

23-47 Villiers St, North Melbourne Urban Context Report

**ADVERTISED
PLAN**

This copied document to be made available for the sole purpose of enabling its consideration and review as part of a planning process under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The document must not be used for any purpose which may breach any copyright

Project	23-47 Villiers St, North Melbourne
Report Title	Urban Context Report
Version	1
Project Code	LS000506
Prepared for	Sentinel Corp
Author	LatStudios

Version	Date	Approved by	Details
1	28/08/2024	AR	Final Report

This document has been prepared solely for the benefit of Sentinel Corp and is issued in confidence for the purposes only for which it is supplied. Unauthorized use of this document in any form whatsoever is prohibited. No liability is accepted by LatStudios, any employee, contractor, or sub-consultant of this company with respect to its use by any other person. This disclaimer shall apply notwithstanding that the document may be made available to other persons.

LatStudios
 PO Box 400
 Flinders Lane VIC 8009
 Australia
 03 9119 1519
info@latstudios.com.au
latstudios.com.au
 LatStudios
 ABN 85 123 754 361
 ACN 123 754 361

LatStudios commit to supporting the health and wellbeing of Country, by respecting, valuing and being guided by First Nations people.

We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, waters and skies of North Melbourne.



Contents

1.0	Overview	4
1.1	Introduction.	4
1.2	Site Description.	4
1.3	Design Team	4
2.0	Vision	5
2.1	Vision	5
3.0	Statutory Framework	6
3.1	Local Planning Policy Framework	6
3.2	Zoning and Overlays	7
4.0	Site and Context Analysis.	8
4.1	Strategic Context.	8
4.2	Access and Movement.	9
4.3	Land Uses, Open Space and Employment.	10
4.4	Built Form.	11
4.5	Activities and Attractions	12
4.6	Context Imagery	13
4.7	Immediate Site Context	14
4.8	Urban Character	15
4.9	Existing and Future Development	16
4.10	Future Development	17
4.11	Site Opportunities	18
4.12	Site Design Considerations	19
5.0	Preferred Development Envelope	20
5.1	Preferred Development Envelope	20
6.0	Urban Design Principles.	21
6.1	Urban Design Principles	21
7.0	Conclusion	22
7.1	Conclusion	22



1.0 Overview

1.1 Introduction

This Urban Context Report has been prepared by LatStudios, and presents a detailed analysis of the urban context for 23-47 Villiers Street in North Melbourne.

The Report discusses relevant strategic and statutory information, provides an analysis of the physical context, and culminates with an analysis of appropriate built form for the site to guide the architectural outcome.

1.2 Site Description

The subject site is an allotment bounded by Harcourt Street to the north-west, Little George Street to the north-east, Villiers Street to the south-east and Mary Street to the south-west.

Key site features include:

- Prominent location in the 'City North' urban renewal area.
- Location within a rapidly evolving context with surrounding midrise residential and mixed use built forms of up to fourteen storeys.
- Close proximity to high quality open spaces, schools, hospitality offerings, abundant public transport as well as medical and university hubs.

Site Details

Area	6526 sqm
Interfaces	Harcourt Street 56.06 m
	Little George Street 101.85 m
	Villiers Street 73.47 m
	Mary Street 47.23 m

1.3 Design Team

The Team

Urban Design	LatStudios
Town Planning	UPco
Architecture	Architectus
Developer	Sentinel Corp
Landscape Architecture	Arcadia

2.0 Vision

2.1 Vision

A multi-storey Build to Rent project is proposed. It will deliver a diversity of housing options within a neighbourhood that bridges between the thriving and growing medical and knowledge precinct and the fine grain residential character of North Melbourne.

Streetscapes will be brought to life with active interfaces, integrated landscapes and a new connectivity network will contribute to the richness of experiences within this evolving neighbourhood.

Architectural language draws from the materials and rhythms evident in surrounding streets with forms that provide a considered and nuanced transition between the high rise commercial and residential buildings along Flemington Road and the distinctly residential lower scale buildings along Courtney Street. Massing will respond to light and shadow ensuring the public realm remains sun-lit while providing diverse landscape experiences throughout the public, semi-public and private spaces created.



3.0 Statutory Framework

3.1 Planning Policy Framework

The following Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) provisions within the Melbourne Planning Scheme are deemed relevant:

- Clause 02.01 – Context
- Clause 02.02 – Vision
- Clause 02.03-1 – Settlement
- Clause 02.03-4 – Built Environment and Heritage
- Clause 02.03-5 – Housing
- Clause 02.03-7 – Transport

Clause 02.01 – Context

Clause 02.01 provides an overview of the City of Melbourne, including demographic statistics. Of particular significance is the expectation of ongoing substantial population growth within the city. Demographically, Melbourne has a predominantly youthful population and a lower proportion of children under 12 compared to the broader metropolitan area. Additionally, Melbourne stands out as a prominent global hub for students, with approximately half of its student population coming from overseas.

Clause 02.02 – Vision

Clause 02.02 Sets the vision to enhance Melbourne's status as a bold, inspirational and sustainable city.

Clause 02.03-1 - Settlement

Clause 02.03-1 includes a Growth Area Framework Plan for the City, including Existing Urban Renewal Area 5 'City North', on which the site is located. City North is given the following description:

'City North is identified for proposed renewal given its existing role as a specialised activity centre, the proposed Parkville Station as part of the Melbourne Metro project and its proximity as an extension of the Central City. The City North Structure Plan 2012 has been adopted by the City of Melbourne and has been implemented into the planning scheme via a planning scheme amendment'.

Clause 02.03-4 – Built Environment and Heritage

Clause 02.03-4 emphasises the importance of ensuring that new developments harmonize with the overall development of streets, buildings, pathways, parks, and public spaces.

The Clause includes the following relevant urban design objectives:

- To ensure that the height and scale of development is appropriate to the identified preferred built form character of an area.
- Provide a complementary transitional scale to adjoining areas where the built form character is to be maintained.
- To improve public realm permeability, legibility, and flexibility.

Clause 02.03-5 – Housing

Clause 02.03-5 highlights the importance of managing residential growth while maintaining high standards of on-site amenity.

Clause 02.03-7 – Transport

Clause 02.03-7 highlights that walking is the primary mode of transportation within the municipality and is especially vital for a well-functioning public transport system. Additionally, cycling is increasingly recognized as one of the most efficient modes of mobility within the area.

3.2 Zoning and Overlays

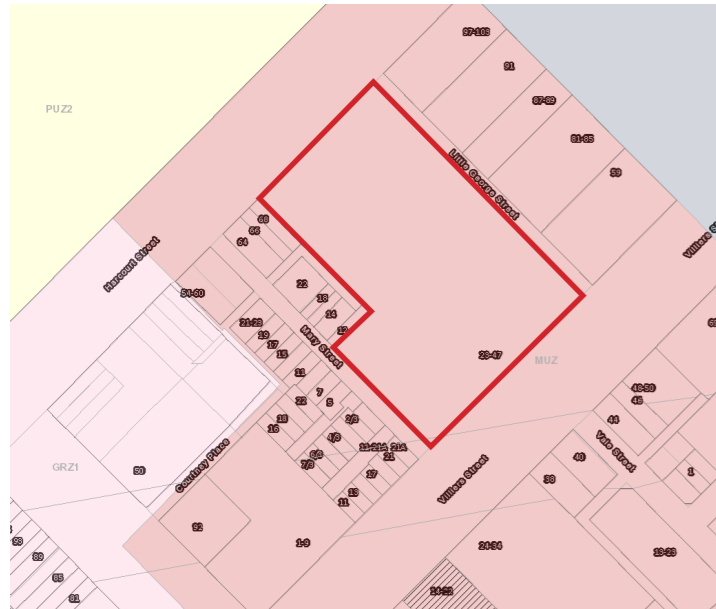


Figure 02: Mixed Use Zone (Source: Melbourne Planning)

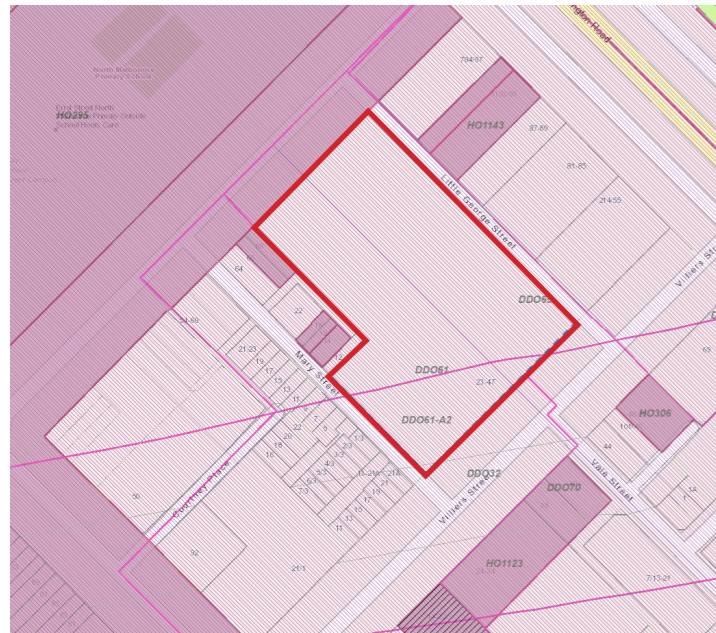


Figure 03: Overlays (Source: Melbourne Planning)

Clause 32.04 - Mixed Use Zone (MUZ)

The subject site is located within the Mixed Use Zone. The purpose of the zone outlined in Clause 32.04 is:

- To provide for a range of residential, commercial, industrial and other uses which complement the mixed-use function of the locality.
- To provide for housing at higher densities.
- To encourage development that responds to the existing or preferred neighbourhood character of the area.
- To facilitate the use, development and redevelopment of land in accordance with the objectives specified in a schedule to this zone.
- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework

The subject site is proposed for use as Residential Dwellings. Within the Planning Scheme, the 'Dwelling' use is 'as of right', pursuant to Clause 32.04.

The subject site is also proposed to be used for an office, which is also a Section 1 use as the leasable floor area does not exceed 250 square metres.

As per the Schedule to Clause 32.04 Mixed Use Zone, no maximum building height requirement is specified to the MUZ.

With regards to overshadowing, Clause 32.04 specifies that before deciding on an application, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate, the impact of overshadowing on existing rooftop solar energy facilities on dwellings on adjoining lots in a Mixed Use Zone.

Design and Development Overlay - Schedule 61 Area 2 'City North' (DDO61-A2)

- Outlines design objectives for proposed developments within the City North Precinct
- Provides a mix of mandatory and discretionary design guidance including: street wall heights, setbacks, scale, tower heights, overlooking and overshadowing

Design and Development Overlay - Schedule 65 - Helicopter Flight Path Protection (DDO65)

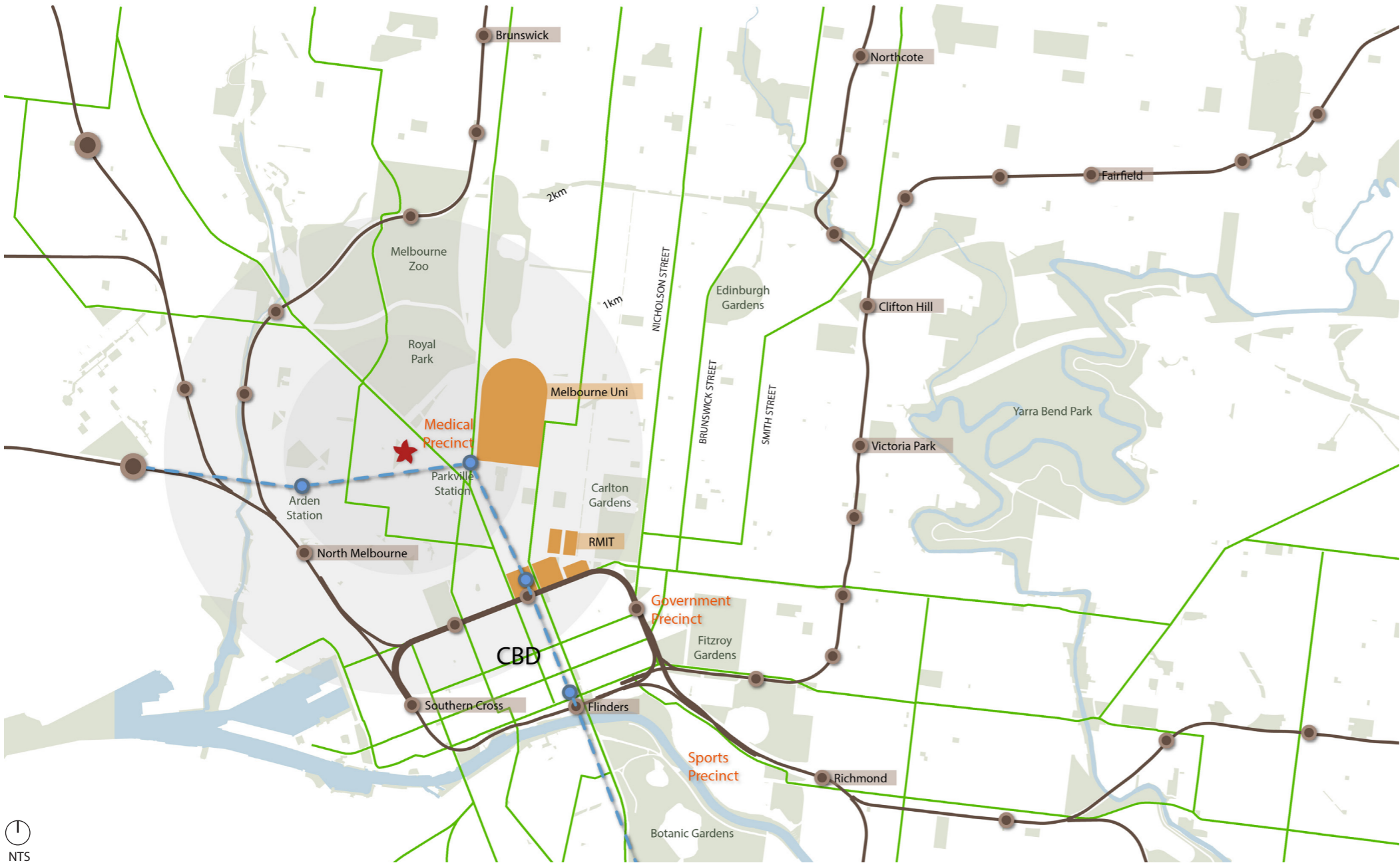
- Sets height controls to ensure that buildings and works to not encroach on the flight path areas associated with hospital helicopter landing sites.

Design and Development Overlay - Schedule 70 - Melbourne Metro Rail Project - Infrastructure Protection Areas (DDO70)

- Provides design objectives to ensure development does not adversely affect or put at risk the construction, integrity or operation of the Melbourne Metro Infrastructure.

4.0 Site and Context Analysis

4.1 Strategic Context



The subject site is situated in North Melbourne, approximately 1.2 km from the Melbourne CBD. It is located within easy walking distance of a huge array of amenities. These include Parkville’s knowledge precinct, extensive open spaces and high quality public transport including the new Metro Parkville Station, universities, medical research facilities, and hospitals. Additionally, the site offers the character and amenity of North Melbourne with its food, nightlife, and heritage architecture.

- ★ Subject Site
- Public Open Space
- Water Body
- Major University
- Tram Line
- Rail Network
- Future Metro Rail Network
- Train Station
- Future Metro Station

NTS

Figure 04: Strategic Context

4.2 Access and Movement



The subject site is well serviced by public transport modes including tram, train and bus that connect to suburbs to the North, West and South.

The pedestrian and cycle network provides a range of route options around the site from main roads like Flemington Road through to the small bluestone cobbled laneways of North Melbourne.

This complexity of urban fabric is a key element of the character of the area.

NTS

Figure 05: Access & Movement

4.3 Land Uses, Open Space and Employment



Figure 06: Land Uses, Open Space and Employment










The site is in an excellent location to capitalise on and contribute to the diversity of land uses surrounding it.

The Melbourne Innovations Districts, a partnership between the City of Melbourne, RMIT University and the University of Melbourne takes in the Parkville Precinct, both universities, the NGO Precinct, Social Innovation Hub and the Queen Victoria Markets amongst other uses.

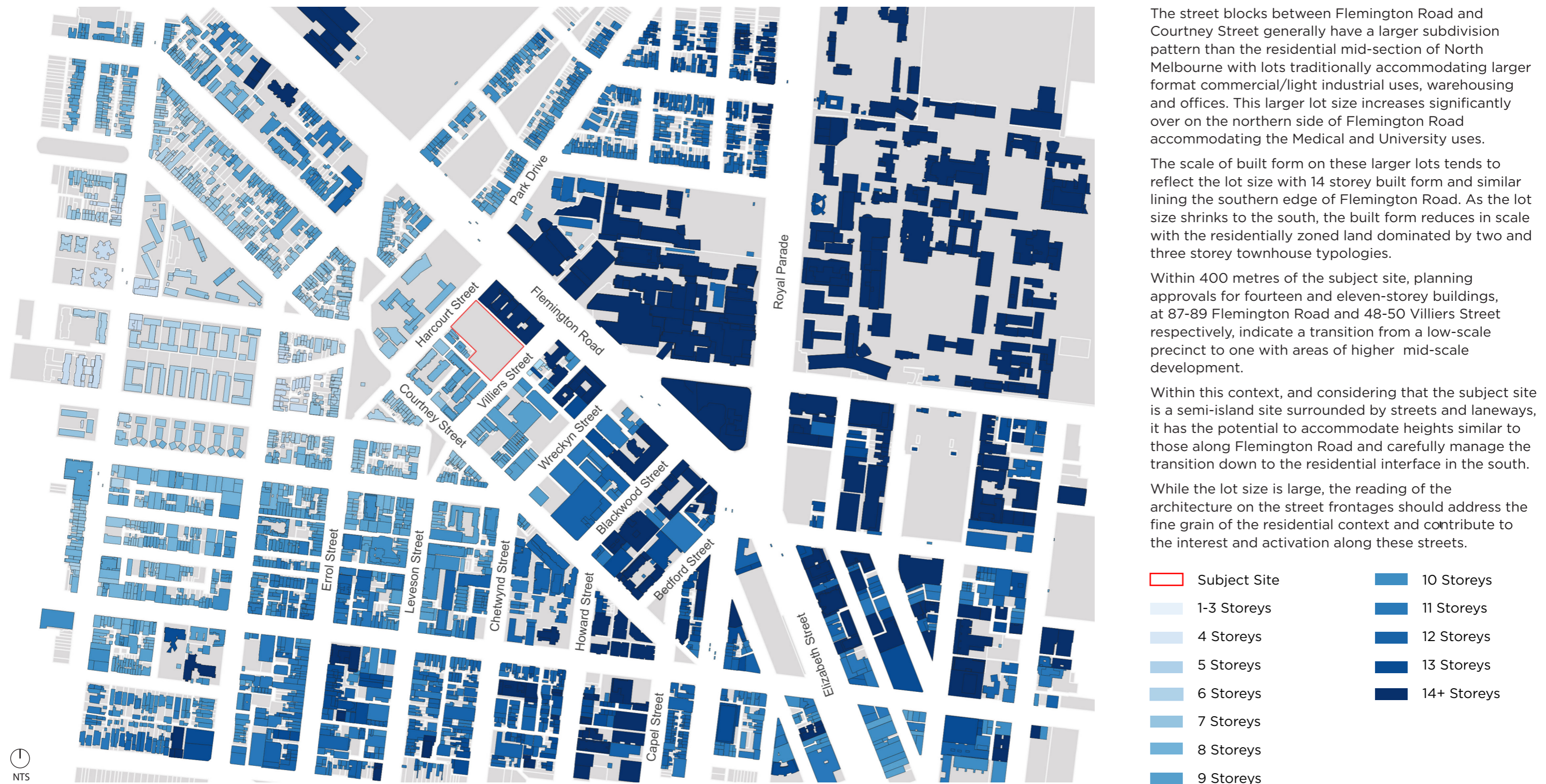
The Parkville Precinct itself has up to 73,000 people working across biomedical research, world-class hospitals, medical research institutes, biomedical organisations and the universities. With upgrades planned for the Royal Melbourne Hospital and Royal Women's Hospital and plans underway for the Australian Institute for Infectious Disease and the Cumming Global Centre for Pandemic Therapeutics, the precinct is expected to be home to over 80,000 employees by 2030.

The residential neighbourhood of North Melbourne to the south of the site has been facing increasing pressure to accommodate greater densities with some strategic sites doing much of the heavy lifting to protect the valued low-mid scale heritage housing stock. A new campus for North Melbourne Primary School (located directly over Harcourt Street from the site) was recently completed on Molesworth Street delivering a five storey vertical campus model to accommodate the growing demand of the surrounding neighbourhood.

This increasing residential and employment density is serviced by some significant open spaces including Royal Park and the award winning Nature Playground as well as network of smaller local parks including the nearby Errol Street Reserve. New development must however contribute to a high amenity public space outcome which includes streets and footpaths, spaces shared with slow moving vehicles and semi-public spaces to ensure everyone has room to connect to nature and connect with each other.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|------------------------|
|  | Subject Site |  | School |
|  | Future Metro Rail Network |  | NGO Precinct |
|  | Future Metro Station |  | Queen Victoria Markets |
|  | Medical Precinct | | |
|  | Knowledge Precincts | | |
|  | Open Space | | |

4.4 Built Form



NTS

Figure 07: Built Form

The street blocks between Flemington Road and Courtney Street generally have a larger subdivision pattern than the residential mid-section of North Melbourne with lots traditionally accommodating larger format commercial/light industrial uses, warehousing and offices. This larger lot size increases significantly over on the northern side of Flemington Road accommodating the Medical and University uses.

The scale of built form on these larger lots tends to reflect the lot size with 14 storey built form and similar lining the southern edge of Flemington Road. As the lot size shrinks to the south, the built form reduces in scale with the residentially zoned land dominated by two and three storey townhouse typologies.

Within 400 metres of the subject site, planning approvals for fourteen and eleven-storey buildings, at 87-89 Flemington Road and 48-50 Villiers Street respectively, indicate a transition from a low-scale precinct to one with areas of higher mid-scale development.

Within this context, and considering that the subject site is a semi-island site surrounded by streets and laneways, it has the potential to accommodate heights similar to those along Flemington Road and carefully manage the transition down to the residential interface in the south.

While the lot size is large, the reading of the architecture on the street frontages should address the fine grain of the residential context and contribute to the interest and activation along these streets.

4.5 Activities and Attractions



North Melbourne is one of Melbourne's highest amenity areas with a wealth of street art, eateries, bars, galleries, heritage streetscapes, comedy and music venues, making it a sought-after suburb for new residents.

Situated within proximity to the Arden and Macaulay urban renewal areas, the CBD and the lively Errol Street, the subject site is well located amongst current and future amenities. Within walking distance of the site, the Metropolitan Meat Market is a popular, flexible events venue which hosts everything from art exhibitions to live music.

Figure 08: Activities and Attractions

4.6 Context Imagery

3.1 Strategic Context



Wreckyn Street Coffee



Meat Market Stables Gallery



The Castle Hotel



The Comic's Lounge



Town Hall Hotel



Meat Market Theatre

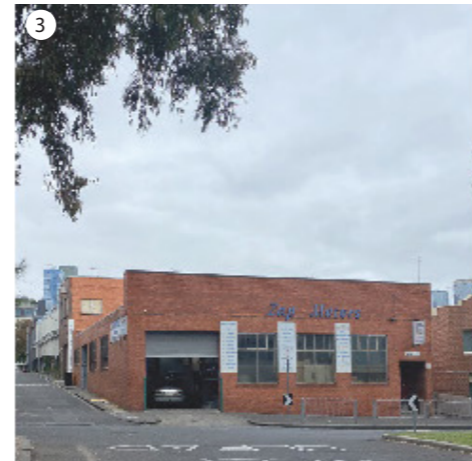
4.7 Immediate Site Context



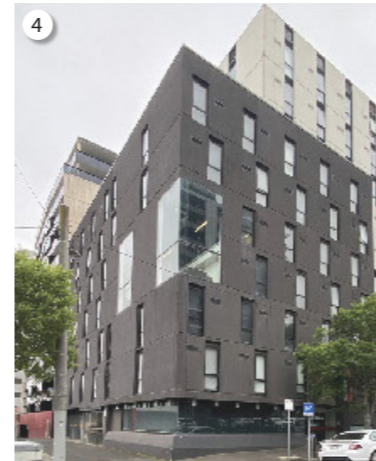
68 Harcourt Street



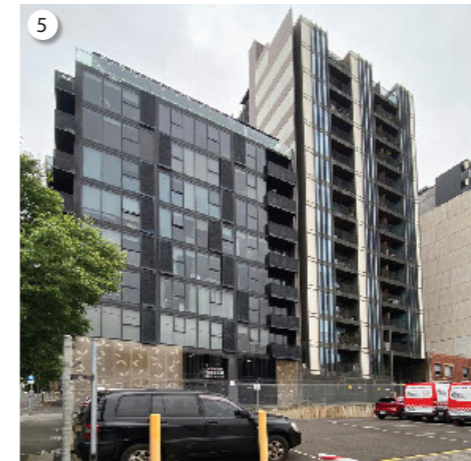
64 Harcourt Street



56-60 Harcourt Street



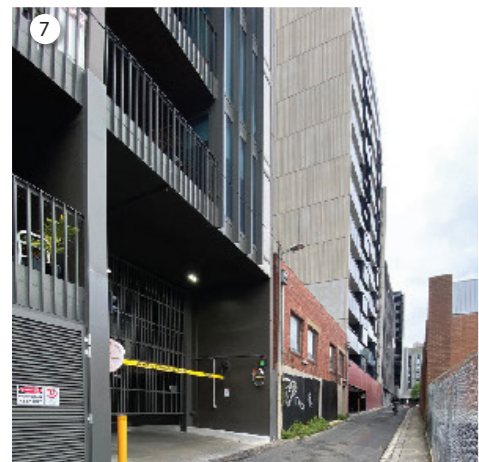
75-79 Flemington Road



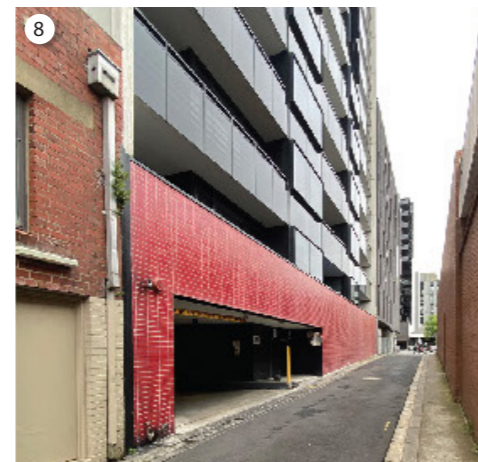
109 Flemington Road



Villiers Street



91-93 Flemington Road



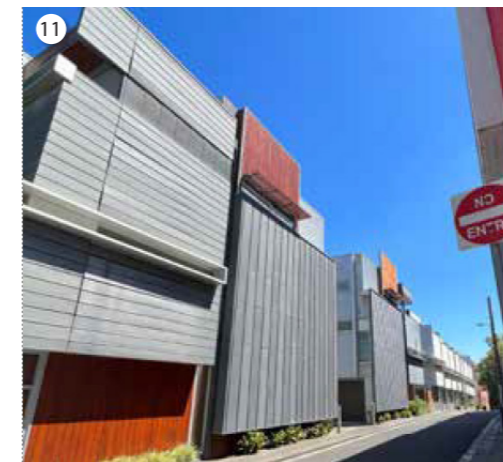
83 Flemington Road



Mary Street West



Rear access to Mary Street townhouses



Mary Street East



Villiers Street

4.8 Urban Character

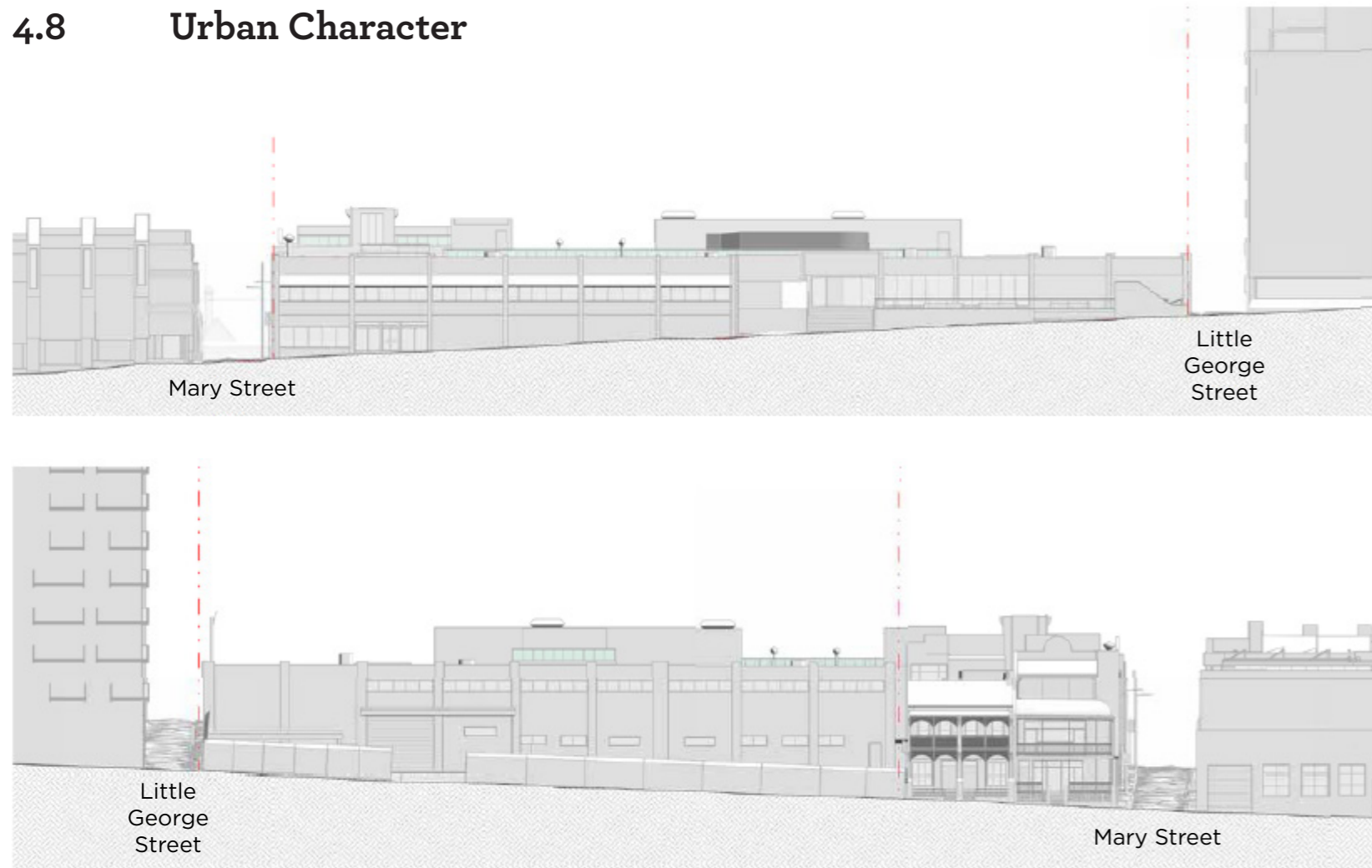
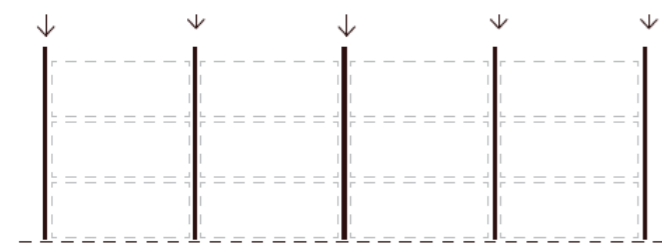


Figure 10: Elevation - Harcourt Street



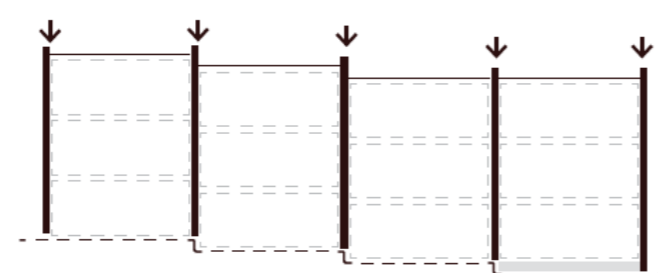
Vertical Rhythm and Expressed Party-Walls



129-133 Leveson Street



11-21A Villiers Street



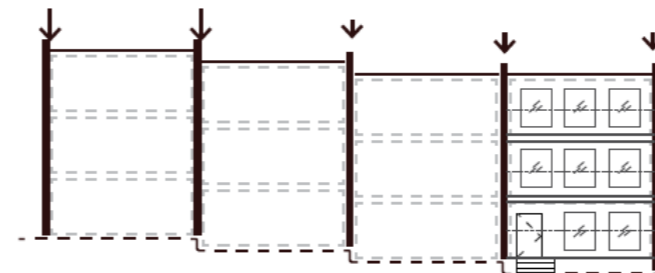
Cascading Parapets and Rooflines



52 Harcourt Street



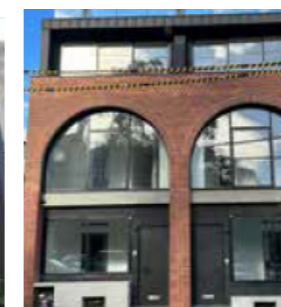
177-188 Errol Street



Street Interface and Residential Stoops



92 Courtney Street



49 Courtney Street

The subject site presents notable variations in ground levels, which require thorough attention to ensure that each street connection offers both accessibility and a sense of address. Notably, there's a considerable drop from Villiers Street to Harcourt Street, measuring approximately 5.59 meters, equivalent to nearly two storeys in height. Additionally, there's an east-west slope along Little George Street measuring 3.81 meters. The transition from Flemington Road to Mary Street also involves significant level changes, with a difference of 1.78 meters along the Harcourt Street side and 3.37 meters along the Villiers Street side. These variations must be carefully addressed in any development plans to ensure harmonious integration with the surrounding environment.

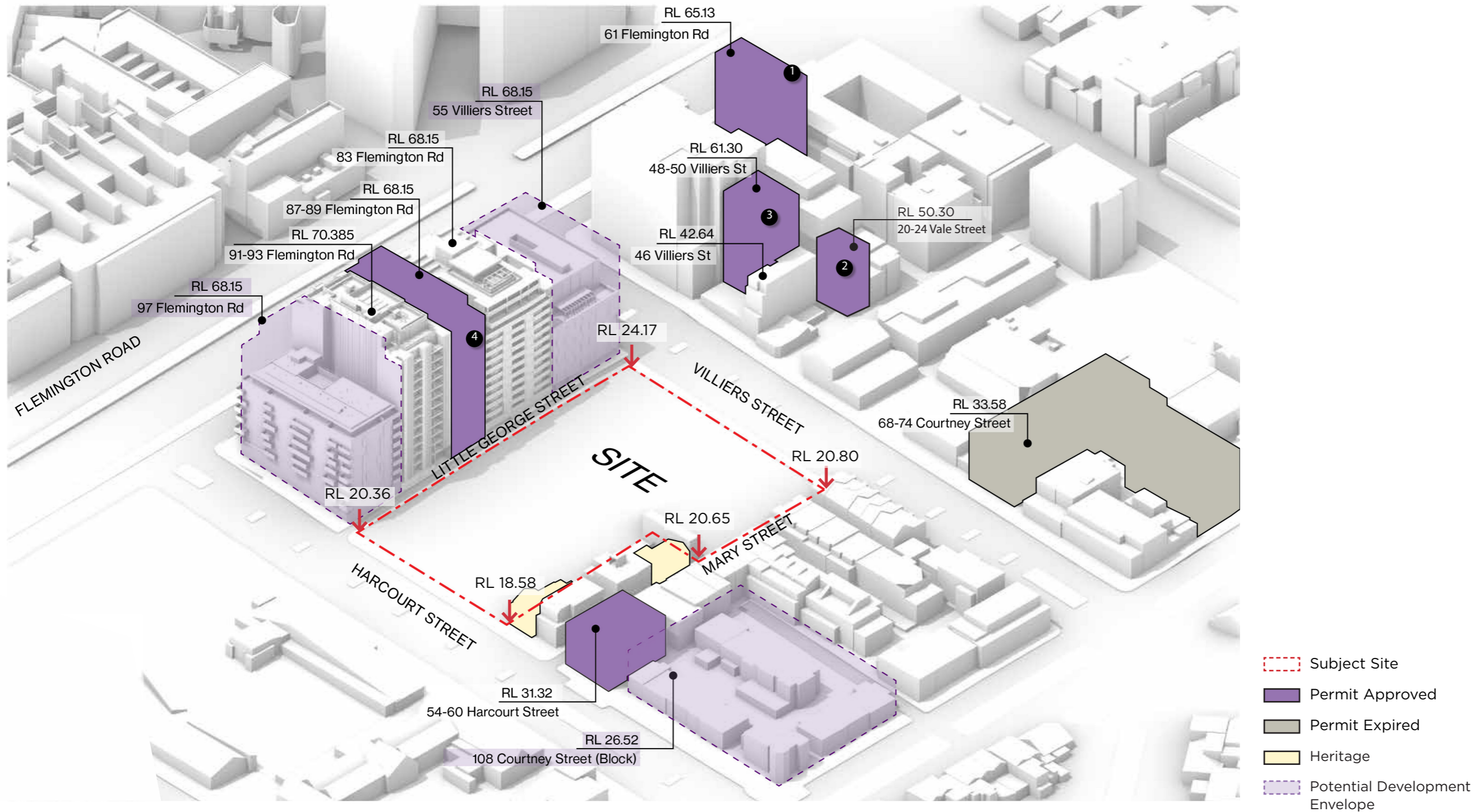
Also of note is the transition in scale of development from high-medium scale development north of Little George Street to low-scale development south of Mary Street.

A thoughtful built form response for the site would prioritise integration with the area's character and heritage.

This could be achieved through the use of:

- commonly used local materials like brick, bluestone and cream render reflecting the neighborhood's texture and solidity.
- Incorporating fine-grain detailing and articulation, especially at lower levels, enhancing pedestrian interaction and adding visual interest.
- A development that provides vertical rhythm, expressed party-walls, and cascading rooflines could contribute to the urban fabric's richness, while street-level activation and stoops could encourage social moments that are common in North Melbourne's low-scale urban fabric.

4.9 Existing and Future Development



4.10 Future Development

1



61-63 Flemington Road, North Melbourne

Project Status	Approved
Project Type	Hotel
Building Type	Mid-rise
Floor Count	13
Building Height	N/A
Number of Buildings	1

2



20-24 Vale Street, North Melbourne

Project Status	Approved
Project Type	Apartments
Building Type	Mid-rise
Floor Count	8
Building Height	N/A
Number of Buildings	1

3



48-50 Villiers Street, North Melbourne

Project Status	Approved
Project Type	Hotel
Building Type	Mid-rise
Floor Count	11
Building Height	N/A
Number of Buildings	1

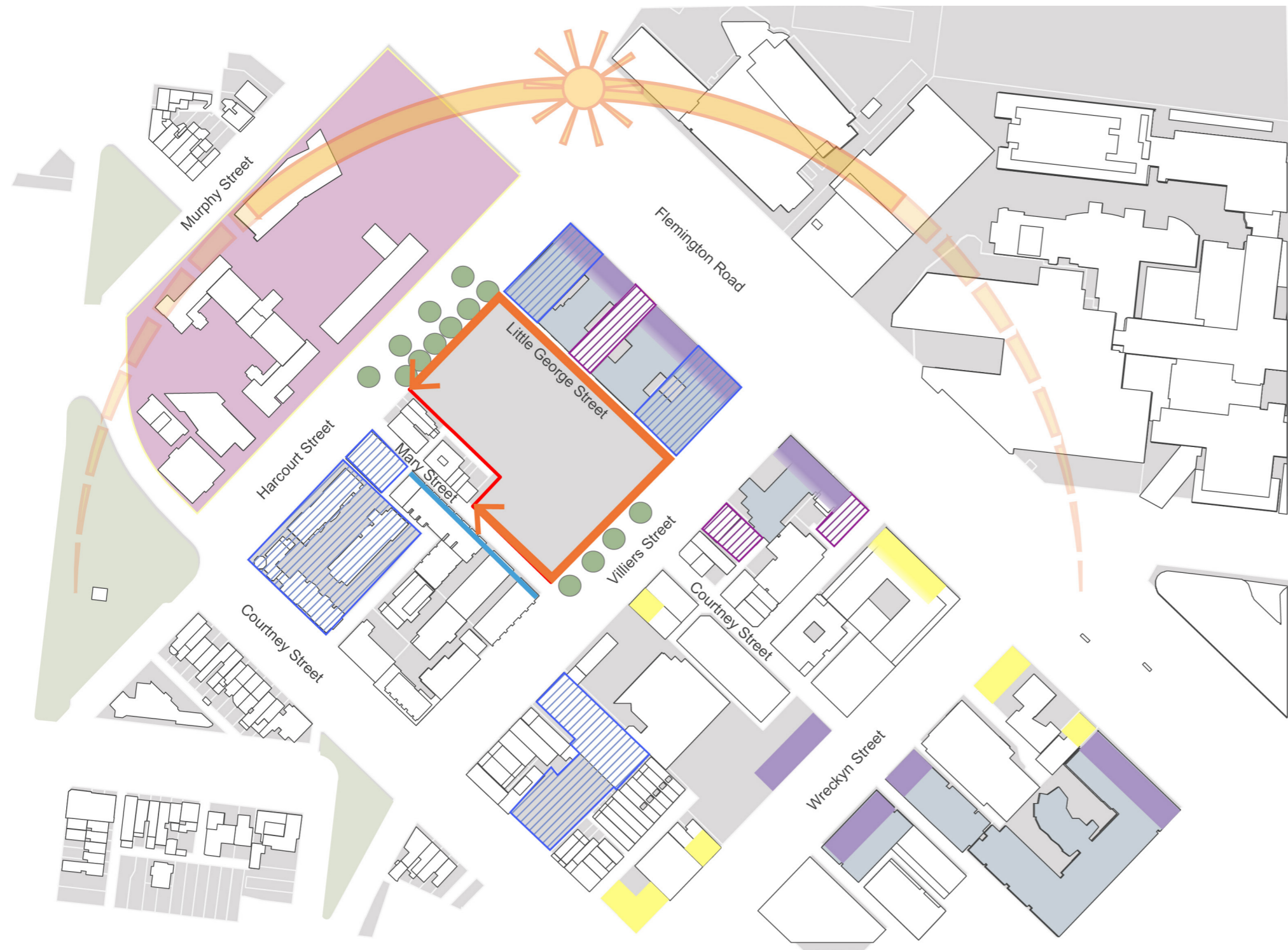
4



87-89 Flemington Road, North Melbourne

Project Status	Approved
Project Type	Apartments
Building Type	Mid-rise
Floor Count	14
Building Height	37 metres
Number of Buildings	1

4.11 Site Opportunities

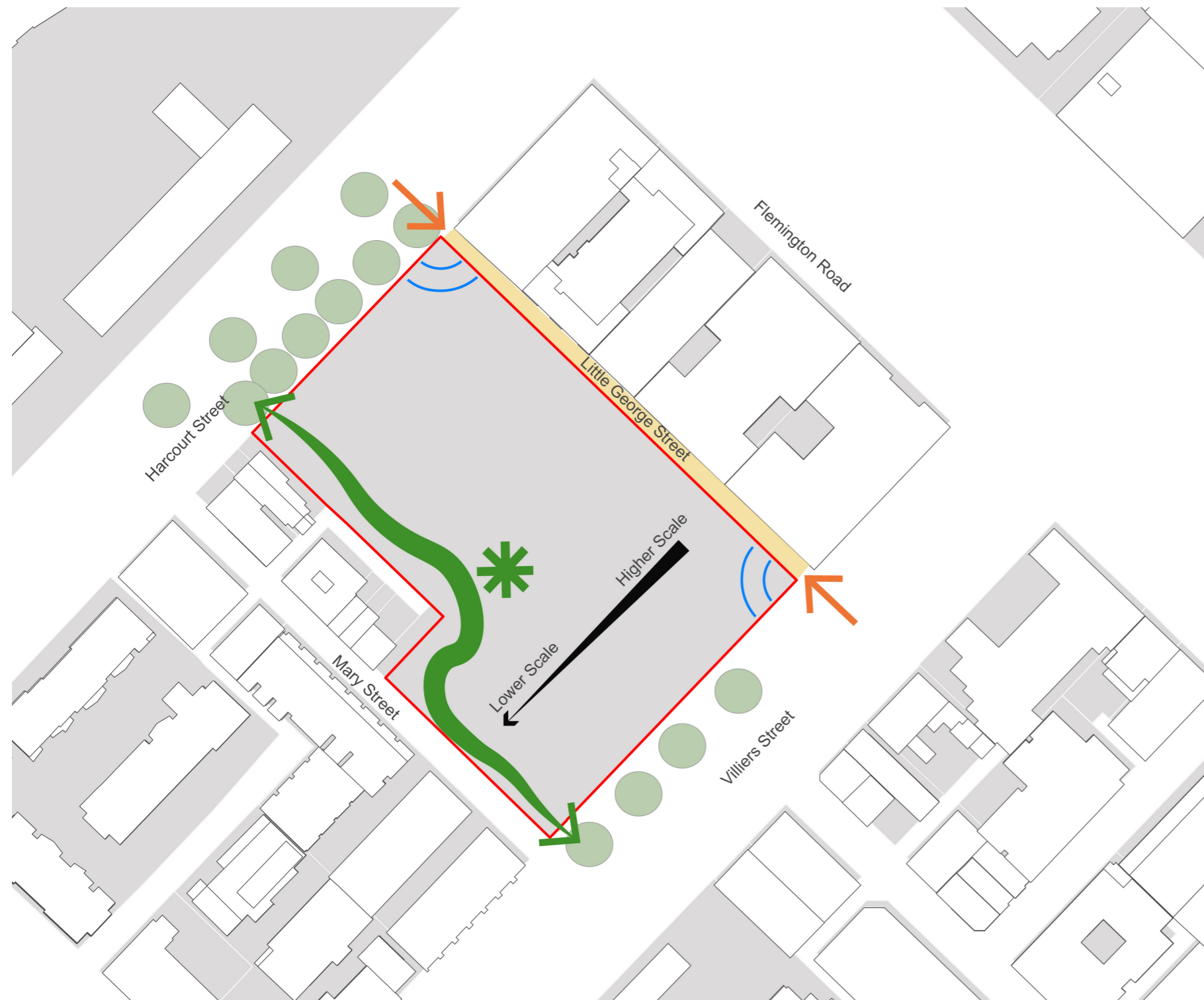


- Prominent and large island site allows for development to control amenity impacts within its own site allowing for the potential of increased height while retaining ample active interfaces.
- Existing vibrant retail and commercial uses are conducive of and can support a build to rent development
- The neighbouring North Melbourne Primary School on Harcourt Street will be a significant draw card for new residents.
- Large parcels identified as current and potential development sites will contribute to a mid to high-scale development precinct in the future.
- Existing street trees provide visual and shade amenity to the subject site
- Site orientation allows good access to natural light and ventilation.
- The townhouses on Mary Street face the site creating an opportunity for street activation on the subject site.

- Subject Site
- Retail/Commercial/Mixed-use
- Current Development
- Potential Development Site
- ↔ Island Site - Potential Street Activation
- Residential Interface Facing Site
- Retail Active Interface
- Residential/Commercial Active Interface
- ☀ Sun Path
- Existing Trees
- North Melbourne Primary School

Figure 11: Opportunities
NTS

4.12 Site Design Considerations



- Vehicle access through Little George Street to minimise pedestrian/vehicle conflict
- New high quality pedestrian route from Villiers Street to Harcourt Street, providing direct access to the southern site entrance on Mary Street
- Retain existing street trees and provide landscape link through the site for increased amenity and biodiversity
- Potential for new pedestrian priority entrance and communal space connected with pedestrian route
- Residential addresses could connect directly with street interfaces and potentially be set above the street level in a 'stoop' style. This would enhance street activation
- Balconies overlooking streets and lanes to increase street activation and provide passive surveillance
- Provide a height transition within the site, with higher built form towards Flemington Road, scaling down to lower built form towards Courtney Street.

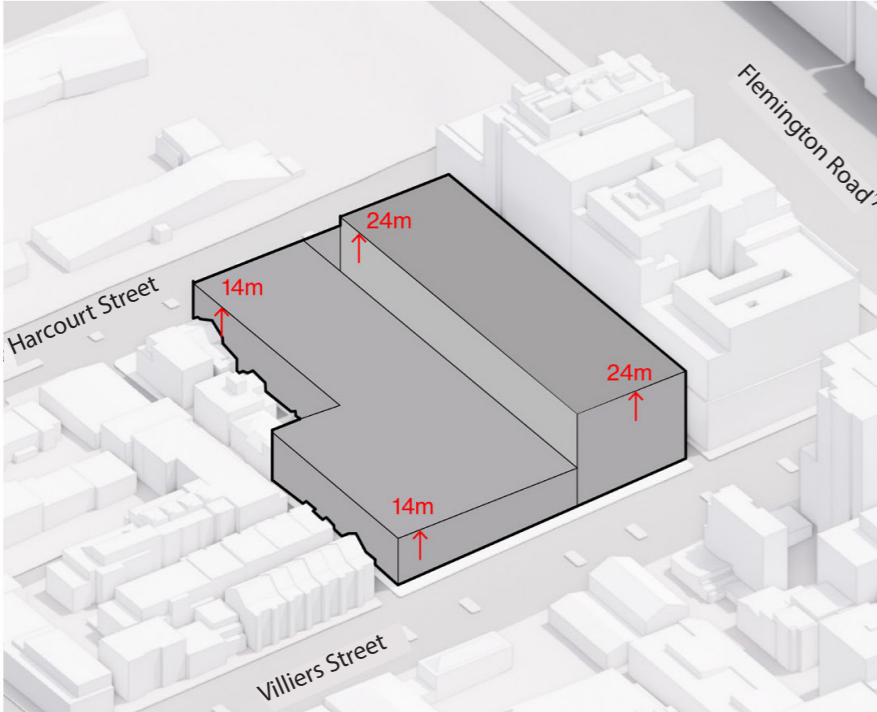
- Subject Site
- ↔ Potential high quality landscaped pedestrian route from Villiers Street to Harcourt Street
- * Potential pedestrian priority entrance with communal open space
- Existing Trees to be Protected and Retained
- ← Potential Site Vehicular Access Points
- ▬ Vehicle Access to Little George Street
- ⤿ Potential Location for Primary Entries Capturing Pedestrian Movement From Flemington Road Public Transport Corridor

Figure 12: Site Design Considerations
NTS

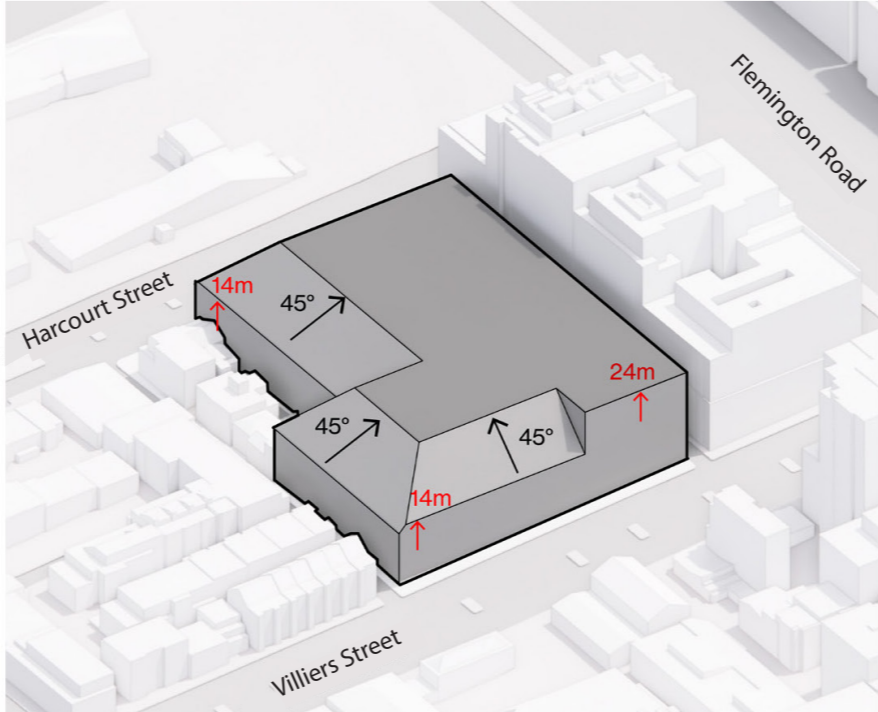
5.0 Preferred Development Envelope

5.1 Preferred Development Envelope

Villiers Street



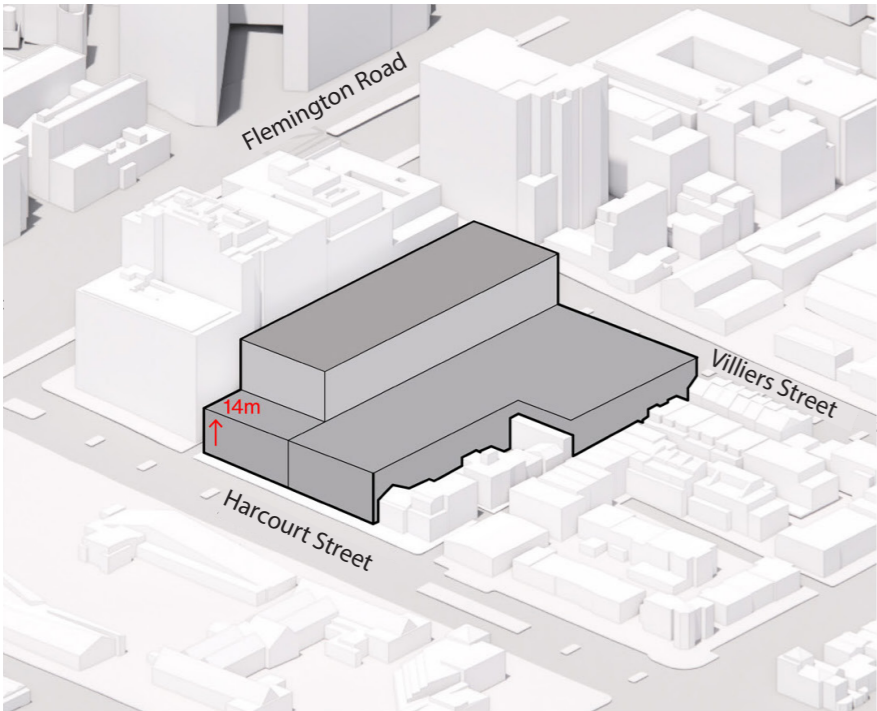
1a. Preferred Street Edge Height



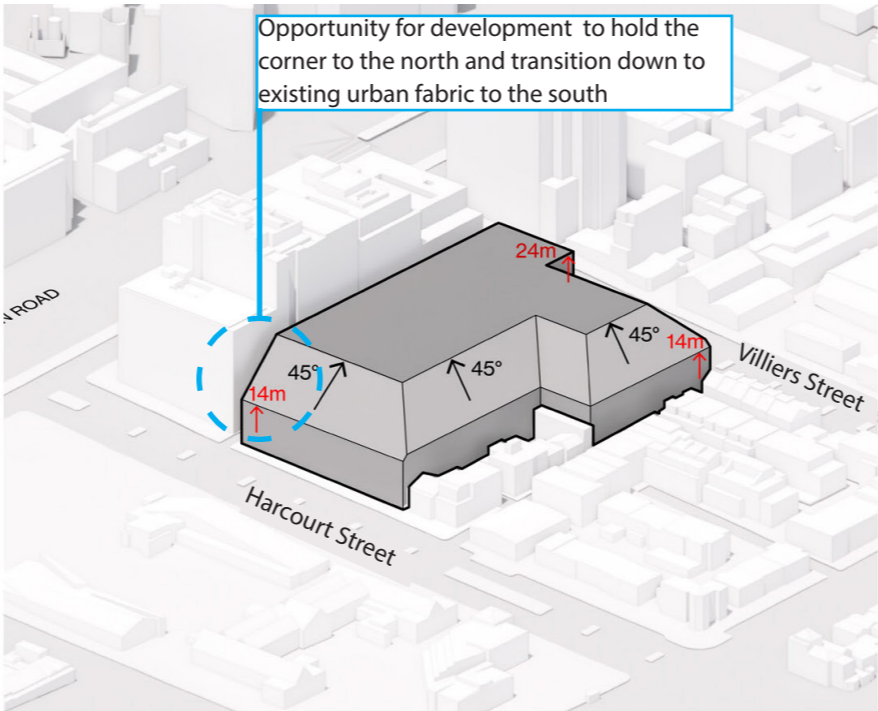
2a. Preferred Building Height, Scale & Setbacks

Note: Diagrams refer to the preferred development envelope outlined in DDO61

Harcourt Street



1b. Preferred Street Edge Height

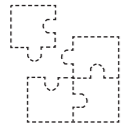


2b. Preferred Building Height, Scale & Setbacks

6.0 Urban Design Principles

6.1 Urban Design Principles

Site Responsive



Site Responsive Scale

The built form massing will transition in scale from Flemington Road down to Courtney Street knitting the neighbourhood together via mid-rise scaled built form.

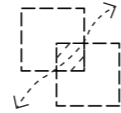
Site Responsive Streets

Each of the streetscapes will respond to their unique built form typologies, development grain, climatic environments and landscape opportunities to contribute to a complex, inviting site response.

Community Responsive Design

The development will deliver a variety of different spaces, including public, private, semi public and communal spaces to allow for a range of activities to occur and to cater for a diverse community.

Connection



Connecting to the neighbourhood

Pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle access is organised to minimise conflict, control vehicle movement and integrate with existing transport networks.

The proposal will provide a high level of pedestrian amenity through and around the site.

Creating new connections

A new publicly accessible pedestrian and bicycle route between Harcourt Street and Mary Street will increase the permeability of the neighbourhood and accessibility of the site.

Enhancing urban complexity

Streetscapes will be designed to allow for individual entries, lobbies, services as appropriate to enhance the complexity, aid in wayfinding and contribute to the safety of the neighbourhood through passive surveillance and diverse uses.

Connecting to each other

Community connections are enabled and encouraged in existing and new spaces including high quality and diverse communal spaces within the development.

Adaptation



Adapting to climate change

The proposal responds to the challenges of climate change by meeting high levels of ESD standards and providing high quality landscaping.

Adaptable buildings

The design of the built form structure will allow for uses at the ground floor to change over time with changing needs of the community and neighbourhood.

Adapting to changing ways of living and working

The build to rent model will provide options for a new ways of living and working within close proximity to the amenity of the CBD.

Adapting to changing land uses

The land use will complement existing residential uses to the south-west as well as the commercial, medical and educational uses to the north and north east on the opposite side of Flemington Road.

Adapting to population increases

The density and diversity of dwellings on site will offer a range of choice transitioning between smaller apartments and hotel offerings already available, reflecting urban population increases and increasing housing demand.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Conclusion

Located in North Melbourne, known for its lively character, food, heritage streetscapes, generous provision of open spaces, proximity to the CBD, schools, universities, medical and research hubs, government institutions and Melbourne's major sport venues, the subject site is ideal for development.

Set within a developing pocket of North Melbourne, with planning permits of up to fourteen storeys in height closer to Flemington Road, the immediate context of the subject site is characterised by large land parcels, reminiscent of the suburb's former industrial activities. These parcels have been incrementally redeveloped into predominately mid-rise residential and mixed-use buildings transitioning down to lower scale older housing.

Considering the abundance of amenity, open spaces and transport opportunities, intense urban character and significant change in the urban profile of the area, LatStudios believe that the subject site is ideal for a thoughtful Build to Rent project that delivers a diversity of housing options and aligns with the project principles of transition, connection and adaptation.



Figure 13: Historical Buildings on Errol Street, North Melbourne (Source: fredodonnellphotography)



LatStudios
PO Box 400
Flinders Lane VIC 8009
03 9119 1519

