

# Part 2

# Alchester Village Built Form Guidelines

May 2016





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# 1. Introduction

Alchester Village is a small Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC) located at the intersection of Mountain Highway, Albert Avenue and Colchester Road, Boronia as shown on Figure 1. The Centre is situated within the Foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, surrounded by low-scale residential dwellings to the south and west and industrial areas to the north.

The Centre is anchored by an IGA supermarket and provides approximately 23 'everyday' services, ranging from cafes and restaurants, pharmacy, hairdresser, bakery and hardware store (see *Part 1: Alchester Village Background Report* for a full list of premises).



Figure 1 – Study Area

## 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 Schedule 10 (DDO11) 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 process was undertaken to include permanent built form controls into the scheme.

## 1.2 Purpose

*Alchester Village – Built Form Guidelines (Part 2)* has been prepared by Knox City Council to provide clear direction on future development opportunities, built form and design within the Centre. It is intended to form the basis for permanent built form controls to be introduced through Planning Scheme C137, which will also introduce controls for The Basin neighbourhood activity centre, through a new Schedule 11 to Clause 43.02 Design and Development Overlay (DDO11).

The *Built Form Guidelines* form Part 2 of a package which includes a *Background Report* (Part 1).

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. Built Form Analysis

The information provided in the *Built Form Guidelines* has been formulated from the built form analysis carried out in *Alchester Village – Part 1: Background Report*, which provides the basis for these *Guidelines*.

The Alchester Village study precinct covers an area of approximately 0.92 hectares and 23 premises. 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 as indicated by Figure 2. Built form is largely single storey, with a small proportion of double storey shop top development and facades. 37.5% of the study area is covered by bitumen and accessible by car. Buildings within the centre were constructed between the 1960s to 1980s.



Figure 2 – Precinct definition

## 2.1 Community Engagement

The *Built Form Guidelines* and *Background Report* draw from two rounds of community consultation carried out with Alchester Village traders, visitors and the local community. Engagement comprised:

- April-July 2013 – Focus on ‘Place’ and streetscape issues - Community meeting with 25 attendees, newspaper and mail out survey with 11 responses.
- April-June 2014 – Focus on built form controls - Mail out survey to 2,334 surrounding land owners and occupiers (86 surveys returned) and three consultation meetings with total 20 attendees.

Key themes expressed by the community include:

- Preserve views to the Dandenong Ranges
- Preserve the ‘village feel’ of the centre
- Upgrade the appearance of the centre
- Provide more/improved public facilities within Alchester Village
- Make Alchester Village a safer place to visit
- Preserve and enhance the convenience of visiting Alchester Village
- Preserve and enhance the ‘every day’ service offering of Alchester Village shops

## 2.2 Planning policy context

Alchester Village is identified as a Neighbourhood Activity Centre within the Knox Planning Scheme (Clause 21.07 – Economic Development). The centre is zoned a mix of Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z), Public Park and Recreation (PPRZ), (the Village Park), and Neighbourhood Residential Zone – Schedule 1 (NRZ1) (roads and rear laneway). A Design and Development Overlay 10 (DDO10) applies an interim 7.5 metre height limit to this centre as well as other Foothills NACs, and an Environmental Significance Overlay 3 (ESO3) applies to the centre and surrounding areas.

The Knox Planning Scheme applies the following strategic planning policy themes to 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 Priorities

The following key built form priorities affecting Alchester Village have been drawn from the community engagement process, built form analysis of the centre (through the *Part 1: Background Report*), and planning policy framework within the Knox Planning Scheme.

## 3.1 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.

View analysis carried out in the *Background Report* shows that the visual connection to the continuous canopy tree cover which surrounds Alchester Village contributes to the character and identity of the Village 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 (as indicated by Figure 3).



Figure 3 - Views to the north east and to the Village Park demonstrating visual dominance of canopy tree backdrop

## 3.2 Protect key views to the Dandenong Ranges

Views analysis carried out in the *Background Report* investigated significant views from public spaces within the centre to the surrounding Dandenong Foothills 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 4.

Unlike the other view points within the Village, the two perspectives shown in the following diagram 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 4 – 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 across the centre will retain the centre's visual connection to the Dandenong Ranges, maintain the compact and intimate feel of the Village, and preserve the visual dominance of the surrounding Foothills tree canopy. Furthermore, increasing buildings to a two storey scale would better capture views, and hopefully visitors, from passing traffic.

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.

## 3.3 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 built form scale,
- the simplicity of built form,
- the focus of each precinct block 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 and other needs.

In order to preserve this ‘village’ atmosphere, the *Built Form Guidelines* seeks to encourage future development within Alchester Village to incorporate:

- providing visual consistency in facades.
- providing active surveillance and orienting development towards Alchester Crescent 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 (discussed further at Section 3.6).
- 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 Sections 3.6 and 3.7).

### 3.4 Increase visibility and presence to surrounding roads

View analysis in the *Background Report* found that 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 (see Figure 4).

The *Built Form Guidelines* seek to enhance Alchester Village’s street presence. Built form and signage in the centre needs to provide an iconic sense of arrival, provide elements to ‘mark’ the centre from surrounding roads, and activate blank building frontages.

A sense of arrival within the Village itself could be further enhanced by a higher built form to the Southern precinct, as well as a stronger canopy tree framing to the northern and southern ends of Alchester Crescent. These elements could provide an attractive backdrop and bookend to the street.

### 3.5 Refresh facades and support a higher quality, visually consistent built form

Community consultation and built form analysis of the centre revealed dissatisfaction with the appearance of Alchester Village – attributed to the lack of updates to building frontages since each precinct was established, and a lack of uniformity in building facades and awnings.

The *Built Form Guidelines* seek to encourage a higher quality of design within the public realm.

### 3.6 Retain and support the ‘every day’ service offering of the centre

The *Built Form Guidelines* seek to ensure and enhance the continuing commercial function of the centre by supporting adaptable internal spaces to developments, particularly at the ground and first floor level of fronting onto key pedestrian areas.

Analysis within the *Background Report* found that internal ceiling heights across the Village are at average 2.4 metres height, the minimum allowed under current building regulations.

The ability of internal spaces at ground and first floors, particularly those fronting onto key pedestrian areas, to be changed from residential to retail or commercial over time is important to ensure the continuing commercial role of the Village into the future. This is particularly important given that the 'everyday' service offering of Alchester Village, spanning services from a supermarket to pharmacy and butcher, represent a key drawcard for visitors to the centre.

Generous floor to ceiling heights can enable adaptability and flexibility of uses in buildings over time. Figure 5 demonstrates the principle of adaptive re-use in the example of an under-utilised level of car parking at the Queen Victoria Centre, Lonsdale Street Melbourne, which was able to be converted to high quality apartments due to the existing building fabric having appropriate floor to ceiling dimensions.<sup>1</sup>

'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. It is important to ensure that future development within Alchester Village 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.



**Figure 5 – Queen Victoria Centre, Melbourne – Conversion of car park level into residential**

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) should 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.

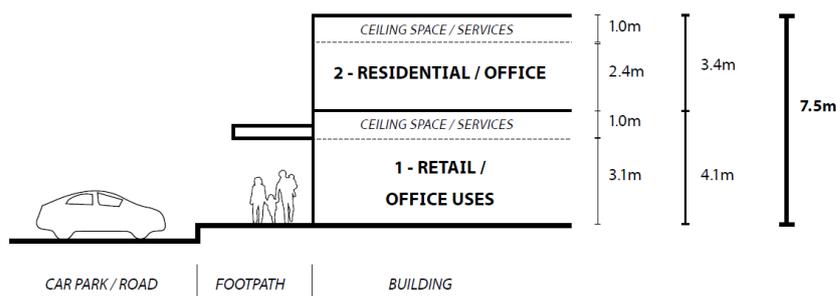
Figure 6 illustrates an indicative building design that could be achieved under the interim building height controls of 7.5 metres. The diagram shows that floor to ceiling heights for at the ground and upper levels are restrictive and will not allow for generous spaces commonly associated with retail/commercial uses.

In contrast, Figure 7 shows that provision of generous 3.6 metre internal heights at ground level (to allow for greater internal amenity, (as discussed in Section 3.7) and above standard

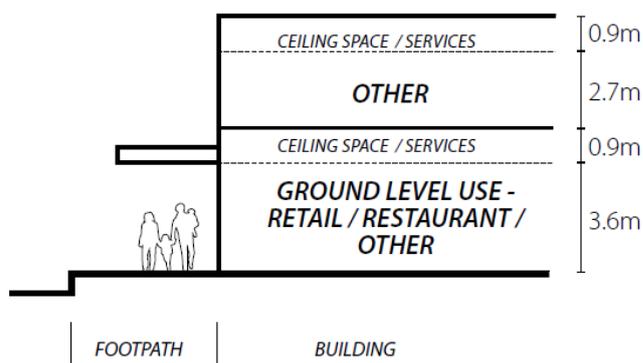
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<sup>1</sup> Source: Grocon, The Age

2.7 metre height at upper levels could allow for adaptation to commercial, retail or restaurant uses.



**Figure 6 – Existing interim 7.5 metre height control – Building outcomes**



**Figure 7 – Internal ceiling heights for different uses**

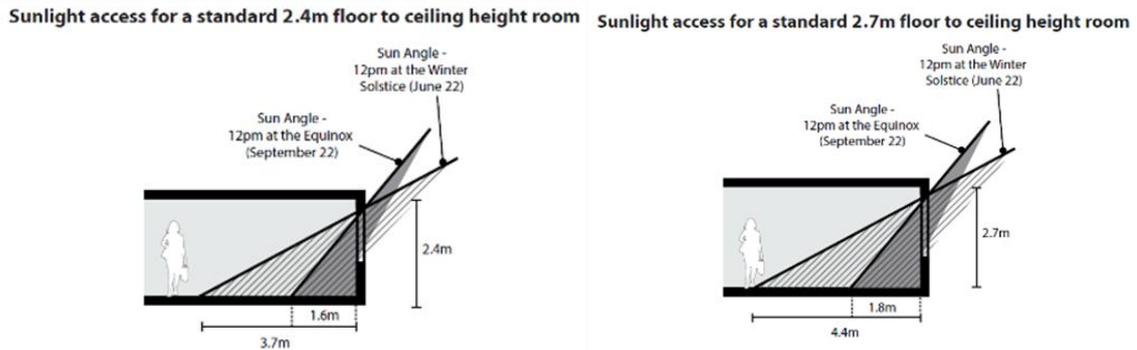
### 3.7 High amenity internal spaces

The *Built Form Guidelines* seek to enhance the overall design quality of development at Alchester Village. A key consideration in determining building heights is the level of amenity of internal spaces. As discussed in Section 3.6, current floor to ceiling heights within Alchester Village are between 2.4 to 2.7 metres high at ground level.

Providing more generous ceiling heights allows for:

- Adaptability between uses (as discussed at Section 3.6).
- 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 Alchester Village. Built form analysis and community engagement for the Village 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 8 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.



**Figure 6 – Sunlight access to 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 modelled at Section 5 in 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.

### 3.8 Make Alchester Village feel safer

The community consultation process for the *Built Form Guidelines* identified a perceived lack of safety when using the Village Park and when visiting Alchester Village at night.

In addition, a safety audit was completed at the Village in June 2014 on behalf of Knox City Council. The independent assessment looked at everything from lighting to plant heights and opportunities for better safety initiatives. The audit applies the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and outlines some of the ways these principles might be applied at Alchester Village. Consultation with Village traders was undertaken as part of this study.

While the audit has since improved elements such as graffiti management, including a graffiti cleanup exercise across the centre, CPTED principles still remain applicable to built form at Alchester Village. Development should address the following issues identified in the safety audit:

- Informal surveillance of pedestrian areas could be enhanced by using clear windows instead of blank facades or windows covered with advertising, and designing landscapes to allow unobstructed views in parking areas, windows and doorways.
- Windows of adjacent buildings should overlook routes to and from problem areas such as car parks and laneways.
- Community focal points should be established where they facilitate social interaction and therefore enhance information surveillance.
- Co-locate pedestrian, cycle and vehicle movements to encourage maximum surveillance of public areas.
- Increase legitimate uses of public spaces, such as outdoor dining.
- Encourage mixed use developments to facilitate day and night use of public spaces, taking into account potentially conflicting uses.
- Lighting needs to promote legitimate activity by users of public spaces after dark.
- Building entrances should be clearly defined, secure, well lit, face onto the street, and maximise opportunities for natural surveillance and sightlines.
- Avoid the use of loose or protruding materials and fixtures such as poor strength cladding or pipes.

- Loading and storage areas should be well lit, able to be locked after hours, and provided with clear sightlines from the building so that occupants can see outside before leaving the building.
- Some employee car spaces should be provided near the building entry for employees working after hours.
- Roller shutters to windows are discouraged as they create a “fortress like” appearance.
- Graffiti prevention – Graffiti-resistant paints and finishes, easily-replaceable panels, protective coatings, or carefully located climbing plants could be used where appropriate.
- Avoid small, confined spaces which are adjacent to a well-travelled route and present entrapment opportunities.

### Active Surveillance

To address perceptions of a lack of safety, greater active surveillance should be promoted at key pedestrian circulation areas, which includes shopping areas, pedestrian pathways onto Alchester Crescent, as well as the Village Park. The Figure 9 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 to street, in order to promote a sense of activity, surveillance and therefore safety within the public realm.

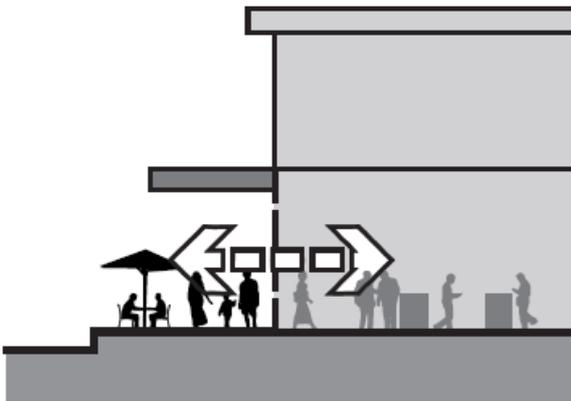


Figure 9 – Ground level pedestrian interfaces

## 3.9 Make Alchester Village a more comfortable place to visit

The *Built Form Guidelines* seek to enhance the pedestrian experience across the centre. The need for enhanced pedestrian comfort across the centre was identified through community engagement and analysis of the Village’s built form, with a greater degree of active surveillance required to Alchester Crescent and the Village Park, as well as continuous weather protection provided by way of verandahs.

### Weather protection

There is a lack of continuous weather protection along the length of the western block to encourage pedestrian movement. Consistent provision of verandahs and awnings provide valuable weather proofing that can enhance the useability of a centre.

Comparison with other town centres provides valuable precedent learning, as shown in Figure 10. Variation in the height and form of verandahs at the Western precinct of Alchester Village creates a disorganised appearance, whereas the visually consistent brick awning to the Eastern precinct was valued by the community for its uniformity. However, the Kalamunda precedent shows that too much consistency can lead to a bland, unactivated streetscape.

At Olinda, continuous but varied awnings 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.



Kalamunda, Darling Ranges, WA



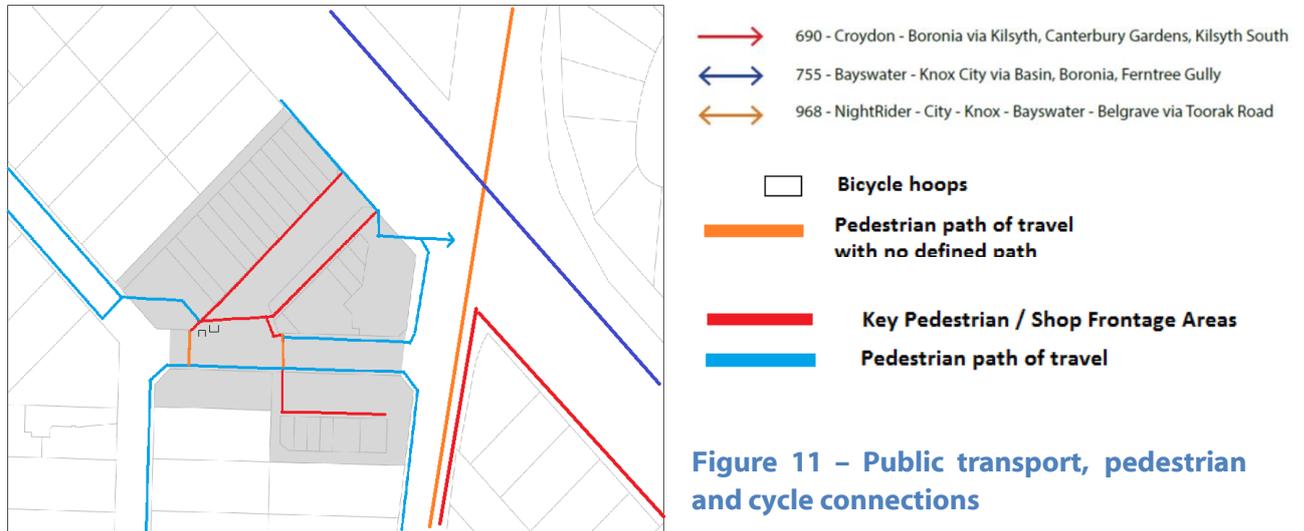
Figure 10 – Precedent learning – Awnings and verandahs

### 3.10 Make it easier to move across the centre

Visitors to the centre, especially the elderly, require improved ease of movement between the precincts - for example, a lack of safe crossing points across the private car park at the Southern precinct.

The location of Alchester Village at the crossroads of three bus services and along the Principal Bicycle Network (as shown on Figure 11) should be exploited, especially when viewed in the context of the centre's heavy reliance on visitors arriving by car.

Connection between the three separated precincts of Alchester Village could be strengthened. Mountain Highway acts as an obstacle to pedestrian connections to industrial and residential land to the north. Footpaths to the east, south and west provide a good level of pedestrian connections to residential areas. The Eastern and Western precincts currently provide continuous awnings for weather protection. The Southern precinct lacks defined pedestrian pathways from the core of Alchester Village.



### 3.11 Protect the amenity of immediate neighbours

The commercial areas of Alchester Village, including the rear laneway to the Western precinct, have immediate abuttal to residential properties. The *Built Form Guidelines* seek to manage potential impacts on residential amenity, such as noise and fumes from loading activities, hours of operation, and visual bulk and overlooking from development.

### 3.12 Respond to wider trends and strategies to increase housing diversity around 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 Alchester Village are preferred to remain low-scale neighbourhoods to best complement the significant biological and landscape values of the Dandenong Foothills.

The *Built Form Guidelines* seek to support some provision of housing diversity within the commercial areas of Alchester Village, but also aims to encourage a scale and form of development which retains key views to the Dandenong Ranges and the Foothills context.

# 4. Vision & Objectives

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

## 4.1 Built Form Vision

### *Community engagement*

- Preserve views to the Dandenong Ranges.
- Preserve the 'village' feel of the centre.
- Upgrade the appearance of the centre.
- Provide more and better public facilities.
- Make Alchester Village a safer place to visit.
- Preserve and enhance the convenience of visiting the centre.
- Preserve and enhance the 'everyday' service offering of the centre.

### *Planning policy framework*

- Support the Village as a gateway to the Dandenong Ranges.
- Support the local role of the centre.
- Protect the Dandenong Foothills setting and Ranges backdrop.
- Increase housing diversity and supply while protecting the Village's commercial role.
- Support quality urban design.
- Encourage sustainable transport.

### *Built form priorities*

- Protect key views to the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills landscape.
- Improve visibility of centre to surrounding roads.
- Support adaptable internal spaces.
- Support high amenity internal spaces.
- Support users' comfort and enjoyment of the public realm.
- Improve walkability of the centre and sustainable transport

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

### ***Vision***

*"For Alchester Village to strengthen its unique identity as a self contained, intimate village within the Dandenong Foothills and support development that reinforces the low scale, village feeling with views to the Dandenong Ranges.*

## 4.2 Built Form Objectives

To assist in achieving the vision for Alchester Village, 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 Alchester Village detailed in the *Background Report (Part 1)*:

Priorities	Built Form objectives
Maintain the connection to the highly vegetated Dandenong Foothills landscape	<b>Objective 1 – To maintain the visual dominance of vegetation to allow the centre to form part of the Dandenong Foothills landscape.</b>
Protect key views to the Dandenong Ranges	<b>Objective 2 – To protect and enhance key views to the Dandenong Ranges</b>
Retain the ‘village’ atmosphere Make Alchester Village feel safer.	<b>Objective 3 – To require development to contribute to a high quality, intimate and active public realm.</b>
Increase visibility and presence to surrounding roads Refresh facades and encourage a higher quality, visually consistent built form.	<b>Objective 4 – To support development that maximises opportunity for commercial activity.</b>
Retain and enhance the ‘every day’ service offering of the centre	<b>Objective 5 – To maintain and enhance the commercial role of Alchester Village into the future.</b>
Make Alchester Village a more comfortable place to visit.	<b>Objective 6 – To support development which is useable by people of all abilities.</b>
Make it easier to move across the centre.	<b>Objective 7 – To support safe and convenient pedestrian movement within and to the centre.</b>
Protect the amenity of immediate neighbours.	<b>Objective 8 – To avoid unreasonable detriment to the amenity of existing residential areas outside the centre.</b>
Respond to wider trends and strategies to increase housing diversity, particularly around existing activity centres.	<b>Objective 9 - Support housing diversity</b>

# 5. Built Form Guidelines

The following Built Form Guidelines have been prepared for Alchester Village to support development which achieves the design objectives detailed in Section 3. Buildings and works within Alchester Village should meet the design guidelines provided in this section.

## 5.1 Building Height

This element provides guidance on building setbacks and the external height of buildings.

These guidelines aim to support the objectives:

**Objective 1 – To maintain the visual dominance of vegetation to allow the centre to form part of the Dandenong Foothills landscape.**

**Objective 2 – To protect and enhance key views to the Dandenong Ranges**

**Objective 3 – To require development to contribute to a high quality, intimate and active public realm.**

**Objective 4 – To support development that maximises opportunity for commercial activity.**

### Building heights

- Buildings must not exceed 8.5 metres (2 storeys) in height above natural ground level.

Preferred building heights for Alchester Village are shown in Figure 12. Maintaining a maximum two storey scale enables retention of an intimate, self-contained experience within the centre, which contributes to the 'village' atmosphere valued by the community. Development at a two storey scale also enables buildings to sit below the height of surrounding canopy trees, allowing the Village to continue to be perceived as part of the Dandenong Foothills vegetated landscape.

Infill two storey development represents a low-impact change scenario for Alchester Village, given existing double storey built form to the Western and Eastern precincts. Built form above three storeys in scale would, as demonstrated by modelling carried out within the *Background Report*, detract from the visual dominance of the Dandenong Ranges and canopy tree backdrop which forms an integral part of the identity of Alchester Village as a gateway neighbourhood centre to the Dandenong Ranges.

Heights above two storeys across the centre must not be permitted given the loss of Foothills context, as well as the centre's immediate abuttal to residential dwellings which are subject to a 7.5 metre maximum height limit through Dandenong Foothills policy).

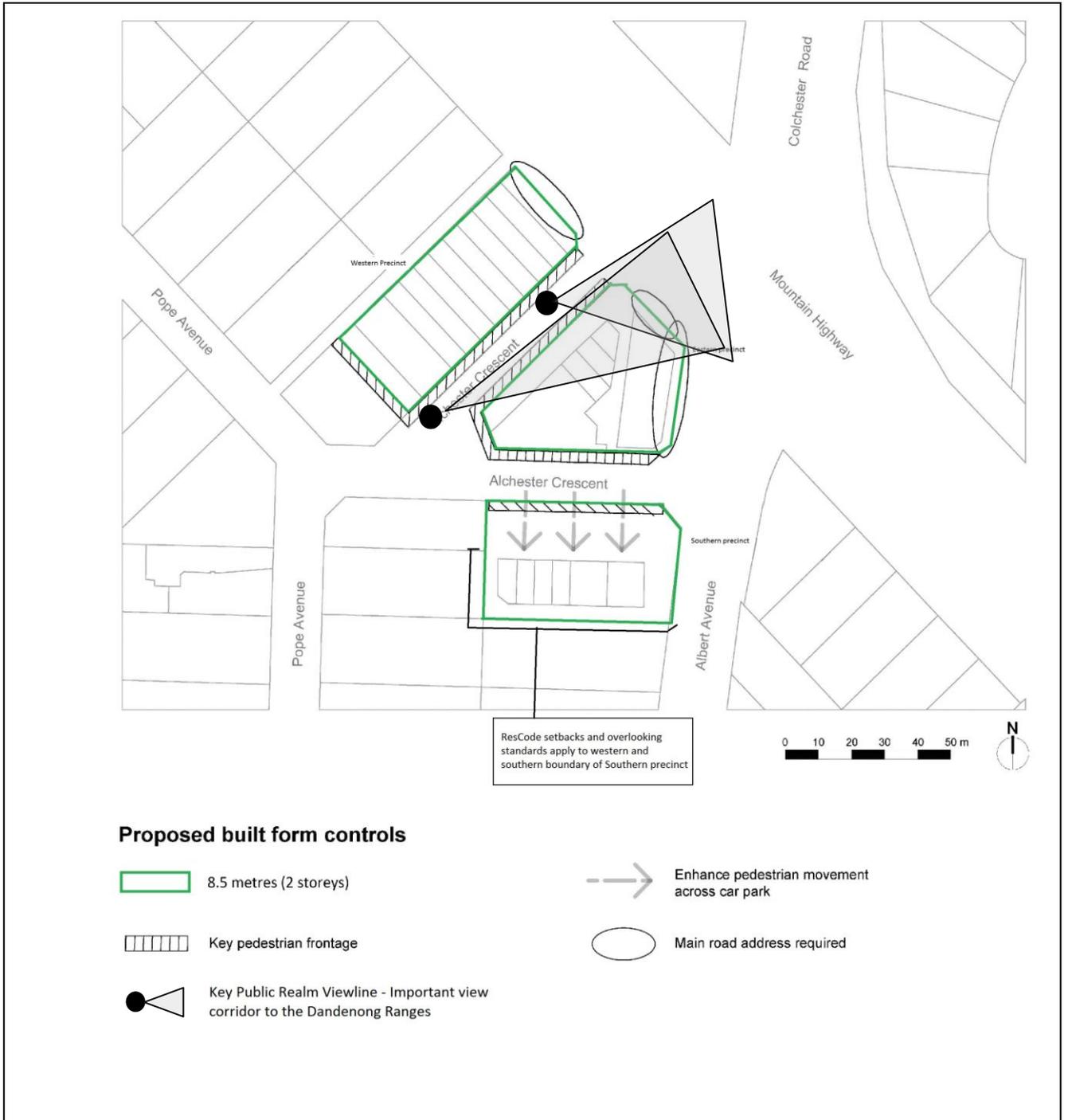


Figure 12 – Building heights, key pedestrian frontages and setbacks

## Western precinct

The Western precinct is currently characterised by a mix of single and double storey heights across the block. Permitting development of up to two storeys (with increased internal ceiling heights as discussed later in this section) represents a low impact change scenario.

The Western precinct is serviced by a rear laneway which enables staff parking, loading and waste storage to be located away from key pedestrian areas along Alchester Crescent, and also to provide a buffer and transition zone to manage amenity impacts to adjoining residential dwellings. The presence of the laneway enables contemplation of scenarios in which double storey buildings span the length of the block, with no vehicle access to disrupt pedestrian frontage areas to Alchester Crescent.

## Eastern precinct

The Eastern precinct is currently characterised by an approximate 4.7 to 5 metre parapet height to Alchester Crescent to the west, as well as a double storey 'false front' to the IGA supermarket which faces east onto Albert Avenue.

Views over the Eastern precinct towards the Dandenong Ranges to the north east / east provide glimpses of the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills canopy tree backdrop. Infill two storey development will intrude into these views; however, these views are not significant at ground level.

## Southern precinct

Double storey built form at the Southern precinct will help to frame the Village when viewed from road approaches. However, it should only be contemplated as long as appropriate setbacks are provided to the interface with residential dwellings.

## Roofs and architectural features

### Roofs and architectural features

- Building heights over the maximum heights stated may be permitted to allow for roof forms, architectural features or detailing for decorative purposes.

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, which is currently absent in the centre as flat roof forms dominate.

The Panel Report for Amendment C129 to implement the Ferntree Gully Village Structure Plan provides some guidance on the matter of roof forms. The Panel noted that the proposed 8 metre height limit for Ferntree Gully Village was problematic in that it did not allow sufficient scope for roof forms, which were encouraged as part of the Structure Plan. The Panel recommended that an exemption from the height limit for architectural features and detailing (including roof forms) be provided.

Roof forms, architectural features and detailing above the nominated 8.5 metre height as shown in Figure 12 must protect Key Public Realm Viewlines specified in that diagram, must be for decorative purposes, and must clearly contribute to the high standard of architectural quality of the development.

Functional features such as roof terraces, services, balustrades, services or lift shafts are not permitted above the maximum height.

## 5.2 Siting and Setbacks

These guidelines aim to support the objectives:

**Objective 1 – To maintain the visual dominance of vegetation to allow the centre to form part of the Dandenong Foothills landscape.**

**Objective 2 – To protect and enhance key views to the Dandenong Ranges**

**Objective 3 – To require development to contribute to a high quality, intimate and active public realm.**

**Objective 4 – To support development that maximises opportunity for commercial activity.**

**Objective 7 – To support safe and convenient pedestrian movement within and to the centre.**

**Objective 8 – To avoid unreasonable detriment to the amenity of existing residential areas outside the centre.**

### General siting guidelines

- Zero ground level setbacks to all buildings fronting onto Alchester Crescent.
- No new vehicle access points to Alchester Crescent. All vehicle, loading and service activities should be provided away from key pedestrian frontage areas shown in Figure 12.
- Development to provide a transition to adjoining residential areas. To achieve this, overlooking and side and rear setbacks standards provided within Clause 55.04 of the Knox Planning Scheme to be applied to the Southern precinct, which has immediate interfaces to existing residential areas.
- Continuous awnings and verandahs at a consistent height with adjoining verandahs should be provided along key pedestrian areas along Alchester Crescent.

Siting and built form orientation (shown in Figure 12), are strongly influenced by the community's desire to preserve the intimate, local feel of Alchester Village, to enhance commercial activity, and to improve pedestrians' safety and enjoyment of the centre.

A strong building edge to the street at ground level will support the presence of activity along streets in the Activity Centre. New vehicle access points should not be permitted over key pedestrian frontage areas as shown in Figure 13, in order to maintain and enhance the commercial activity and walkability of the centre.

Currently, the Western precinct is separated from residential dwellings to the east by the approximate 5 metre width of the rear laneway, followed by open parking/waste/loading areas of between 6-8 metres in width. Should future double storey development extend the length of the block, the width of the laneway and slope of the land away from residential dwellings would allow double storey built form to sit comfortably within the Foothills setting and avoid unreasonable detriment to adjoining dwellings, without requiring additional building setback from the rear laneway.

## 5.3 Dandenong Ranges and Foothills

These guidelines aim to support the objectives:

**Objective 1 – To maintain the visual dominance of vegetation to allow the centre to form part of the Dandenong Foothills landscape.**

**Objective 2 – To protect and enhance key views to the Dandenong Ranges**

### Dandenong Ranges and Foothills

- Buildings to provide pitched roof forms to provide a visual connection to the undulating ridgelines of the Dandenong Ranges and reflect its land form.
- Landscaping to respond to and enhance the character of the surrounding tree canopy.

The preferred building heights at Figure 12 and building setbacks at Figure 13 have been designed in order to maintain key views from within Alchester Village towards the Dandenong Ranges.

Pitched roof forms will reflect the undulating ridgeline of the Dandenong Ranges. At the Eastern precinct, pitched roof forms will help to draw the eye upwards to the ridgeline of the Dandenongs. Flat roofs should be avoided.

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 single and double storey heights and predominantly flat roof forms.

## 5.4 Public Realm

These guidelines aim to support the objectives:

**Objective 3 – To require development to contribute to a high quality, intimate and active public realm.**

**Objective 4 – To support development that maximises opportunity for commercial activity.**

**Objective 5 – To maintain and enhance the commercial role of Alchester Village into the future.**

**Objective 6 – To support development which is useable by people of all abilities.**

**Objective 7 – To support safe and convenient pedestrian movement within and to the centre.**

### Active surveillance

- Buildings to 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.
- Parking and vehicle entries not to present as a dominant element when viewed from the public realm. Appropriate and innovative screening and landscape planting should be used.
- Encourage upper level balconies or terraces with clear sightlines to the public realm.
- Ground levels of shop fronts to be provided as clear glazing with customer service areas facing the street. Upper levels should locate clear windows or balconies towards the street.

The aim of these guidelines is to support building frontages which provide a sense of address to Alchester Crescent and provide active, natural surveillance to key pedestrian frontage areas identified in Figure 12.

### Pedestrian experience

- Avoid blank walls and provide visual interest at street level.
- Articulate the form and façades of buildings through the use of different colours and materials, and through the composition of openings and setbacks.
- If on a corner site, emphasise the corner through facade articulation and roof form.
- Screen waste, storage, loading or service areas within view of the key pedestrian frontage area.
- Pedestrian access paths across car parking areas should be clearly marked and prioritised over vehicle movement.
- Pedestrian entries to buildings to:
  - Be clearly visible and easily identifiable from the street.
  - Be accessible for all abilities.
  - Ramps or stairs required to access a raised ground floor level must be provided within the development property boundary.

The aim of these guidelines is to promote an enjoyable and comfortable pedestrian experience, and support the experience of Alchester Village as an engaging, local meeting place.

### Avoiding visual bulk

- 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.

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.

### Alchester Village Park

- Development immediately adjoining the Alchester Village Park to:
  - Provide a high degree of active surveillance to the Village Park
  - Ground floors should locate active uses fronting onto the Village Park

The guidelines aim to improve the amenity of the Park and support its integration to the Village.

### Weather protection

- Buildings fronting onto key pedestrian frontage areas to provide continuous verandahs or awnings over footpaths, at a consistent height and design with adjoining premises.
- The underside of verandahs to be lightly-coloured.

The guidelines identify the primary retail areas where verandahs are required to provide shade for pedestrians and protection from the rain. This will create an 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 Village. Verandahs and awnings should be encouraged to be consistent with adjoining properties.

### Main road address

- Buildings fronting onto Mountain Highway as identified as 'Street Address required' in Figure 12 to:
  - Orientate the building and windows to face the main roads.
  - Incorporate signage into the design of the building.

The *Background Report* has identified that Alchester Village has poor visibility and presence when viewed from surrounding entry roads. Appropriate orientation (such as through window placement), massing and height will assist in 'marking' the Village from surrounding roads.

## 5.5 Building Design

These guidelines aim to support the objectives:

**Objective 3 – To require development to contribute to a high quality, intimate and active public realm.**

**Objective 4 – To support development that maximises opportunity for commercial activity.**

**Objective 5 – To maintain and enhance the commercial role of Alchester Village into the future.**

**Objective 7 – To support safe and convenient pedestrian movement within and to the centre.**

**Objective 9 - Support housing diversity**

### Internal ceiling heights

- Ground and first levels to be developed with a minimum 3.6 metres finished floor level (FFL) to finished ceiling level (FCL) at ground level, and minimum 2.7 metres at upper level.
- Additional ceiling height must not be used for additional storeys or mezzanine levels.
- Developments to create internal spaces which offer a high amenity and access to natural sunlight to residents or occupants.

### Internal amenity

- Developments to provide opportunities to capture and utilise northern sunlight at 'active' areas inside and outside of buildings, such as customer service, dining areas or outdoor uses.

Existing premises are characterised by low internal ceiling heights. New development should be encouraged to provide higher internal ceiling heights in order to improve internal amenity and solar access (as demonstrated by Figure 13). Given the cool winters of the region, maximising solar access is of particular importance for comfort of residents, customers and occupants.

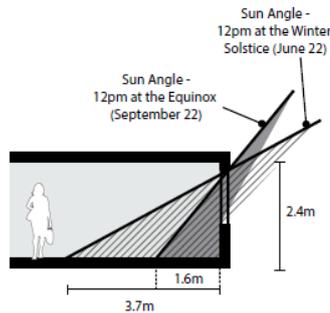
The proposed maximum building heights of 8.5 metres (two storeys) above natural ground level, is greater than the existing interim building height controls of 7.5 metres (two storeys) in DDO10. The proposed 8.5 metre height limit provides scope for increased floor to ceiling heights on both the ground 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 as well as allowing for an articulated roof form. Articulated roof forms and architectural features are not included in the 8.5 metres.

Increased floor to ceiling dimensions support the following:

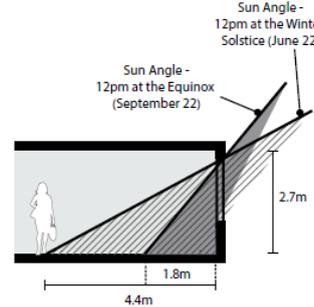
- Allow for adaptable designs and enable buildings to accommodate a range of uses over time, ensuring that the centre is capable of retaining its core commercial function;
- Allow a greater level of amenity for occupants by allowing more light to enter the building, improved natural ventilation and reduced 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.

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



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



### Commercial function of Alchester Village

- Ground levels of premises defined as key pedestrian frontages as defined in Figure 13 not to be used as residential dwellings, other than provision of residential entries or foyers of limited width.
- Distinguish residential entries from retail and commercial entries.

These guidelines aim to support the continuing commercial function of Alchester Village by minimising the loss of key commercial frontages for residential purposes.

### Housing

- Housing of types and sizes which vary from the existing, dominant housing types in the surrounding area are encouraged at first floor level.

Infill development at the first floor level has the potential to provide for housing diversity within the area.

### Architectural standard and design

- Avoid bulky building forms, blank façades and flat roofs.
- Roof plant and services to be screened and integrated into the overall design of the building.
- Avoid using large expanses of single materials, such as concrete block work and render.
- Development to demonstrate that CPTED principles have been adopted at the side and rear of sites, particularly at the rear laneway to the Western precinct.
- New buildings are to incorporate best practice Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principle, such as designing for passive solar design, incorporation of green walls and roofs where possible and feasible, and the use of sustainable materials

## 5.6 Colours and Materials

These guidelines aim to support the objectives:

**Objective 1 – To maintain the visual dominance of vegetation to allow the centre to form part of the Dandenong Foothills landscape.**

**Objective 2 – To protect and enhance key views to the Dandenong Ranges**

### Colours and Materials

- External building walls to utilise muted tones, finishes and colours that contribute to the landscape setting of the Foothills, and to avoid excessive use of colours that contrast strongly with the dominant colours of the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills.
- Roofs to be coloured in dark, muted tones and be of low reflectivity.
- External walls which may be vulnerable to graffiti to incorporate vertical landscaping or other integrated deterrent measures.

These guidelines aim to maintain the Foothills character of Alchester Village.

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.

## 5.7 Car parking

These guidelines aim to support the objectives:

**Objective 3 – To require development to contribute to a high quality, intimate and active public realm.**

**Objective 4 – To support development that maximises opportunity for commercial activity.**

**Objective 5 – To maintain and enhance the commercial role of Alchester Village into the future.**

### Car Parking

- No net loss of car parking to occur.
- Car parking or vehicle access not to be provided over footpaths.
- Western and Eastern precincts - No new vehicle access points to be provided to Alchester Crescent.
- Car parking not to dominate key pedestrian frontages at Figure 12.

The guidelines seek to retain sufficient car parking provision for Alchester Village in order to maintain the attractiveness of the centre as a retail destination. Community engagement revealed that the convenience of accessing shops was a key drawcard for the centre and any net loss of parking, whether at Council or private communal car parks, would reduce the convenience of visiting the centre.

## 5.8 Landscaping

These guidelines aim to support the objectives:

**Objective 1 – To maintain the visual dominance of vegetation to allow the centre to form part of the Dandenong Foothills landscape.**

**Objective 2 – To protect and enhance key views to the Dandenong Ranges**

**Objective 3 – To require development to contribute to a high quality, intimate and active public realm.**

### Landscaping

- Development to be encouraged to use landscaping as a frame for buildings.
- Landscaping to be well integrated with the design of the development.
- Landscaping to complement the vegetation of the adjoining public realm and Foothills landscape.
- Development to ensure retention of significant vegetation on or around the property.

The Guidelines aim to facilitate development that is designed to retain existing trees where possible. This will strengthen the valued landscape setting in the Activity Centre, which is characterised as:

- A mixture of native and exotic canopy vegetation, predominantly located within public spaces; and
- Vegetation frames the centre, particularly at views through Alchester Crescent to the South, and eastwards to the Dandenong Ranges as a backdrop to the Eastern precinct.

## 5.9 Advertising signs

These guidelines aim to support the objectives:

**Objective 1 – To maintain the visual dominance of vegetation to allow the centre to form part of the Dandenong Foothills landscape.**

**Objective 2 – To protect and enhance key views to the Dandenong Ranges**

**Objective 3 – To require development to contribute to a high quality, intimate and active public realm.**

**Objective 4 – To support development that maximises opportunity for commercial activity.**

## Advertising Signs

Advertising signs to:

- Be of a scale, design and location that complement the building, streetscape setting, and the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills landscape setting.
- Be kept to a minimum by consolidating information.
- Be designed to avoid visual clutter and not incorporate animation, flashing, bright or reflective surfaces.
- 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.

# 6. Implementation

Statutory implementation of the *Built Form Guidelines* and *Background Paper* will be achieved by preparing Planning Scheme Amendment C137. 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 Alchester Village NAC.
Amend Clause 21.07 (Economic Development).	Amend to provide direction on economic development for Alchester Village NAC and reference the <i>Built Form Guidelines</i> for the centre.
Amend Clause 21.09 (Reference Documents)	Amend to include <i>Alchester Village 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 Alchester Village NAC. All other aspects of the policy will continue to apply.
Amend Clause 22.12 (Residential Land Use and Development within the Commercial 1 Zone)	Amend to include direction on housing for Alchester Village NAC and reference the <i>Built Form Guidelines</i> for the centre.
Amend the zoning of the laneway at the rear of the Western precinct (2-26 Alchester Crescent) from Neighbourhood Residential 1 Zone to Commercial 1 Zone.	The Council-owned laneway to the rear of the Western precinct forms an integral part of the NAC as it provides vehicle and loading access to the Western precinct and acts as a buffer to neighbouring residential properties. As such, the current residential zoning along western half of the laneway should be altered to a Commercial 1 zoning.
Apply the Design and Development Overlay Schedule 11 (DDO11) to the centre.	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 Alchester Village (DDO11). This will support development consistent with the outcomes sought in the <i>Built Form Guidelines</i> 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 centre 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).