



Bridge Mall Built Form Review

Key Messages

Council has undertaken a review of the heritage and built form within the Bridge Mall Precinct with a view to amending the current planning controls to enable the urban renewal opportunities envisaged by the Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan, adopted by Council in 2019.

As part of this review, Council has also engaged heritage consultants to review current heritage provisions within the Ballarat Planning Scheme to ensure that new development respects and enhances the heritage character of the Bridge Mall and Bakery Hill Precinct.

An amendment to the Ballarat Planning Scheme will be prepared to change building height controls and to strengthen heritage provisions so that future development is well designed and responds to the heritage context of the area.

The Review of Built Form and the Design Development Overlay

- The Built Form Framework provides an analysis of the current conditions within the Bridge Mall precinct and makes recommendations for changes to the planning scheme to facilitate urban renewal opportunities.
- Currently, the “Design Development Overlay” is the tool within the planning scheme that guides and “controls” development outcomes. However, the current planning control is out of step with Council’s strategic vision for the Ballarat CBD which encourages an increase in dwellings and population, close to public transport, shops and services.
- A review of heritage within the Bridge Mall and Bakery Hill Precinct will be the first step in a broader review that looks at the Ballarat CBD and areas beyond, to ensure that the Ballarat Planning Scheme is up to date and serves to protect heritage places across Ballarat.

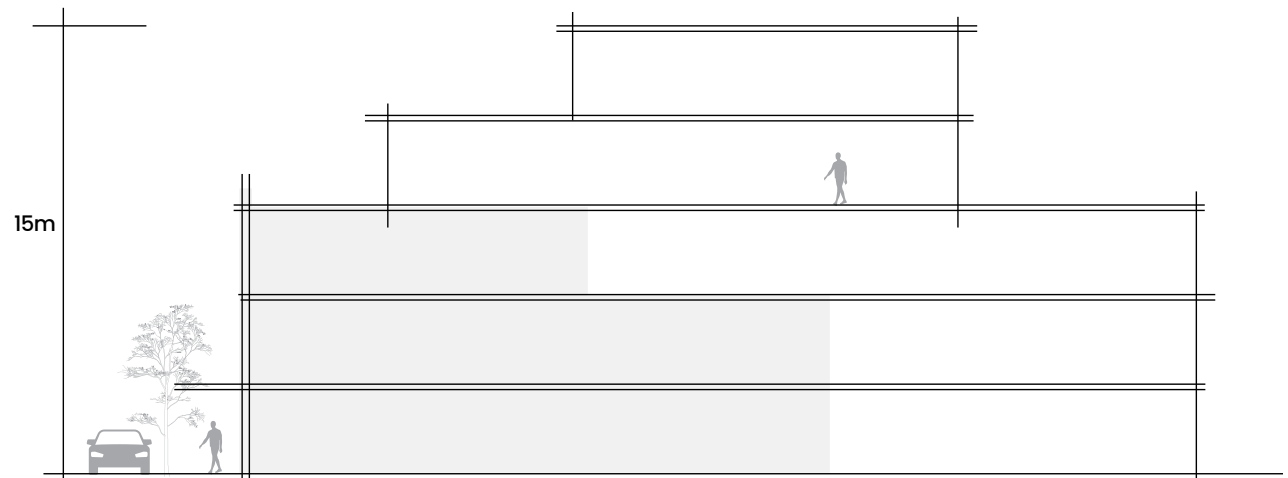


Next Steps and Stages of the Project

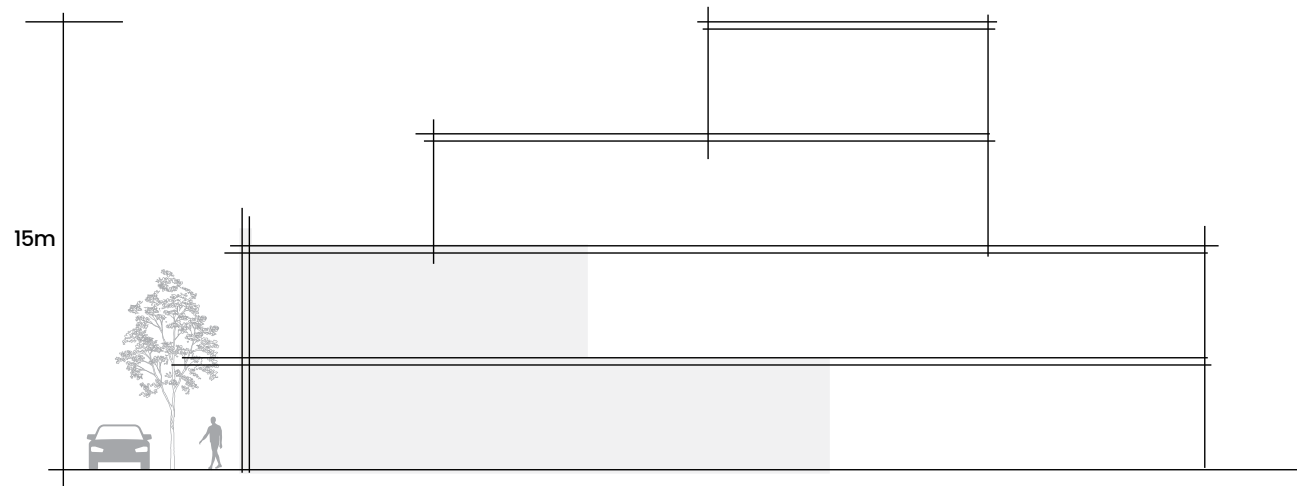
- After this stage of community engagement, Council will review feedback from the community before requesting “authorisation” from DTP (Department of Transport and Planning) to undertake a planning scheme amendment process.
- A report will be presented to Council at the June Council meeting.
- The community and key stakeholders, including property owners, will have the opportunity to make a submission to the amendment when it is formally exhibited sometime after the June Council meeting (subject to receiving authorisation from DTP).
- Planning Scheme Amendment exhibition: August 2023 (estimated).

Building Heights

- Building heights are generally expressed as storeys but because the floor levels of buildings can vary, a more accurate way of stating the maximum height (which is also preferred in the planning world) is metres.
- As a general rule, residential floor to floor heights are lower than for commercial buildings and so a five storey residential building might be a similar height (in metres) to a four storey commercial building.
- Office and retail buildings have between (approximately) 3.5 to 4m between floors (including ceiling space). Residential buildings are generally between 3 and 3.5m between floors (again, including ceiling space).
- The zoning of Bridge Mall allows for retail, commercial and residential uses (or a mix of uses) and future development could be any combination of uses allowable under the zone but there is an emphasis on commercial use at ground level under the Commercial 1 Zone.



An example showing a five storey residential building with approx 3m between floors

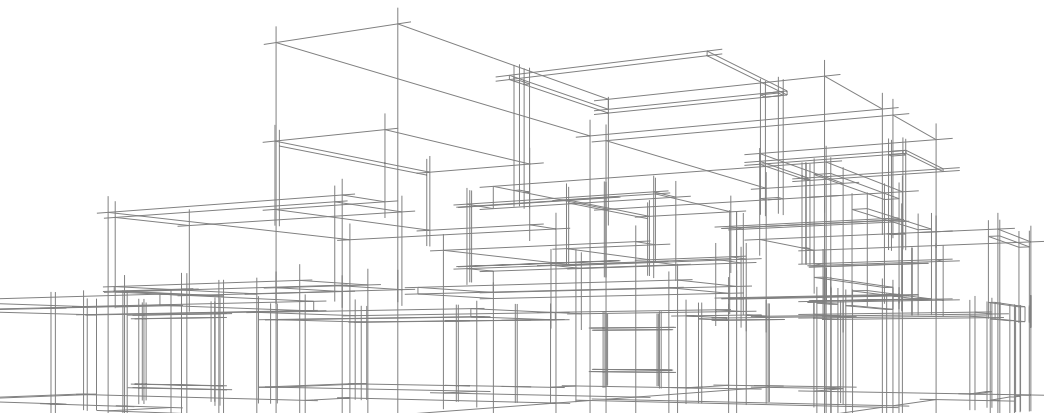


An example showing a four storey commercial building with approx 3.75m between floors



What is a Design Development Overlay?

The Design Development Overlay (or DDO) is a planning scheme “control” that guides the scale and design of development including the maximum height of buildings so that developers and the community know what to expect when new development occurs.



The Role of the Design Development Overlay when combined with Heritage Overlay

Having two planning overlays probably seems confusing (and it can be...)

- The Design Development Overlay (or DDO) provides rules and guidance for new development, including how new buildings should be designed in response to existing heritage buildings (in terms of scale, setbacks and front façade height).
- The DDO can specify (preferred or mandatory) maximum building heights. Preferred heights are the (preferred) approach to setting building heights as stated in the Department of Transport and Planning Practice Note (PPN60 – Height and Setback Controls in Activity Centres):

The application of discretionary controls, combined with clear design objectives and decision guidelines is the preferred form of height and setback controls.

www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/97323/PPN60-Height-setback-controls-for-activity-centres.pdf

FAQs

Why is Council undertaking this project?

The Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan, which was adopted by Council in 2019, seeks to promote new residential, retail and commercial (mixed-use) development within the Bakery Hill area of the Ballarat CBD as way of renewing the area and making it more attractive for the local community, visitors to Ballarat, and investors.

Bridge Mall is currently affected by planning controls that (unintentionally) discourage the redevelopment of properties due to strict building height controls contained in the "Design Development Overlay".

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How will heritage buildings be protected?

The Heritage Overlay has also been reviewed and an updated Statement of Significance reinforces the role of the Heritage Overlay (HO176 – Bridge Mall Precinct).

The Heritage Overlay will continue to provide planning scheme guidance for the conservation of heritage buildings and the retention of heritage fabric when redevelopment occurs.

What is a Planning Scheme Amendment?

Firstly, the Ballarat Planning Scheme is the "rule book" under which planning decisions are made. Yes, it's complex... but Council officers are available to explain any aspect of it for community members and prospective developers.

When Councils want to change the planning scheme they must undertake a Planning Scheme Amendment and must seek "authorisation" from the Department of Transport and Planning in order to start the process.

What is happening across the rest of the Ballarat CBD? How will future development be managed?

Council is undertaking the Bridge Mall project as a first step in developing new built form controls for the Ballarat CBD to guide and manage change. This work will identify areas that are suitable for higher densities of development whilst protecting areas of significant heritage value – such as the Lydiard Street Precinct which is a current Council project seeking to place the precinct on the Victorian Heritage Register.

What is a Framework Plan?

The "Framework Plan" is the plan used to inform the building height and setback provisions contained within the Design Development Overlay.

The plan shows the following:

- The height that new buildings can be (proposed) for new development
- Setbacks from the street frontage
- The identification of heritage buildings

How can we make a submission?

During Stage 1 we are asking the community to review the material and to ask any questions at this early stage of the project.

The Stage 2 community engagement will occur in August and we encourage people to make submissions during this stage of engagement.

Submissions will likely be referred to an independent planning panel, which is a standard process for planning scheme amendments when submissions are made.

Details on how to make a submission will be made available when exhibition formally begins.



What is a Heritage Overlay?

The Heritage Overlay is intended to give effect to Statements of Significance for heritage buildings, places and precincts.

A Statement of Significance describes what is significant about a place in terms of its heritage value and identifies buildings and places that are significant.

The Heritage Overlay should also be applied with the guidance provided at Clauses 15.03 (Heritage – State Provision) and 21.06-2 (Heritage – Local Provision).

What are Building Envelopes?

Building envelopes are a visual tool to demonstrate a (theoretical) build out of the entire area. In reality, this will not occur in this way and this is evidenced by other parts of the Ballarat CBD that are not subject to the Design Development Overlay. The pace of development in Ballarat is very slow and this is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

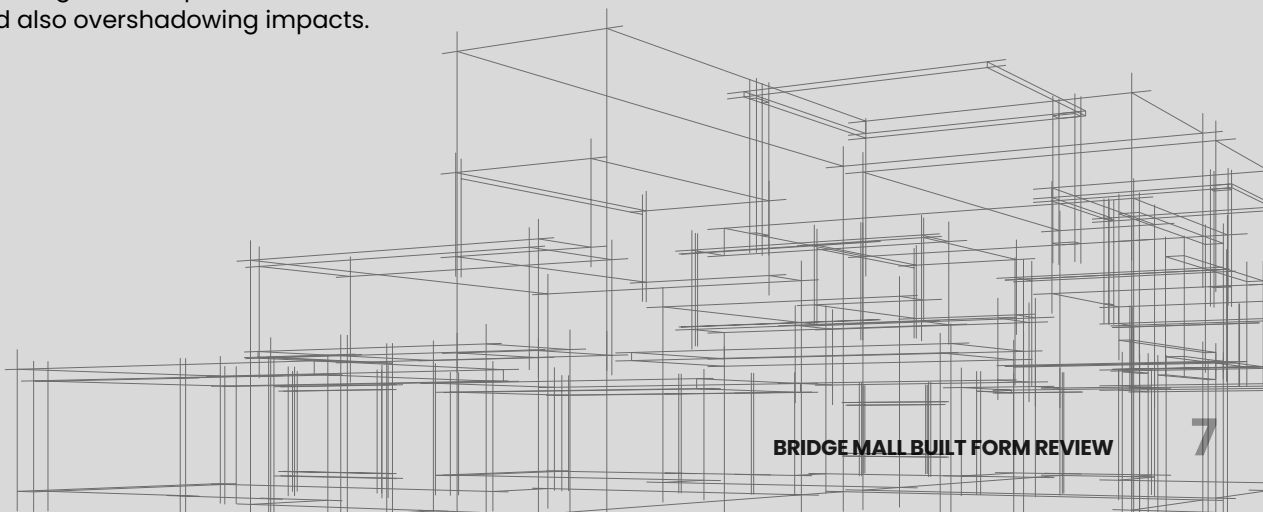
Building envelopes (generated from a 3D “block” or “mass model”) do not illustrate fully designed (or architecturally designed) buildings and therefore are for demonstration purposes only. They are also used for testing visual impacts from different viewpoints and also overshadowing impacts.

What is a Street-Wall ?

This is an “urban design” term that refers to the pattern of façades of buildings at the street frontage, viewed along the streetscape.

Typically, within a heritage streetscape, the heritage buildings are a consistent height with variations of 1 or 2 storeys. Bridge Mall varies from 1 to 3 storeys, but mostly 2 storeys (or about 8 to 9 metres).

New development (on non-heritage sites) should be designed to fit in with the existing heights of heritage buildings, at the street frontage.





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