Open Space Opportunities

City of Melbourne

in North and West Melbourne

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In North and West Melbourne

Introduction

Reasons for the Study

Although North and West Melbourne possess few large parks, the local street pattern produces two important open space assets. Thoroughfares are wide, and pockets of open space occur where different street grids intersect. Some of these streets and intersections are intensively landscaped. These areas provide green corridors and attractive oases within a dense fabric of residential and mixed-use buildings. However, the potential of many other streets and sites remains unrealised. In their present form they are too small, too inaccessible or too sparsely planted to provide valuable recreational amenities.

Council's North and West Melbourne Greening Strategy Draft Issues Paper already describes a program of street tree planting for the area. Recently, streetscape improvements have been completed in Capel Street, Railway Place and Lloyd Street. More planting is planned for Chetwynd, O'Connel and Howard Streets. As the strategy is implemented, broad green medians will replace the unnecessary expanse of asphalt found in many North and West Melbourne streets.

The North and West Melbourne Open Space Opportunities Study is an extension of the Greening Strategy. It focuses on the irregular "left over" spaces that occur between North and West Melbourne's skewed street grids. The study examines how these accidental open spaces can become more significant components of the city's recreational open space system.

Open Space Opportunities helps to achieve several strategic directions identified in the North West 2010. This local plan calls for the "development of open spaces" in North and West Melbourne. It also seeks better access to open space, and improvements to the neighbourhoods' streetscape (see page 38).

Scope of the Project

Open Space Opportunities produces detailed analyses and recommendations for nine of the most promising residual sites within North and West Melbourne's street grids. Choices were influenced by the size and location of the spaces and also by Council's ability to implement change at each location within a short to medium time frame. However, before the scope of the study was fixed, a comprehensive survey of the neighbourhoods' open space assets was carried out. As a result, a number of supplementary sites for landscape improvement have been identified. These are listed in Appendix 1.

The boundaries of North and West Melbourne's pocket parks provide the principal subject for investigation. Sometimes, the existing landscaped areas are no more than large traffic islands. In such locations, expanding the open space into the surrounding road reserve may be an attractive option. Elsewhere, open space improvements depend on land acquisition. Where this applies, the study's recommendations are subject to agreements being reached with private owners.

Open Space Opportunities is a feasibility study rather than a design exercise. The study indicates how the size, shape and character of the sites might change. However, these scenarios are constructed so that costs and benefits can be assessed, and so that terms of reference can be identified for a later design brief. Detailed landscape concepts still need to be produced before any of the sites can be developed.

To produce a balanced evaluation, the study addresses a wide range of issues. In some cases, extending the area of landscape can improve motorists' behaviour. By closing or narrowing streets, vehicle speeds are reduced and through-traffic is discouraged (Note: these outcomes are also identified as objectives in North West 2010 - see page 41). However, some street closures simply divert traffic through other residential enclaves. Access to private properties can be restricted, and none of the sites can be significantly improved without losing on-street parking spaces. If kerbs are realigned, heritage features and streetscape character can be compromised. All these negative impacts are considered and, if possible, quantified along with the expense of construction. The costs are compared with the obvious visual and recreational benefits associated with green open space.

Creating an open space system

Although the study focuses on nine individual sites, the merits of these locations are assessed in terms of their potential to contribute towards a network of open spaces. "Views and linkages" are part of the detailed analysis of every site. So, Open Space Opportunities do not simply identify new recreational opportunities. It develops a series of key connections within a network of attractive walking and cycling routes. These routes join the neighbourhoods of North and West Melbourne to important municipal and metropolitan assets such as Flagstaff Gardens, Moonee Ponds Creek and Royal Park.

Carrying out the Feasibility Study

The Open Space Opportunities feasibility study is the result of a phased work program that was carried out over a nine month period between October 2000 and June 2001.

Phase 1: Survey of existing policies and strategies

The following policies and strategies were surveyed:

- Capel Street Action Plan (City of Melbourne, 1984)
- City Plan 1999 (City of Melbourne, 1999)
- Grids & Greenery (City of Melbourne, 1987)
- Moonee Ponds Creek Proposed Realignment: Landuse, Visual Assessment & Landscape Report (ERM Mitchell McCotter Pty Ltd, 1999)
- Moonee Valley 2010: A Vision for the Future (City of Moonee Valley, 1998)
- North & West Melbourne Greening Strategy Draft Issues Paper (Laycock & Jaquet Landscape Architects, 1998)
- North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Character Study (City of Melbourne, 1996)
- North Central City Corridor Study (Department of Infrastructure, 2001)
- North West 2010, Community Consultation Process (City of Melbourne, 1999)
- North West 2010: Local Plan (City of Melbourne, 1999)

Issues and objectives from these documents are addressed in detailed analyses of the nine sites.

Phase 2: Site analysis

In the first instance, visual inspections and photographic surveys were made at each of the open spaces. Underground and overhead services were mapped using information from the City's Land Information System (LIS) and the Dial-Before-You-Dig service. One of Council's heritage experts provided detailed information on streetscape character in the vicinity of the subject sites. The extent of North and West Melbourne's historic bluestone kerbs was also systematically recorded. At each location, the results of these investigations have been compiled into a single site analysis diagram.

The site survey was followed by a series of sketch designs that explored existing and potential relationships between landscape, circulation and surrounding buildings. In each location, the design exercises produced several development options that indicate how the size, shape and character of the sites might change. They also considered improvements to landscape features and recreational facilities. These options enabled costs and benefits to be assessed and provided the basis for peer review and stakeholder consultation.

Council's transport engineering consultants examined each of the open space development options. Their comments include an assessment of each scenario's impact on traffic patterns, driver behaviour and road safety.

On-street parking spaces were counted at each of the nine sites. Opportunities for additional car parks were also studied. As a result, each development scenario predicts likely changes to parking availability.

Phase 3: Stakeholder consultation

Extensive consultation has occurred both inside and outside the City of Melbourne.

Three rounds of meetings were held with stakeholders with Council. These meetings were attended by representatives from the following Groups and work areas:

- City Projects
- Community Services
- Engineering Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Strategic Planning

Councillors Martin Brennan and Kevin Chamberlin were briefed on the project before community consultation began.

The views of key external stakeholders were solicited. The following groups and individuals provided feedback on the costs and benefits associated with various open space development options:

- Bayside Trains Transport House Co-Op
- Lithuanian Community Club
- North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre
- North & West Melbourne Association
- North Melbourne Football Club
- North Melbourne Pool Community Group
- North Melbourne Precinct Environment Group
- North Melbourne Primary School (Errol Street)
- North Melbourne Tenants Union of Victoria
- North Melbourne Traders Association
- Roman Catholic Trusts Association
- Salvation Army
- St Aloysius College
- St Josephs Christian Brothers College
- St Michaels Catholic Primary School
- Vic Roads
- Victoria Hill Precinct
- West Melbourne Baptist Church
- Wurundjeri Council

In most cases, the stakeholders' input focused on a single relevant location. However, the North and West Melbourne Association supplied feedback on all nine sites.

Public opinion was surveyed. A standard multiple-choice questionnaire was produced along with information for each of the nine open space opportunities. Questionnaires and information sheets were distributed to properties adjoining each of the reserves. The material was also displayed at four locations within North Melbourne: the community centre, the library, the town hall and the swimming pool. The project and the displays were also advertised in The Melbourne Times and The Melbourne Leader. Over 150 responses to the questionnaire were received. Results are tabulated in Appendix 2.

On Tuesday 8 May 2001, a public meeting was held in the North Melbourne Town Hall. The meeting was advertised in The Age and promoted in the public questionnaire. Between 25 and 30 people attended the meeting.

Phase 4: Cost estimate

A quantity surveyor was engaged to assess costs for each of the open space options. Estimates were based on an indicative landscape specification as well as a diagrammatic site plan.

Format

Each of the nine sites is addressed in a separate chapter of the report. These sections are self-contained. They can be read individually without reference to the rest of the study. However, they all follow a standard format and address recurring issues:

- Description of Existing Conditions
- Site Analysis Diagram
- Detailed Site Analysis
- spatial character
- existing landscape
- views and linkages
- heritage
- traffic management
- parking
- services
- community and stakeholder response
- costs and funding
- Design Principles and Objectives
- street layout
- built form
- streetscape
- park landscape
- Development Options
- Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall conclusions and recommendations are given at the end of the report. This section reiterates the preferred response at each site, and gives priorities for implementation. Supplementary material is contained within the appendices.

Where to from here

The study identifies priorities for open space improvements in North and West Melbourne. At each of the nine sites, a preferred development scenario is defined. The sites are also divided into three groups according to the desirability and feasibility of the changes at each location.

At today's prices, the estimated cost of all recommended improvements is $2 500 000. High and medium-priority projects account for $2 000 000 of this amount, and it is suggested that this expenditure is spread over a five-year period ending in 2005/06. These figures exclude the cost of land acquisition, which is an option at two of the nine sites (Sites 6 and 9).

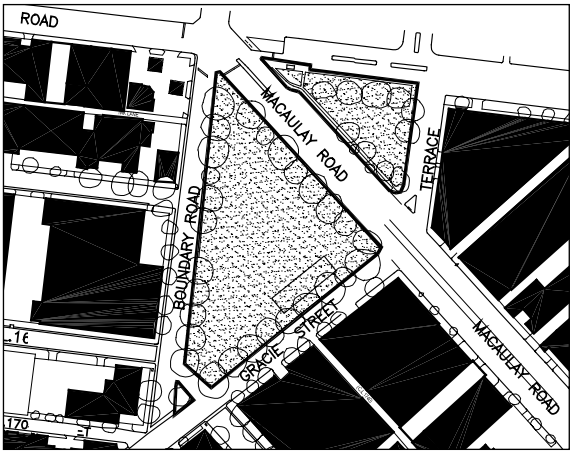
All design and documentation of the projects is to be managed by, and on behalf of City Projects, through a collaborative process of consultation with Engineering Services and Parks & Recreation. Construction of the designs will be managed by either Engineering Services or Parks & Recreation; and will be confirmed at a later time.

As part of the Capital Works Program for 2001/02, funding has already been approved for design and documentation at two high-priority locations (Sites 5 and 6). This year's budget also allows for a small amount of construction at the Eades Place reserve (Site 8).

At the remaining locations, funds for design or construction must be sought and approved in the normal way as part of Council's capital projects approval process. Successful proposals for individual sites will become part of Council's Approved Program of Works.

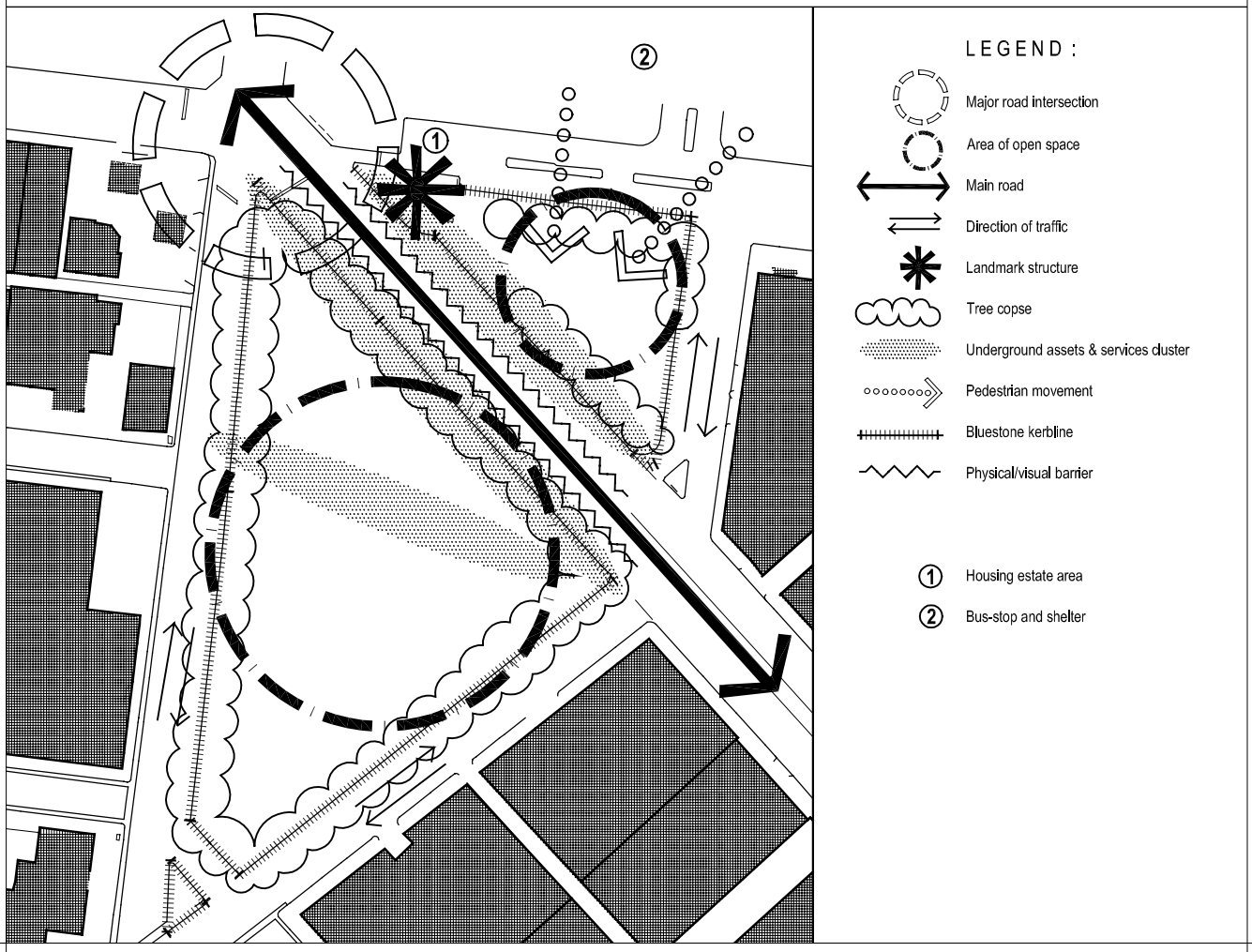
Site 1: **Clayton Reserve**

Existing Conditions



Clayton Reserve is split by Macaulay Road. Four lanes of fast traffic make it difficult to cross from one side of the open space to the other. The larger section of the reserve is surrounded by industrial and commercial buildings, while the closest housing is located some distance away in the Canning Street/Melrose Street area. Fortunately, the completion of City Link means that Macaulay Road can be narrowed. In addition, a short section of Henderson Street can be closed completely. These changes could expand the park, and create a stronger functional and visual connection between the two sides of the reserve.

Site Analysis



Detailed Site Analysis

Spatial character

- The reserve contains two triangular open spaces.
- Most of the surrounding frontages are comprised of one and two storey commercial buildings. These provide little visual containment to the park.
- Slab blocks within an adjacent housing estate provide the dominant built form.

Existing landscape

- Lines of mature trees frame the two open spaces. However, there is too much unstructured and unsheltered ground at the centre of the larger triangle.
- Both sides of the reserve are treated as a flat grass plane. The simplicity and continuity of this surface reinforces visual links between the two triangles. This connection is enhanced by lawn along the median within Macaulay Road.
- Footpaths are absent from much of the perimeter of the reserve. There are no paths crossing either of the open spaces.
- Light poles provide the only furniture within the space. Unsightly overhead lines serve the lanterns. The quality of night lighting is poor. The edges of the park depend on street lighting, yet trees around the perimeter of the space block illumination from this source.
- A plaque near the corner of Boundary and Macaulay records the origin of Clayton Reserve's name. This element is inconspicuous and is poorly integrated with surrounding landscape.
- A bus shelter at the corner of Canning and Macaulay Road is poorly integrated with the reserve and the surrounding streetscape.

Views and linkages

- Macaulay Road offers a potential "green link" between Clayton Reserve and Gardiner Reserve.
- Clayton Reserve is only a short walking distance (approximately 250 metres) from Macaulay Station and the Moonee Ponds open space corridor.
- The larger triangle of open space is relatively isolated. It is several hundred metres away from the closest residential areas.
- Because there is no housing close by, there is little passive surveillance of the open space especially after business hours.

Heritage

- There is no heritage overlay on this site, and the surrounding streetscape is ungraded.
- The reserve is bounded by bluestone kerbs and channels. These should be retained or reinstated.
- The lines of mature trees around the perimeter of the reserve have historic significance, in addition to their value as landscape.

Traffic management

- Following completion of City Link, Macaulay Road no longer has arterial status. However, the route remains a main road and is under the control of VicRoads.
- The capacity of Macaulay Road can be reduced to one traffic lane and one bike lane in each direction. But there is some potential for through-traffic to be diverted into surrounding residential areas if this occurs.
- The intersection of Macaulay and Canning can be narrowed to accommodate two standing lanes for northbound vehicles and a single lane for southbound traffic.
- From a traffic management perspective, it is preferable to have a single streetscape treatment with a uniform median for the full length of Macaulay Road (between Canning and Arden). Varying the width and configuration of the carriageway could reduce safety.
- Presently, there is no pedestrian crossing across Macaulay Road linking the adjacent reserves. Pedestrians need to negotiate three sides of the intersection in order to cross safely between the two open spaces.
- The northern end of Henderson Street (between Boundary and Gracie) is redundant. It can be closed and absorbed into the reserve, provided adequate turning space is retained for commercial vehicles at the corner of Boundary and Gracie.
- Turning circles for large vehicles also need to be accommodated on Vaughan Terrace. This requirement limits the scope for narrowing the street.

Parking

- Parking can be removed from the eastern edge of Macaulay Road in the vicinity of the reserve. Approximately ten spaces would be lost from this location if the carriageway is narrowed. These are unrestricted parks, and appear to be well used.
- To compensate, it may be possible to increase the number of car parks slightly in Vaughan Terrace by introducing angle parking. However, the need to accommodate commercial vehicles and a bus route severely limits the street's potential as a parking precinct.

Services

- Before design occurs, the exact locations of water, gas, underground stormwater, telephone, and power services need to be identified. Special attention should be given to the edges of Macaulay Road and the area within the reserve.

Community and stakeholder response

- Clayton Reserve prompted less community feedback than any other site. Support was stronger for Example B with a wide median along the full length of Macaulay Road.
- The community's principal objective in this location is to reduce vehicle numbers and speeds, rather than to increase open space. Additional trees and seating are viewed as important improvements to amenities within the reserve.
- The North and West Melbourne Association supports new amenities and improved pedestrian access to the park. However, the association does not favour extending the reserve into Macaulay Road. The group sees little benefit in such a small increase in open space, especially when this is gained at the expense of parking. The association is also concerned about any change in traffic patterns that might divert traffic into residential streets.
- Open space improvements at Clayton Reserve are popular with internal stakeholders, mainly because City Link has delivered a one-off opportunity to re-configure Macaulay Road. Internal objectives for this initiative relate more to traffic calming and streetscape improvements than extensions to recreational open space.
- Sites 1 Clayton Reserve and 2 Gardiner Reserve might be considered higher priorities if State Government funding is available for changes to Macaulay Road.

Costs and funding

- Cost estimates for improvements at this site vary from $195 000 to $208 250. Example A is the more expensive option. The higher costs result from the relocation of kerbs and channels.
- The capacity of Macaulay Road has been reduced as part of City Link. For this reason, the Council should seek funding from VicRoads for reductions in the width of the carriageway and intersections. However, the State's traffic management objectives for Macaulay Road have already been achieved simply by changing road markings. Under these circumstances, VicRoads are likely to object to additional costs for relocating the kerbs and repaving.

Design Principles and Objectives

Street layout

- North of Gracie Street, minimise the width of Macaulay Road by removing the existing median and parking. South of Gracie Street, introduce a wider median and retain parallel parking at the edges of the street.
- Provide a generous gap between these two treatments. Ensure the interval allows traffic to flow easily and contributes to visual continuity along the street.
- Locate bike paths within the reserve, but provide safe connections to and from the street.
- Alternatively, introduce a uniformly wide median along the full length of Macaulay Road (between Canning and Arden).

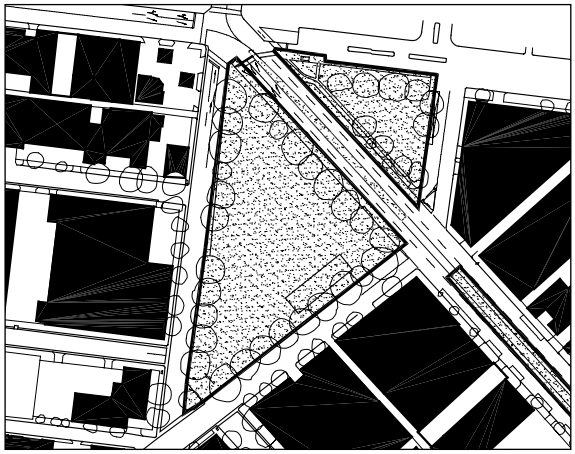
Streetscape

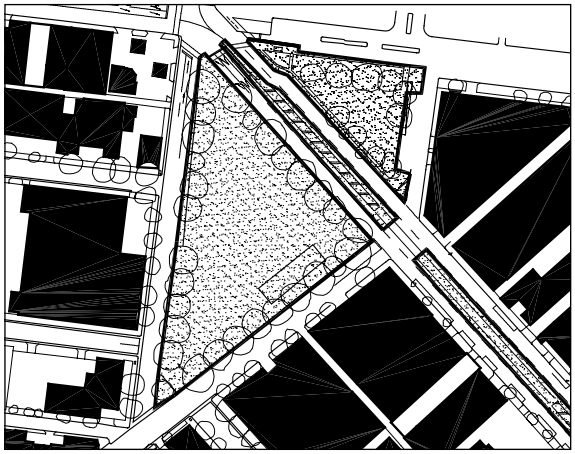
- If a wide median is adopted along the full length of Macaulay Road, consider planting it with a double row of trees within the area of the reserve. Use these trees to emphasise the presence of the park and to enhance the median as a pedestrian refuge. South of Gracie Street, revert to a single line of trees within the median.
- Consider the streetscape treatment at Clayton Reserve in relation to possible improvements at Gardiner Reserve. Ensure that the full length of Macaulay Road (between Canning and Arden) is designed as single coherent entity. Reinforce continuity by placing continuous lines of street trees along both edges of the street.
- Provide a new pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Canning and Macaulay.
- Reinstate or relocate all bluestone kerbs, channels and pitchers.

Park landscape

- Treat the two triangles similarly to emphasise the unity of the space and increase visual connection across Macaulay Road.
- Consider adding trees to the centres of the two triangles. Use an informal layout that complements the uniform rows of trees at the edges of the park.
- Provide new pathways in response to improved pedestrian access across Macaulay Road. Follow an "organic" layout, consistent with the new planting pattern.
- Take advantage of the site's relative isolation. Consider using the reserve to accommodate noisy or untidy activities such as temporary out-door events, a community garden or a skate park.

Development Options





Example 1A

- Narrow Macaulay Road between Canning and Gracie. Extend the edges of the reserves out into the roadway. Retain the existing median. Remove some parking from the edge of Macaulay Road, and provide one traffic lane and a bike lane in each direction.
- Expand the reserve by closing Henderson Street between Boundary and Gracie. Incorporate this area and the adjacent traffic island in the open space.
- Introduce a new pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Canning and Macaulay.
- Retain car parking around the edge of the reserve, ie. along Vaughan Street, Canning Street, Boundary Road and Gracie Street.

Advantages

- more open space within reserve
- narrower carriageway
- less uniform streetscape

Disadvantages

- more disruption to bluestone kerbs
- marginally more expensive
- less continuity in traffic flow streetscape

Example 1B

Retain the existing kerb lines on either side of Macaulay Road. Replace the existing median with a wider version.

Otherwise as for Example 1A.

Advantages

- more continuity in traffic flow
- more uniform streetscape
- pedestrian refuge in centre of road
- less disruption to bluestone kerbs

Disadvantages

- wider carriageway
- less open space within the reserve

Summary of Findings

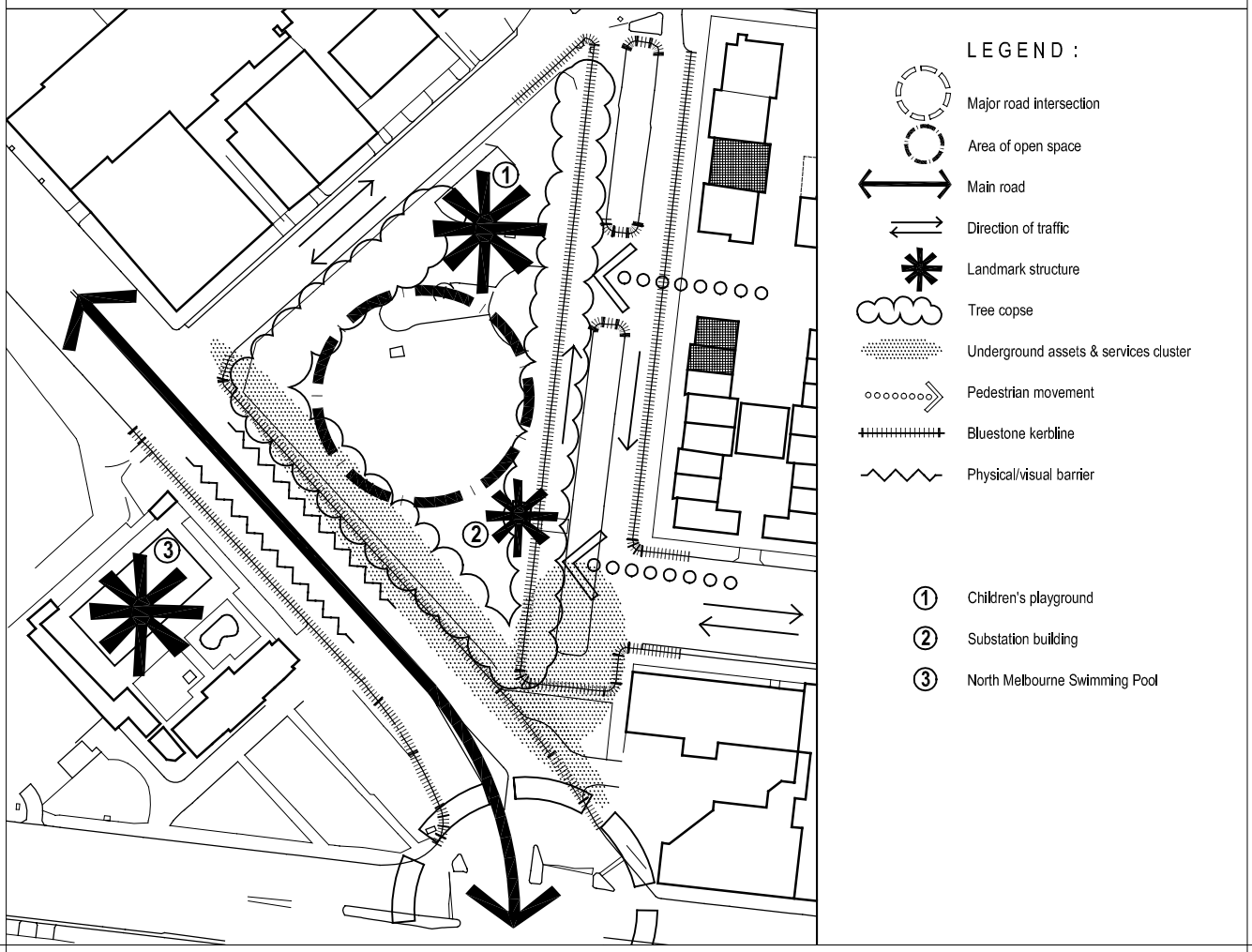
Open space improvements at this site take advantage of a unique opportunity to modify traffic patterns. Extensions to the reserve are modest, and the real benefit is improved pedestrian access between the two sides of the open space. This site attracted relatively little support from the community, although internal stakeholders were more enthusiastic. Example A (a single narrow carriageway) is the preferred option, even though most feedback favoured Example B (a wider median). From an urban design perspective, the main advantage of Example A is that additional open space is located in the reserves where it can be readily used. However, two drawbacks need to be acknowledged. First, bluestone kerbs need to be relocated. Second, Macaulay Road changes from a wide cross section with a median to a single narrow carriageway. Unless it is carefully designed, this alteration could disrupt traffic flows and detract from the unity of the streetscape. The solution to both problems is to allow a sufficient interval between one pattern and the next.

Site 2: **Gardiner Reserve**

Existing Conditions

Gardiner Reserve is a shady, well-used park. It contains a children's play area and BBQ facilities. The North Melbourne Swimming Pool is located directly across Macaulay Road. The North Melbourne cricket and football ground is nearby. However, four lanes of fast traffic make it difficult to walk from the reserve to the other recreational amenities. Fortunately, the completion of City Link means that Macaulay Road can be narrowed. It may also be possible to reduce the width of Dryburgh Street in the block between Haines and Arden. These two changes could expand the park, and create a stronger functional and visual connection between some of North Melbourne's main recreational assets.

Site Analysis



Detailed Site Analysis

Spatial character

- Multi-unit housing along Dryburgh Street provides the strongest built edge to this space. Structures range from two to four storeys. This frontage also gains stature from rising ground levels.
- Single storey commercial buildings along Haines Street are unattractive, but they are also inconspicuous.
- From vantage points within the reserve, a line of trees provides a clear delineation of the park's Macaulay Road edge.

Existing landscape

- The reserve is framed by matures trees. However, their layout is less formal than that at Clayton Reserve. Some large individual specimens are located well inside the park's boundaries. But the centre of the open space is dominated by a large unstructured area of grass.
- Trees along the eastern side of the park are part of an established streetscape in Dryburgh Street.
- Elms in the Dryburgh median have a life expectancy of 15-20 years. Inter-planting should begin soon so that replacement trees are well established before existing specimens need to be removed.
- The reserve is fenced along its Haines Street and Macaulay Road boundaries. This has a utilitarian chain-link construction. Some sections of the fence support creepers and other plants, and these have the appearance of hedges.
- The fences prevent children from straying, but they also limit pedestrian access especially from the direction of the pool and the Recreation Ground. There is gated entrance at the corner of Haines and Macaulay. However, this is unattractive, and provides little invitation to enter the park. If vehicle numbers and speeds are reduced on Macaulay Road, it may be possible to remove some or all of these barriers.
- The reserve is open to Dryburgh Street. Park users are most likely to approach from this direction.
- There are no paths across the park. If pedestrian connections with the pool and the recreation ground are strengthened, east-west circulation routes across the centre of the space will become more important.
- Drainage appears to be poor, especially in the vicinity of the Haines/Macaulay intersection. Ponding of stormwater has caused damage to the grass.
- Lighting is poor. The edges of the park depend on street lighting, yet trees around the perimeter of the space block illumination from this source.
- The reserve contains an "arts and crafts" style substation. This small "pavilion" is not a listed heritage feature. However, it enhances the open space and the surrounding streetscape.
- A children's play area near the corner of Dryburgh and Haines is about to be upgraded.

Views and linkages

- Visual connections to the North Melbourne Pool and the Recreation Ground are weak. This separation supports the identity of Clayton Reserve. However, it also inhibits better integration among these amenities.
- The park straddles a natural watercourse. The stream is now buried in an underground culvert. However, low-lying land and a chain of open spaces provide an historical and topographical link to Harris Street and Ievers Reserve.
- From the corner of Dryburgh and Macaulay, the park offers a clear view of silos on Munster Terrace.

Heritage

- There is no heritage overlay on this site, and the surrounding streetscape is ungraded.
- The reserve is bounded by bluestone kerbs and channels. These should be retained or reinstated.
- The lines of mature trees around the perimeter of the reserve have historic significance, in addition to their value as landscape.

Traffic Management

- Following completion of City Link, Macaulay Road no longer has arterial status. However, the route remains a main road and is under the control of VicRoads.
- The capacity of Macaulay Road can be reduced to one traffic lane and one bike lane in each direction. But there is some potential for through-traffic to be diverted into surrounding residential areas if this occurs.
- At the intersection of Macaulay and Arden, two "standing" lanes are required in each direction. However, the left turn lanes from Arden into Macaulay and from Macaulay into Arden can be closed; subject to a revised arrangement that adequately serves the local access and circulation needs.
- From a traffic management perspective, it is preferable to have a single streetscape treatment with a uniform median for the full length of Macaulay Road (between Canning and Arden). Varying the width and configuration of the carriageway could reduce safety.
- One-way traffic is undesirable on Dryburgh Street. It would force additional cars along O'Shanassy and out onto Abbotsford at an uncontrolled intersection. Local one-way streets with low traffic flow also

encourage motorists to travel counter to the flow in order to avoid diversions.

- f alterations to Dryburgh Street do go ahead, it is worth conducting a detailed investigation of vehicle access to the Dryburgh/O'Shanassy/Abbotsford/Haines block. Because this block contains multi-unit housing, vehicle access from Haines and O'Shanassy may provide a substitute for kerb crossings along Dryburgh. If this is the case, it may be possible to close Dryburgh Street completely between O'Shanassy and Haines.

Parking

- The community appears tolerant towards the loss of parking at this site. However, some Dryburgh Street residents would be inconvenienced if this thoroughfare is closed or narrowed and car parks are sacrificed.
- Visitors to the North Melbourne Recreation Ground also park near the reserve.
- Arden Street provides the only opportunity for additional parking. However, supplementary spaces would be some distance from Dryburgh Street where most losses will occur. Also, additional trees are planned for Arden, and these will limit the number of new car parks that can be provided.
- If the cross section of Macaulay Road is altered, a small number of drop-off parking spaces could be provided alongside the swimming pool. However, indenting the kerb to accommodate these parks could detract from the streetscape and inhibit pedestrian access.

Services

- Before design occurs, the exact locations of stormwater, telephone, power and other services need to be identified. Services are concentrated along Macaulay Road between Haines & Dryburgh and along Dryburgh Street between Macaulay and O'Shannessy. Stormwater drains from the North-Melbourne Swimming Pool cross the reserve, and these should be accurately located.

Community and stakeholder response

- Gardiner Reserve functions well in its present form. Residents perceived it as safe, and they appreciate the ease with which it can be accessed from adjacent residential areas.
- Proposed improvements prompted little support from the community.
- Feedback from the public suggests a preference for Example 2B. This is consistent with the choice made at Clayton Reserve.
- The community's principal objective for this location is to increase the area of open space. Reducing vehicle numbers and speeds was rated the second most important priority.
- BBQ's, additional seating and more trees are the most commonly suggested improvements to the park's amenities.
- The North and West Melbourne Association do not support extending the reserve into either Dryburgh Street or Macaulay Road. The association believes that the benefits of greater open space are offset by the loss of valuable on-street parking and disruptions to local streetscape. The group is also concerned about potential access problems at the Mills Building on the corner of Arden, Dryburgh and Macaulay.
- Open space improvements at Clayton Reserve are popular with internal stakeholders, mainly because City Link has delivered a one-off opportunity to re-configure Macaulay Road. Internal objectives for this initiative relate more to traffic calming and streetscape improvements than extensions to recreational open space.
- Sites 1 Clayton Reserve and 2 Gardiner Reserve might be considered higher priorities if funding is available from the State Government for changes to Macaulay Road.
- Costs and funding
- Cost estimates for improvements at this site vary from $135 000 to $225 000. Example 2C is the least expensive option because it leaves Dryburgh Street substantially unaltered. Example 2B is slightly less costly than Example 2A because constructing a new median in Macaulay Road is cheaper than relocating the kerbs at either side of this street.

Design Principles and Objectives

Street layout

- Improve pedestrian access between Gardiner Reserve and the North Melbourne Swimming Pool.
- Minimise the width of Macaulay Road to the south-east of Haines Street by removing the existing median. To the north-west of Haines, introduce a wider median and retain parallel parking at the edges of the street.
- Provide a generous gap between these two treatments. Ensure the interval allows traffic to flow easily and contributes to visual continuity along the street.
- Locate bike paths within the reserve, but provide safe connections to and from the street.
- Alternatively, introduce a uniformly wide median along the full length of Macaulay Road (between Canning and Arden).

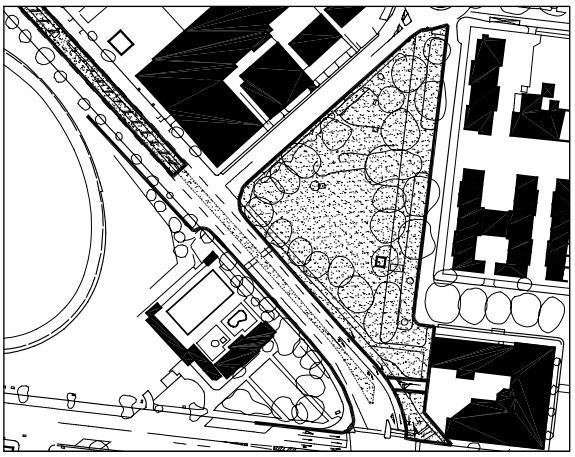
Streetscape

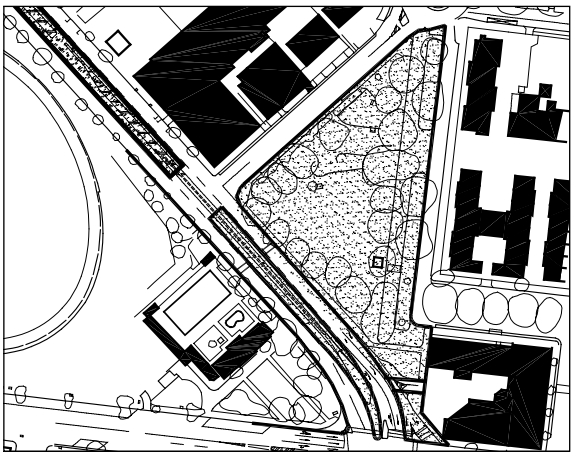
- Strengthen visual connections between Gardiner Reserve and the North Melbourne Swimming Pool.
- If a wide median is adopted along the full length of Macaulay Road, consider planting it with a double row of trees adjacent to the reserve. Use these trees to emphasise the presence of the park and to enhance the median as a pedestrian refuge. North of Haines Street, revert to a single line of trees within the median.
- Consider the streetscape treatment at Gardiner Reserve in relation to possible improvements at Clayton Reserve. Ensure that the full length of Macaulay Road (between Canning and Arden) is designed as single coherent entity. Reinforce continuity by placing continuous lines of street trees along both edges of the street.
- Reinstate or relocate all bluestone kerbs, channels and pitchers.

Landscape

- If part of Dryburgh Street is closed, the linear space acquired from the road reserve might be used for fixed amenities such as children's play equipment, BBQ's and seating. This could enable the rest of the park to be treated as a large open area suitable for informal sports games and other forms of active recreation.
- Connections between the park and Arden Street are poorly articulated. The existing edge of Dryburgh Street is not cohesive. A strong linear landscape feature within the present road reserve would help to organise the buildings and spaces along its length. This benefit would be enhanced if the full width of Dryburgh Street could be landscaped and included in the park.
- Ensure that landscape along the eastern edge of the reserve remains consistent with the streetscape of Dryburgh Street.

Development Options





Example 2A

- Narrow Macaulay Road between Arden and Haines by extending the edge of the reserve out into the roadway. Retain the existing median. Remove some parking from the edge of Macaulay Road, and provide one traffic lane and a bike lane in each direction. Retain drop-off parking close to the pool.
- Expand the reserve by narrowing Dryburgh Street between Haines and O'Shanassy. Incorporate the median and the western side of this street in the open space. Remove some on-street parking, and introduce one way traffic along the narrowed section of Dryburgh Street.
- Retain car parking along the Haines Street edge of the reserve.

Advantages

- more open space within reserve
- more useful park layout
- narrower carriageway on Macaulay
- less impact on parking in Dryburgh
- more uniform streetscape on Dryburgh

Disadvantages

- difficult local access along Dryburgh
- less uniform streetscape on Macaulay
- loss of parking on Dryburgh (17-20 spaces)
- some disruption to bluestone kerbs
- less continuity in traffic flow on Macaulay
- safety problems associated with one-way streets

Example 2B

- Retain the existing kerb lines on either side of Macaulay Road. Replace the existing median with a wider version.
- Expand the reserve by narrowing Dryburgh Street between Haines and O'Shanassy. Incorporate the median and the western side of this street in the open space. Remove on-street parking, but retain two-way traffic and bicycle flow along the narrowed section of Dryburgh Street.
- Retain car parking along the Haines Street edge of the reserve.
- Introduce a shared pathway into the edge of the park along Dryburgh Street

Advantages

- more open space within reserve
- more useful park layout
- more continuity in traffic flow on Macaulay
- more uniform streetscape on Macaulay
- less disruption to bluestone kerbs
- pedestrian refuge in centre of Macaulay
- less impact to local access on Dryburgh

Disadvantages

- loss of parking on Dryburgh (39 spaces)
- wider carriageway on Macaulay
- shared pathway occupies open space

Example 2C

- Retain Dryburgh Street in its present form.
- Otherwise as for Example 2A.

Advantages

- narrower carriageway on Macaulay
- no impact on local access along Dryburgh
- minimal loss of parking (2 spaces)
- more uniform streetscape on Dryburgh

Disadvantages

- minimal extension to open space
- less continuity in traffic flow on Macaulay in relation to full length of the road
- less uniform streetscape on Macaulay in relation to full length of the road

Summary of Findings

The preferred development option is a hybrid of Examples B and C. Macaulay Road should be narrowed and the existing median should be removed. This solution adds open space to the reserve where it is most accessible and useful. It also matches recommended changes at Clayton Reserve, and permits development of a varied but integrated streetscape along Macaulay Road.

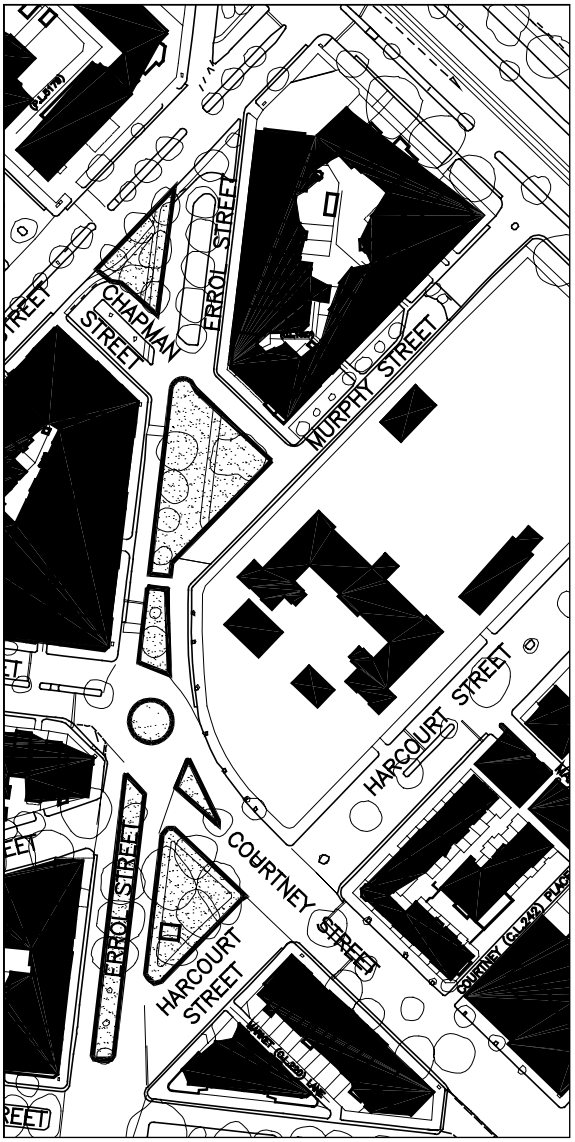
The hybrid option also involves expanding the reserve into Dryburgh Street. The western side of Dryburgh is an attractive space lined with mature street trees. Its acquisition allows the park to be structured as two distinct zones. On one side, land presently contained within the road reserve can accommodate seating, BBQ facilities and other fixtures. On the other side, the existing park space can be given a more open treatment that accommodates informal sports games and other active recreation.

These improvements lead to a significant loss of parking along Dryburgh Street. Two-way traffic including bicycle flow needs to be retained along here, even though the width of this street is halved. This can only be achieved by removing on-street parking. Additional parking can be provided along Arden Street, however this is too far away to be convenient for Dryburgh Street residents.

A second impediment to development is the need to relocate long sections of bluestone kerbs and channels.

Site 3: **North Melbourne Primary School**

Existing Conditions



The North Melbourne Primary School is a landmark at the northern end of Errol Street. The school grounds provide the only large open space in this part of North Melbourne. Pockets of green also occur along Errol Street. However, these are fragmented by complex circulation patterns, and amount to little more than landscaped traffic islands. Large areas of asphalt dominate the intersections, and the surrounding streets are generally wider than necessary. It may be possible to amalgamate these open spaces, so that they become more useful and more accessible. Joining some of these "islands" together could discourage through traffic, and create a green pedestrian link between North Melbourne and levers Reserve. However, even though the open spaces can be consolidated into a more useful shape, the reserves must remain an integral part of the surrounding streetscape. New landscape treatments must take this relationship into account.

Site Analysis

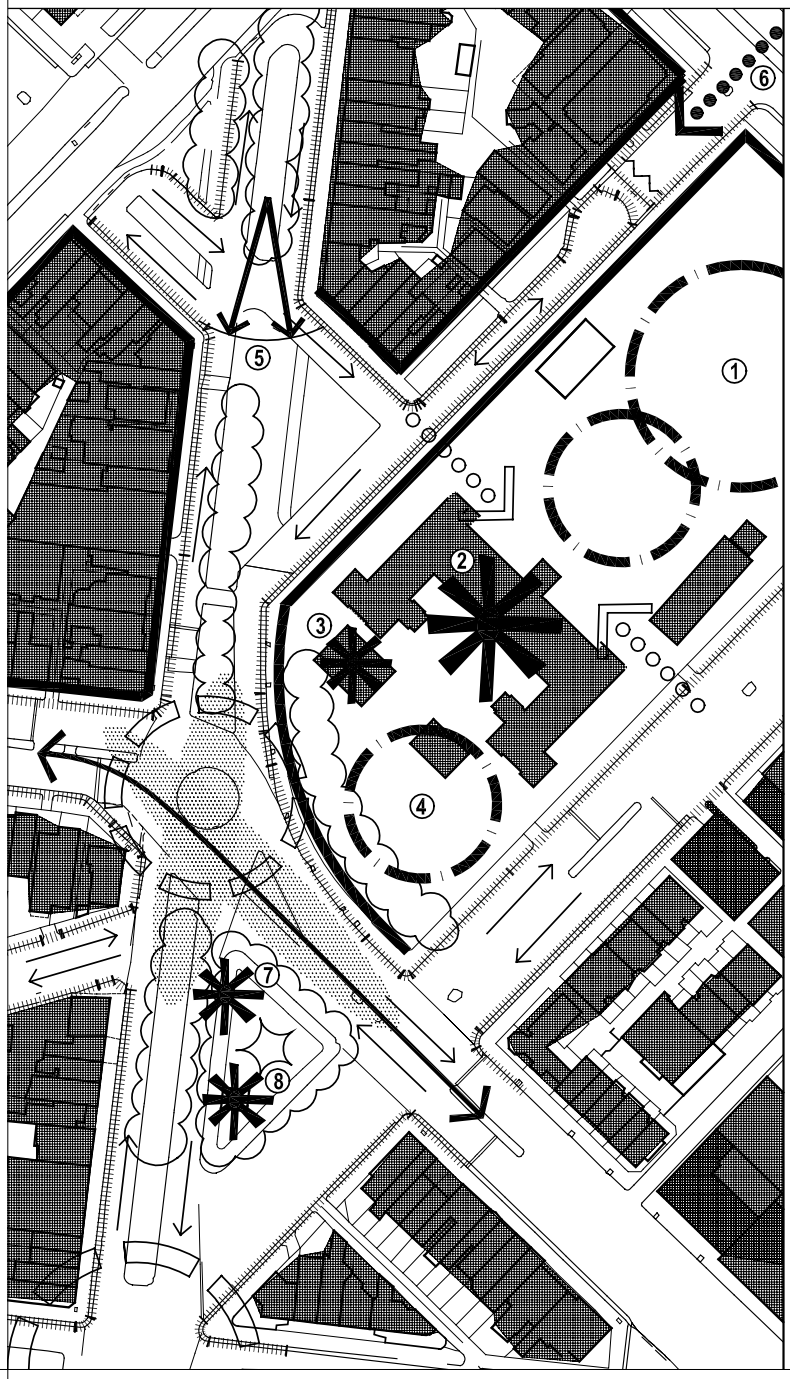
Spatial character

- The reserve consists of three small triangular open spaces. These are arranged along a north-south axis that follows the Errol Street median.
- Each triangle is enclosed on two sides and open on the third. Containment is stronger within the northern and central triangles where residential fabric and school buildings create distinct built edges. However, these two areas merge into a single space at the intersection of Chapman and Errol.
- Containment is weakest in the southern triangle where the built edge of Errol Street is only one storey high and where the public open space is visually contiguous with the surrounding streets and the adjacent school grounds.

Existing landscape

- The northern triangle of open space contains high-quality landscape including a number of large mature trees.
- The central triangle is the largest of the three open spaces. However it is poorly landscaped. It contains few trees, and it is bisected by a bike path.
- The southern triangle is occupied by four very large trees. A bark chip surface and an irrigation system have recently been installed. The porous ground treatment assists the trees, but it discourages pedestrian access.
- The southern triangle contains an "arts and crafts" style substation. This small "pavilion" is not a listed heritage feature. However, it enhances the open space and the surrounding streetscape.

- The southern triangle also contains a bus shelter. This utilitarian in character and is poorly integrated with the adjacent substation and the surrounding landscape.
- The perimeter of the school site is densely planted. The trees suggest an extension to the public open space. But the informal mixture of species, the impenetrable foliage and the utilitarian chain link fence create an unattractive backdrop to the reserve.
- The line of street trees within the Errol Street median is relatively continuous, and is one of the main unifying features in the streetscape. However, trees are generally absent from the edges of this street.
- Courtney Street and Harcourt Street have wide carriageways with vestigial medians and few street trees.



LEGEND :

- Major road intersection
- Area of open space
- Through traffic
- Direction of traffic
- Landmark structure
- Tree copse
- Underground assets & services cluster
- Connection/linkage
- Pedestrian movement
- Viewline
- Heritage streetscape
- Bluestone kerbline
- Physical/visual barrier

1. School oval
2. Historic school building
3. Heritage Listed shelter shed
4. School carpark
5. Views to North Melbourne Town Hall and CBD
6. Link to Ievers Reserve and Royal Park
7. Bus-stop shelter
8. Substation

- The Haines Street roundabout is grassed but unlandscaped, and the surrounding intersection is dominated by a wide expanse of asphalt. Within Haines Street itself, the pattern of street trees needs to be reinforced with infill planting.
- Large areas of redundant asphalt mark the intersection of Chapman Street and Errol Street.
- North of Harker, street trees are well established along Chapman Street. Median planting continues this pattern south to meet Errol.

Views and linkages

- The site benefits from a close association with North Melbourne Primary School. The school is a local landmark and a well-known institution. It helps to locate the reserve and gives the reserve a distinct character.
- Errol Street is North Melbourne's "main street". The urban structure of the whole neighbourhood is strengthened if this thoroughfare terminates at a recognisable public open space.
- The site is strategically located at the intersection of several existing and proposed "green links". Planted medians are found along Haines, Errol and O'Shanassy. Street trees are also planned for nearby Arden Street.
- The site forms part of a potential "green link" that includes a pedestrian connection across Flemington Parade to Ievers Reserve and Royal Park.
- The site falls appreciably between Harker and Haines. From the high ground between Chapman and Errol, there are good views south to the North Melbourne Town Hall and the CBD. Conversely, Flemington Road and the hospital are visible along the ridge to the north. However, some of these landmarks may be concealed if street trees are added to the side of Errol Street.
- The main building at the North Melbourne Primary School is a potential backdrop to the central and southern open space triangles. However, planting around the school grounds currently denies the building a strong visual presence.

Heritage

- The following locations are graded as Level 2 Streetscapes:
  - The corner of Errol and Harcourt
  - The northern edge of Chapman, between Errol and Murphy
  - The southern side of Murphy Street, between Haines and Flemington
  - The northern side of Murphy Street, between Chapman and Flemington
  - The area bounded by Haines, Errol, Chapman and Molesworth
- All streets contain bluestone kerbs and channels with the exception of the northern edge of Harcourt Street and the traffic islands.
- An unusual double kerb borders the northern open space triangle. This feature is a response to the site's gradient, and should be retained.
- One of the "sheds" in front of the main school block is a listed heritage building.
- At their northern end, the school grounds are laid out in a classic "oval". This feature is not directly affected by proposed open space improvements. However, the oval introduces a constraint to site planning within the school as a whole.

Traffic management

- Locals need good access to and from the school without using Flemington Road.
- Through-traffic is a problem in this area. Courtney Street, Haines Street and Harcourt Street should carry local traffic, but all carry some non-local traffic. Residents would like to see vehicle numbers reduced and speeds cut. To achieve this, Engineering Services plan to reduce the Errol/Courtney/Haines roundabout to single entry, exit and circulation lanes. A more substantial median is also proposed for Haines. However, Engineering Services acknowledges that narrowing carriageways and closing a section of Courtney Street (from Harcourt to Errol) could be just as effective.
- The existing configuration of the Harcourt and Errol Street intersection is undesirable from a traffic viewpoint and needs to be redesigned.
- Complex traffic management measures are already in place in this part of North Melbourne. If more street closures are introduced in the vicinity of Courtney and Harcourt, impacts on traffic flow need to be examined over a wide area. Conditions at this site also need to be assessed in relation to possible changes elsewhere. In some cases, there may be useful synergies between developments. For example, because open space improvements and traffic calming are proposed for both ends of Courtney Street (at Sites 3 and 4), there is potential to substantially reduce the amount of through traffic on this route.
- The local streets are wider than necessary. However, it is doubtful whether two-way traffic with dedicated bike paths will fit onto one side of an existing carriageway.

Parking

- Residents, teachers, hospital staff, students and others compete for popular four-hour metered car parks along Harcourt Street.
- Popular four-hour metered car parks are a source of revenue for the City.
- Additional on-street parking spaces can be accommodated within the southernmost block of Harcourt Street. These may offset losses elsewhere.
- Parking is provided within the school grounds. Because of after-school activities, some of these spaces are in use until 6.30 pm. Approximately one third of the school's parking is rented to outside users. On-site parking is likely to be reduced as a result of school expansion and redevelopment.
- Blackwood, Harcourt, Villiers and Wreckyn streets are reverting to residential use. Developments are required to be self-sufficient for car parking. These changes do not alter the need for drop-off parking near the school. However, the new uses should reduce demand for longer-term on-street parking within the neighbourhood as a whole.

Services

- Designers should identify the exact locations of sewers, gas, stormwater, telephone, electricity and water. Services are concentrated at the intersection of Courtney/Errol/ Harcourt/Haines/Harris adjacent to the existing roundabout and the central medians. Services are also buried in the centre of the southbound carriageway of Errol Street between Courtney Street and Flemington Road.

Community and stakeholder response

- Feedback suggests that Example 3A is the most popular development option. This layout maximises the area of the reserve. However, the community's principal objective is to reduce vehicle numbers and speeds, rather than to increase open space. Retention of on-street parking is the second most important issue. This is the only site where parking ranks this highly.
- The North Melbourne Residents Association does not support proposed improvements. The association suggests that improving the quality and utility of the reserve is more important than expanding the area of open space. The group is concerned that historic streetscapes will be compromised with the realignment of kerbs and traffic lanes. They also believe that some of the proposals could lead to an increase in through-traffic (Example 3A), a loss of on-street parking and restrictions to street tree planting.
- The North Melbourne Primary School Board is willing to continue feasibility studies into shared use of the open space. The board has several concerns about funding and managing such a place. The main issues are supervision, maintenance and security. Staff car parking, liability and community reactions to the plan are secondary concerns. At this stage, it is not clear whether the benefits to the school outweigh the likely costs. The board is more likely to collaborate if it can be shown that traffic volumes will be cut and that vehicle speeds will be reduced around the school.
- The school also needs to feel confident about the decision-making processes. Each stage of development needs to be negotiated with the board and the State Government. As a first step, they would like a more detailed traffic study to be commissioned by the Council.
- Local residents also have reservations about shared use of the reserve. They fear that the reserve will be "taken over" by the school, leaving only restricted use for the public.
- Parks and Recreation support maximum consolidation of open space in this area. Merging medians and islands into a single continuous reserve reduces the maintenance costs associated with edges and over-spraying.

Costs and funding

- Budget estimates for Site 3 are between $392 000 and $510 000. Cost differences reflect the extent to which kerbs are relocated and roads realigned.
- Example 3A is the most expensive of the three options presented below. This proposal also delivers the largest area of open space.
- Example 3B is the least expensive option.

Design Principles and Objectives

Street layout

- Refer to specifications and guidelines within VicRoads Safety around schools document.
- Integrate school crossings with overall street layout and landscape.
- Maintain a direct north-south pathway through the site for pedestrians and cyclists.

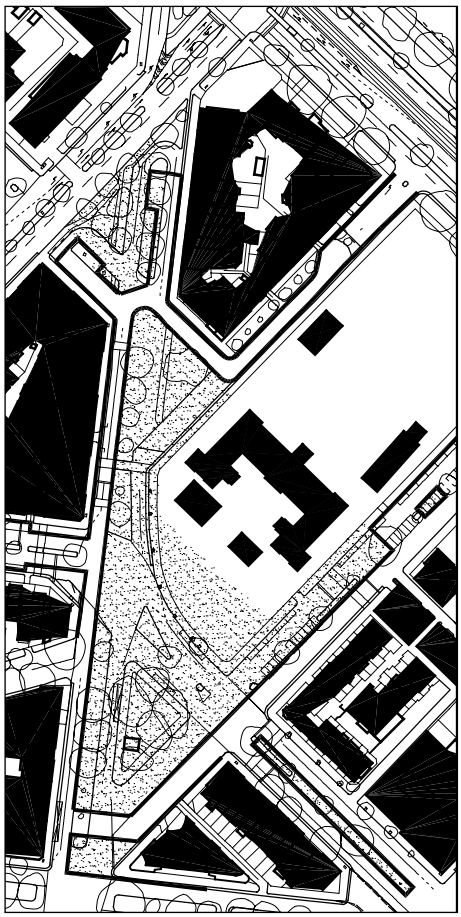
Built form

- Treat the historic main school building as a backdrop to a single consolidated open space at the intersection of Errol, Courtney and Harcourt.
- Consider combining the bus shelter and the substation into a single structure in the southern open space triangle.

Landscape

- Retain existing ficus trees, and recognise their importance as heritage features and local landmarks.
- Incorporate additional seating and trees in the design. Consider including children's play equipment.
- Introduce new street trees to Courtney Street, Errol Street and Harcourt Street. Reinforce existing planting patterns along Haines Street.
- Create stronger visual connections among the three triangular open spaces, and ensure that new landscape within the reserves is consistent with surrounding streetscape.
- Negotiate with the North Melbourne Primary School to achieve visual and functional integration between the southern triangle of open space and the school grounds.

Development Options



Example 3A - Estimated cost: $510 000

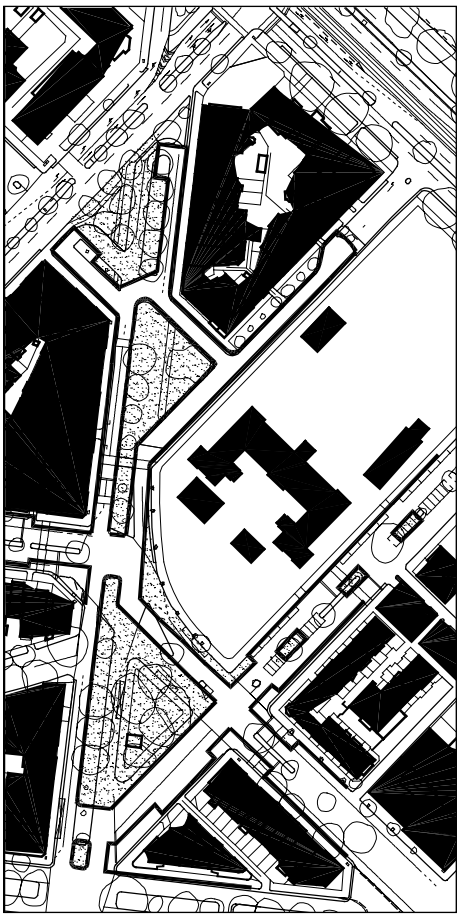
- Extend the reserve by closing Courtney Street between Errol and Harcourt, and by closing Murphy Street between Chapman and Errol.
- Extend the reserve by narrowing Errol Street between Harker and O'Shanassy. Also, narrow Harcourt Street between Errol and Mary, and narrow Chapman Street between Errol and Harker. Incorporate one side of each street in the reserve. Remove some on-street parking, and introduce one-way traffic: north on the narrowed section of Errol Street and south on the narrowed section of Harcourt Street. Allow traffic to exit along Murphy Street onto Flemington Road.
- Introduce new medians with street trees and parking on Courtney Street and Harcourt Street.
- Investigate the potential for North Melbourne Primary School to use the extended reserve during school hours.

Advantages

- maximum area of open space
- less dependent on school's collaboration

Disadvantages

- severe restrictions on local access
- limited access to school
- increased danger to children from traffic
- greatest loss of parking (54 spaces)
- significant disruption to bus route
- increased usage by non-local traffic to access Flemington Road via Errol Street



Example 3B - Estimated cost: 392 000

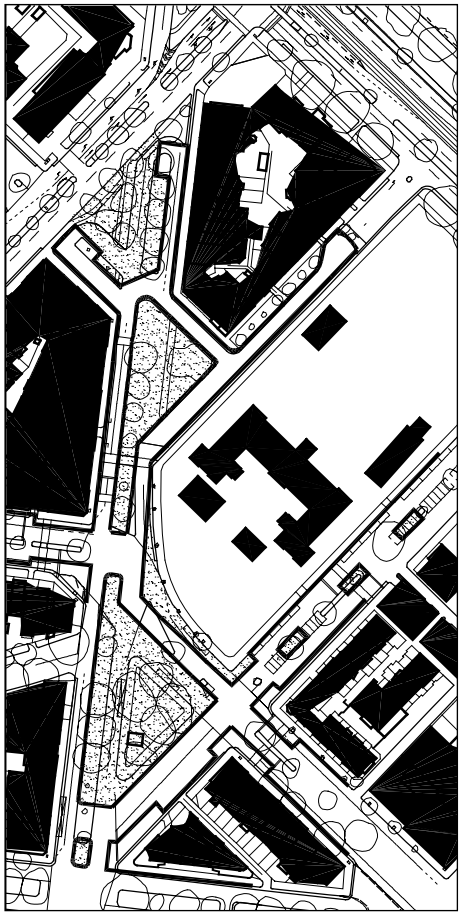
- Extend the reserve by closing Courtney Street between Errol and Harcourt.
- Extend the reserve by narrowing Harcourt Street between Courtney and Errol. Incorporate the northern side of this street in the reserve. Reduce on-street parking, but retain two-way traffic along the narrowed section of Harcourt Street.
- Extend the reserve by narrowing Errol Street between Chapman and Harker. Incorporate the median and the western side of this street into the reserve. Remove some on-street parking, but retain two-way traffic along the narrowed section of Errol Street.
- Introduce new medians with street trees and parking on Courtney Street and Harcourt Street.
- Investigate the potential for North Melbourne Primary School to use the extended reserve during school hours.

Advantages

- discourages through traffic
- minimal delays for local motorists
- minimal loss of parking (11 spaces)
- substitute car parks available on Harcourt
- no disruption to bus route
- large consolidated open space
- lowest estimated cost

Disadvantages

- most dependent on school's collaboration
- some local access more circuitous



Example 3C - Estimated cost: $420 000

- Extend the reserve by closing Errol Street to southbound traffic between Courtney and Harcourt. Incorporate the median and the eastern side of this street in the open space. Divert southbound traffic along Courtney and Harcourt towards Arden.
- Extend the reserve by narrowing Courtney Street between Errol and Harcourt. Extend the edge of the open space out into the roadway. Introduce one-way traffic along the narrowed section of Courtney Street.
- Extend the reserve by narrowing Harcourt Street between Courtney and Errol. Extend the edge of the open space out into the roadway. Retain two-way traffic on the narrowed section of Harcourt Street.
- Introduce new medians with street trees and parking on Courtney Street and Harcourt Street.

Advantages

- independent of school
- minimal loss of parking (15 spaces)
- substitute spaces available on Harcourt

Disadvantages

- significant disruption to bus route
- inclusion of one-way traffic flow increasing potential for collisions at Courtney/Harcourt

Summary of Findings

This location offers the largest and most dramatic single improvement to public open space within North and West Melbourne. However, the site received limited community support, and the area's full potential can only be realised through collaboration between Council and the North Melbourne Primary School. For these reasons, the development should not be given a high priority.

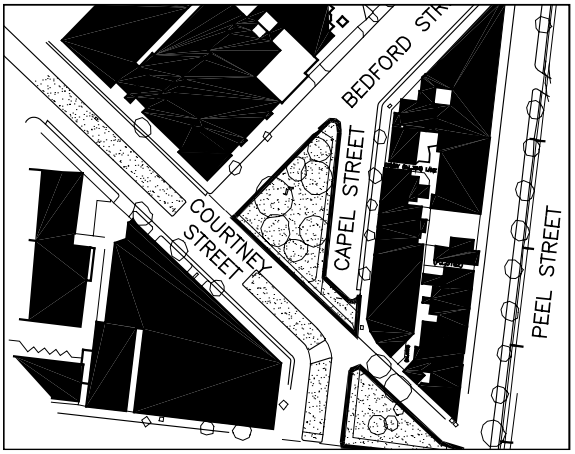
Work can proceed in phases, beginning with street improvements and the closure of Courtney Street between Harcourt and Errol. Staged implementation allows the Council and the North Melbourne Primary School more time to address the management issues associated with shared use of the public open space and a portion of the school grounds. These matters should be included in the master plan that the school hopes to produce within the next two years.

Example 3B is favoured as the final outcome. This proposal has the least impact on parking in the vicinity of the North Melbourne Primary School. Through traffic is effectively discouraged. However, the school remains readily accessible and locals suffer minimal inconvenience. Most importantly, road safety concerns are satisfied because no additional traffic is diverted past the school grounds.

Example 3A yields the largest area of open space. However, disruptions to local traffic patterns are unacceptable.

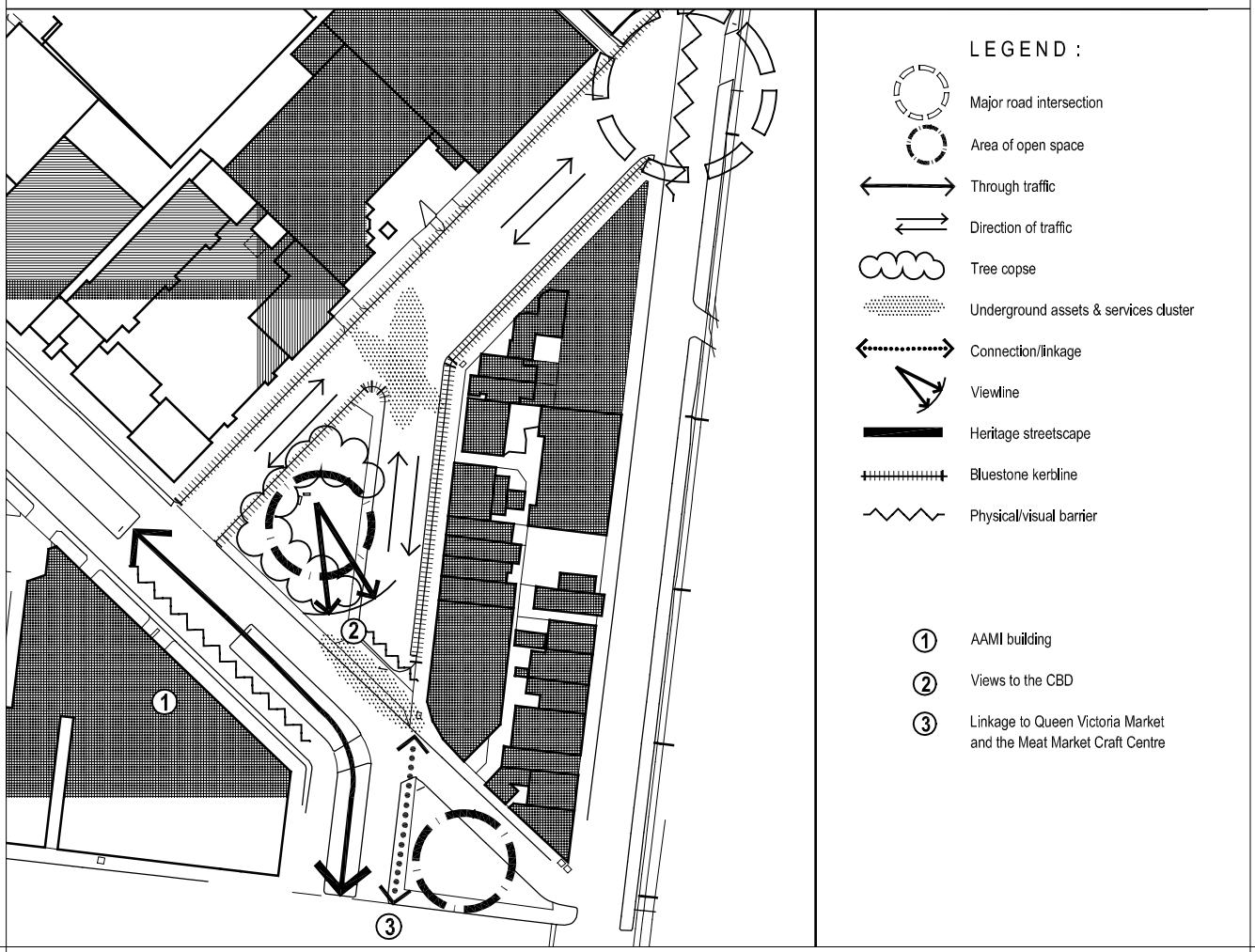
Site 4: **Bedford Street Reserve**

Existing Conditions



The Bedford Street Reserve comprises two triangles of "left over" space. These are formed where the main North Melbourne street pattern meets the Flemington Road grid. The site is grassed and contains several mature trees. It also offers good views towards the Central City. Bedford Reserve becomes more important as new residential developments occur in the surrounding blocks. However, although the open space is attractive and strategically located, it is too small to be very useful. Unless the area is extended, or the triangles merged, opportunities for recreational use and landscape improvements are extremely limited. Extensions to the reserve may be possible. The surrounding streets carry mainly local traffic, and they are wider than necessary. Though there is heavy demand for on-street parking, potential exists for some asphalt to be converted to green open space.

Site Analysis



Detailed Sit Analysis

Spatial character

- The reserve contains two triangular open spaces.
- The larger northern triangle is enclosed on two sides by two-storey residential fabric. The built edge of Courtney Street is similar in scale, but it is dominated by the long blank wall of the AAMI facility.
- The smaller southern triangle is more open, and is exposed to traffic noise from Peel Street and Queensberry Street.

Existing landscape

- The northern triangle contains a collection of mature specimen trees. However, landscape in the southern space is less established. This area is grassed and contains just a few small trees and shrubs.
- The reserve is valuable as a visual amenity. However, it contains a single park bench and does not invite use.
- The northern end of Bedford Street is dominated by a wide expanse of asphalt.

Views and linkages

- The reserve is a short walk from the North Melbourne Meat Market Craft Centre and the Queen Victoria Market.
- The reserve offers good views of the Central City skyline.

Heritage

- The local streetscape is ungraded.
- The built-up edges of Bedford and Capel Street have bluestone kerbs and channels. Proposed open space improvements have minimal impact on these features.

Traffic Management

- Bedford Street should carry local traffic only. Engineering Services plans to re-configure the intersection of Bedford and Peel to restrict access to and from the arterial. This work could be done in conjunction with streetscape improvements along Bedford, including parking and landscape within a new median.
- Capel Street was closed to prevent its use as a through route for non-local traffic. For this reason, the community is unlikely to support re-opening this street, even to one-way traffic.
- Capel Street was the subject of a detailed parking and traffic study in 1984. The Capel Street Action Plan should be acknowledged in further design investigations.
- Over a short distance, one-way streets do not provide sufficient deterrence to through traffic because motorists drive counter to the flow, either erroneously or deliberately (as a short-cut), creating safety problems. For this reason, Engineering Services would not support reopening either Capel Street or Courtney Street.
- Complex traffic management measures are already in place in this part of North Melbourne. If more street closures are introduced in the vicinity of Bedford Street, impacts on traffic flow need to be examined over a wide area. Conditions at this site also need to be assessed in relation to possible changes elsewhere. In some cases, there may be useful synergies between developments. For example, because open space improvements and traffic calming are proposed for both ends of Courtney Street (at Sites 3 and 4), there is potential to substantially reduce the amount of through traffic on this route.
- Car carriers enter Bedford from Peel to access the AAMI facility on Courtney Street. There is a large gap in the Courtney Street median to accommodate this manoeuvre.

Parking

- Parking is in heavy demand because the site is close to the North Melbourne Meat Market Craft Centre and the Queen Victoria Market, as well as multi-storey residential developments at the corner of Courtney and Bedford Streets.

Services

- Designers should identify the exact locations of sewers and cables for telecommunications or electricity. Adjacent to the reserve, services are concentrated at the Bedford/Capel intersection. Services are also clustered opposite the reserve, at the intersection of Capel and Courtney.

Community and stakeholder response

- Feedback from the public suggests a preference for Example 4A.
- The community's principal objective for this location is to reduce vehicle numbers and speeds. Extending the open space was rated as the second most important priority.
- Additional trees, seating and open lawn areas are the most commonly suggested improvements to the park's amenities.
- The community does not support a building development at this site.
- The North and West Melbourne Association supports construction of new or extended medians in Bedford Street and Courtney Street. However, the association requests that any further changes be the subject of a more detailed traffic study. The group is also concerned about the visual consequences of proposals to realign kerbs. The group believes this alteration will have a negative impact on streetscape and will detract from the area's traditional character.

Costs and funding

- Improvements at Bedford Reserve are cheaper than those at any other site.
- Costs estimates for these proposals vary from $92 000 to $160 000. Example 4C is the least expensive option because few streets are realigned. Example 4B is slightly less costly than Example 4A because the southern triangle of open space is left relatively unchanged.

Design Principles and Objectives

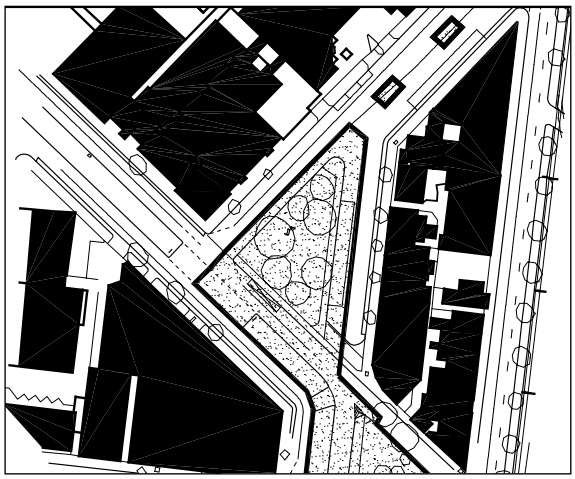
Street layout

- Remove on-street parking from Capel Street and reduce the width of the carriageway. Compensate by providing new parking spaces within the Bedford Street median.

Landscape

- Plant a dense group of trees on the smaller southern reserve. Use these to distance the main open space from traffic on Peel Street and Queensberry Street.

Development Options



Example 4A - Estimated cost: $160 000

- Expand the reserve by closing Courtney Street to eastbound traffic between Bedford and Capel. Also, close Capel Street to southbound traffic between Courtney and Queensberry. Incorporate one side of each street in the open space so as to merge the two triangles into a single entity. Remove the existing road closure at Capel and Coventry, and divert eastbound traffic from Courtney Street along Bedford and Capel towards Peel.
- Expand the reserve by narrowing Bedford Street between Courtney and Peel, and also by narrowing Capel Street between Bedford and Courtney. Extend the edges of the reserve out into these roadways. Introduce one-way traffic: north on Bedford Street and south on the narrowed section of Capel Street.
- Introduce a new median with trees and parking on Bedford Street between Capel and Peel. Extend the existing median with trees and parking on Courtney Street.

Advantages

- greatest extension to open space
- joins triangles into a single entity

Disadvantages

- long detour for eastbound traffic on Courtney
- restricted access to AAMI site
- loss of short-term parking (12 spaces)
- prevents access to Queensberry/Peel intersection

Example 4B - Estimated cost: $150 750

- Retain the two triangles as separate open space entities. Remove the existing road closure at Capel and Courtney, and introduce southbound traffic on Capel between Bedford and Queensberry.
- Consider erecting a building on the smaller southern triangle of open space. Use this building to separate the main part of the reserve from Peel Street. Investigate using the ground floor of this building for community services or other public amenities.
- Otherwise as for Example 4A.

Advantages

- significant extension to open space
- consolidates space around larger triangle

Disadvantages

- long detour for eastbound traffic on Courtney
- risk of re-opening through route for non local traffic along Capel
- restricted access to AAMI site
- loss of short-term parking (12 spaces)

Example 4C - Estimated cost: $92 000

- Retain two-way traffic on Courtney Street.
- Retain two-way traffic on Capel, and retain the road closure at Capel and Courtney.
- Otherwise as for Example 4B.

Advantages

- little disruption to existing traffic patterns
- minimal loss of parking (2 spaces)

Disadvantages

- smallest addition to open space
- open space remains fragmented

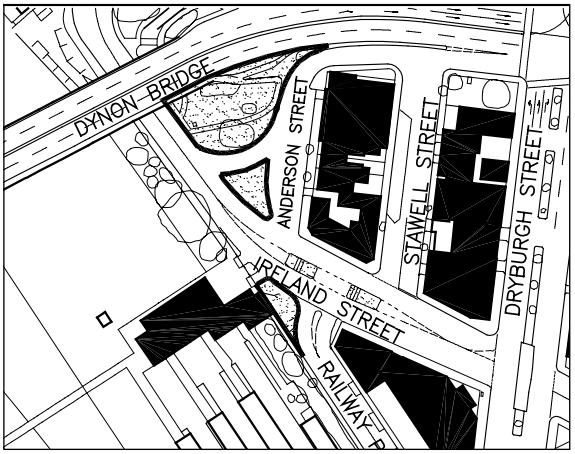
Summary of Findings

There is little potential to change the character or use of this reserve without major disruptions to local traffic patterns. Proposals for the Bedford Street site prompted little support from the community. Accordingly, they deserve a low priority in relation to other open space opportunities throughout North and West Melbourne.

Under these circumstances, Example 4C is preferred because it offers modest improvements in return for a relatively small investment. In this proposal, the larger reserve is extended into Bedford and Capel. But two-way traffic is retained on both streets. In terms of area, the open space gains are limited. However, the triangle becomes more inviting and is made more accessible from surrounding residential frontages. Uninterrupted expanses of asphalt disappear, and vehicle speeds are reduced. Yet the negative impacts on traffic circulation and parking are reduced to acceptable levels, especially if new car parks are provided in the proposed Bedford Street median.

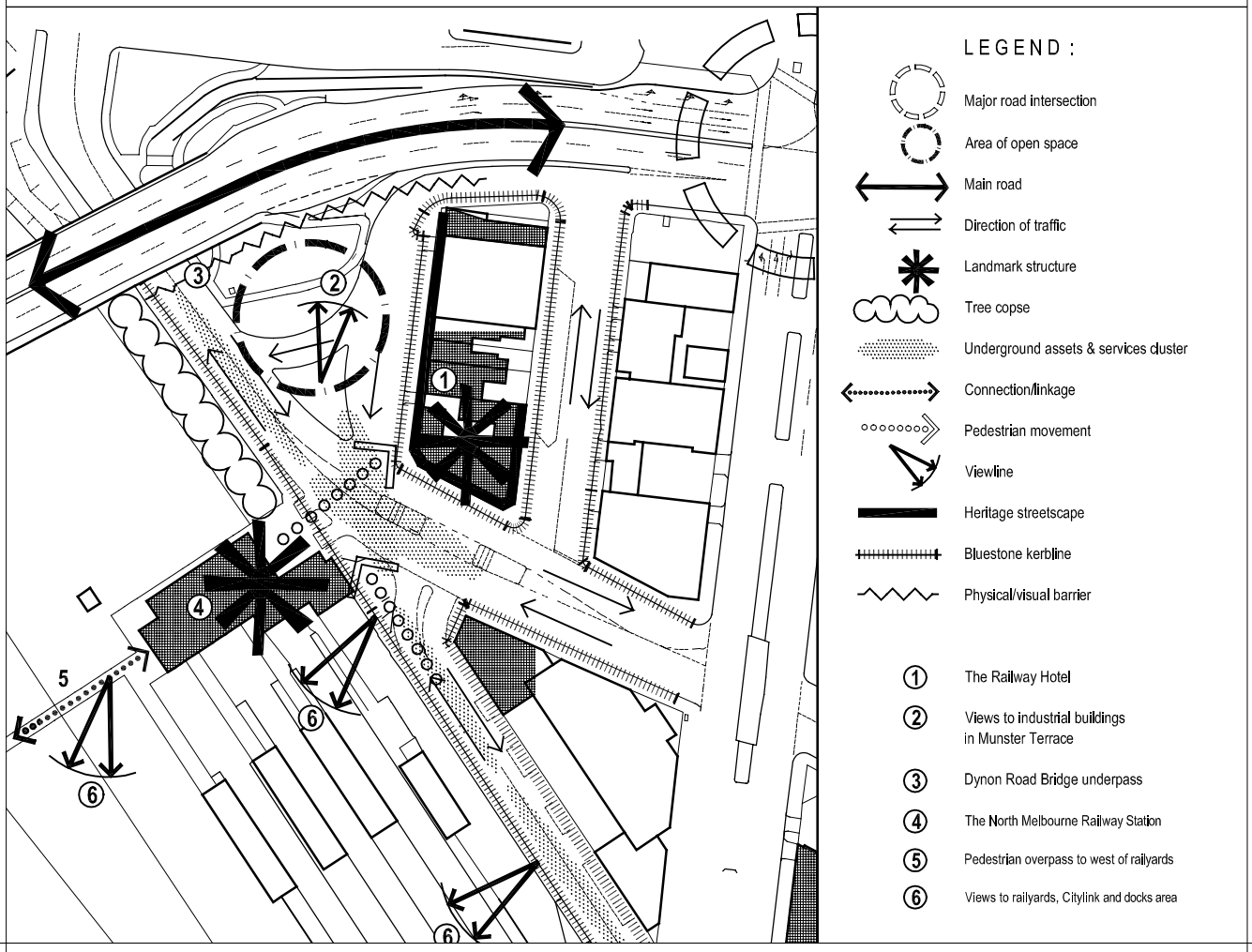
Site 5: **North Melbourne Railway Station**

Existing Conditions



North Melbourne Railway Station is an important public transport node. However, the surrounding streets provide a poor environment for pedestrians. The traffic on Dynon Bridge is noisy, and the space beneath this structure is dark and unattractive. Heavy vehicles travel along Railway Place and through the underpass on their way to the Laurens Street industrial area. The bridge embankment has been landscaped. But the site is too steep and too exposed for recreational use. As a result, there is little street activity in the area. Most importantly, there is no obvious pathway from the station to the centre of North Melbourne. Despite these problems, the area has potential to become a destination rather than just a through-route. A sizeable open space is formed at the intersection of Anderson Street, Ireland Street and Railway Place. It is centred on a local landmark: the Railway Hotel. On the opposite side of this space, the land falls away to provide a sweeping vista of Docklands and Footscray. If a more pedestrian-friendly place can be created here, rail commuters may be encouraged to stop and enjoy the view.

Site Analysis



Detailed Site Analysis

Spatial character

- This site suffers from poor spatial definition. The three-storey Railway Hotel provides the only strong built edge to the area. The station has only a diminutive presence at street level and the two-storey commercial building between Ireland Street and Railway Place has no active frontages.
- Complex changes in levels also detract from the space. The ground rises steeply at the bridge embankment and also falls away sharply where Railway Avenue passes beneath Dynon Road.
- Opposite sides of the open space present different kinds of amenity. The “north” side, adjacent to the hotel, offers a more active built-up perimeter. The “south” side is contiguous with the station. It is sunnier, easier to consolidate as a pedestrian area and potentially it has better views out over the escarpment.

Existing landscape

- A very large area of asphalt occurs at the intersection of Anderson Street, Ireland Street and Railway Place. The existing carriageways here are wider than necessary.
- The open space is fragmented, and landscaped areas are restricted to traffic islands or small isolated pockets.
- The existing landscaped area beside the Dynon Road Bridge has little value as open space. It is steep, and it is exposed to traffic noise.
- Railway Place and the railway embankment are potential recreational assets. There is already one observation deck along the edge of this street, but there is scope to improve the streetscape and enhance the appearance of the escarpment.
- There are no street trees along Railway Avenue. However, the railway embankment is planted with an eclectic collection of trees and shrubs. The overall effect is untidy and incoherent, but there are some valuable individual specimens, such as the large ficus that stands just north of the station building.
- Part of the railway station frontage is occupied by a disused loading dock. The area is currently used as parking for railway staff.

Views and linkages

- Pedestrian connections from the railway station to the rest of North and West Melbourne are very poor. There are no direct sightlines between Railway Place and, for example, Miller Street and there are few way-finding clues for how to get there.
- To the east, there are views along Railway Place and Ireland Street. However, neither of these views helps to connect the site with the rest of North Melbourne.
- Beneath the bridge, sightlines continue only a short distance before being terminated at the intersection of Laurens Place and Railway Avenue. Because these streets meet at an obtuse angle there is a sense of continuity around the corner. But the visual closure combines with a drop in the ground level and the dark undercroft of the bridge to create an uninviting backdrop to the open space.
- Views to the north are blocked by the Dynon Road Bridge, but the upper levels of industrial buildings are visible above the embankment. Their presence recalls the fact that Anderson Street once continued north to meet Munster Terrace.
- This site offers a clear sense of the West Melbourne escarpment, the topographic discontinuity that marks a natural edge to the city. The elevated ground offers expansive views to the west, taking in an industrial area that includes rail marshalling yards, City Link and much of the port.
- Within the station, a pedestrian overbridge provides access to platforms and to the western side of the railway tracks. At present, the far side of the bridge is an industrial wasteland. But in future, the bridge could provide a valuable connection with Victoria Harbour along one of Dockland’s least accessible edges. This prospect is supported in submissions from the community.
- It is possible to bring “green linkages” into this area by introducing planted medians to Ireland Street, Stawell Street and Miller Street.

Heritage

- The Railway Hotel is a local landmark with heritage significance. Its presence gives identity and character to surrounding public open space.
- Buildings between Anderson and Stawell streets also have heritage value, especially the car repair workshop with its distinctive roof trusses.
- Existing bluestone kerb and channel pitchers are in good condition. If streets are realigned, these features should be reinstated.

Traffic Management

- Heavy vehicles travel through the site on their way to and from the Laurens Street industrial area. There are alternative routes. However, any reduction of through-traffic on Anderson Street, Ireland Street or Railway Place could divert commercial vehicles onto Queensberry Street where residents would be affected.
- If an acceptable alternative route can be found for heavy traffic, it is possible to close Anderson Street or restrict access to local vehicles.
- The station needs good drop-off facilities. The current road layout allows motorists to make u-turns after leaving or collecting passengers.
- Two-way traffic needs to be maintained on Stawell Street because there is no right turn out onto Miller Street.
- Introducing a sharper bend into Ireland Street and reducing the width of the carriageway would have the beneficial effect of discouraging fast through-traffic.

Parking

- On-street parking will be lost if Anderson Street is closed. However, this could be offset by introducing angle parking to Ireland Street.
- There may be scope for some public parking beneath a new building on the bridge embankment. Changes in ground level could help to provide vehicle access to this site.

Services

- Designers should identify the exact locations of water rmains, manholes, stormwater, gas lines and telephone or electricity cables. Services are concentrated at the intersection of Railway/Ireland/Anderson adjacent to the station. Services are also buried beneath Railway Place between Dryburgh and Laurens.

Community and stakeholder response

- Increased open space is the community's highest priority here. Reductions in traffic and vehicle speeds were next in importance, followed by provision of on-street parking.
- Bayside Trains, Vic Roads and local residents all have an interest in this site. For this reason, lengthy negotiations will be probably necessary before more detailed development plans can be finalised.
- Community Development has expressed strong interest in the bridge embankment as a site for public housing. The land is in public ownership, and there are few competing uses. The area is well served by public transport. A rooming house or an aged care facility in this location would fit unobtrusively into the surrounding residential and commercial fabric.
- The North and West Melbourne Residents Association gives a high priority to open space expansion at this site. However the association is concerned about the potential for diversion of heavy traffic, lost access to Anderson Street properties and changes to the historic streetscape of Stawell Street. The group does not support a building on the bridge embankment. Instead, it favours a pedestrian underpass beneath the Dynon Road Bridge approach.
- Building development is not popular with the community at large. Feedback suggests alternative methods for reducing the negative impact of the Dynon Road Bridge such as painting the structure and planting more large trees on the embankment.

Costs and funding

- The budget estimates for improvements at Site 5 are between $600 000 and $750 000. Costs are higher here than at any other location. This results from extensive kerb realignments and the large area of hard landscape involved.
- A further sum of approximately $25 000 should be included as a contingency to pay for disruptions to overhead and underground services.
- These estimates do not include costs and revenues associated with any building development.
- The DHS has funds available for a social housing development in North or West Melbourne.
- The Inner City Social Housing Company and the Ecumenical Society are potential partners in a social housing project.

Design Principles and Objectives

Street layout

- Re-configure Ireland Street and Railway Place to create a larger pedestrian area on the northern side of the street.

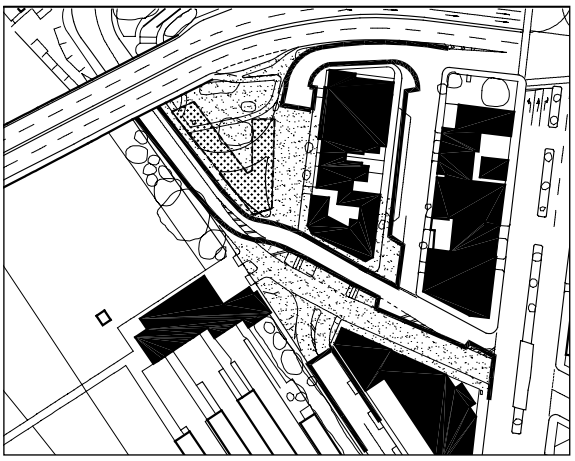
Built form

- Place a building on the Dynon Road Bridge embankment.
- Include social housing as a component of the development.
- Use the new building to improve conditions within the new public open space: block traffic noise, screen views of the overpass and reduce the presence of the bridge undercroft.
- Use the building to give a coherent shape to the new public open space.
- Establish a sympathetic relationship between the new building and the Railway Hotel.
- Provide active frontages at ground level, especially along the edges of the new public open space.
- Express human inhabitation on the upper levels of the street elevations, and encourage passive surveillance of the public open space.
- Consider using the housing development as the basis for a design competition that showcases ESD principles on a difficult urban infill site.
- Provide natural light and ventilation to all living spaces. Capture winter sun and minimise summer heat gain. Minimise the intrusion of noise from the overpass and the rail lines.
- Consider extensions to the station including building over the existing loading bay and car park.
- Consider building along parts of the railway embankment and within the air space above the rail lines.

Landscape

- Ensure there is no reduction in the total area of landscaped public open space.
- Attempt to retain the mature eucalyptus trees on the Dynon Bridge embankment.
- Consider using the railway loading dock area for an extension to the public open space, or as the site for an addition to the station building.
- Consider planting a ficus tree within the new open space to match the existing specimen on the railway embankment.
- Improve the streetscape of Railway Place by planting street trees. But do not create a continuous barrier to views across the escarpment. Consider using widely spaced groups of tall trees to frame views and make the change in ground levels more visible.

Development Options



Example 5A - Estimated cost: $680 750

- Create a new pedestrian plaza by closing Railway Place at its connection with Ireland Street, and also by narrowing Ireland Street between Stawell Street and Railway Place.
- Extend the plaza along Anderson Street by closing this street's connections with Ireland Street and Railway Avenue.
- Erect a triangular building on the Dynon Bridge embankment. Use the new building to block views of the bridge and reduce traffic noise. Also, use this building to define the edge of the new plaza, and to centre this open space on the North Melbourne Railway Station and the Railway Hotel.

Advantages

- viable building footprint
- strongest community support
- large pedestrian areas
- sunny aspect
- lowest estimated cost

Disadvantages

- 16-18 car parks lost
- confusing disconnected streets
- little active frontage to main plaza
- loss of direct access to Ireland via Railway

Example 5B - Estimated cost: $592 000

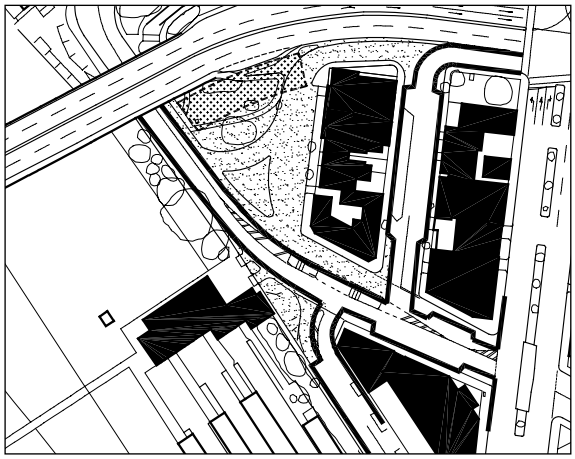
- Retain a connection between Anderson Street and Ireland Street.
- Otherwise as for Example 5A.

Advantages

- viable building footprint
- only 2 car parks lost
- retains access to Anderson St properties
- sunny aspect

Disadvantages

- smallest consolidated area of open space
- little active frontage to main plaza
- loss of direct access to Ireland via Railway



Example 5C - Estimated cost: $725 000

- Create a new pedestrian plaza by closing Anderson Street between Ireland Street, Railway Place and Stawell Street.
- Extend the plaza by narrowing Ireland Street between Stawell Street and Railway Place, and also by narrowing Railway Place between Dynon Bridge and Ireland Street.
- Erect a crescent-shaped building on the Dynon Bridge embankment. Use the new building to block views of the bridge and reduce traffic noise. Also, use this building to define the edge of the new plaza, and to direct pedestrians towards Miller Street.

Advantages

- largest uninterrupted open space
- active edges to open space
- connected street layout

Disadvantages

- smaller building footprint
- south-facing frontage to open space
- $100K retaining wall required at building site
- loss of access to business and residential properties in Anderson
- loss of parking in Anderson Street

Summary of Findings

Improvements on this site did not attract strong community support. Nevertheless, the potential benefits for social housing, public transport and public open space combine to suggest a high priority for development here.

The preferred option is a hybrid, matching the building footprint from Examples A and B with the street layout from Example C.

A “V-shaped” building at the corner of Anderson Street and Ireland Street helps to frame a sunny level open space between the station and the Railway Hotel. This building form also permits a larger footprint, and retains an open buffer zone between the new structure and the bridge. The existing eucalyptus tree could become a feature of this “back yard” space.

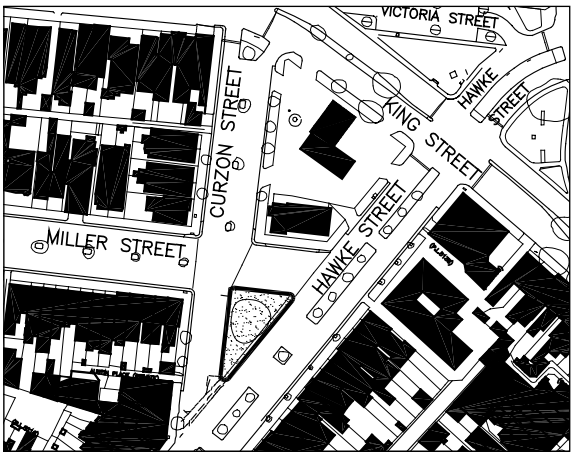
A widened pedestrian zone should extend along the northern side of Ireland Street. Together with the closure of Anderson Street, this will create a public “plaza” with an active built-up frontage.

Two-way traffic should be channelled into a narrower carriageway along the southern side of Ireland Street. This alignment maximises pedestrian space on the northern side of the road reserve. It also allows a drop-off zone immediately outside the station, and permits an efficient one-way connection between Ireland Street and a proposed parking area in Railway Place. Because there are no cul-de-sacs, the whole circulation layout is more legible.

This development option depends on providing access from Stawell Street to the Anderson Street properties.

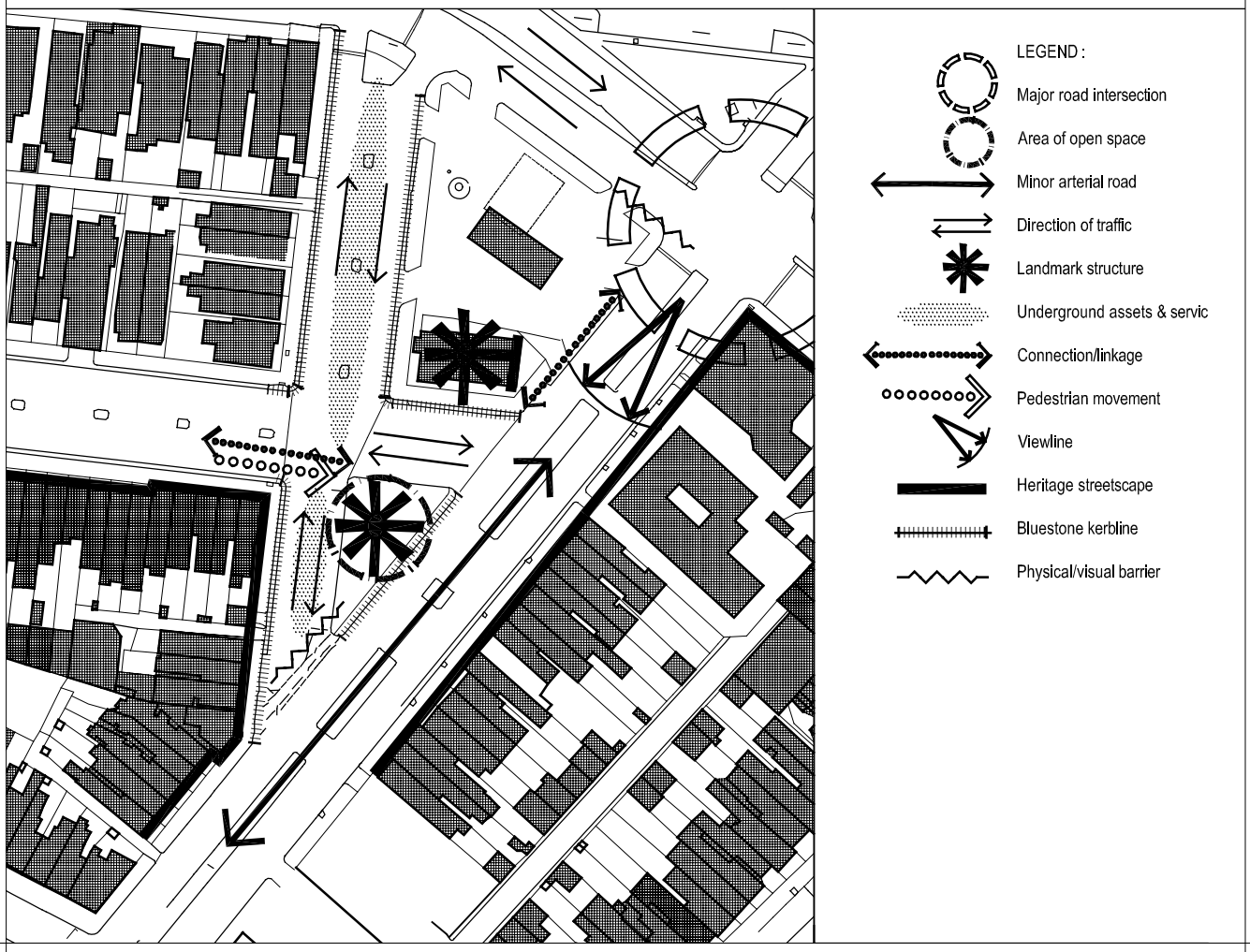
Site 6: **Curzon Street Reserve**

Existing Conditions



This tiny reserve is located at the intersection of Curzon Street and Hawke Street, close to the heart of North Melbourne. The small triangle of grass accommodates a magnificent elm tree, but very little else. The reserve is part of a much larger open space that extends beyond Miller Street to King Street. Some of this land is privately owned. But a sizeable area is asphalted and occupied by roadways. It may be possible to increase public use and enjoyment of this space by closing or narrowing some of these thoroughfares. If such improvements occur, a sizeable new park could become a gateway to the Errol Street shopping precinct.

Site Analysis



Detailed Site Analysis

Spatial character

- Sites 6 and 7 are part of a much larger open space with ill-defined edges. The two small public reserves are visually contiguous with surrounding streets and intersections. In the centre of this expanse is a service station. The diminutive building on this site fails to partition or focus the surrounding area. As a result, it is unclear whether the two reserves are discrete places or a single spatial entity.
- Strong built edges are confined to Victoria Street and Errol Street. These are remote from Site 6, though they provide effective containment along two sides of Site 7.
- The ground falls appreciably towards the south-west. This slope and the absence of a substantial built edge along Curzon and Miller mean there is no obvious edge to the open space, especially in views from the direction of Errol and Victoria.
- In this context, the bungalow housing the Baptist Church and the large elm tree south of Miller Street appear as prominent free-standing objects.

Views and linkages

- Errol Street is the principal focus for community activity and identity within North and West Melbourne.
- This site could form part of a "green link" between the North Melbourne Railway Station and Errol Street. Miller Street provides the greater part of this route. It is already planted with street trees and has a landscaped median. The Curzon Street reserve could complete the connection with a safe convenient pedestrian pathway.
- Hawke Street provides good views towards Docklands and Moonee Ponds Creek.
- Victoria Street provides views east towards the city.

Landscape

- There is a very large elm tree in the small triangle of open space below Miller. This provides a local landmark, visible from as far away as the Errol Street shops.
- South of Roden, King Street contains rows of regularly spaced trees along its edges and its median. These are seen to advantage because of the street's curvature. However, the pattern breaks down at the northern end of King Street where it approaches Curzon and Victoria.

Heritage

- Curzon, Hawke and Miller are classified as Level 2 streetscapes.
- Curzon Street has bluestone kerbs and channels. These should be retained or reinstated.
- The front portion of the bungalow on the Baptist Church property is listed as a heritage feature.
- The Baptist Church has occupied this site for 140 years. A bluestone church stood on the site of the service station. This was constructed in 1862 and demolished in the 1960's to make way for roading improvements.

Traffic management

- King Street is an arterial road as well as a declared Main Road. It carries four lanes of fast through traffic. Although there are pedestrian crossings at its intersections with Curzon and Hawke, King Street inhibits pedestrian access between Sites 6 and 7.
- South of its intersection with Victoria and King, Curzon Street is very quiet, and is used mainly for local access and parking. However, this section of Curzon Street should continue to carry two-way traffic, as one-way flow would force local residents to make extensive detours.
- Heavy non-local traffic usage could develop if southbound vehicles on Curzon Street are permitted to cross King and continue directly towards Miller.
- The Baptist Church needs good vehicle access for elderly and disabled members of the congregation.

Parking

- Parking is in heavy demand at this site. This is a particular concern for the local resident and business community. Errol Street traders and shoppers park vehicles in Miller Street because it provides the closest area of four-hour parking.
- Open space improvements could lead to the loss of 22 car parks on Curzon Street. However, alternative spaces could be provided within the Hawke Street median.
- If building development occurs on the Baptist Church property, it may be possible to incorporate some public parking.
- Parking requirements on this site need to be assessed in relation to the existing Council-owned car park located further north on Curzon Street. If the Curzon Street lot is developed as a multi-level facility, on-street parking could possibly be reduced in the Miller Street area (see also Site 7).
- The Baptist Church needs some easily accessible on-street parking for elderly and disabled members of the congregation.

Services

- Designers should identify the exact locations of gas pipelines and electricity cables. These services are concentrated along both sides of Curzon Street between Hawke and Victoria.

Community and stakeholder response

- Proposals for Curzon Street prompted the largest community response in the survey. Feedback demonstrates overwhelming support for extensions to the present reserve.
- The community would also like to see reductions in vehicle numbers and speeds. They did not identify parking as an important issue.
- There is strong support from the public for a children's playground in this location.
- The North Melbourne Association supports the closure of Miller Street between Curzon and Hawke. However, the association does not support further restrictions to traffic along Curzon Street. They are concerned that valuable parking spaces will be lost here. They also believe that the character of the street will be compromised if kerbs are realigned and if indented parking bays are introduced.
- The association recommends deferring a decision about Curzon Street until the future of the service station site is known.
- Errol Street traders support open space extensions at Sites 6 and 7. However, they want the current number of car parks to be maintained.
- The local Baptist Church controls all the land within the Curzon/Miller/Hawke/King block. The Church occupies the brick bungalow at the corner of Hawke and Miller, and leases the remainder of the site to the service station operator.
- The Church favours its current site, not because of sentimental associations or prominence but because it is strategically located at a distance from other churches.
- The Church has recently built a meeting room at the rear of the bungalow. Their minister normally occupies the house itself. However, church deacons would not rule out moving to a different site if suitable accommodation could be found or built elsewhere. A second small meeting room would be beneficial.
- The service station lease expires in September 2002. The operator has expressed interest in purchasing the site.
- The Baptist Church is not willing to have a public discussion about the merits of including their land in a future open space. They feel that widespread knowledge of this proposal could generate pressure on them to sell. This makes it difficult to canvas public opinion about the merits of acquiring church land to extend the reserve.
- In private discussions, the church left open the possibility of entering into some kind of deal with the Council. A lease is more likely than outright sale, as the church wishes to keep its long-term options open.
- As an alternative to land acquisition, the Council could negotiate with the Baptist Church to ensure that building development produces a favourable relationship to adjacent public open space.
- Parks and Recreation regard this as an attractive site for a park because of its size and proximity to Errol Street, and because it offers "blank slate" for a new landscape design. Nevertheless, they assign a low priority to improvements here because of the difficulty and cost associated with acquiring the Baptist Church site.

Costs and funding

- The cost estimate for improvements at this site is $210 000. Most of the expense is associated with realigning kerbs and introducing new paving.
- The market value of the Baptist Church property has not been assessed.

Design Principles and Objectives

Street layout

- Narrow the intersection of Curzon and King to provide a single lane in each direction. Restrict entry into Curzon Street to a left turn off King. Avoid increasing non-local traffic usage by preventing southbound vehicles on Curzon Street from crossing King and continuing towards Miller.
- Provide bike lanes on both sides of Curzon Street between King and Miller. If angle parking is introduced to this section of the street, provide a generous separation between the rear of the parked vehicles and the cycleway. Alternatively, include a bike path within the reserve.
- Introduce additional two-hour car parks to the Hawke Street median. Consider converting some Miller Street parking spaces to short-term use.

Built form

- The site is exposed to traffic on two frontages. An open space along King Street would not be an inviting environment for pedestrians, though it would provide a visual amenity for passing motorists. Under these circumstances, introducing a built edge to King and Hawke may be an appropriate treatment for the Baptist Church site. A building frontage would provide better spatial definition at the broad King/Hawke/Victoria intersection. Landscape might be limited to a more sheltered zone at the centre of the block and the along the Curzon Street frontage.
- These objectives need to be assessed in relation to sunlight access. A built edge along King could insulate the open space from traffic noise, but it could also overshadow the reserve and a present a south-facing elevation to public or semi-public areas. Building along Hawke Street provides less effective protection from traffic. But it preserves a northern aspect for the centre of the block.
- Site planning also needs to take account of the visual relationship between Sites 6 and 7. Building along King Street will separate the reserves into two distinct places. Building along Hawke Street could enable the two spaces to appear as a single entity.
- If the church site is acquired, the minister's house and meeting room could be retained and would be useful for community services accommodation.

Streetscape

- Continue "boulevard" style planting north along King Street to the intersection with Curzon and Victoria. Keep street trees at least 18 metres from street corners, or set trees back from the street edge in order to maintain sightlines to traffic lights.
- If the Baptist Church property is acquired and Sites 6 and 7 are developed as a single open space, vary the streetscape to indicate that King Street passes through a reserve. For example, use the street tree pattern as the basis for formal planting layouts on either side of the roadway. Alternatively, treat King Street as a "cut" through parkland. In this case, omit some street trees to allow views into informal landscapes on either side of the roadway. Use either treatment to unify Sites 6 and 7.

Park landscape

- Record the existence of the old Baptist Church. Consider using the demolished church as part of the landscape theme.

Development Option

Example 6A - Estimated cost $210 000

- Expand the reserve by closing Miller Street between Curzon and Hawke.
- Expand the reserve by closing Curzon Street at Miller rather than Hawke. Provide access to Curzon Street properties via a new cul-de-sac off Hawke Street.
- Expand the reserve by narrowing Curzon Street between King and Miller. Incorporate the median and the eastern side of this street in the open space. Retain on-street parking and two-way traffic along the narrowed section of Curzon Street.

Advantages

- significant extension to public open space
- no overall loss of parking
- potentially phase one of staged development

Disadvantages

- fails to make a strong connection with Site 7
- circuitous local access

Summary of Findings

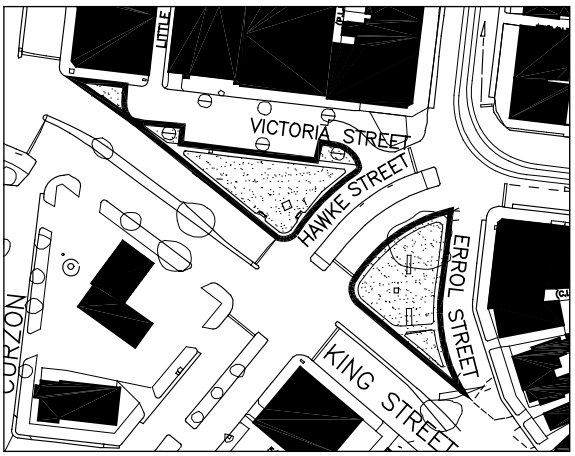
Site 6 is the most popular location for open space improvements. These could enhance the appearance of several prominent intersections and create a substantial recreational amenity close to North and West Melbourne's "village centre". A new park at Curzon Street would also serve a wide residential area where open space reserves are scarce.

The full potential of this site can only be realised if the Baptist Church property is acquired. The church does not wish to sell. But they have not ruled out further negotiations with Council about the future of their land. Even if the property is offered to the City, its cost would be substantial (the market value of the land was not assessed in this feasibility study). Funds may be available from the open space contribution levied on local building developments. However, cost presents a serious obstacle to this proposal.

Beneficial extensions to the reserve are possible without the church land. If redundant sections of Curzon Street and Miller Street are closed, the area of open space can be quadrupled. These improvements should receive the highest priority. However, they should be treated as the first phase of a possible two-stage project. The work can be completed once the future of the Baptist Church property has been decided.

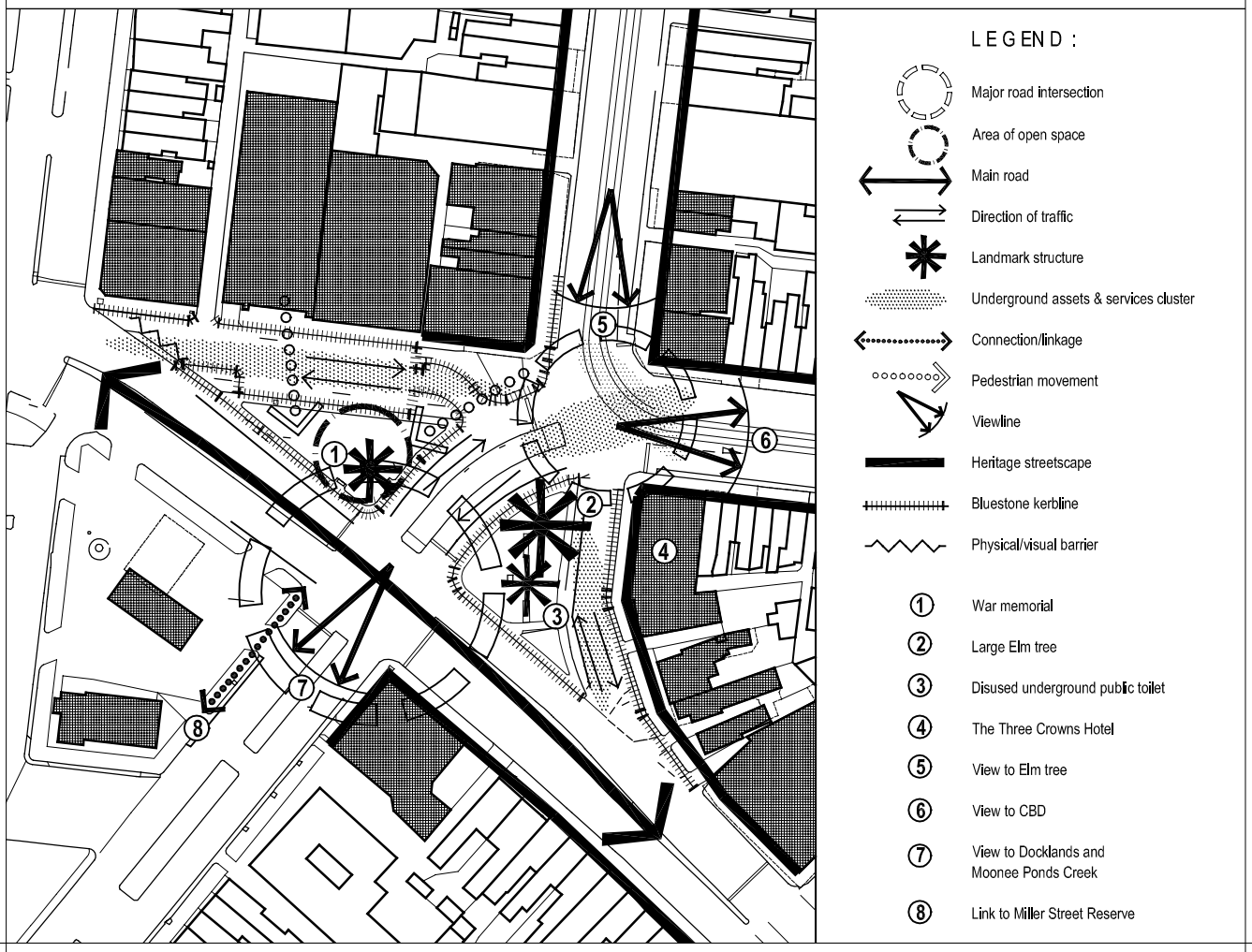
Site 7: **Errol Street Reserve**

Existing Conditions



Despite their diminutive size and fragmented shape, these two pockets of green provide a gateway to the Errol Street shopping precinct. The eastern side of the reserve contains a large elm tree. In summer, this terminates Errol Street with a canopy of foliage. The western side of the reserve is more open, and accommodates North Melbourne's war memorial. Fast through traffic is limited to Hawke Street, a four-lane thoroughfare that bisects the whole open space. Sections of Victoria Street and Errol Street have been closed to provide valuable short-term parking, and to limit the number of vehicles entering King Street. In spite of these changes, the two green triangles fail to appear accessible or inviting. On its own, neither area is large enough to attract or retain much activity. To make matters worse, the parking separates each landscaped zone from building frontages that could help to generate use. So, although the Errol Street reserve is centrally located, it often seems peripheral to the life of the shopping centre.

Site Analysis



Detailed Site Analysis

Spatial character

- Sites 6 and 7 are part of a much larger open space with ill-defined edges. The two small public reserves are visually contiguous with surrounding streets and intersections. In the centre of this expanse is a service station. The diminutive building on this site fails to partition or focus the area. As a result, it is unclear whether the reserves are two discrete places or a single spatial entity.
- Strong built edges are confined to Victoria Street and Errol Street. These are remote from Site 6, though they provide effective containment along two sides of Site 7.
- The ground falls appreciably towards the south-west. This slope and the absence of a substantial built edge along Curzon and Miller mean there is no clear edge to the open space when this is viewed from the corner of Errol and Victoria.
- The Errol Street reserve itself is subdivided into two small triangular open spaces. The northern triangle is larger than the southern one.
- Victoria Street is one of Melbourne's most important thoroughfares. In the east of the city, as Victoria Parade, the route has the status of a major boulevard. In the west, it provides the most recognisable link between North Melbourne and the CBD.
- However, beyond Errol, Victoria Street has much less significance. Emphasis shifts to Errol Street as a retail strip and a public transport route. King Street and Curzon Street have more importance as major arterials.
- Historically, the discontinuity was reinforced by the presence of the North Melbourne Asylum. This institution terminated the Victoria Street "axis" at Curzon Street. When the building was demolished in the early twentieth century, Victoria Street was continued west to meet Abbotsford and Dryburgh. However, the new section has a residential character. It resembles a local street rather than an extension of a major boulevard.
- Victoria Street is closed between Errol and Curzon. This section of the thoroughfare does not belong to either of the two characters described above. Instead, its parking bays and service lane appear to be appendages to King Street and parts of the large irregular space that encompasses the King/Hawke intersection.
- The "redundant" block of Victoria Street could develop its own identity as a shopping frontage, if local retail activity develops further.

Existing landscape

- The two triangles of open space are landscaped differently. As a result, visual connections between the areas are weak.
- The larger northern space is fragmented by service access and parking. Its layout discourages pedestrian access from the direction of Errol Street.
- Both spaces possess important civic artefacts. The northern triangle contains a war memorial. This monument is uncomfortably close to the edge of King Street. It is inaccessible and is poorly integrated with surrounding landscape.
- The southern triangle houses a disused underground public toilet. Its visible elements include wrought iron railings and an ornamented brick ventilation shaft. These have architectural and heritage value.
- A local community group has planted part of the southern triangle with shrubs. These have grown to the extent that they block sightlines across the space. As a landscape treatment, the shrubs are too dense and too complex for such a small area. They are also at odds with the more formal beds in the northern triangle.

Views and linkages

- Errol Street is the principal focus for community activity and identity within North and West Melbourne.
- This site could form part of a "green link" between the North Melbourne Railway Station and Errol Street. Miller Street provides the greater part of this route. It is already planted with street trees and has a landscaped median. Along with open space improvements at Curzon Street, the Errol Street reserve could complete the connection with a safe convenient pedestrian pathway.
- Hawke Street provides good views towards Docklands.
- Victoria Street provides views east towards the city.
- The Errol Street view shaft terminates at a large elm tree in the southern triangle of open space.

Heritage

- The Three Crowns Hotel at the corner of Errol and Victoria has a Level 1 heritage classification.
- A Level 2 heritage classification applies to streetscape along the northern side of Victoria Street and along both sides of Errol Street.
- Bluestone kerbs and channels occur along Errol Street, including the block between King and Victoria.
- The war memorial is a heritage feature. It is the focus of ceremonies on Anzac Day and other commemorative occasions.

Traffic

- Hawke Street must retain four traffic lanes. Narrowing its carriageway is unrealistic, even within the short section of roadway that connects Victoria and King. This being the case, it is desirable to keep the wide median in the centre of the street as a pedestrian refuge.
- The closed section of Victoria Street provides parking and service access to adjacent retail stores and the Errol Street shopping precinct. Vehicles enter and leave the area from Hawke Street where a median prevents right-hand turns. This arrangement is not ideal. Motorists' access is restricted, and pedestrians on Errol Street are isolated from the main area of open space.
- Victoria Street frontages need direct vehicle access. Some of these properties are not served by rear laneways. Little Curzon Street provides rear access to premises on the western side of the block, and this lane connects with Curzon Street. However, it contains a ninety-degree turn, and cannot be used by large vehicles.
- Victoria Street properties could be accessed via a shared vehicle/pedestrian zone. However, this kind of space is rare in Melbourne and there are concerns for pedestrian safety in such an environment. A detailed investigation is required to test its feasibility.
- The southernmost block of Errol Street can be closed to through traffic. However, access to adjoining properties must be maintained.

Parking

- Parking is heavily used by visitors to the Errol Street shopping precinct. The parking precinct in Victoria Street is particularly valuable because of its proximity to the shops. Although used by traders and patrons of the 3 Crowns Hotel, the smaller parking area at the southern end of Errol Street is generally less conveniently located. These spaces could be removed, but only if replacement parking is provided elsewhere.
- Parking requirements for the site as a whole need to be assessed in relation to the existing Council-owned car park located on Curzon Street. If the Curzon Street lot is developed as a multi-level facility, on-street parking could possibly be reduced in the vicinity of Errol and Victoria.
- However, this development would require a more direct pedestrian link between the car park and Errol Street, and the connection is difficult to achieve. It would need to cross the site of the present Commonwealth Bank building. Alternatively, it would result in the demolition of heritage buildings.
- Regardless of the total amount of parking available near Errol Street, Victoria Street businesses wish to have some spaces directly outside their premises. The warehouse-style buildings here are occupied by large-scale retailers selling bulky items. Short-term car parks are essential for this trade.

Services

- Designers should identify the exact locations of gas lines, stormwater pipes and electricity cables. These services are concentrated along Victoria Street, between Curzon and Errol. Services are also clustered at the intersection of Errol/Hawke/Victoria and at the southern end of Errol Street near its junction with King.

Community and stakeholder response

- Proposals for the Errol Street reserve prompted comparatively little response from the community. The public has not expressed a clear preference for any of the three development proposals.
- The North Melbourne Association supports expansion of the reserve. However, they do not regard improvements at this site to be a high priority. The association is opposed to any change in access to Errol Street between Victoria and King. They note that vehicle movements in this area have already been examined by Council. They regard the present circulation pattern as the safest option.
- The association supports construction of a mixed-use development on the Curzon Street car park site. In their view, this building could contain public parking, if pedestrian access to Errol Street can be provided.
- The local business community objects to any reduction in parking at this location. However, this interest group accepts that it is necessary to look at parking as a totality. Retailers would support the development of a multi-storey car park on Curzon Street. However, the management of this facility is a critical issue. Traders would like shoppers to be given free one-hour parking voucher with their purchases. Otherwise, the cost of parking is added to the cost of shopping in Errol Street.
- Parking aside, the business community supports efforts to provide a better park near Errol Street. They regard open space improvements as asset that will help to attract customers to the area.
- The war memorial is a very sensitive issue for some sectors of the community. Proposals to relocate this monument should be the subject of further consultation with RSL and other interested parties.
- Streetscape improvements were carried in this area in the early nineties. For this reason, it could be difficult to justify further changes.

Costs and funding

- Cost estimates for improvements at this site vary between $200 000 and $220 000. Example A is the cheapest development option, even though it delivers the largest area of open space. The other proposals are more expensive because they require longer runs of new kerbs and channels.

Design Principles and Objectives

Street layout

- Introduce a shared pedestrian/vehicle zone to the closed section of Victoria Street. Use this to accommodate service vehicles and a small amount of parking. Structure the space so that it is accessible to pedestrians and easily used for street activities.
- Provide vehicle access to this zone directly from King Street. Locate this entrance as close as possible to the Curzon Street intersection.

Built form

- Consider locating a new public toilet in the reserve.

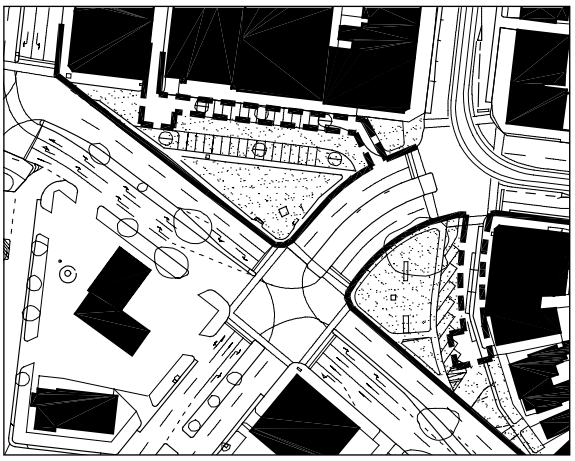
Streetscape

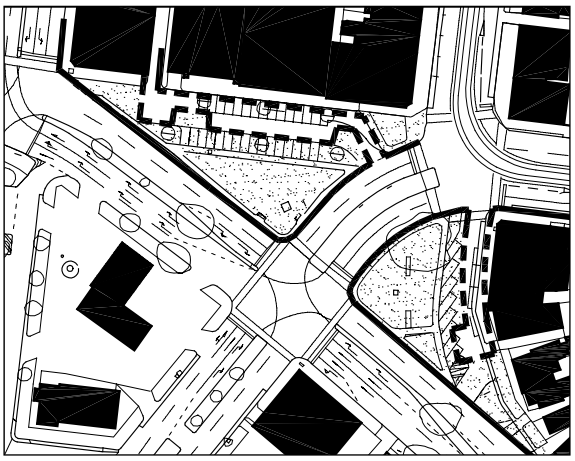
- Continue "boulevard" style planting north along King Street to the intersection with Curzon and Victoria. Keep street trees at least 18 metres from street corners, or set trees back from the street edge in order to maintain sightlines to traffic lights.
- If the Baptist Church property is acquired and Sites 6 and 7 are developed as a single open space, vary the streetscape to indicate that King Street passes through a reserve. For example, use the street tree pattern as the basis for formal planting layouts on either side of the roadway. Alternatively, treat King Street as a "cut" through parkland. In this case, omit some street trees to allow views into informal landscapes on either side of the roadway. Use either treatment to unify Sites 6 and 7.

Park landscape

- Devise a single comprehensive landscape treatment for both triangles. Include the Curzon Street reserve in this concept, and allow for the possible purchase of the Baptist Church site (see also Site 6).
- Consider planting a second elm tree in the reserve, to match the existing specimen in the southern open space triangle. Use the two trees to create a stronger "gateway" to the southern end of Errol Street.
- Consider emphasising the slope on the larger triangle of open space. Use the falls on the site to help to distance King Street traffic from the retail frontage along Victoria Street.
- Investigate moving the war memorial away from the edge of King Street. Keep the monument within the northern triangle of open space. But, aim to give it a more prominent and accessible location near the corner of Errol and Victoria. Fully integrate the memorial with the surrounding landscape, and provide a hard-paved area suitable for ceremonial gatherings.
- Consider including a fountain that produces "white noise" and helps to mask the sound of passing traffic.

Development Options





Example 7A - Estimated cost: $200 000

- Extend the eastern half of the reserve into the closed section of Errol Street. Remove on-street parking, and replace the existing access road with a shared zone for pedestrians and service vehicles. Retain vehicle access from Victoria Street.
- Extend the western half of the reserve into the closed section of Victoria Street. Remove on-street parking, and replace the existing access road with a shared zone for pedestrians and service vehicles. Retain vehicle access from Hawke Street.
- Ensure that removal of on-street parking is dependant upon the construction of a multi-level parking building at the site of the existing Curzon Street car park. Include pedestrian access to Errol Street as part of this development.

Advantages

- maximum area of open space
- built edge directly adjacent to open space
- improved pedestrian access

Disadvantages

- greatest loss of parking (43 spaces)
- restricted access to Victoria St properties
- potential vehicle/pedestrian conflict
- safety concerns for entry/exit of service trucks for the 3 Crowns Hotel

Example 7B - Estimated cost: $215 000

- Extend the western half of the reserve into the closed section of Victoria Street. Replace the existing car park and access road with a shared zone for pedestrians, service vehicles and a small number of short-term shopper car parks. Retain vehicle access from Hawke Street.
- Otherwise as for Example 7A.

Advantages

- extended open space
- improved pedestrian access

Disadvantages

- significant loss of parking (30 spaces)
- restricted access to Victoria St properties
- safety concerns for entry/exit of service trucks for the 3 Crowns Hotel

Example 7C - Estimated cost: $220 000

- Extend the western half of the reserve into the closed section of Victoria Street. Replace the existing car park and access road with a shared zone for pedestrians, service vehicles and a small number of short-term shopper car parks. Retain a dedicated service area at the southern end of Little Curzon Street. Provide vehicle access directly from King Street.
- Otherwise as for Example 7A.

Advantages

- better access to Victoria St properties
- better access to Errol St properties
- uninterrupted pedestrian access from Errol

Disadvantages

- significant loss of parking (30 spaces)
- safety concerns for entry/exit of vehicles from car-park area
- allows use of Lt. Curzon as through route by non-local traffic

Summary of Findings

The potential of this reserve depends on the future of Site 6 and the Curzon Street car park. For this reason, it is impossible to recommend a single development option.

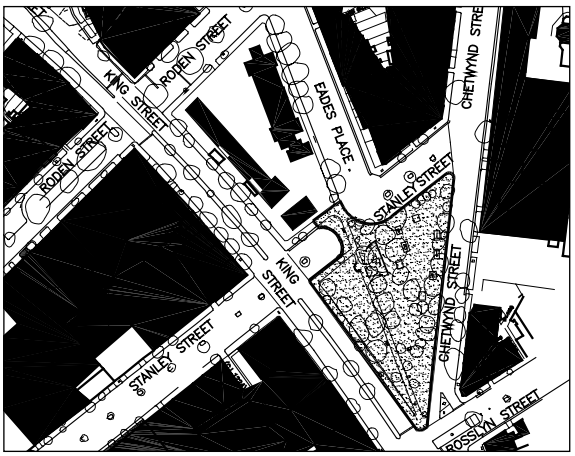
Car parking is the major obstacle to open space improvement. The pedestrian area can only be consolidated if parking is removed from Victoria Street. Yet such a move would be strongly opposed by the local business community. Under these circumstances, significant enhancements are unlikely unless the Council's Curzon Street car park is developed as a multi-level parking facility.

A completely new landscape will also be warranted if the Baptist Church property is acquired. In this case, Council's Curzon Street reserve will expand to become a substantial neighbourhood park with a frontage on King Street. Site 7 should be part of the landscape concept.

If neither of these initiatives proceeds, modest improvements to the local streetscape are still possible. These include extending street trees along King Street, relocating access to the Victoria Street car park and introducing a simpler, more open landscape to the southern triangle of open space. In addition, options for moving the war memorial could be investigated.

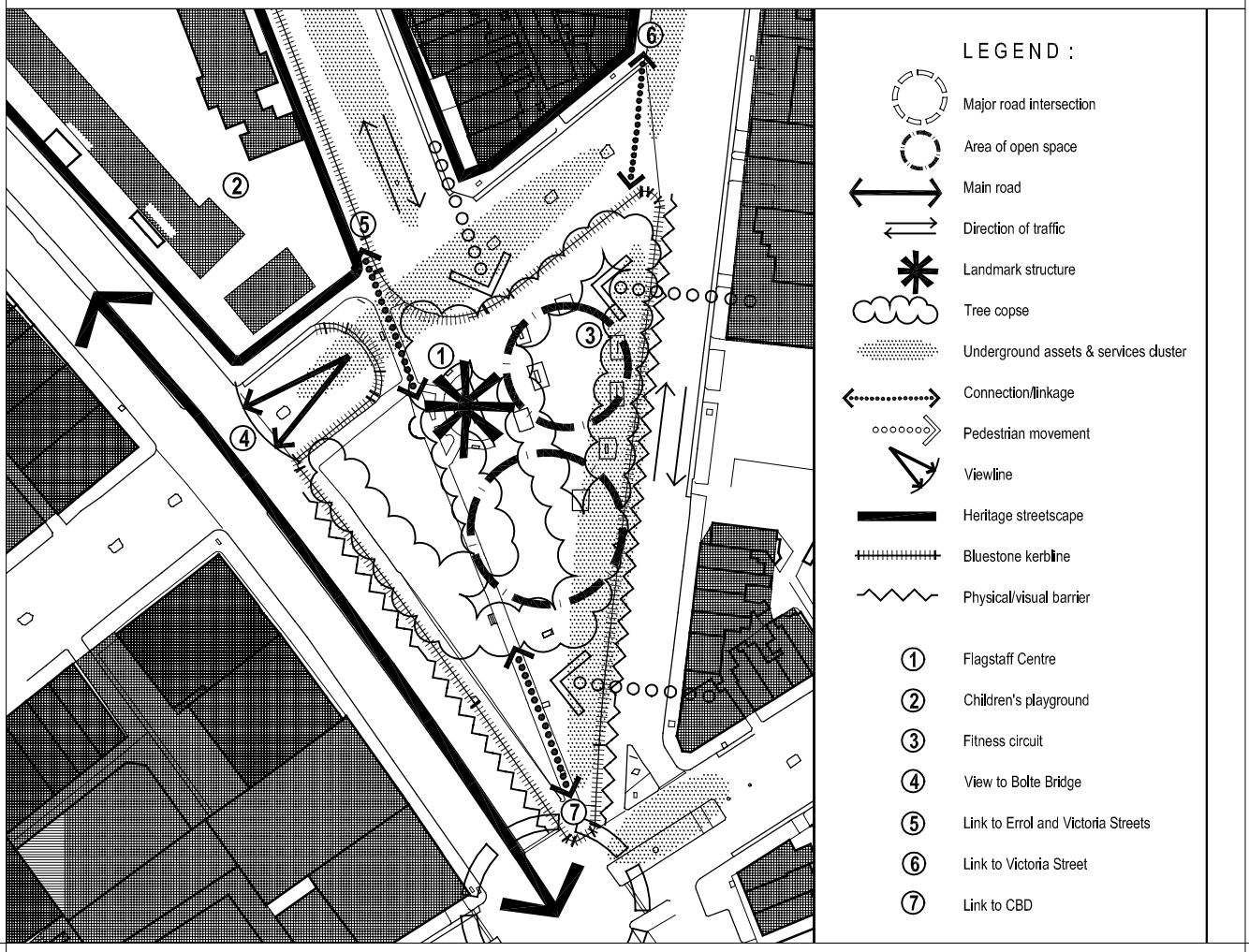
Site 8: **Eades Place Reserve**

Existing Conditions



Eades Reserve is already well developed as a neighbourhood park. It offers a fitness circuit and a children's play area as well as a large area of trees and grass. These amenities are a short distance from the Errol Street shops, and form part of a "green link" between Flagstaff Gardens and the centre of North Melbourne. The reserve also serves another useful purpose. It provides an effective buffer between King Street and the residential properties in Eades Place and Chetwynd Street. However, passing vehicles have a negative impact on the western edge of the open space. Here, traffic noise is intrusive, and an unsightly chain-link fence prevents park activities spilling onto the road. Because Chetwynd Street and Stanley Street are wider than necessary, it may be possible to extend Eades Reserve along its northern and eastern boundaries. This would create additional open space well away from the King Street traffic. The park could also expand onto the closed section of Stanley Street. Much of this area is asphalted, though it is no longer needed for vehicle access. More radical changes might also be beneficial. These could include building on some of the less attractive parts of the site. New structures would help to orient the park away from King Street. They might also introduce a wider range of public amenities to the area.

Site Analysis



Detailed Site Analysis

Spatial character

- The reserve provides a green buffer between the houses on Chetwynd Street and the fast traffic on King Street. The site falls towards the south-west, and this gradient also helps to separate the residential fabric and the park from the arterial road. As a result, King Street commercial frontages have little impact on the open space. The strongest built edge occurs along Chetwynd Street where four to five storey office and apartment blocks stand on higher ground.
- The park is more exposed to traffic at its southern end. Here the reserve tapers until it is only a few metres across. It merges with the large irregular open space formed by the intersection of Chetwynd, King and Rosslyn.
- The northern end of the park is quieter, but it is still not well contained. Space "leaks" away across the wide expanse of Eades Place. The neighbouring buildings do little to prevent this. The residential fabric between Chetwynd and Eades is diminutive in scale, and the adjoining corner of the Flagstaff Centre site is used as a car park.

Existing landscape

- The park's main "axis" continues the footpath and the line of street trees from the western side of Eades Place. This feature splits the open space into two unequal parts, and emphasises the triangular geometry of the reserve. The axis also provides a strong visual and functional connection between Victoria Street and the park.
- Two sides of the reserve are fenced to prevent children running out onto the adjacent streets. Parks and Recreation plan to remove the barrier along Chetwynd if traffic calming measures reduce vehicle speeds on this street. However, the King Street boundary of the reserve must remain secured. Presently, both fences are unsightly chain link constructions and are poorly maintained.
- A footpath will be introduced to the Chetwynd Street edge of the reserve, but it will need to be located inside the park in order to avoid tree roots.
- Chetwynd Street has a high-quality landscape that includes mature trees on either side of the carriageway. However, although it is a broad thoroughfare, there is no median within this section of the street.

Views and linkages

- Street tree planting is proposed for Stanley Street and Chetwynd Street as part of the "green linkages" initiative.
- The footpath along King Street is an important pedestrian route to the Central City.
- Within the northern end of the park, there are good sightlines to two local landmarks: St Marys Church and the North Melbourne Town Hall (the tower is visible along the laneway between Eades Place and Chetwynd Street).
- Commercial buildings at the corner of Leveson and Victoria close the view along Eades Place. These structures provide a visual clue to the proximity of the Errol Street shops.
- The Bolte Bridge terminates the view shaft along Stanley Street.
- The old West Melbourne Primary School, now part of the Flagstaff Centre, provides a recognisable backdrop to the park.
- King Street describes a curve through West Melbourne. Because the reserve is located on the concave outside edge of this street, the park is conspicuous to passing motorists.

Heritage

- A Level 1 classification applies to streetscape along Eades place and along the north side of Stanley Street (between Chetwynd and Eades).
- Bluestone kerbs and channels occur along King Street and Eades Place. Disruption to these features should be minimised. Bluestone kerbs in the area of Chetwynd and Stanley have less historical significance, and these could be relocated or recycled if necessary.

Traffic management

- Stanley Street is closed to through traffic between Eades Place and King Street. Most of the carriageway remains in place, but the asphalt is interrupted by a narrow strip of landscape at the junction with Eades Place. When Stanley was first closed, this arrangement maintained rear access to the West Melbourne Primary School. Now, the school site is occupied by the Flagstaff Centre. Its vehicle entrance is located on Eades Place. As a result, this section of Stanley Street is completely redundant, and can be fully integrated with the park.
- Chetwynd Street is a route favoured by non-local traffic by-passing the arterial network between Flemington Road and King Street. To discourage fast through-traffic, Engineering Services may reduce the "green time" for vehicles on Rosslyn Street, although this may put pressure on other streets. A more extreme solution is to close Chetwynd Street at its junction with Rosslyn and King.
- As part of improvements to Chetwynd Street, Engineering Services plan to introduce bike lanes o both sides of the carriageway.
- South of Stanley, Chetwynd Street narrows from four lanes to two. Southbound motorists jockey for position where this constriction occurs. If the width of Chetwynd is further reduced, traffic calming measures (such as a wide median) should also be introduced north of Stanley. This would avoid exacerbating the safety problems at the pinch point.
- Further reduction in the width of the Chetwynd Street carriageway may not be possible. Two-way traffic needs to be maintained, along with dedicated bike lanes in each direction

Parking

- Eades Reserve is a short walk from the Errol Street and Victoria Street shopping precincts. There is heavy demand for parking in the surrounding streets.
- The Flagstaff Centre provides secure on-site parking for its fleet vehicles. However, staff compete for spaces in the surrounding streets.
- Engineering Services is exploring the feasibility of increasing on-street parking by adding an intermittent median along Chetwynd Street between Stanley and Arden.

Services

- Designers should identify the exact locations of sewers and manholes, water mains, stormwater pipes and telephone or electricity cables. These services are concentrated along Stanley Street, between King and Chetwynd, and along Chetwynd Street, between Victoria and Rosslyn. Services are also found at the intersection of Chetwynd, King and Rosslyn.

Community and stakeholder response

- Proposals for Eades Reserve prompted comparatively little response from the community, though strong opposition was expressed towards building developments in or around the park. Not surprisingly, feedback favoured Example 8A. This option does not include any new buildings.
- The community would like to see reductions in the number and speed of vehicles in adjacent streets. They regard this objective as being more important than increasing the area of open space.
- A children's playground and more trees were the most popular suggestions for new amenities in the park.
- The community appreciates the park in its present form, and does not wish to see it reshaped or cut off from the adjacent streets. Some additional insulation from King Street traffic is considered desirable. However, the community would like this to be achieved with landscape rather than buildings.
- Some local residents believe the park is unsafe. Their concerns are heightened by the presence of the Flagstaff Centre which offers emergency accommodation to homeless men.
- The North and West Melbourne Association sees no merit in expanding Eades Reserve while there are greater opportunities for "greening" the surrounding streets. As an example, it suggests kerb-side tree reserves on the eastern side of Eades Place, to match those on the western side. Traffic calming in Chetwynd Street is supported. The association favours full closure of Stanley Street between Eades and King, and incorporation of this area in the park. The association is strongly opposed to building in the park or the adjoining road reserve. It believes landscape should be used to improve spatial definition and provide insulation from passing traffic on King.
- The Salvation Army operates the Flagstaff Centre. They regard the local residents' fears as unjustified. They argue that the centre's residents do not frequent the park because the complex has its own recreational open space. However, they concede that some men may drink there in order to avoid scrutiny.

- The Salvation Army supports full closure of Stanley Street between Eades Place and King Street. However, they do not want dense vegetation along the boundary of their site as this might compromise security.
- Local residents would oppose the introduction of further community services in or around Eades Reserve. Residents would object to any loss of open space, and would regard such a facility as an "extension" of the Flagstaff Centre.
- The Flagstaff development has soured community feelings towards the Council. Locals feel they were not consulted about the project. They believe the site is inappropriate for emergency housing because it is in a residential area. To a large extent, the project was a State Government initiative. However, people have difficulty separating the Government's role from that of Council.

Costs and funding

- The estimated cost for the improvements shown in Example 8A is $200 000. Most of the expense is associated with construction of new kerbs and paving. Other costs are relatively modest because few changes are required to the existing landscape. Example 8B was not costed because internal and external stakeholders expressed strong opposition to building developments on this site.

Design Principles and Objectives

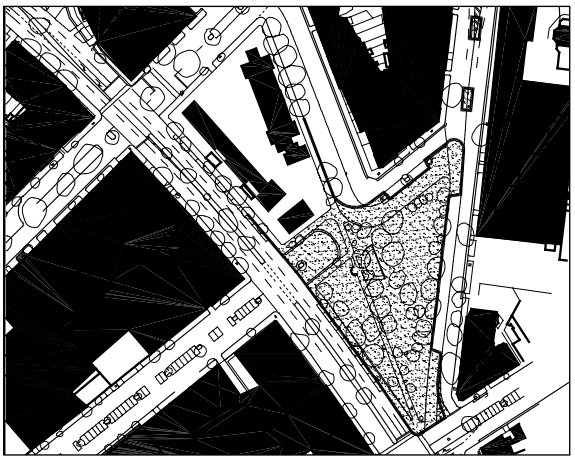
Streetscape

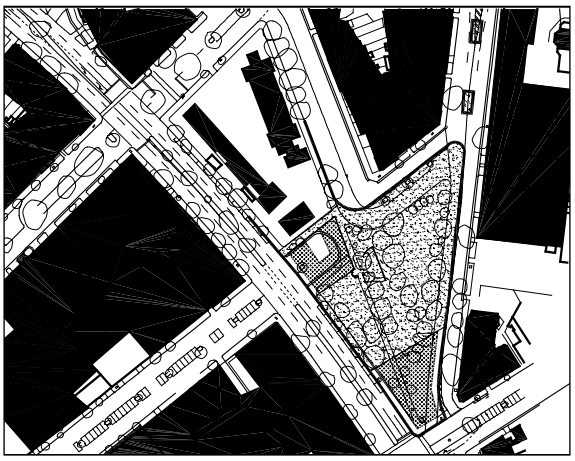
- Introduce planted medians to Eades Place and Chetwynd Street.
- Relocate bluestone kerbs and channels in Chetwynd Street and Stanley Street.
- Plant landscaped sections of the Chetwynd Street median with shrubs rather than grass to assist maintenance.

Park landscape

- Ensure the park is clearly visible from surrounding streets. Avoid concealed enclaves, and place seating in conspicuous locations.
- Retain clear sightlines along the Stanley Street boundary of the Flagstaff Centre.
- Consider installing a synthetic surface beneath the existing children's play area. Synthetic materials do not conceal syringes and other hazardous objects as readily as bark chips do.
- Provide good lighting along the edges of the park and along all pathways within it.

Development Options





Example 8A - Estimated cost: $200 000

- Expand the reserve by narrowing Chetwynd Street between Rosslyn and Stanley. Also, narrow Stanley Street between Chetwynd and Eades. Incorporate one side of each street in the open space. Retain two-way traffic and bicycle lanes on the narrowed sections of both streets.
- Expand the reserve by fully closing Stanley Street between Eades and King.
- Introduce a new median with trees and parking along Chetwynd Street between Stanley and Victoria.

Advantages

- larger area of open space
- traffic calming on Chetwynd Street
- no net loss of parking (25 spaces lost on Chetwynd Street)

Disadvantages

- park remains exposed to King Street
- disruption to existing streetscape
- reduction in parking between Stanley and Rosslyn Streets
- restriction on local access

Example 8B - Not costed owing to opposition from internal and external stakeholders

- Erect two new low-rise buildings: one on the closed section of Stanley Street and the other at the southern end of the reserve.
- Use these buildings to reorient the reserve away from King Street and to separate the open space from the intersection of King and Rosslyn.
- Consider using the ground floors of these buildings for community services and other public amenities that will enliven the park.
- Expand the reserve by narrowing Chetwynd Street and Stanley Street, as for Example 8A. Ensure that new buildings do not result in an overall loss of open space.
- Introduce a new median along Chetwynd Street, as for Example 8A.

Advantages

- reduced exposure to King Street
- separation from King/Rosslyn intersection
- better spatial definition
- active frontages to open space

Disadvantages

- strong stakeholder opposition to buildings
- disruption to existing streetscape
- on-street parking is more distant from some Chetwynd Street properties

Summary of Findings

Unlike most other open space opportunities in North and West Melbourne, Eades Reserve is already well established as a neighbourhood park. A range of amenities are provided, and the reserve is already large enough to accommodate a variety of recreational activities. The community values these qualities, and they have expressed little support for significant changes to the existing landscape. Under these circumstances, expensive adjustments to the alignments of Chetwynd Street and Stanley Street are not justified.

However, two factors reduce the park's appeal to nearby residents. Some people regard the area as unsafe. There have been few recorded instances of criminal activity or anti-social behaviour in the reserve. Nevertheless locals feel threatened, influenced by the proximity of the Flagstaff Centre. Whether these fears are real or perceived, landscape modifications should focus on making the park appear safer, rather than on increasing the area of open space.

Traffic is the second factor that detracts from the park's amenity. The King Street arterial channels a large number of high-speed vehicles along the western edge of the reserve. Although complete visual separation between the park and the road is undesirable, landscape should provide a more effective and attractive buffer than the present chain link fence.

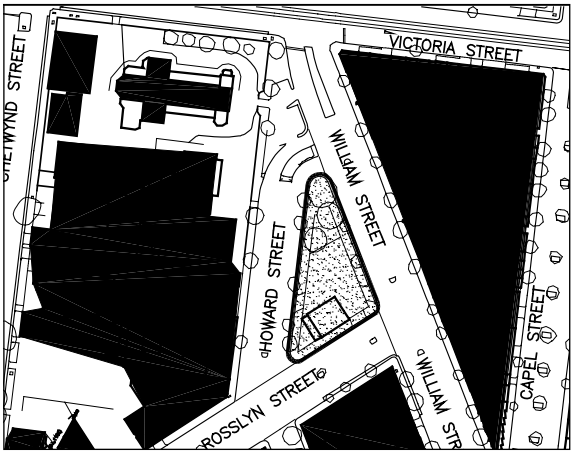
The eastern side of the reserve, along Chetwynd Street, is also exposed to traffic. However, a more comprehensive solution is available here: the local streets should be modified to discourage through-traffic. This can be achieved by introducing a median to Chetwynd Street and by reducing the green time for motorists on Rosslyn.

The proposed Chetwynd Street median serves several purposes apart from traffic calming. It provides additional on-street car parks. It also enhances the appearance of the street. Streetscape improvements on Chetwynd should be carried out in conjunction with similar work along Eades Place.

One small extension to the reserve is warranted. Between Eades and King, the redundant section of Stanley Street offers an immediate opportunity for a cost effective improvement to both the park and the adjoining streetscape. Internal and external stakeholders have expressed support for this initiative, and it should proceed as soon as possible.

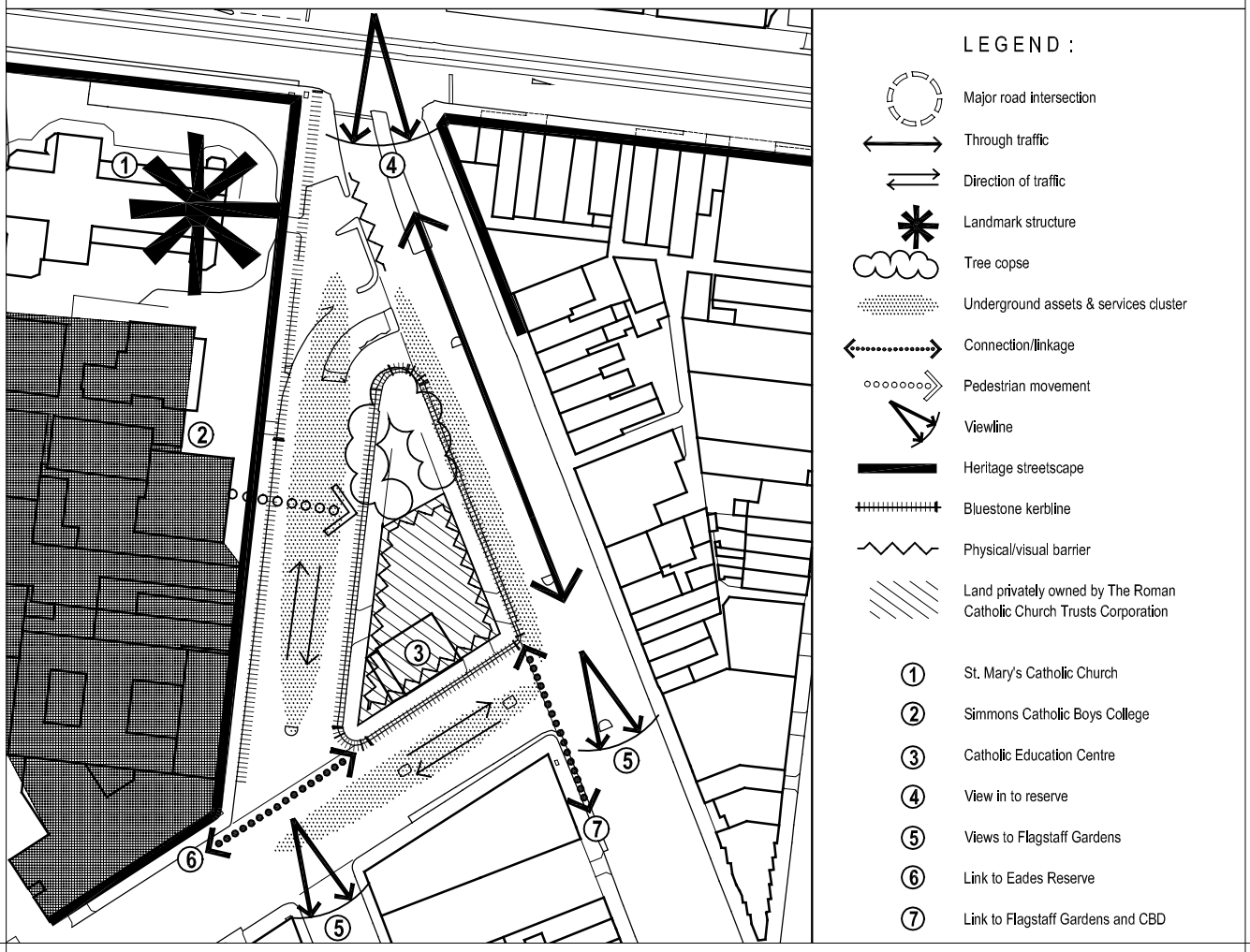
Site 9: **Howard Street Reserve**

Existing Conditions



This narrow strip of landscape is wedged between two broad streets. The tiny green triangle is part of a much larger open space that includes Howard Street and portions of Rosslyn Street and William Street. Most of this area is paved with asphalt. Although local traffic flows do not justify such wide thoroughfares, there is heavy demand for car parks. For this reason, the medians or edges of all three streets are used for metered parking. The whole area contains a single block of private land and just one small building. Despite the constraints imposed by on-street parking and private ownership, it may be possible to expand the reserve and improve the area's appearance. The edges of the open space could be extended out into one or more of the surrounding streets. New streetscape could replace the untidy collection of traffic islands that presently spoil the junction of Howard Street and William Street. These improvements should provide a better setting for St. Mary's church, one of North Melbourne's principal landmarks.

Site Analysis



Detailed Site Analysis

Spatial character

- The Howard Street reserve sits within a triangular block bounded by Howard, Rosslyn and William. The area of landscape is small, and most of the sense of openness here can be attributed to the large expanse of asphalt in the surrounding streets.
- The grounds of St Marys Church and presbytery provide further visual extension to the reserve.
- The reserve is framed on two sides by heritage fabric. Institutional and commercial buildings along Howard Street provide the more substantial frontage. Each of the structures here has a singular appearance, a distinct scale and a different setback. However, they are linked by their common orientation, by the quality of their architecture and by a low masonry wall that marks the front boundary of the church properties. The terrace houses on William Street are smaller, but they present a highly unified edge to the open space.
- Most of the block is private property. The land is in a single lot, owned by the Catholic Church and occupied by the Catholic Education Office. It is used mainly for parking, though there is a small two-storey building at the corner of Howard and Rosslyn. The private car park is unattractive, but it adds to the spaciousness of the site.

Existing landscape

- There are a number of conifers in the reserve. These are inconsistent with the surrounding streetscape, but they are valuable as isolated specimen trees.
- William Street has an established streetscape that includes trees along both sides of the carriageway. Rosslyn Street has a similar treatment, though trees are more sporadic in the vicinity of the reserve. Neither street has a fully developed median.
- The private car park is unlandscaped, and is surrounded by a utilitarian chain link fence. The appearance of the building will improve soon, after maintenance and upgrading have been carried out.

Views and linkages

- There are good sightlines from Victoria Street to the reserve.
- William Street is a well-known Central City street. Though it is interrupted briefly at Flagstaff Gardens, it provides an implicit connection between North Melbourne and the Hoddle Grid.
- William Street and, to a lesser extent, Milton Street provide good visual connections from the reserve to Flagstaff Gardens.
- Milton is a quiet residential street with few kerb crossings. In combination with the Howard Street reserve, it offers an opportunity for a green pedestrian link between Victoria Street and Flagstaff Gardens or the Central City.
- Rosslyn Street provides a green link to Eades Reserve.
- St Marys Church is a major North Melbourne landmark. Its prominent location at the corner of Howard and Victoria helps to locate the reserve.

Heritage

- A Level 2 heritage classification applies to streetscape along the west side of Howard Street and on the east side of William Street near its intersection with Victoria.
- luestone kerbs and channels occur around all sides of the reserve and along the west side of Howard Street.

Traffic

- None of the surrounding streets should carry large volumes of through traffic. If their carriageways are substantially narrowed, ìrat runsî will be discouraged. But one-way flows are undesirable because they would channel more vehicles past the school entrance on Howard Street.
- The junction of Howard and William needs to be rationalised. This area is confusing. It presents an unattractive foreground to the church and reduces the appeal of the reserve for people approaching from Victoria Street. The present collection of turning lanes, parking bays and traffic islands should be simplified to separate church vehicles from parking, and to provide more assembly space for congregations after they leave St Marys.

Parking

- Demand for on-street parking is heavy seven days a week. On weekdays, teachers at St Marys Primary School and workers in nearby mixed-use areas leave their vehicles here. On weekends, the area is used by people who are visiting Queen Victoria Market or attending church services.
- Much of the local on-street parking is metered. If the number of spaces is reduced, revenue will be lost.
- Additional parking might be accommodated within new medians along Rosslyn and William.
- The private car park is used exclusively by the Catholic Education Office. Although Education Office staff could park in adjacent streets, fleet vehicles are left at the site overnight and need to be secured.

Services

- Designers should identify the exact locations of water mains, stormwater pipes and telephone or electricity cables. These services are concentrated along Howard Street, between Rosslyn and Victoria, and along Rosslyn Street, between Howard and William. Services are also clustered along the western edge of William Street.

Community and stakeholder response

- Proposals for the Howard Street reserve prompted a moderate number of responses from the public, though none of the three development options is a clear preference. The community provides strong support for expansion to the open space. But their feedback identifies reductions in vehicle numbers and speeds as an equally important objective.
- The most popular requests for new amenities were those for seating, more trees and more grassed open space. Children's play equipment and BBQ facilities are secondary priorities.
- The North and West Melbourne Association identified this area as the highest priority for improvement. Location is an important factor in this choice. Expansion to the Howard Street reserve helps satisfy a North West 2010 objective to provide more recreational open space in Precinct 4. The association supports efforts to acquire the Catholic Church site and, in particular, to close the existing car park. The association suggests that land acquisition could be part of a phased programme of work, beginning with improvements along Howard Street. The association does not favour expansion into Rosslyn Street or William Street. It believes that valuable parking will be lost and historically significant streetscapes will be damaged. The association would also prefer to see angle parking on the west side of Howard Street rather than indented parking bays along the edge of the reserve.
- The Catholic Diocese owns the Catholic Education Office site. The Education Office operates independently from St Marys and the adjoining school. St Marys Church and presbytery are owned and controlled by the local parish.
- In the past, the Church investigated selling their property. However, at present, they have no plans to part with the land. The Catholic Education Office was recently given a further ten years on the site, they are about to commit $30-40 000 on upgrading the building. The church normally likes to hold on to land because it may become useful sometime in the future. They may find leasing the property is a more attractive option than selling it.
- The Catholic Church would be pleased to collaborate with Council to investigate landscape options in front of St Marys. The City of Moreland has landscaped a publicly accessible area in front of a parish church on Brunswick Street. This project provides a precedent for similar collaboration at St. Marys.

Costs and funding

- Cost estimates for improvements at this site vary between $155 000 and $210 000. Example C is the cheapest option, though it also delivers the smallest area of additional open space. The other proposals are more expensive because they require longer runs of new kerbs and channels.

Design Principles and Objectives

Built form

- Negotiate with the Catholic Church and explore options for purchasing or leasing their property. As part of these discussions, assist the Catholic Education Office to find alternative accommodation, ideally a Council-owned site or building.
- If the Catholic Education Office site is acquired, consider retaining the existing building and using it to accommodate community services or other park-related amenities. Investigate options for extended the building along Rosslyn Street to create a stronger built edge on the south side of the reserve.

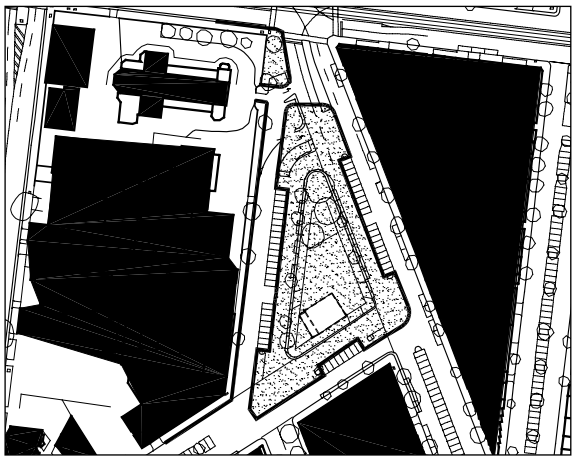
Streetscape

- Reinforce the existing pattern of street trees along Rosslyn and William. Introduce an intermittent median to both streets, so that planting and parking alternate along the centres of the carriageways.

Park landscape

- Consider phased implementation, beginning with improvements along Howard Street. Ensure the landscape design allows for acquisition of the Catholic Education Office site.
- Develop an informal landscape that is appropriate to the restricted dimensions of the site. Alternatively, integrate planting with the pattern of surrounding street trees.
- If the Catholic Church site cannot be acquired, collaborate with the church to investigate landscape options for the existing car park.
- Extend the landscape of the reserve into the grounds of St Marys so that the two spaces appear as a single entity.

Development Options



Example 9A - Estimated cost: $210 000
(does not include acquisition of private land)

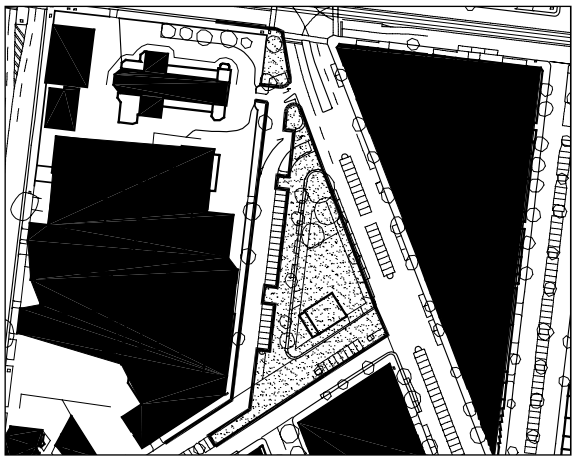
- Expand the reserve by introducing one-way traffic flow around an enlarged open space. Close Howard Street to southbound traffic, and close Rosslyn Street to eastbound traffic between Howard and William. Also, close William Street to northbound traffic between Rosslyn and Howard. Incorporate one side of each street in the reserve. Retain on-street parking around the edges of the new open space.
- Provide direct two-way access from William Street to the front of St. Marys Church.

Advantages

- largest area of public open space

Disadvantages

- most disruption to surrounding streetscape
- safety concerns associated with increased traffic past school entrance
- restricted access to and from Milton Street
- circuitous access
- greatest loss of parking (26 spaces)
- loss of parking adjacent St.Mary's Church
- highest estimated cost



Example 9B - Estimated Cost: $190 000
(does not include acquisition of private land)

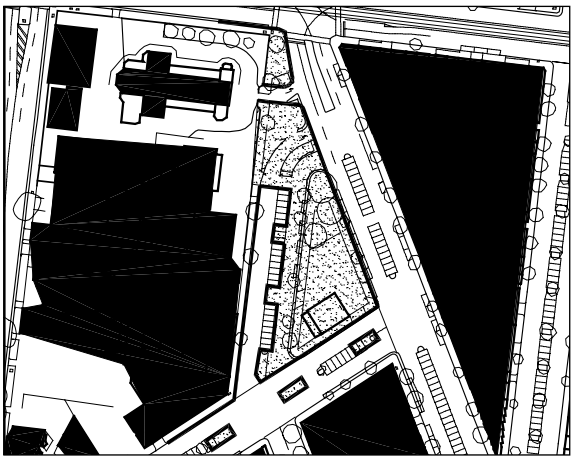
- Expand the reserve by closing Rosslyn Street to eastbound traffic between Howard and William. Incorporate the median and the northern side of this street in the open space. Retain on-street parking along the southern edge of the reserve.
- Expand the reserve by closing Howard Street to southbound traffic. Incorporate the median and the eastern side of this street in the open space. Retain parking along the western edge of the reserve.
- Provide direct two-way access from William Street to the front of St. Marys Church.
- Investigate options for extending accessible landscaped open space onto the privately owned land within the block.

Advantages

- moderate extension to open space
- minimal disruption to William Street

Disadvantages

- additional traffic past school entrance
- circuitous access to school entrance
- restricts access to and from Milton Street
- significant loss of parking (18 spaces)



Example 9C - Estimated cost: $155 000
(does not include acquisition of private land)

- Expand the reserve by closing the northern section of Howard Street, and by narrowing the southern section of this street. Incorporate these areas in the open space. Retain parking along the western edge of the reserve.
- Provide direct two-way access from William Street to the front of St. Marys Church.
- Introduce a new median with trees and parking along Rosslyn Street.
- Investigate options for extending accessible landscaped open space onto the privately owned land within the block.

Advantages

- no overall loss of parking
- least disruption to surrounding streetscape
- minimal disruption to traffic
- improved entrance to St Marys Church
- lowest estimated cost

Disadvantages

- smallest area of public open space
- restricted access to Howard Street properties
- increased traffic access outside school entrance
- loss of parking adjacent St.Mary's Church

Summary of Findings

The Howard Street reserve has the potential to become a significant neighbourhood park, rivalling Eades Reserve and Gardiner Reserve in terms of its size and range of amenities. This would be a dramatic transformation, given the vestigial nature of the existing open space.

The site is enhanced by its proximity to the landmark St Marys Church and to the other heritage buildings that line Howard Street and the northern end of William Street. The reserve also straddles green linkages between Victoria Street, Flagstaff Gardens and the Central City. These relationships mean the site is likely to be identified and accessed by a wide number of North and West Melbourne residents.

Improvements to the reserve can also produce a more legible and attractive streetscape along Howard Street, especially in front of St Marys. However, significant open space encroachments into either Rosslyn or William are undesirable, because they would channel traffic past entrances to the school and the church. For this reason, Example 9C is the preferred development option.

The full potential of the site can only be realised if the Catholic Education Office property is acquired. This will be costly. Furthermore, the Education Office's tenure has recently been extended for ten years. For both these reasons, acquisition presents a long-term goal.

In the short term, it is possible to upgrade the existing open space and proceed with improvements to Howard Street. The landscape design should allow for the Education Office site to be incorporated in the reserve sometime in the future.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Summary of conclusions

Open space improvements are viable at all nine sites identified in this study. In most cases, the area of the reserves can be extended into the surrounding streets. The accessibility, appearance and recreational value of these "left over" open spaces can be enhanced in exchange for modest construction costs and minor disruptions to local traffic and car parking.

The ratio of benefits to costs is more favourable at some sites than at others. As a result, the nine locations can be divided into three groups based on high, medium and low priorities for implementation. These priorities also reflect time constraints. Improvements at some sites are likely to be delayed by established land uses. In other locations, development is should be accelerated so as to be synchronised with approved public works.

High priority

- Site 5: North Melbourne Railway Station
- Site 6: Curzon Street reserve
- Site 8: Eades Place reserve (Stanley Street closure)

Medium priority

- Site 1: Clayton Reserve
- Site 2: Gardiner Reserve
- Site 3: North Melbourne Primary School
- Site 9: Howard Street reserve

Low priority

- Site 4: Bedford Street reserve
- Site 7: Errol Street reserve

Collectively, residual open spaces within the street grid amount to a significant resource. They have considerable visual and recreational value, especially if they are developed in conjunction with greener streets.

However, even if all the high and medium priority sites are improved, most residents of North and West Melbourne will lack easy access to the type of large multi-purpose park that characterises Melbourne's other inner-city neighbourhoods. This is because the subject sites are too small to accommodate a broad range of landscape features and recreational uses. At a few locations, expanded open spaces may be large enough to contain informal sports activities. The reserves at Curzon Street/Errol Street, North Melbourne Primary School and Howard Street all have the potential to become sizeable neighbourhood parks. However, at all three locations, an optimum outcome depends on the acquisition of private land and the cooperation of adjoining owners.

For these reasons, the improvements recommended in this study should not be regarded as a complete answer to North and West Melbourne's open space needs. Council should pursue additional open space opportunities, particularly those that will deliver large unencumbered areas for active recreation.
A supplementary list of study sites is included in Appendix 1.

At almost every site, buildings are an unnecessary and unpopular option for development. In several locations, new structures could help to define spaces, screen traffic, improve surveillance and support a wider range of recreational activity. However, many of these objectives can be achieved with landscape features instead of built edges. Given the community's opposition to buildings, landscape solutions are preferable. The North Melbourne Railway Station site is an exception. Here, some construction is essential in order to produce an active coherent plaza.

Aside from constructions costs and land purchase, the major impediments to improvements are the effects on traffic and parking. In all high-priority locations, expansions to the open space are compatible with established traffic-calming objectives. However, none of these reserves can be significantly enhanced without reducing on-street car parking. Losses in one location may be offset against gains elsewhere. But the competition between parks and parking remains a fundamental issue within all the scenarios examined in this study.

Heritage considerations impose further constraints. Expanding the reserves can displace old bluestone kerbs and channels. It can also alter the setting of historic buildings and introduce discontinuity to the local streetscape. However, even though these changes may be significant, they can be regarded as part of an ongoing evolutionary process. Most of the existing reserves bear the imprint of twentieth-century traffic management initiatives. Few, if any, of the subject sites have remained unaltered since Victorian times. As North and West Melbourne enter a period of redevelopment, it appropriate for some of these sites to change again in response to the needs of a new residential population. Though the characteristic pattern of wide streets and continuous kerb lines is sometimes compromised by open extensions, aberrations occur at irregular intersections where unique conditions already exist.

Summary of recommendations

High-priority initiatives

The following initiatives have approved funding. In the case of Curzon Street and North Melbourne Railway Station, design documentation should be completed before the end of the 2001/02 financial year. If funding is approved, construction may follow in 2002/03. Improvements at the Eades Reserve are fully funded, and these should be implemented by July 2002.

Site 5: North Melbourne Railway Station

Create a pedestrian plaza within redundant parts of the road reserve. Close Anderson Street, and create a building site at the corner of Anderson and Ireland streets. Channel two-way traffic into a narrower carriageway on the southern side of Ireland Street. Limit access to Railway Place.

Estimated construction cost: $725 000
(exclusive of the revenue from a building development)

Site 6: Curzon Street reserve

Prepare a phased development plan for streetscape and open spaces in the Curzon Street/Hawke Street/Victoria Street triangle (see Example 6A). Allow for possible acquisition of the Baptist Church property. Allow for a possible reduction at the Errol Street reserve (see Example 7C). In the first stage of the work, extend the Curzon Street reserve into closed portions of Curzon Street and Miller Street.

Estimate construction cost: $140 000

Site 8: Eades Place reserve

Fully close Stanley Street between Eades Place and King Street. Incorporate the redundant road reserve within the park. Retain the rest of the reserve in its present form.

Estimated construction cost: $20 000

Medium-priority initiatives

The following initiatives deliver significant benefits. However, the projects' viability is compromised by poor community support or the need for land acquisition. If funding is approved, work should be commenced before the end of the 2005/06 financial year.

Sites 1 & 2: Clayton and Gardiner Reserves

Upgrade the reserves in conjunction with streetscape improvements and traffic management measures on Macaulay Road. Extend Gardiner Reserve onto the western side of Dryburgh Street but retain two-way traffic on the eastern side of the street (see Example 2B).

Reduce the width of Macaulay Road to a single traffic lane and a cycle lane in each direction. Achieve this by introducing a wider median between Gracie and Haines. But form a single narrow carriageway adjacent to the two reserves (see Examples 1A & 2C).

Estimated construction cost: Clayton Reserve $208 050, Gardiner Reserve $225 000

Site 3: North Melbourne Primary School

Prepare a phased development plan for streetscape and open spaces in the Errol Street/Harcourt Street triangle (see Example 3B). Coordinate this with the North Melbourne Primary School master plan. In the first stage of the work, close Courtney Street between Errol and Harcourt, and incorporate the redundant area of road with the adjacent reserve.

Estimated construction cost: $392 000

Site 9: Howard Street reserve

Expand the reserve by closing the northern section of Howard Street, and by narrowing the southern section of the street. Provide direct two-way access from William Street to St. Marys Church. Allow for the Catholic Education Office property to be included in the reserve some time in the future (see Example 9C).

Estimated construction cost: $155 000
(exclusive of the cost of acquiring land)

Low-priority initiatives

The following initiatives are unlikely to attract funding within the next five years. However, their status may need to be reviewed if conditions change. For example, improvements at the Errol Street reserve become more feasible and more attractive if a parking building is constructed nearby and the supply of on-street car parks can be reduced.

Site 4: Bedford Street reserve

Extend the reserve by narrowing Bedford Street between Courtney and Capel, and by narrowing Capel Street between Bedford and Courtney (see Example 4C).

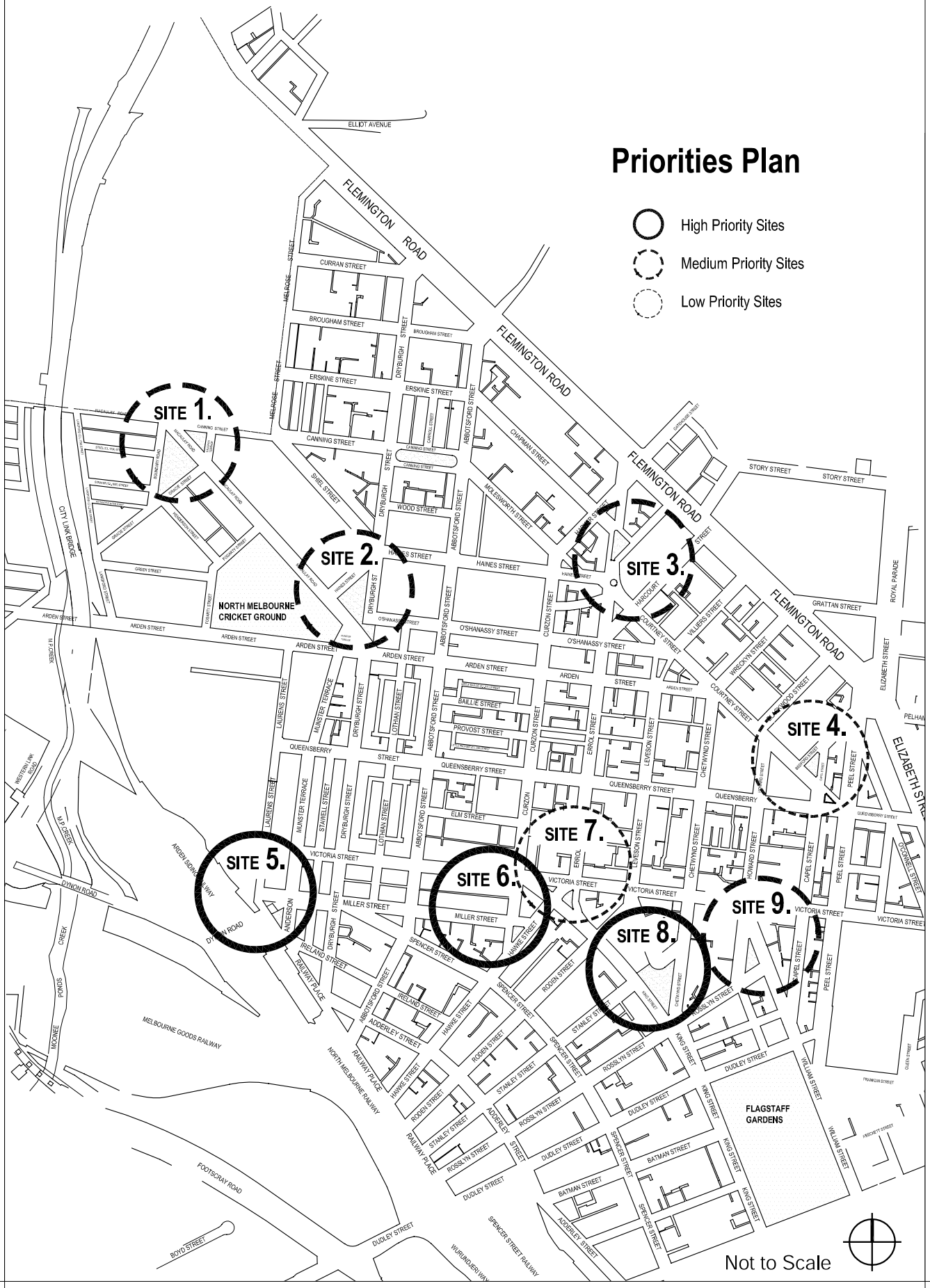
Estimated construction cost: $92 000

Site 7: Errol Street reserve

Expand the reserve by reducing the number of car parks and by providing service access to Victoria Street properties directly from King (see Example 7C). Treat the reserve as part of a larger landscape concept for the Curzon Street/Hawke Street triangle (see Site 6).

Estimated construction cost: $220 000

Open Space Oppunities
In North and West Melbourne



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Appendix 1A

Supplementary List of Open Space Opportunities

The following sites and initiatives fall outside the scope of this feasibility study. Nevertheless, they provide opportunities for more recreational open space in North and West Melbourne. In this respect, they are consistent with the objectives of North West 2010 Local Plan.

Type 1. Open space improvements may result from traffic management and traffic calming measures at the following locations (note - many of these opportunities arise from the completion of City Link):

- Arden Street median (see Greening Strategy Draft Issues Paper)
- Abbotsford Street tram median
- Capel Street road closure (see Capel Street Action Plan)
- Chetwynd Street and Leveson Street medians
- the junction of Miller Street and Spencer Street (adjacent to Bristol Paints)
- part closure of Adderley Street between Dudley and Rosslyn
- Pleasance Gardens (street closure at Dryburgh Street)

Type 2. North and West Melbourne have direct access to two large recreational spaces. In both locations landscape can be upgraded, and facilities can be reviewed to take account of changing demands and demographics in the surrounding community:

- Flagstaff Gardens (see Flagstaff Gardens Master Plan)
- North Melbourne Recreation Ground

Type 3. Land acquisition can be used to create new recreational open spaces in areas of high demand. New parks can also attract residential development to those parts of North and West Melbourne that would benefit from rehabilitation. The following sites should be considered:

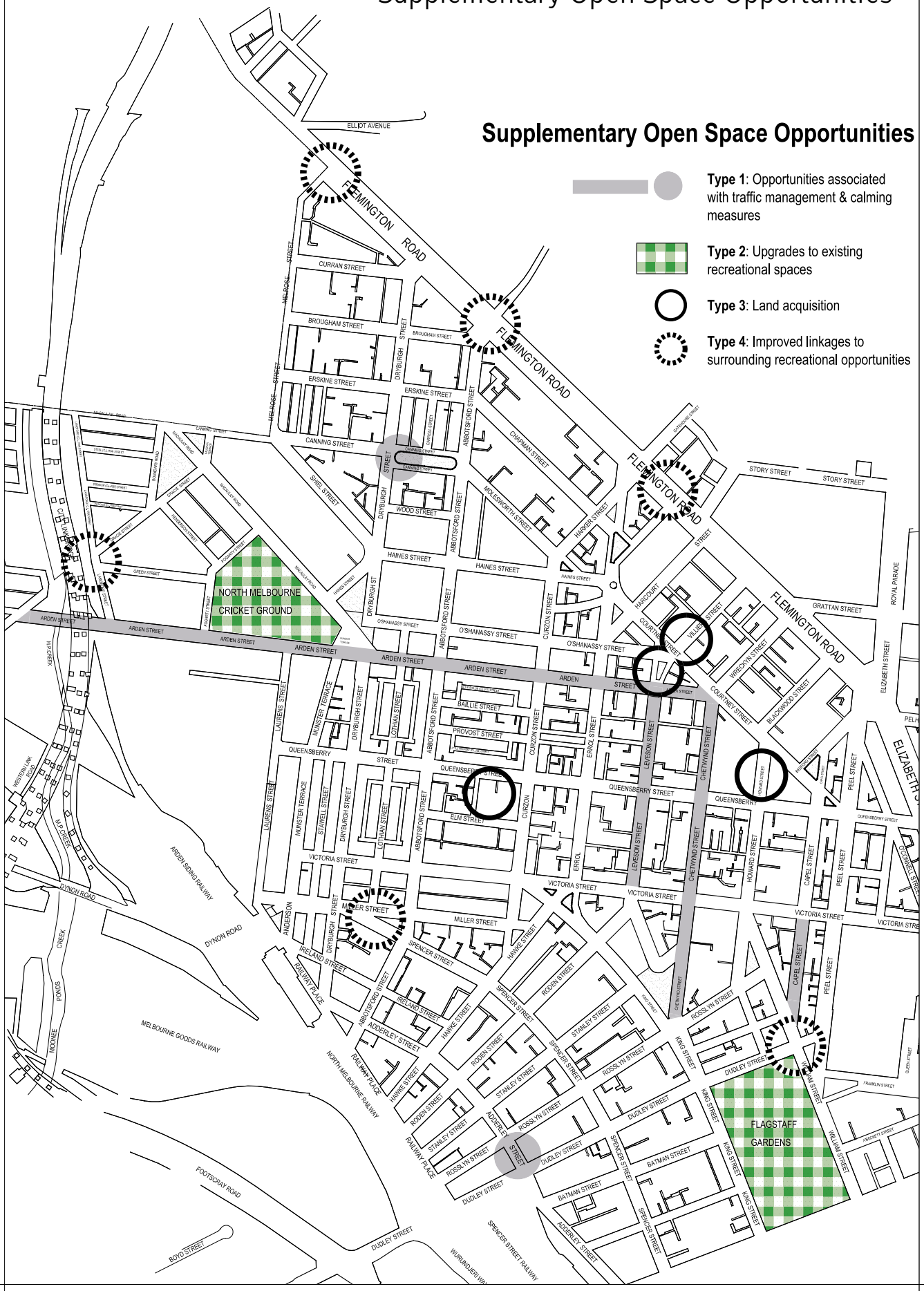
- Latrobe Close
- the former Bulla Cream site, corner Arden and Leveson
- the NCR site, Villiers Street
- the former RMIT School of Design & Printing and the Queensberry Street Primary School, 603-615 Queensberry St

Type 4. Links between North and West Melbourne and surrounding recreational opportunities can be improved. Attention should focus on the following connections:

- pedestrian access to Flagstaff Gardens via William Street
- pedestrian and cycle access across Flemington Rd, especially at Melrose St and opposite Ievers Reserve
- pedestrian and cycle access to Moonee Ponds Creek, especially via Green Street and the adjacent municipal depot
- improved signage at the northern end of Abbotsford Street indicating access to Royal Park and the zoo

Appendix 1B

Supplementary Open Space Opportunities



Appendix 2

Streetscape Heritage

City of Melbourne

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