Appendix C:
Building Heights & Setbacks
Analysis
Building Heights

Strategic Context
A range of building height controls apply to the study area, through zone or overlay controls. In some areas, overlay controls also trigger a permit above a specified height. The existing controls are detailed in Chapter 2, Planning Context.

In addition, appropriate height controls for different parts of the study area have recently been considered through several strategic processes:
- DDO3 Review, exhibition of Amendment C155 to implement the study findings, and the report of the Planning Panel appointed to hear submissions to the Amendment
- Introduction of the new format residential zones through Amendment C187
- Forrest Hill Structure Plan and the introduction of DDO8 through Amendment C147.

In determining appropriate heights for the study area, the direction and outcomes of these strategic processes has been considered.

Analysis & Recommendations
Recommended building heights for the study area are shown on the map opposite and discussed on the following page.

Analysis and recommendations have been provided for the existing DDO3 area, west of Grange Road, and the area from Grange Road to the municipal boundary.

DDO Control Boundary
It is recommended that the existing DDO3 be extended to include all land with a frontage to the river. The extent of the existing DDO3 and proposed revised extent of the control are shown on the map opposite.

West of Grange Road, the recommended control boundary reflects the outcomes of the DDO3 Review, C155 Panel and new format residential zones application.

East of Grange Road, the recommended control boundary applies to land where built form could be potentially visible from the opposite bank of the river. This includes one or two properties back from the edge of the river. It also reflects, in part, the boundary of the existing SLO1. It excludes land used for the railway line and Heyington station.

Proposed Height Controls

Legend
- Municipal Boundary
- Cadastical Boundary
- Railway Line
- 6m Maximum Height
- 9m Maximum Height
- 12m Maximum Height
- Existing DDO8 Discretionary 38m
Punt Road to Grange Road

The DDO3 Review (2012) and subsequent updates, including a detailed visual assessment through 3D modeling, have analysed preferred building heights in this part of the study area. As previously noted, the Panel appointed to hear submissions to Amendment C155 was generally supportive of the strategic basis of the proposed heights, with a few minor adjustments.

Residentially Zoned Land

The introduction of the new format residential zones through Amendment C187 in 2015 has seen the application of mandatory maximum height limits for residentially zoned land in the study area, ranging from 9 metres to 12 metres. These new height limits reflect the recommendations of the DDO3 Review, with several modifications to note:

- Residential zone heights reflect the extended boundary of DDO3, as recommended by the DDO3 Review report and supported by the C155 Panel
- Minor boundary re-alignment between DDO3-1 and DDO3-4, relating to the site at 61 Kensington Road, South Yarra, reflects recommendations of the C155 Panel
- Mandatory controls applied to all height areas, recommended by the DDO3 Review, but not supported by C155 Panel, which recommended discretionary heights for the two areas between River Street and Como Park (DDO3-1 and DDO3-4).

There is a sound strategic basis to support the continuation of the height controls introduced through Amendment C187 in the future revision of DDO3.

Mixed Use Zoned Land

The mixed use zoned site at the southwest corner of Chapel Street and Alexandra Avenue is included within the Forrest Hill Precinct, with built form controls applying to this site through DDOB. This control applies a discretionary height limit for the Melbourne High School site and all public spaces within the study area. The C155 Panel supported the strategic basis for this recommendation and it is proposed that this be included in the future revision of DDO3.

Melbourne High School & Public Open Spaces

The DDO3 Review proposed a 6m discretionary height limit for the Melbourne High School site and all public spaces within the study area. The C155 Panel supported the strategic basis for this recommendation and it is proposed that this be included in the future revision of DDO3.

Grange Road to Municipal Boundary

Amendment C187 applied a mandatory 12 metre height limit to sites within the eastern part of the study area, through the schedules of the General Residential Zone. GRZ8 and GRZ11. This height limit is applied to the Garden River and Garden Estate Neighbourhood Character precincts, which are characterised by large dwellings or apartment buildings (up to 2-3 storeys, some with high pitched roofs), often set in spacious grounds and with a high level of established vegetation.

This 12 metre height limit relates to how buildings are viewed from the street. For sites adjoining the river, the view of the building from the opposite bank or from the river itself must be taken into consideration. Due to the steep topography of the riverbank, when the building footprint steps down the sloping land to the water, the apparent building height as viewed from the opposite bank is larger than the height taken at the street frontage. It is therefore recommended that a maximum height limit of 9 metres apply to this area, taken from natural ground level at any point across the site. A 9 metre height limit:

- Reflects the average height of existing buildings from the street frontage
- Would limit the appearance of building scale/mass as seen from the opposite bank
- Allows for a 3 storey building form with flat roof or a 2 storey building form with pitched roof

This rationale is illustrated in the cross-section opposite. The recommended building height of 9 metres would assist in achieving the desired outcomes for this area, in conjunction with other design requirements:

- Mandatory building setbacks, recommended to be implemented through a revised DDO
- Side setback requirements, applied through the GRZ schedules which can be reinforced through the DDO
- Site coverage requirements, which are also applied through the GRZ schedules
- Requirement for appropriate landscaping within the river setback, which can be assessed through the SLO

Measuring Building Height

In all instances, aside from the area contained within GRZ4, building height is measured from natural ground level at any point across the site. This is the most commonly used measure of height, an accepted industry standard and is used by the Victoria Planning Provisions as a standard rule.

Building height within GRZ4 is measured from the property frontage, allowing buildings on higher ground on sites to the rear to maintain views to the river. It also allows a stepping of built from the 32 metre GRZ4 area up to the 9 metre height area of GRZ5 directly behind. This height measurement control was introduced through Amendment C187.

This building has a height of 2 storeys at the street frontage, which translates to an apparent building mass of 4-5 storeys over the sloping topography of the riverbank.

![Indicative cross-section through St Georges Road](Image)
Prominent building on site without vegetation.

Yarra River, as viewed from Mac Robertson Bridge.

Steep topography of the Yarra River.

St Kevin’s College building directly abutting river’s edge.

**Grange Road to Municipal Boundary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Matters for Consideration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing landscape character</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Character Type</strong></td>
<td>Leafy Suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural landscape character</strong></td>
<td>In this part of the study area the topography of the river banks rises up steeply to an elevated, undulating landscape in the wider environment. The river banks on the southern side of the river are mostly well vegetated and support a strong tree canopy (up to approximately 14m in height), with a mixed scale of residential development beyond. While some buildings are located in close proximity to the river’s edge, the majority of residential development is well screened from views from the opposite bank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pattern of viewing</strong></td>
<td>Whilst this cluster of development is not publicly accessible on the southern bank of the river, the landscape of this area can be observed from a variety of angles on the northern bank of the river. This area can be viewed principally from the Main Yarra Trail, the Yarra Boulevard, the Monash Freeway, the Heyington railway bridge and path, as well as from the river itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction of built form &amp; landscape</strong></td>
<td>Buildings are sited at mixed setbacks, reflecting the flood prone nature of the land. Most buildings are at or beyond a setback of 30 metres. However, there are examples of development set close to the river, within a distance of approximately 15-10 metres. There are various examples of hard landscaping which dominates the landscape, including tennis courts, swimming pools and terracing, all of which have resulted in substantial modification to the river’s natural topography. There is a mix of building types in this area: low scale structures that are screened amongst heavy vegetation; large scale structures (including a heritage listed building) sited atop the crestline which are visible yet well integrated with the tree canopy; and more recent development that steps down the hillside to the river and has a high site coverage, resulting in highly prominent built form that dominates the landscape. The St Kevin’s College buildings are anomalous to this landscape, presenting a 5-6 storey form directly to the river’s edge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future landscape directions</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic context</strong></td>
<td>The General Residential Zone (GRZ8 &amp; GRZ11) applies to this area, supporting residential development with a mandatory maximum building height of 12 metres (or 13 metres on a sloping site). The St Kevins campus is included in the Special Use Zone (SUZ1) for the purpose of education. The Land Subject to Inundation Overlay is applied along the edge of the Yarra River, to a depth of approximately 10-70 metres from the setback reference line, which limits development opportunities due to flooding issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desired outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Visibility of buildings from the river, adjoining parkland and the opposite bank is minimised. Strong landscaped edge to river to screen views to buildings is maintained. Further encroachment of built form into the river corridor is avoided. Tree canopy is retained and enhanced as the dominant visual element in the landscape. Further disturbance of riverbank topography is minimised.</td>
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### Criteria: Recommended minimum building setbacks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Criterion</strong></th>
<th><strong>Recommendation</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>30m setback from closest property boundary to river:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• is equivalent to the average setback of existing buildings and avoids further encroachment of development into river corridor</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• achieves the maximum setback possible in view of site layout and developability</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sites building envelope so that it is away from the immediate river corridor and will be mostly concealed from river by topography and vegetation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• allows substantial space for strong vegetation buffer to river</td>
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### Criteria: Recommended maximum building height

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Criterion</strong></th>
<th><strong>Recommendation</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A mandatory maximum height limit of 9m is recommended. This:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reflects the average height of existing buildings from the street frontage</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Would limit the appearance of building scale/mass as seen from the opposite bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Allows for a 3 storey building form with flat roof or a 2 storey building form with pitched roof</td>
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### Criteria: Recommended control boundary for extended DDO3

<table>
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<th><strong>Recommendation</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DDO is recommended to be applied to properties abutting the river’s edge, or within close proximity to river, in order to implement mandatory height and setback controls.</td>
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