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The Ballarat Station Precinct plays a pivotal role as a gateway for public transport in Ballarat, significantly contributing to connectivity within and to/from Ballarat. The station is a CBD landmark and one of the grandest Victorian era station buildings in the State.

Revitalisation of the Ballarat Station Precinct through the Ballarat Station Precinct Master Plan sought to improve the land use and transport outcomes in the precinct to stimulate the Ballarat CBD economy and provide community benefits.

Future investment in the precinct is vital to support broader Government objectives within Plan Melbourne and the Central Highlands Regional Plan by strengthening the economic role of Ballarat as a regional city in support of the Government’s ‘State of Cities’ plan.

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The project objectives for the Ballarat Station Precinct Master Plan are as follows:

- To promote exemplary urban design, and benchmark station renewal.
- To promote appropriate integration of the Precinct within the Ballarat CBD.
- To consider and integrate opportunities that will stimulate urban renewal, including encouraging private sector investment within the Precinct.
- To respond to and be integrated within the urban form, function and fabric of the surrounding Ballarat CBD.
- To improve the Precinct’s amenity, and facilitate the creation of a place that is friendly and vibrant, socially and commercially successful and pedestrian focussed.
- To acknowledge and protect the Precinct’s current and future transport strategic and operational importance, and where possible improve transport functions.
- To create a contemporary symbol of a vibrant city, yet be respectful of, and celebrate and protect Ballarat’s heritage and culturally significant elements.
- To contribute to civic identity and promote Ballarat as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest.
- To be consistent with planning and heritage provisions and the City of Ballarat’s strategies.
- To create an appropriate gateway to Ballarat that enhances travellers’ arrival, departure, interchange and visiting experiences.
- To ensure a station and transport interchange that is:
  - functional and experiential, offering a variety of experiences through good functionality.
  - elegant, providing a positive built form contribution.
  - durable, can withstand a high volume of use.
  - safe and legible: is easily and safely navigated with intuitive way finding through good visual links.
  - integrated, making appropriate formal and spatial linkages to be physically, visually and functionally integrated within the broader precinct.
  - accessible: is accessible for all.
  - environmentally responsible: considers sustainable design principles and practices.
  - influential: in people’s travel decisions and promotes increased use of public and sustainable transport.
  - able to meet users’ needs, and, as far as practicable, expectations.

Delivery of the Master Plan is broken into two distinct stages within the Master Plan:

- Stage 01: Short-term (2014-2023)
- Stage 02: Medium and long-term opportunities (2024+)

It was recommended that Stage 01 of the Master Plan be implemented across two packages:

- Package A: consisting of improvements to the station, station forecourts and the transport and movement network; and
- Package B: consisting of the refurbishment and re-use of the heritage Goods Shed (and associated private development opportunities).

This schematic design work falls under Package B of Stage 01 of the Master Plan.
Existing Master Plan (April 2014)

Figure 01: Ballarat Station Precinct Master Plan (April 2014)
Urban Design Principles

01. Structure and Order
The layout supports a simple and clear overall site layout, defined by movement routes running perpendicular to the Goods Shed. It also allows the siting and position of the Goods Shed to inform the wider site configuration, reinforcing its importance/prevalence in this part of the Station Precinct. The expansive but generally linear surface car parking is divided into several generally equal ‘squares’ of car parking space, to reduce the visual extent of tarmac surface. The layout and alignment of pedestrian paths provides a ‘grid’ over the irregular-shaped precinct, with clear linkages to important destinations (North Station building, Lydiard Street entrance, level crossing etc.).

02. Legibility
The straight road alignment allows vehicles (and pedestrians) entering the precinct from Nolan Street to gain extended views to the North Station Building and across the Precinct. This supports urban legibility and wayfinding outcomes, allowing visitors to orient themselves more easily and effectively.

03. Pedestrian Experience and Connectivity
The main pedestrian ‘spine’ linking Nolan Street to the North Station Building is adjacent to the east wall of the Goods Shed. This allows pedestrians to walk alongside the heritage building, engage with new openings, and enter the Goods Shed building directly from the pedestrian spine. The main entry from Nolan Street is also further removed from likely back-of-house areas on the north side of the proposed hotel and Goods Shed.

04. Accessibility
The alignment of the internal road, coupled with the main pedestrian spine, can be graded up at approximately 1:20 (for DDA compliance) from the entry point at Nolan Street, to meet the existing at-grade level near the proposed internal intersection and access road to car parking areas.

05. Efficiency
The road layout results in less road space and fewer corners, and supports a more efficient car parking arrangement. Travel distances for vehicles within the precinct are shorter and less circuitous. Pedestrians also benefit from the straight routes through the site.

06. Views and Visibility
The alignment of the main pedestrian spine from Nolan Street, the pedestrian path linking through the hotel restaurant link, and other landscaping lines through the car park, direct views towards the Goods Shed and Station buildings, especially from Nolan Street and the car park areas. This reinforces the primacy of the Station buildings, as opposed to landscaping along Nolan Street or following circuitous internal road alignments.

Landscape Design Principles

07. Flatness
The ‘flatness’ of the station precinct is an important characteristic of the broader site. It allows clear views throughout the precinct and in particular means that the facades of the North Station Building, Goods Shed & Carrier’s Office all have a clear and unencumbered address to what will become the forecourt/station square. We feel this is an important characteristic that should be maintained.

08. Former Uses
There is the potential to interpret the former uses of the Goods Shed as a point of exchange and interchange between rail and horse & carriage, in the design of the forecourt/station square. We have approached this by creating a series of paths that respond to the doorways and allude to the movement of carriages through the precinct. We recognise that the former use might be interpreted in other ways, but we recommend that the design of the ground-plane consider and interpret the former uses. This should also extend to revealing the raised plinth/platform edge along the Goods Shed, to make legible its former use for unloading/loading goods.

09. Materials
The working/industrial nature of the site is another important attribute that we believe should be maintained. We suggest that materials used in the forecourt/station square are robust and maintain the heritage character of the precinct. We also note that potential exists to retain/reveal/adaptively reuse some of the remaining fragments of the precinct such as the rails, ballast, bluestone dimension blocks/cobbles and gantry structures.

10. Vegetation
Further to the issue of ‘flatness’ discussed in 07, we believe that the forecourt should be generally open and free of trees. However, we do encourage the creation of strong rows of trees throughout the car parking areas that respond to the Goods Shed doorway locations. We have nominated trees that have a narrow, columnar form to maintain clear views through the site and to the building’s facade. All vegetation must, of course, be selected for its appropriateness to the Ballarat climate, being frost hardy and drought tolerant.
Precinct Conceptual Plan

Figure 02: Goods Shed Development Precinct Concept Plan
Precinct Plan Overview

The design approach in this review of the Master Plan sought to respond to and enhance the Goods Shed Development Precinct in alignment with the technical and economic inputs and advice received for the site as part of this project phase. The following design alterations have been analysed, discussed and incorporated:

Internal Road Realignment
The realignment of the internal road was the key design move and reordered the structure of the Precinct, including the pedestrian spine which was moved to align with the edge of the Goods Shed. This realignment through the site also provides a direct route from Lydiard Street to a sloping Nolan Street. This is achieved by grading the internal road appropriately.

Pedestrian Movement
The pedestrian spine now follows the alignment of the internal road, and is replicated on alignment with the hotel development parcel, to allow for direct pedestrian access through to the commuter car park, and provide stronger legibility for pedestrians through the Precinct.

Public Plaza
The public plaza envisaged to the south of the Goods Shed was further investigated by SJB Urban with landscape inputs from Hassell, and builds upon the strong north-south pedestrian axes through the site via the Goods Shed’s eastern and western walls. Please refer to Hassell’s landscape report for further detail of this space.

Development Parcels
The development parcels in the Master Plan along Lydiard Street, which envisaged a hotel, have been relocated slightly south down Lydiard Street in front of, but in alignment with, the Goods Shed (as advised from the consultant team). Constructed to the north of this development will be a mixture of at-grade and structured parking to service the hotel (or commercial use) and commuters.

Further design testing also takes advantage of the topography of the site in the design of the hotel and structured car parking on the site’s western boundary. The hotel reception is at ground level on a sloping Lydiard Street, which is midway between ground level at the northern and southern ends of the site. The structured car park is accessed at ground level at the north end of Lydiard Street. By employing a sloped ramp carpark design, it is possible ensure the carpark structure does not rise above the sloping Lydiard Street. The concept for the structured carpark is shown in Figure 05. Scaled Sections are illustrated on the following pages. This design provides access to the hotel’s lobby level for drop off and pick-up, as well as access to the surface carpark to the north of the Goods Shed.

Commuter Parking
The parking configurations to the north and the east of the Goods Shed have been designed in order to allow for maximum efficiency and ease of movement for pedestrians. The numbers allocated meet the requirements as outlined / stipulated by Public Transport Victoria (PTV).
Figure 06: Goods Shed Development Precinct Plan
Part C

Sectional Studies

Section A

Section B

Original contour

- Ground Level

- Hotel drop-off

- Parking entrance

- Parking structure

- The Goods Shed

- Old brick building

- Hotel

- 435.6 Street Level

- 430

- 435.3

- 434.2

- 432.8

- Lydiard Street Nth

- Original contour