

Appendix D:
Strategic Site Review

Commercial 1 Zone: Heidelberg Road, Fairfield

214-276 Heidelberg Road, Fairfield

This area is a small pocket of land included within the Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z). It comprises commercial properties, including the Porta Mouldings factory, as well as a residential apartment block which have a frontage to Heidelberg Road. The area is surrounded by the Yarra Bend Park.

Together with the adjoining parkland, this small area of C1Z is currently included in the Parkland character type (Area A - Yarra Bend Park) under the 2015 Strategy, which is defined by native vegetation along the river banks, naturalistic river edges and a lack of built form. The character type includes locations where the river bank adjoins areas of parkland, golf courses and landscaped grounds. The 2015 Strategy recommended a mandatory height limit of 6m for this area.

The entire C1Z area is currently included in the interim DDO1, with a mandatory maximum height limit of 6m. The area is not included within the interim ESO1.

Other controls which apply to the area:

- Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO)
- Heritage Overlay (HO421) applies to part of the Porta Mouldings site.

Heritage

HO421 applies to the 'Porta Factory' at 224 Heidelberg Road, Fairfield, which is in the middle of the site with a frontage to Heidelberg Road. In the Yarra Planning Scheme, external paint controls apply within the HO. The site is located within close proximity to the Fairfield Boathouse and Fairfield Cricket Club and grounds, which are adjacent to the Main Yarra River Trail. Yarra Bend Road forms the eastern boundary of the site.

According to the statement of heritage significance for the site, the Porta Factory timber mill and timber components manufacturing buildings were constructed in the 1920s. The factory is locally significant both architecturally and culturally, as a demonstration of industrial activities adjacent to the Yarra River and in Fairfield at the time of its construction. The campus of buildings includes a chimney stack, which is a highly visible element of the development when viewed from Heidelberg Road and the surrounding road network; it is also visible from the Yarra River corridor.

Municipal Strategic Statement

In Clause 21.03 (Municipal Vision) the Porta Mouldings site is identified as a strategic redevelopment site.

The following key points apply to the Porta Mouldings land and its redevelopment as a strategic site in the future:

Clause 21.05-2 (Built Form - Urban Design)

- Development on strategic redevelopment sites or within activity centres should generally be no more than 5-6 storeys unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal can achieve specific benefits such as:
 - Significant upper level setbacks
 - Architectural design excellence
 - Best practice environmental sustainability objectives in design and construction
 - High quality restoration and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings
 - Positive contribution to the enhancement of the public domain
 - Provision of affordable housing.
- Require development of Strategic Redevelopment Sites to take into account the opportunities for development on adjoining land.

Clause 21.08-6 (Fairfield-Alphington Neighbourhood Strategy)

- Encourages the redevelopment of the strategic re-development sites in a way that contributes positively to the urban fabric and public domain of Yarra, and where subject to the Heritage Overlay, protects the heritage of the site and of the area (Clause 21.08-6 Fairfield-Alphington Neighbourhood Strategy).

Business & Industrial Land Strategy

The BILS concluded that the current zoning of the site (which at that time was the Business 5 Zone) was appropriate for future land use expectations. This zone encouraged the development of offices or multi-dwelling units with common access from the street.

Implications for this Project

Given the site's potential for redevelopment and its prominent location on Heidelberg Road, this site has been analysed to determine:

- Whether this site should be included within the DDO extent (i.e. whether it is appropriate considered as a part of the river's immediate experience corridor).
- If considered integral to the river corridor, determine appropriate built form recommendations taking into consideration the site's Strategic Development designation in the Yarra Planning Scheme and impacts on the Yarra River corridor, adjoining parkland and the Merri Creek parklands.

The Site and the Yarra River Corridor Experience

The C1Z area comprises a mix of commercial buildings of 1-2 storeys and a recent apartment building of 4 storeys.

The Porta Factory site is developed intensively with a campus of industrial buildings, including 'saw-tooth' one storey warehouse buildings. The heritage-listed chimney is located centrally within the site, and is screened from view in some locations when seen from Heidelberg Road on the eastern approach, as a result of higher scale built form on adjoining sites (e.g. 262-268 Heidelberg Road).

The most prominent location from which to view the area from the Yarra River corridor is at the junction of the Main Yarra trail towards the Fairfield Boathouse. Development is visible through vegetation from the footbridge which crosses the River opposite the Boathouse (the pipeline bridge). In this well-vegetated location there is a high provision of trees, resulting in a dense canopy that emphasises the parkland character when in the corridor itself. From the footbridge, a key view point, a higher vantage point is afforded, showing views to the flat parklands and development immediately adjacent to the area. This provides an insight into the potential visibility for higher scale development if the area is more densely developed in future.

The entire C1Z area, including the Porta Factory site, is strategically located for redevelopment. New development may have impact on the surrounding Parkland character type and the broader Yarra River environs and should be carefully managed.

Recommendations

In view of this analysis, it is recommended that the C1Z area be removed from the Parkland character type and considered as an Ex-Industrial character type. It is also recommended that the DDO1 continue to be applied to the area in the following manner:

- Discretionary height controls to apply, to enable flexibility for future development.
- Proposed scale and design of future built form to be tested against the State Policy and DDO1 objectives with regard to impact upon the landscape character of the Parkland character type and the broader the Yarra River corridor landscape setting.
- Use of the DDO to encourage high quality built form as the area is redeveloped, including separation between higher elements of built form to avoid the appearance of a solid building mass when viewed from the parkland or river.
- Consider preparation of a masterplan for the Porta Mouldings site to address detailed design issues, including protection and integration of heritage fabric.



View of the area from the Main River Trail



View of the Porta Factory tower in height in the distance in comparison to the cricket ground lighting



View to Porta buildings from Yarra Bend Road



As above



View to Fairfield Boathouse and illustration of Parkland character type



View towards parklands and the C1Z area from Yarra Bend Road



View of the area over the Fairfield Cricket Ground from the Main River Trail



As above



View of Heidelberg Road frontage

