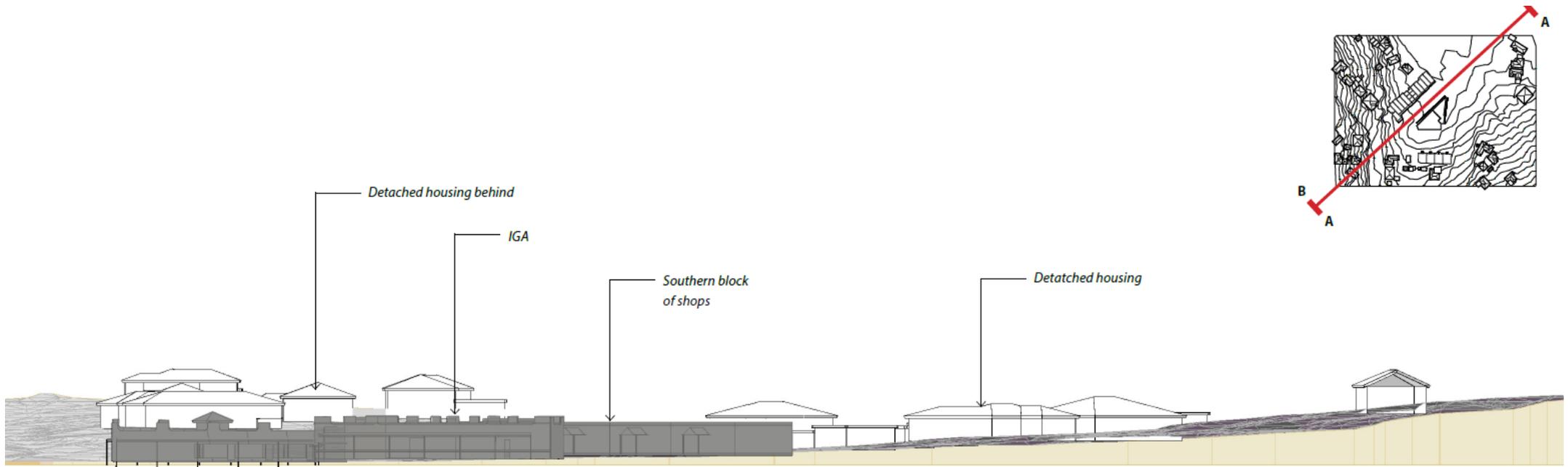
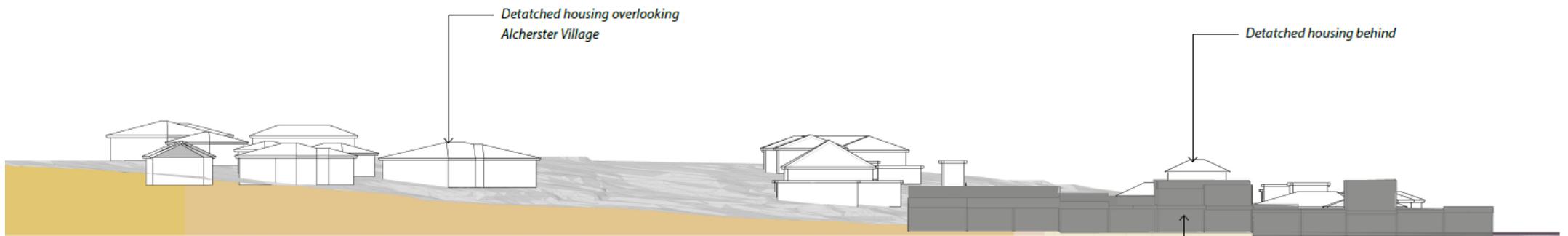


Figure 7 – Topography



Sectional Perspective A-A 1:250



Sectional Perspective B-B 1:250

Single and 2 storey forms in the western block of shops on Alchester Crescent

Figure 8 - Sectional perspective of Village

### Street Pattern and Ownership structure

There is a high proportion of land dedicated to road reserve within the study area.

Figure 9 demonstrates that there is some overlap where pedestrian footpaths and sections of car parking along Alchester Crescent which are most likely perceived as part of the public realm are actually in private ownership. These areas may be eligible to be considered as public highways due to factors such as unhindered public use of these spaces and maintenance of the spaces by Council.



Figure 9 - Private land ownership (Source?)

Built form modelling carried out at Section 5 of this report assumes that sections of pedestrian paths and car parking areas along Alchester Crescent which are in private ownership will not be built on, due to likely designation of these areas as public highways. It is not yet determined whether open air car parks to the Eastern and Southern precincts would be designated as public highways (see Section 3.1 for further discussion).

The models therefore assume developable footprints of approx. 1,840 sqm to the Western precinct, 1,864 sqm to the Eastern precinct), and the entire 2,000 sqm site area to the Southern precinct.

### Vegetation

The core of the Village contains little vegetation, with the majority of canopy trees located within the Park or on nature strips to the Mountain Highway / Albert Avenue frontages as indicated by Figure 10.



Figure 10 – Existing tree canopy

## Land Uses

As Figure 11 shows, land use at Alchester Village is primarily retail, with one commercial office, a medical centre at the Southern precinct (see Figure 4 for full details of premises).

Alchester Village is able to provide a wide range of 'everyday' goods and services for the local community, such as a supermarket, butchers and pharmacy. The centre also offers a range of cafes and restaurants, and speciality needs such as a hardware shop.

The centre has a lack of community facilities, with the Village Park presenting the only opportunity for public gatherings. A public toilet will be constructed by Council (location to be determined) in 2016.



Figure 11 – Land Use

## Car parking

Alchester Crescent is a local road managed by Council. The road allows two-way traffic movements. There is access to 90 car parks (See Figure 12).

As discussed in 'Street Pattern and Ownership Structure' earlier in this report, portions of the pedestrian footpaths and car parking areas within the Village are in private ownership. However, these are likely to be considered as public highways and development over these areas is likely to be restricted.

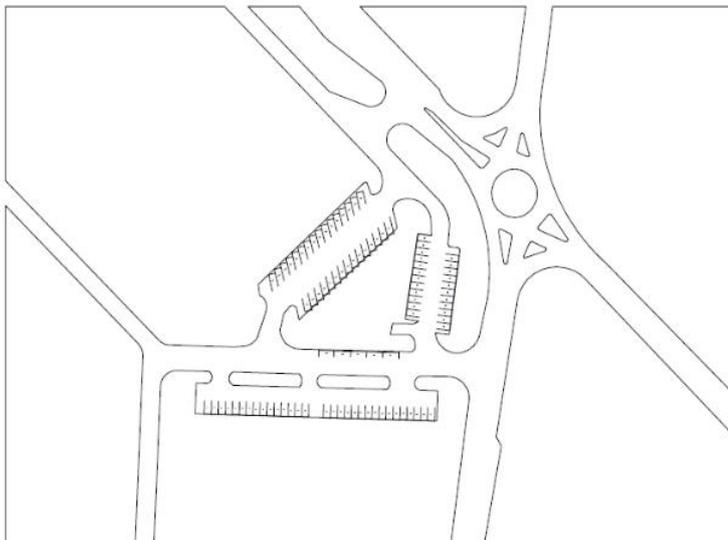


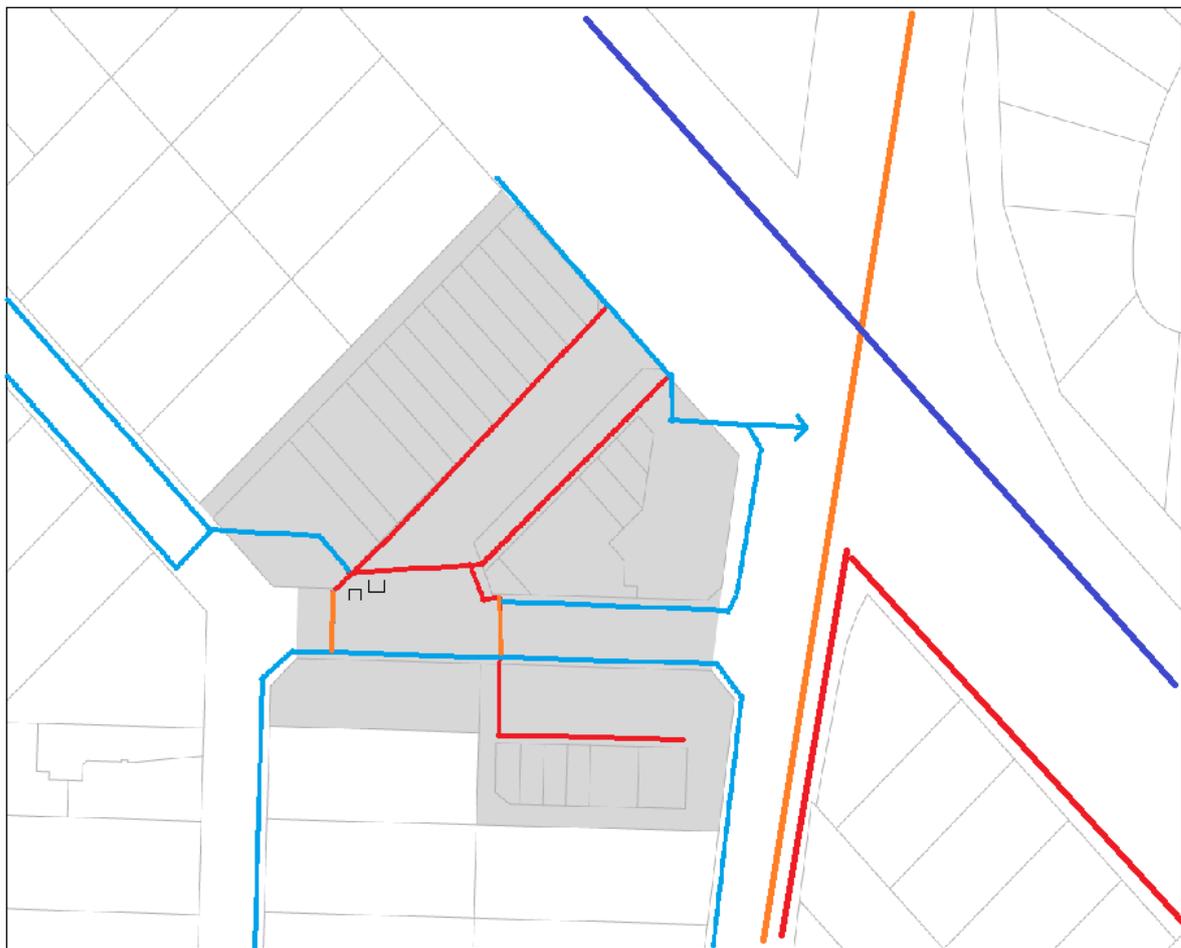
Figure 12 - Existing car parking

## Public transport, Walking and Cycling

Alchester Village is well served by public transport, with three bus lines providing connections to the region.<sup>1</sup> The main bus stops are located on Albert Avenue and Mountain Highway.

Alchester Village has a compact footprint. A round trip across the centre to the other spans only 250 metres. Formal pedestrian pathways around the centre are generally adequate; however, there are some gaps in formal pedestrian crossings, such as to the Southern precinct (see Figure 13).

Albert Avenue and Mountain Highway form part of VicRoads' on-road Principal Bicycle Network - existing and proposed bicycle routes identified to connect major destinations around Melbourne. Two bicycle racks are located in front of the Milk Bar.



- Key Pedestrian / Shop Frontage Areas
- Pedestrian path of travel
- Bicycle hoops
- Pedestrian path of travel with no defined path
- 690 - Croydon - Boronia via Kilsyth, Canterbury Gardens, Kilsyth South
- ↔ 755 - Bayswater - Knox City via Basin, Boronia, Ferntree Gully
- ↔ 968 - NightRider - City - Knox - Bayswater - Belgrave via Toorak Road

**Figure 13 - Public transport, pedestrian and cycle connections**

<sup>1</sup> Bus route 690 – Runs between Croydon and Boronia at twice-hourly intervals from 6am to 9pm Mon-Fri, hourly from 7am to 9pm on Saturdays, and hourly from 9am to 9pm on Sundays.  
 Bus route 755 runs between Bayswater, Boronia and The Basin at twice-hourly intervals from 7am to 9pm Mon-Fri, from 8am to 9pm on Saturdays, and hourly from 9am to 9pm on Sundays.  
 Bus route 968 (Nightrider) runs between the City, Toorak, Glen Waverley, Wantirna, Bayswater, Boronia and Belgrave from 12am to 4am on Saturday and Sunday nights.

## 3.2 Precinct Analysis

The Alchester Village study precinct covers an area of approximately 0.92 hectares and 23 premises (see Section 2.1 and Figure 4).

The Village is an open air shopping centre characterised by three distinct precincts of attached shops and commercial premises separated by public roads and parking areas. 37.5% of the study area is covered by bitumen and accessible by car (see Figure 14).

Built form is largely single storey. Lot sizes, with the exception of the IGA site, are considered to be very deep for a local shopping strip.

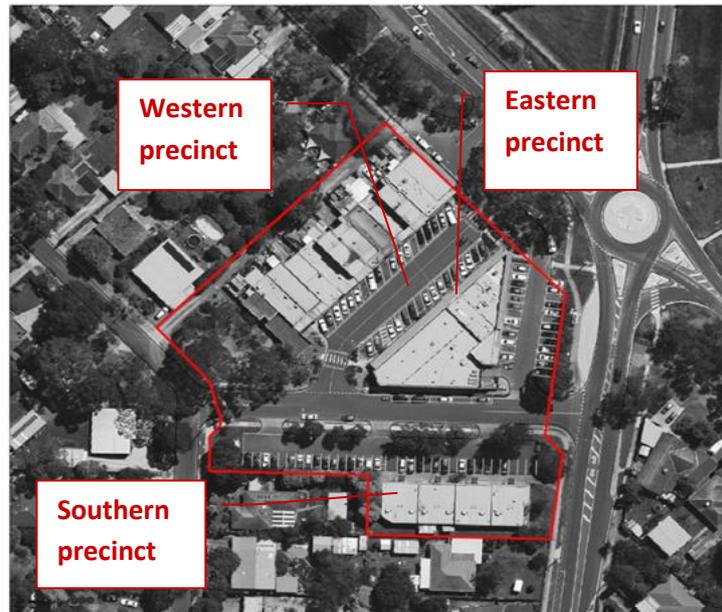


Figure 14 – Precinct definition

## Western Precinct

The Western Precinct comprises of a mix of single and double storey buildings.

Key features:

- Retail at ground level, commercial at first floor (see Figure 16)
- Constructed between the 1960s to 1970s
- Facades are a mix of exposed and painted brickwork. Single doorway entrances into premises
- Interior spaces have approximate ceiling heights of 2.4 metres to 2.7 metres (finished floor to finished ceiling height)
- Flat tray roof awnings extending over the footpath
- Flat roofs to buildings
- Extensive signage features to the front facade
- Little visual uniformity in the signage and awning heights to the block frontage
- Rear loaded access via a public, unsealed laneway which runs along the north western boundary of the premises and allows access to car parking, loading and service areas to the rear (See Figure 15)



Figure 15 - Western Precinct (top) and rear laneway (bottom)

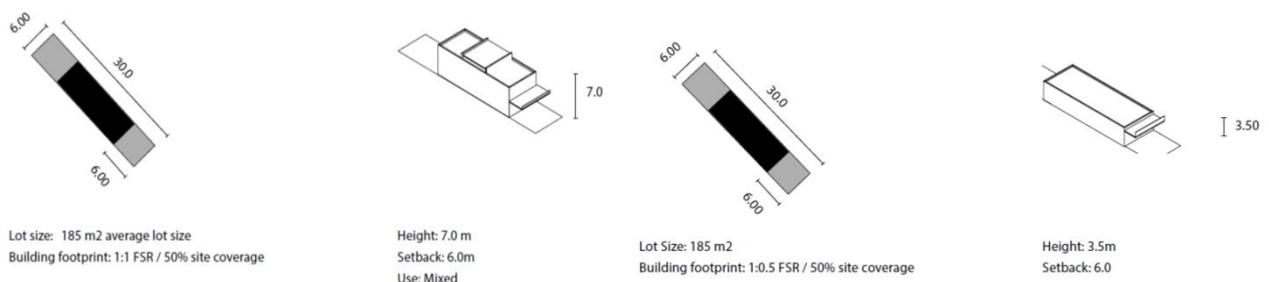


Figure 16 – Western precinct – single and two level small format mixed uses

## Eastern Precinct

The Eastern precinct contains the IGA supermarket and three other tenancies.

Key features:

- Single storey block. A Communal car park is located to the east (See Figure 19)
- Late 1970s Construction
- Visual uniformity in its exposed brick facade, arched parapets, continuous pitched verandah over the footpath, and regular window forms to Alchester Crescent (see Figure 18)
- Double storey 'false front' wall to Albert Avenue eastern frontage to Albert Avenue (approx. 6.5 metre height), (see Figure 17)
- Interior spaces have approximate ceiling heights of 2.4 metres to 2.7 metres (finished floor to finished ceiling height)
- The eastern frontage is characterised by a sense of 'back of house' due to obscuring of windows and location of bins, (See Figure 20)
- The southern frontage also has limited activity; although a mural installed by local artists (May 2015) provides some visual interest.



**Figure 17 - Eastern precinct, Alchester Crescent and Dandenong Ranges to the north east**



**Figure 18 - Eastern precinct, looking south to Alchester Crescent**



Lot Size: 500 SQM (approximate)  
Builtform footprint: 5000SqM with lot coverage 1:1 FSR



Height: 5.00  
Setback: 0m / none  
Use: Retail

**Figure 19 – Eastern precinct – medium format retail**



**Figure 20 - Rear of Eastern precinct - IGA supermarket**

## Southern precinct

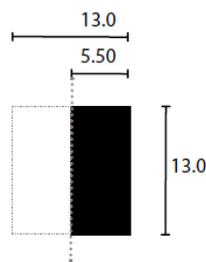
The southern precinct has a sense of separation from the 'core' of Alchester Crescent due to the presence of a roadway and car parking. A Council owned car park is located at the western end of this precinct.

Key features:

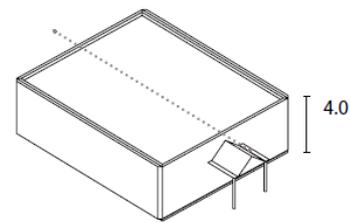
- Constructed circa 1980s
- Visually distinct, contemporary appearance as compared to eastern and western precincts (see Figure 21)
- Uniform appearance characterised by dark glass frontages, muted tones of blue/gray, and pitched glass porticos to entrances
- Interior spaces have approximate ceiling heights of 2.4 metres (finished floor to finished ceiling height), (see Figure 22).
- Premises are either single occupation or split into dual leases
- Shared car parking and communal access  
Front loaded – all loading and parking located to the front of premises



**Figure 21- Southern precinct, viewed from communal car park to the rear of the Eastern precinct**



Lot Size: either 72 sqm or 144 sqm  
Built form footprint: 100% site coverage / 1:1 FSR



Height: 4.00  
Setback: 0m / none  
Use: Retail / commercial

**Figure 22 – Southern precinct – small format services and retail**

## Village Park

- Located at the westernmost corner of Alchester Village. Provides the only formal communal gathering place within the centre.
- 690 sqm area. Contains a small playground and seating area. (See Figure 23)
- Provides a pedestrian entry point to the Village from residential areas to the north.
- Council is currently embarking on a program of improvements to the Village Park (including the installation of new landscaping in 2016).



**Figure 23 - Village Park, view to Alchester Crescent**

### 3.2.1 Views Analysis

The following public realm views have been selected as contributing to the character and identity of Alchester Village as a neighbourhood activity centre located within the Dandenong Foothills, and as a gateway to the Dandenong Ranges (See Figure 24). The views provide:

- a sense of the continuous canopy tree cover characteristic of the Foothills,
- views to the Dandenong Ranges backdrop of hills and ridgeline, and
- entrance perspectives of the Village from surrounding road approaches.

#### **View 1 – From Pope Avenue. View from stairway entry into Village Park towards the Dandenong Ranges**



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

The location of the Village Park within the neighbourhood activity centre enables the Foothills landscape to be drawn into the heart of Alchester Village.

#### **View 2 – From within Village Park. View from benches towards the Dandenong Ranges**



There are some views to the Dandenong Ranges ridgeline; however, they are not prominent as existing shops and built form dominate the foreground. Tree canopy within the Village Park enables the Foothills landscape to continue across the centre.

**View 3 – From outside the Milk Bar. View from post box towards the Dandenong Ranges**



From the street level, views towards the Dandenong Ranges ridgeline are concentrated at the northern end of the Eastern Precinct.

Views over the IGA Supermarket roof to the Ranges are filtered by tree canopy in the middle distance; however, the canopy tree cover provides a valuable sense of the Foothills landscape.

**View 4 – From Alchester Crescent, outside the Butchers. View from benches towards the Ranges**



From street level (outside the butcher), there are significant ridgeline views of the Dandenong Ranges ridgeline over the northern end of the Eastern precinct. This backdrop provides a strong sense of the Village's location within the Dandenong Foothills.

**View 5 - View to north along Alchester Crescent**



From the pedestrian crossing and post box outside of the Milk bar (Western precinct), views to the Dandenong Ranges and through undeveloped land to the north of the Village provide a sense of openness and connection to the Foothills landscape.

**View 6 - Views to Park**

At the Southern precinct, views towards canopy trees within the Village Park and beyond allows Alchester Village to be seen as part of the low scale, vegetated Foothills landscape.

**View 7 – Distant views to Dandenong Ranges**

Entry into Alchester Village from the west captures distant views of the Dandenong Ranges ridgeline. From this external perspective, the Village is seen as nestled within the Foothills of the Dandenong Ranges.

**View 8 – Eastern approach (along Mountain Highway)**

Entry views of the Village from Mountain Highway, which is one of the routes leaving the Dandenong Ranges tourist area, do not provide any sense of arrival to the centre and do not direct or entice visitors to the centre. The built form appears dull, flat and boxy; however, turning into the main street of Alchester Crescent does provide a good sense of the human and village scale of intimacy. The eucalypts surrounding the Village provide an attractive frame for entry views.

### View 9 – Western approach (along Mountain Highway)



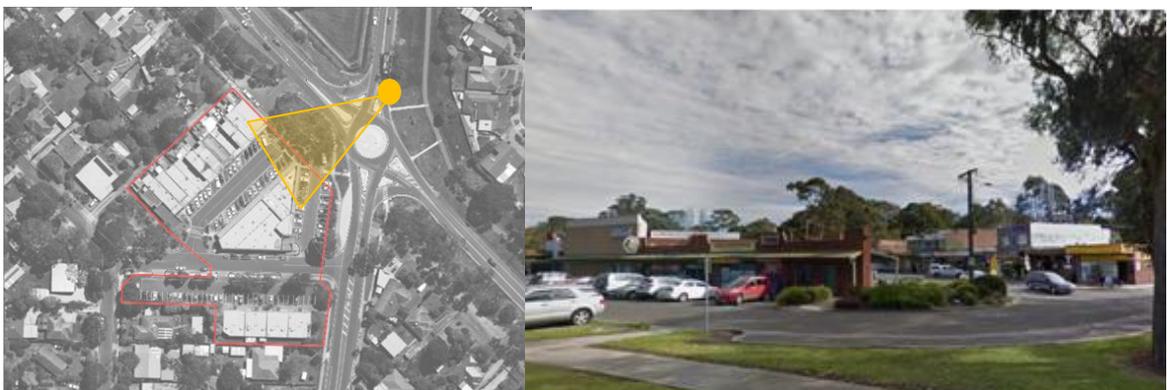
There is poor visibility of the retail core when approaching from the west. No iconic sense of arrival is provided as surrounding tree canopies filter views through to Alchester Village, and the broad width of surrounding roads and nature strips dominates perspectives. Views to the Eastern precinct are more appealing, with the verandah structure providing a sense of human scale and a strong lineal and legible structure. Views through Alchester Crescent to the Southern precinct lack a more iconic element or structure which could contribute to framing the street.

### View 10 – Southern approach (along Albert Avenue)



Entry perspectives of Alchester Village from the south lack a sense of anticipation, with poor signage to indicate the centre's presence and initial views being of loading and 'back of house' functions.

### View 11 – Northern approach (along Colchester Road)



Entry to the Village from the northern road approach displays the attractive Foothills canopy tree landscape setting and good sightlines into the Village. Consistency across the red brick facades to the Western and Eastern precincts is attractive; however, there are no built form elements or signage which could capture passing views.

### Summary of views analysis:

- Entrance views into the Alchester Village do not support or attract passing traffic on major streets to stop at the centre. In particular, arrival perspectives from the western, eastern and southern road approaches need to better attract passing traffic to the centre.
- Key views 1 and 2 as seen in Figure 24 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, unfiltered views of the Dandenong Ranges backdrop, and are the main viewpoints from which users of Alchester Village are able to form a sense of the Foothills identity of the centre.



Figure 24 – Key views to and from Alchester Village

### 3.3 Summary of Built Form Analysis

- Alchester Village provides a wide range of daily convenience needs for the local community.
- Key public realm views from within the centre are those from the Western Precinct and Village Park to the Dandenong Ranges backdrop over the northern half of the Eastern precinct.
- Greater provision of facilities is required for user comfort, such as formal pedestrian crossings, public toilet and seating facilities, particularly for elderly visitors.
- The centre has poor visibility to surrounding roads.
- The rear laneway to the Western precinct and communal car park to the Eastern precinct provide opportunities for further development of these blocks without needing vehicle access to the main pedestrian areas of Alchester Crescent.
- Greater visual uniformity is required to refresh the appearance of the centre, particularly in building facades and verandahs.
- Greater internal amenity is required to internal spaces at ground levels, particularly in sunlight penetration to retail premises.

# 4. Engagement

## 4.1 Engagement Opportunities

Community engagement with Alchester Village traders, surrounding residents and users covered the topics of:

- **'Place' and Streetscape engagement**

*Community meeting, newspaper and mail out survey (April-July 2013) – 33 survey responses, 25 attendees*

Outlines Landscape Architecture was engaged by Council in 2013 to create a 'Place Program' for Alchester Village which would identify various forms of investment in social, economic and environmental outcomes and guide the staging of this investment.

The first round of community consultation occurred through a meeting with local traders and residents on 18 April 2013 to capture the aspirations, issues and opportunities for Alchester Village. A survey was then conducted in July 2013 to gain a better understanding of the priority issues identified in the first stage of consultation.

- **Built form**

*Mail out survey to 2,334 surrounding land owners and occupiers (approx. 1.3km radius from Alchester Village) - 57 surveys returned.*

*Three consultation meetings (April-June 2014) - 18 attendees.*

Engagement on the topic of Built Form undertook the following methodology:

Stage 1 - A mail out survey to 2,334 surrounding land owners and occupiers to reveal issues surrounding built form at Alchester Village.

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 (average six attendees per meeting).

Stage 3 - The final consultation session included testing of built form scenarios (see Built Form Scenarios at Section 5) and demonstrating the impact of those scenarios (average six attendees per meeting).

## 4.2 Key Engagement themes

The following headings and comments represent the key themes drawn from the community engagement process:

### **“Preserve views to the Dandenong Ranges”**

- Strong concern about additional height in the Village which might take away views to the Foothills.
- Strong concern regarding a second storey to the IGA supermarket building which might take away views.
- Support for generous internal ceiling heights to provide for architectural forms and articulated roof forms which respond better to the undulating form of the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills ridgelines.
- Colours and materials which are sympathetic to the Foothills landscape and vegetation, but still varied within that palette of colour.

### **“Preserve the ‘village feel’ of the centre”**

- The community valued ‘village’ feel of Alchester Village, which is attributed to:
  - the compact footprint of the centre which provides an intimate built form scale,
  - the simplicity of built form,
  - the focus of each precinct onto Alchester Crescent which provides a ‘village green’ experience, and
  - the simplicity of the Village’s service offering, which allows users access to all their ‘everyday’ needs such as convenience food, groceries, pharmacy etc.

### **“Upgrade the appearance of the centre”**

- Shop fronts look tired and are in need of a renovation.
- Better identity for the Village as seen from Mountain Highway. Support for corner marker to the western precinct of shops on Alchester Crescent.
- More trees to soften the Village’s built form.
- Improve uniformity across the Village through simple and consistent architecture, colours, awnings and signage.
- Introduce design elements such as rooftop gardens.
- Avoid new development which is of poor quality and design.
- Existing strengths - The scale, uniform verandah and ‘clean lines’ of the IGA Supermarket and Chemist.
- Existing strengths - Current building heights and scale; north facing, active sun spots; generous outdoor pavements.

### **“Provide more/improved public facilities within Alchester Village”**

- What the community wanted - More, better designed and safer parking.
- Inadequate places within the Village for the elderly and those less mobile to rest. The community called for provision of increased public seating and a public toilet within the Village to encourage people to socialise within the centre, without having to visit cafes or restaurants for facilities.
- The rear laneway was identified as an opportunity to be upgraded to allow access for trader and staff car parking.

### **“Make Alchester Village a safer place to visit”**

- The community identified safety concerns when accessing the Village after dark, due to a perceived lack of lighting within Alchester Crescent.
- The Alchester Village Park is perceived as attracting anti social behaviour and being unsafe at night. The opportunity to upgrade the park with increased play items, lighting and surveillance gained the greatest support in dealing with safety concerns.

### **“Preserve and enhance the convenience of visiting Alchester Village”**

- Existing strengths - The convenience function of the Village, which was defined as easy access to the Village shops by car, and the compact footprint of the centre and close proximity of shops which allowed efficient visits.
- Elderly visitors to Alchester Village seek greater walkability across the centre. There is concern over lack of safe crossing points for pedestrians and those less able to cross Alchester Crescent.

### **“Preserve and enhance the ‘every day’ service offering of Alchester Village shops”**

- The Village is perceived as a local shopping strip with a high level of customer service, and as an attractive and functional place with all the necessary services.
- Economic Diversity – A main priority for the community was to ensure Alchester Village remains a local shopping village and continues to be convenient for users to visit. An opportunity to build on this convenience was the support for an Australia Post outlet within the Village.

# 5. Built Form Scenarios

## 5.1 Built form assumptions

Community engagement, the planning policy framework for the Village, and analysis of key views in Section 3.2.1 of this report highlight that views to the surrounding Dandenong Ranges and Foothills landscape are a highly prized in contributing to the identity and attractiveness of Alchester Village. However the centre could benefit from greater built form presence to capture views from passing traffic along Mountain Highway, Albert Avenue and Colchester Road.

The following models were constructed to best demonstrate the impact of increased height and bulk both looking into and out of Alchester Village. *(Please note that the visualisations are used to demonstrate indicative built form and do not represent intended land use).*

The models are based on the following parameters and assumptions:

### **Building height**

Scenarios range from a single storey up to a three storey scale, taking into consideration the low 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:

- 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. 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.

A range of viewpoints have been selected to reflect key publicly accessible viewing locations in Alchester Village (as illustrated by Figure 25). The viewpoints were selected by Knox City Council officers.

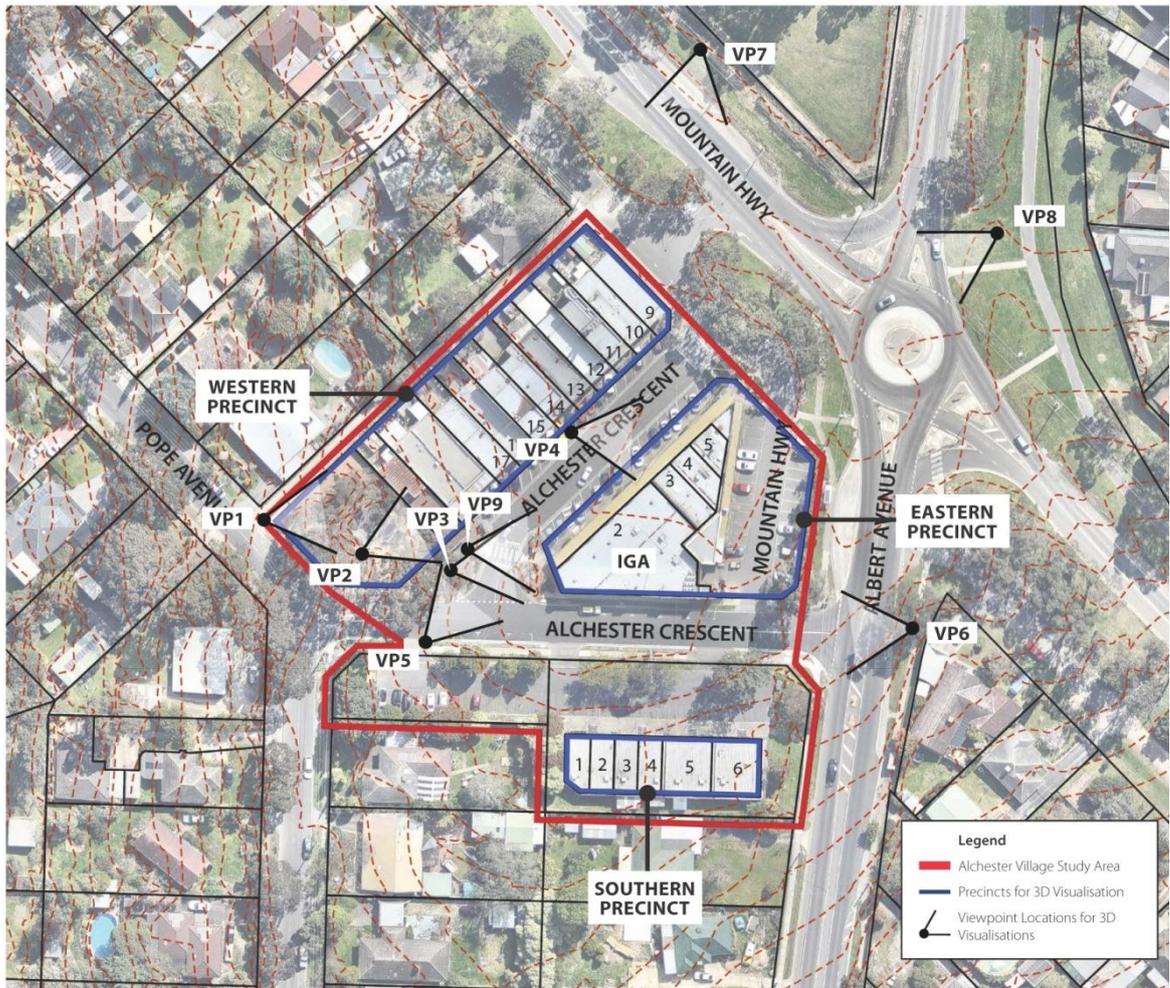


Figure 25 – View point plan

**View point 1**  
**Village Park**



VIEWPOINT 1 - FROM POPE AVENUE, VIEW FROM STAIRWAY ENTRY INTO VILLAGE PARK TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES: EXISTING (GOOGLE STREETVIEW)



VIEWPOINT 1 - FROM POPE AVENUE, VIEW FROM STAIRWAY ENTRY INTO VILLAGE PARK TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES: TWO STOREY BUILT FORM EXTENDING THE LENGTH OF THE WESTERN PRECINCT, NO SETBACKS FROM THE LANEWAY



VIEWPOINT 1 - FROM POPE AVENUE, VIEW FROM STAIRWAY ENTRY INTO VILLAGE PARK TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES: TWO STOREY BUILT FORM EXTENDING TO BOUNDARY, WITH A 5 METRE REAR SETBACK FROM THE LANEWAY

**Analysis:**

- Two storey built form to the Western precinct represents a low-impact change scenario, given existing double storey built form. Views to, and the visual dominance of, the Dandenong Ranges remain intact. Increased building setback from the rear laneway reduces visual bulk to surrounding residential properties; however, the width of the laneway already provides visual and acoustic separation.
- Two storey built form to the Eastern precinct maintains distant views to the Dandenong Ranges from this perspective, while three storey buildings unduly intrude into this backdrop.



VIEWPOINT 2 - FROM WITHIN VILLAGE PARK. VIEW FROM BENCHES TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES: EXISTING (GOOGLE STREETVIEW)



VIEWPOINT 2 - FROM WITHIN VILLAGE PARK. VIEW FROM BENCHES TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES: TWO STOREY TO WESTERN PRECINCT, NO SETBACK FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT



VIEWPOINT 2 - FROM WITHIN VILLAGE PARK. VIEW FROM BENCHES TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES: THREE STOREY TO WESTERN PRECINCT, WITH TOP LEVEL SETBACK 2 METRES FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT. 2 STOREY TO IGA SUPERMARKET

**Analysis:**

- Two storey built form to the Western and Eastern precincts maintains a low scale, intimate feel to the Village, while more intense three storey buildings overwhelm the compact dimensions of the centre.
- Views to the Dandenong Ranges over the Eastern precinct are maintained with two storey buildings but largely obscured at three storeys.

**View point 3**  
**From Milk Bar and post boxes**



**VIEWPOINT 3 - FROM OUTSIDE THE MILK BAR. VIEW FROM POST BOX TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES:**  
TWO STOREY TO THE IGA SUPERMARKET (LOT 2) AND SINGLE STOREY TO LOTS 3,4 AND 5



**VIEWPOINT 3 - FROM OUTSIDE THE MILK BAR. VIEW FROM POST BOX TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES:**  
TWO STOREY TO LOTS 3, 4 AND 5 AND EXISTING PARAPET HEIGHT TO THE IGA SUPERMARKET (PARAPET HEIGHT OF 4.7m ABOVE GROUND LEVEL SHOWN)



VIEWPOINT 3 - FROM OUTSIDE THE MILK BAR. VIEW FROM POST BOX TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES:  
TWO STOREY TO THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE IGA SUPERMARKET SITE (LOT 2) AND SINGLE STOREY TO LOTS 3,4 AND 5



VIEWPOINT 3 - FROM OUTSIDE THE MILK BAR. VIEW FROM POST BOX TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES:  
TWO STOREY TO THE SOUTHERN HALF OF THE IGA SUPERMARKET SITE (LOT 2) AND SINGLE STOREY TO LOTS 3,4 AND 5



VIEWPOINT 3 - FROM OUTSIDE THE MILK BAR. VIEW FROM POST BOX TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES:  
THREE STOREY ACROSS ALL LOTS

### Analysis

- These models compare the impact of views to the Dandenong Ranges should buildings be restricted at either the northern or southern portions of the Eastern precinct.
- The models show that restricting additional buildings above the existing parapet over the southern half of the block (over the IGA supermarket) provides a slight benefit in allow the Ranges ridgeline to be visible to pedestrians at street level; however, this is not a dominating view.



VIEWPOINT 4 - FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT, OUTSIDE THE BUTCHERS. VIEW FROM BENCHES TOWARDS THE RANGES:  
EXISTING (GOOGLE STREETVIEW)



VIEWPOINT 4 - FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT, OUTSIDE THE BUTCHERS. VIEW FROM BENCHES TOWARDS THE RANGES:  
TWO STOREY TO THE IGA SUPERMARKET (LOT 2) AND SINGLE STOREY TO LOTS 3,4 AND 5 (PARAPET HEIGHT OF 4.7m ABOVE GROUND LEVEL SHOWN)



VIEWPOINT 4 - FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT, OUTSIDE THE BUTCHERS. VIEW FROM BENCHES TOWARDS THE RANGES:  
TWO STOREY TO LOTS 3, 4 AND 5 AND EXISTING PARAPET HEIGHT TO THE IGA SUPERMARKET



VIEWPOINT 4 - FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT, OUTSIDE THE BUTCHERS. VIEW FROM BENCHES TOWARDS THE RANGES:  
THREE STOREY ACROSS ALL LOTS, TOP LEVEL SETBACK 2 METRES FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT

## View point 4

### From benches outside Butchers

#### Analysis

- The existing condition photo and model shows that, at street level, views to the Dandenong Ranges are already blocked by the Eastern precinct parapet and canopy trees in the middle distance. A sense of the Foothills landscape is provided by views through the end of the Village.
- Two storey buildings to the Eastern precinct balances the scale of Alchester Crescent, whereas three storey buildings dominate the streetscape and detract from views to the surrounding Foothills landscape.



VIEWPOINT 5 - VIEW TO NORTH ALONG ALCHESTER CRESCENT FROM PEDESTRIAN PATH ON SOUTHERN SIDE OF ALCHESTER CRESCENT: EXISTING (GOOGLE STREETVIEW)

**View point 5**

**View to north along Alchester Crescent from pedestrian path outside Village Park**



VIEWPOINT 5 - VIEW TO NORTH ALONG ALCHESTER CRESCENT FROM PEDESTRIAN PATH ON SOUTHERN SIDE OF ALCHESTER CRESCENT: TWO STOREY TO BOTH WESTERN PRECINCT AND IGA (LOT 2) AREA AT THE EASTERN PRECINCT. NO SETBACK FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT



VIEWPOINT 5 - VIEW TO NORTH ALONG ALCHESTER CRESCENT FROM PEDESTRIAN PATH ON SOUTHERN SIDE OF ALCHESTER CRESCENT: TWO STOREY TO BOTH WESTERN PRECINCT AND LOTS 3, 4 AND 5 AT THE EASTERN PRECINCT. NO SETBACK FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT



VIEWPOINT 5 - VIEW TO NORTH ALONG ALCHESTER CRESCENT FROM PEDESTRIAN PATH ON SOUTHERN SIDE OF ALCHESTER CRESCENT: THREE STOREY TO BOTH PRECINCTS, TOP LEVEL 2 METRE SETBACK FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT

*Analysis:*

- These models compare the impact of views to the Dandenong Ranges should buildings be restricted at either the northern or southern portions of the Eastern precinct. The models show that restricting development over the IGA supermarket provides benefit at street level by allowing views of the Ranges backdrop.
- The models also demonstrate the impact of two or three storey buildings at the Western and Eastern precincts. Three storey development increases visual bulk to an extent that buildings dominate the sense of the surrounding Foothills landscape.

**View point 6**

**Entrance views from Albert Avenue towards the east**



**VIEWPOINT 6 - VIEWS FROM THE PEDESTRIAN FOOTPATH ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF ALBERT AVENUE, TOWARDS THE EAST ACROSS THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN PRECINCTS: EXISTING (GOOGLE STREETVIEW)**



**VIEWPOINT 6 - VIEWS FROM THE PEDESTRIAN FOOTPATH ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF ALBERT AVENUE, TOWARDS THE EAST ACROSS THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN PRECINCTS: TWO STOREYS TO IGA PORTION OF EASTERN PRECINCT (INCLUDING FULL BUILD OUT OVER REAR CARPARK). TWO STOREYS TO WHOLE OF SOUTHERN PRECINCT (INCLUDING COMMON PROPERTY**



**VIEWPOINT 6 - VIEWS FROM THE PEDESTRIAN FOOTPATH ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF ALBERT AVENUE, TOWARDS THE EAST ACROSS THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN PRECINCTS: THREE STOREYS TO WHOLE OF SOUTHERN PRECINCT, INCLUDING COMMON PROPERTY AREA, TOP LEVEL 2 METRE SETBACK FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT. THREE STOREYS TO WHOLE OF EASTERN PRECINCT, INCLUDING FULL BUILD OUT OVER REAR CARPARK, TOP LEVEL 2 METRE SETBACK FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT**

**Analysis:**

- Increasing buildings to a two and three storey scale helps give Alchester Village a greater street presence and marks the centre from further afield. Development should activate any blank walls facing the road to enhance the attractiveness of the centre to passing traffic.
- Two storey development to the Eastern and Southern precincts sits well beneath the continuous canopy tree cover that provides the Foothills ‘feel’, whereas three storey development tips the balance to make buildings more prominent than the surrounding Foothills landscape.

**View point 7**

**Arrival views from Mountain Hwy / Albert Avenue**



**VIEWPOINT 7 - ARRIVAL VIEWS OF ALCHESTER VILLAGE AS VIEWED FROM THE MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY / ALBERT AVENUE INTERSECTION: EXISTING (GOOGLE STREETVIEW)**



**VIEWPOINT 7 - ARRIVAL VIEWS OF ALCHESTER VILLAGE AS VIEWED FROM THE MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY / ALBERT AVENUE INTERSECTION: TWO STOREY TO WHOLE OF EASTERN PRECINCT AND WESTERN PRECINCT**



**VIEWPOINT 7 - ARRIVAL VIEWS OF ALCHESTER VILLAGE AS VIEWED FROM THE MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY / ALBERT AVENUE INTERSECTION: THREE STOREY TO WHOLE OF EASTERN PRECINCT AND WESTERN PRECINCT. 2 METRE TOP LEVEL SETBACK FROM ALCHESTER CRESCENT, 5 METRE TOP LEVEL SETBACK FROM THE REAR LANEWAY**

**Analysis:**

- Two and three storey development gives Alchester Village a greater street presence to potentially capture passing traffic, as long as buildings are oriented appropriately towards the street.
- From this perspective, two storey development sits below canopy trees in the foreground and does not dominate views of the surrounding Foothills landscape.



VIEWPOINT 8 - NORTHERN APPROACH (ALONG COLCHESTER ROAD): EXISTING (GOOGLE STREETVIEW)

**View point 8**  
Arrival views from Mountain Hwy / Colchester Rd



VIEWPOINT 8 - NORTHERN APPROACH (ALONG COLCHESTER ROAD): 2 STOREY OPTION



VIEWPOINT 8 - NORTHERN APPROACH (ALONG COLCHESTER ROAD): 3 STOREY SETBACK OPTION

*Analysis:*

- As in previous models, increased building height within the Village improves its visibility to surrounding roads.
- However, buildings at a three storey scale result in an appearance of intensity which does not sit comfortably within the lower scale, heavily vegetated Foothills landscape.

## View point 9

Views from middle of Village

(in vicinity of Post box and pedestrian crossing to Eastern precinct)



VIEWPOINT 9 - POSTBOX LOOKING TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES:  
EXISTING (GOOGLE STREETVIEW)



VIEWPOINT 9 - POSTBOX LOOKING TOWARDS THE DANDENONG RANGES:  
TWO STOREY TO THE IGA SUPERMARKET AND EXISTING PARAPET HEIGHT TO LOTS 3,4 AND 5



VIEWPOINT 8 - NORTHERN APPROACH (ALONG COLCHESTER ROAD): 3 STOREY SETBACK OPTION:  
TWO STOREY TO LOTS 3, 4 AND 5 AND EXISTING PARAPET HEIGHT TO THE IGA SUPERMARKET

### *Analysis:*

- These models compare the impact of views to the Dandenong Ranges should buildings be restricted at either the northern or southern portions of the Eastern precinct.
- The existing condition photo shows that, from street level, only minor views of the Dandenong Ranges and tree canopy cover are visible. Restricting further development at the northern end of the Eastern precinct would also provide glimpses of the Ranges backdrop, but this is not a visually dominating view.

## 5.2 Summary of Built Form Scenarios

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

- Two storey development to all precincts enables the centre to retain its compact, intimate feel, and to continue to sit below surrounding canopy tree height;
- Three storey built form results in a level of visual bulk which detracts from the sense that the Village forms part of the Dandenong Foothills landscape; and
- Key views from within the centre to the Dandenong Ranges (explored in detail at Section 3.2.1) are not enhanced by restricting the future development at the Eastern precinct to existing single storey heights.

# 6. Conclusion

The following built form priorities for Alchester Village neighbourhood activity centre have been drawn from community consultation, the planning policy framework for the centre, as well as the built form analysis provided in Section 3 of this report.

## **Built form priorities for Alchester Village:**

- Protect Alchester Village's unique Dandenong Foothills landscape setting, which is primarily characterised by views of the canopy tree backdrop to the Village and canopy tree cover within the Village Park, and views to the Dandenong Ranges ridgeline, by restricting development to a two storey scale.
- Protect the 'village' feel of the centre by maintaining the compact footprint of the three precincts and restricting development to an intimate two storey scale.
- Support infill second storey development at the Western and Eastern precincts which already contain double storey built form.
- Support built form which is oriented and designed to capture views from passing traffic.
- Improve the appearance of the Village's built form, particularly in improving the consistency of colours and materials, verandahs and signage across the centre.
- Maintain the convenience of visiting the centre and being able to access a wide range of 'everyday' goods and services.
- Support the role of the Village Park as a focal point for the local community to meet and rest.
- Support the safety and convenience of pedestrians moving across the centre.

## 6.1 Next steps

This *Background Report* forms the strategic basis for the preparation of Built Form Guidelines for Alchester Village (see *Alchester Village Built Form Guidelines, May 2016*).

The Built Form Guidelines will be implemented through Planning Scheme Amendment C137 which will introduce a new Schedule 11 to the Design and Development Overlay (DDO11) to include height, setback and design controls for Alchester Village as well as The Basin Neighbourhood Activity Centre.

This will ensure the centre maintains a contained and low scale village feel, set within the treed environment of the Dandenong Foothills, whilst providing flexibility and capacity as needed for Alchester Village to develop and grow into the future.