

Brunswick Street & Smith Street Built Form Review:

SMITH STREET

BUILT FORM FRAMEWORK

Prepared by **Hansen Partnership**
in conjunction with **GJM Heritage**
for **City of Yarra**
November 2019

PART 1

DRAFT

Contents

Preamble

Part 1 : Brunswick & Smith Context

Part 2 : Smith Street Precinct Influences

Part 3 : A Built Form Proposition

Part 4 : Recommended Controls

3

5

8

17

22



Smith Street, looking south from outside 208 Smith Street.

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** Note: This Draft document is a part only of a broader Built Form Review for the Brunswick Street and Smith Street Activity Centres : Built Form Review. It is a component part of a broader body of work that sets out a future proposition for two of Yarra’s key Activity Centre spines and their adjoining mixed use precincts.*

Preamble

The following urban design report has been prepared for the City of Yarra as the basis for an urban design vision for the Smith Street Activity Centre Spine. It sets out a preferred built form framework underpinned by an integrated urban design and heritage assessment.

The report has been prepared by a multidisciplinary team comprising Hansen Partnership (Urban Design) and GJM Heritage (Heritage) with the support of City of Yarra's internal working group.

The study area is identified in Figure 1.

This report sets out the rationale for proposed built form controls for Smith Street and is underpinned by key components, namely:

Part 1: Brunswick & Smith Context

Part 2: Smith Street Precinct : Influences

Part 3: Smith Street : Built Form Proposition

Part 4: Recommended Controls

The report is part of a broader Built Form Review.



Oblique View of the Study Area and Surrounding Context

PART 1

BRUNSWICK ST & SMITH ST CONTEXT

The Brunswick Street and Smith Street Built Form Review seeks to set a clear framework for future change within two of Yarra's key Activity Centres and their adjoining Mixed Use area. Planning policy identifies such Activity Centres as areas for accommodating growth and change. Therefore, these are the areas that must be carefully planned and managed in order to accommodate progressive change while protecting (or indeed enhancing) existing established character and heritage values.

The project was initiated in May 2017 and encompasses large areas bound by Alexandra Parade (to the north), Victoria Parade (to the south), Wellington Street (to the east) and Nicholson Street (to the west).

As part of the process extensive analysis of the existing conditions was undertaken and documented within an overall Background report. This comprehensive analysis identified and divided the overall Review Area into ten 'place specific' precincts. Furthermore, a series of guiding objectives were identified to be contemplated across ten defined precincts.

This report addresses the Smith Street Precinct. The Brunswick Street, Town Hall Precinct and Gertrude Precinct reports are also being prepared in 2019. A Collingwood Precinct report was prepared in June 2018 and a Johnston St Precinct, Fitzroy East Precinct report were completed in June 2019. The remaining five other precincts will be addressed in subsequent reports.

1.1 Overarching Built Form Objectives

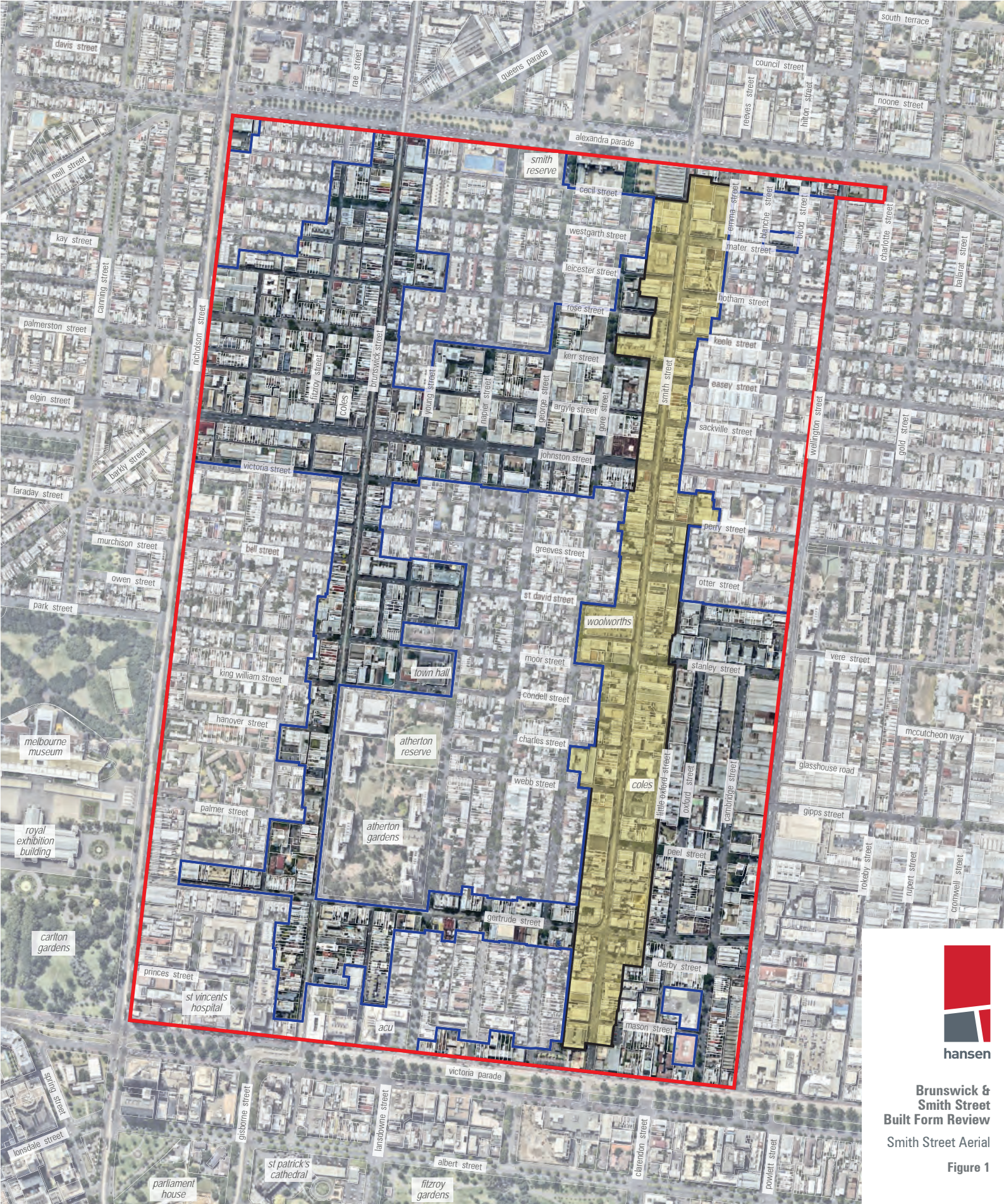
The following 8 objectives have been identified:

Objectives:

1. Recognise and carefully manage potential in key areas within the Activity Centres.
2. Highlight the character distinctions between the different retail streets and mixed use precincts within the Activity Centres.
3. Reinforce the traditional Victorian cityscape of heritage streetscapes as dominant elements, including significant corner elements and identified local landmarks.
4. Ensure continued diversity through sensitive infill within traditional Victorian streetscapes.
5. Shape the retail streets and mixed use areas to ensure a high quality, people-oriented public realm.
6. Ensure development encourages walking, cycling and public transport usages through layout and design responses.
7. Ensure new development is sustainable and adaptive over time.
8. Manage the built form profile of new development to avoid adverse impact to surrounding areas, including heritage places, streetscapes and residential interfaces.



View looking north along Smith Street.



Legend

- study area
- built form review boundary
- smith street precinct



Brunswick & Smith Street Built Form Review Smith Street Aerial

Figure 1

Project Ref: 2017.073
Dwg No.: UDD-002
Scale: 1:6000 @A3
Date: 04.06.2019
Revision: A

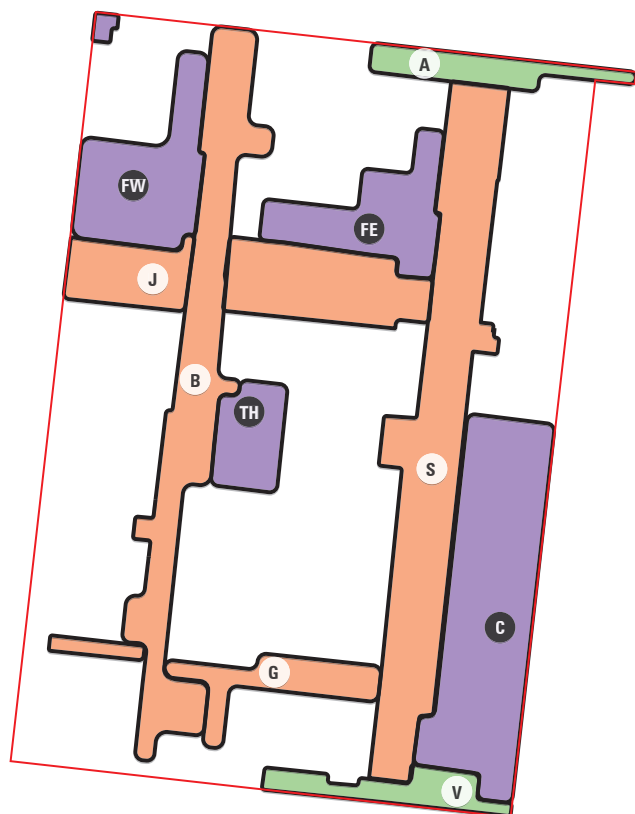
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10 Precincts

The 10 precincts within the Brunswick & Smith Street Built Form Review are:

- Precinct 1: Brunswick Street (B);
- Precinct 2: Smith Street (S);
- Precinct 3: Gertrude Street (G);
- Precinct 4: Johnston Street (J);
- Precinct 5: Fitzroy West (FW);
- Precinct 6: Fitzroy East (FE);
- Precinct 7: Collingwood (C);
- Precinct 8: Town Hall (TH);
- Precinct 9: Alexandra Parade (A); and
- Precinct 10: Victoria Parade (V).

This report addresses Precinct 2: Smith Street (S).



- Activity Spine
- Mixed Use Areas
- Boulevards

1.2 Brunswick & Smith Built Form Precincts

Based on the initial analysis phase of the project the following Precincts were identified spatially as relatively coherent parts. The Precincts are largely defined by function as either:

- an Activity Spine;
- a Mixed Use Area; or
- a Boulevard.

Activity Spines

The Activity Spines are defined by the 'traditional' retail and commercial functions along the four main streets within the review area of:

- Brunswick Street;
- Smith Street;
- Gertrude Street; and
- Johnston Street.

Mixed Use Areas

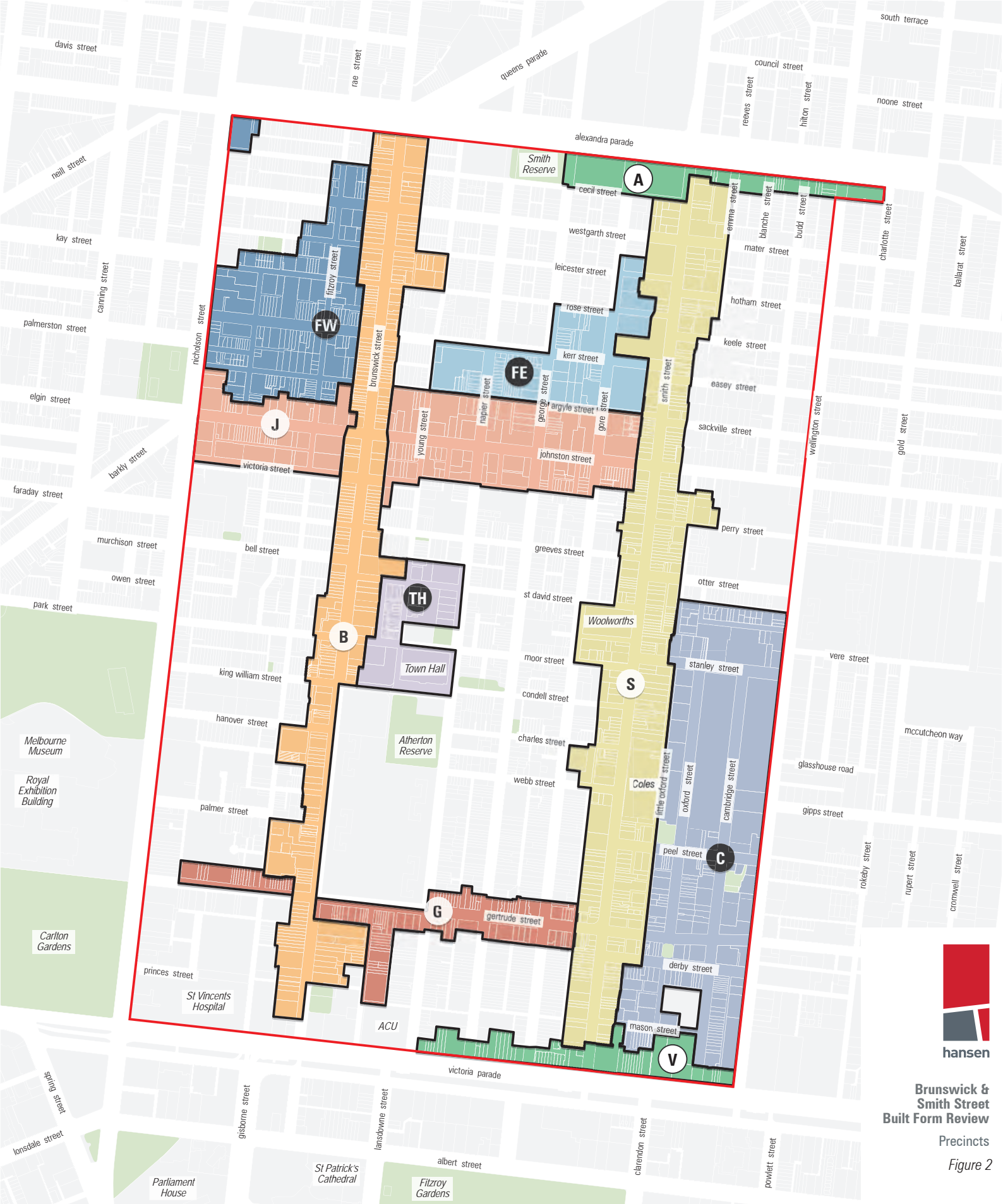
The Mixed Use Areas are defined by the mixed use functions present in the non-residential land located generally in local streets, behind the Spines. The four renewal areas within the review area are:

- Fitzroy West;
- Fitzroy East;
- Collingwood; and
- Town Hall.

Boulevards

The Boulevards are the non-residential land to the northern and southern edges of the review area which front the broad road corridors of:

- Alexandra Parade; and
- Victoria Parade.



Brunswick & Smith Street Built Form Review

Precincts

Figure 2

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PART 2: PRECINCT INFLUENCES

Smith Street is one of the City of Yarra's Major Activity Centres and a key metropolitan activity spine with a long retail tradition and largely intact heritage character. The street defines the boundary between the suburbs of Fitzroy and Collingwood and is hemmed in by predominately Fitzroy residential properties and diverse Collingwood residential, mixed use and former industrial properties to either side. The overall streetscape character is diverse, comprising sections of highly consistent heritage scale and rhythm, sections defined by the strong profile of prominent heritage retail buildings and areas to the northern end where contemporary, renewal and taller forms have emerged.

The extent of the linear Smith Street Precinct is set out in Figure 3.

Boundary Description

This precinct encompasses the commercial properties which line Smith Street, bound by Victoria Parade in the south and Alexandra Parade in the north. The eastern extent of the precinct is defined by the extent of the C1Z and the western edge is also generally defined by the extent of C1Z and three discrete pockets of MUZ land.

Built Form Character

Smith Street is a unique Activity Centre spine with a particularly strong north-south visual framework informed continuous segments of traditional and largely intact heritage retail buildings typically extend from anchoring key intersections such as Johnston and Gertrude Streets, before variation is presented by punctuations of 'grand retail' forms, remnant of the historical department store typology. Medium rise apartment forms set behind traditional street walls represents an emerging character of change, particularly north towards Alexandra Parade.

The corridor benefits from a series of important local landmarks, typically occurring at corners which act as important wayfinding elements through the precinct. Other local landmarks occur mid-block, some of which are located at the termination of perpendicular streets, increasing the visual extent and influence of these buildings, such as the Victorian Heritage Registered Post Office. The topography gently falls north of Johnston Street, resulting in the taller contemporary forms generally sited within the line of traditional 2 storey parapets in long distant corridor views from higher land south of Johnston Street. While the corridor is largely defined by long segments of fine grained allotments, the precinct presents a number of anomalous larger sites accommodating warehouses found both along the spine as well as in the adjacent 'back-blocks.'



Recent Smith & Co, development



hansen

Brunswick & Smith Street Built Form Review

Smith Street
Precinct Boundary

DRAFT

Legend

Smith Street Precinct
Boundary



Project Ref: 2017.073
Dwg No.: UDD-000
Scale: 1:2000@A3
Date: 06.06.2019
Revision:

2.1 : Foundations

Setting an agreed vision for this section of Smith Street must be underpinned by an understanding of its diverse conditions, including the fabric of existing and approved buildings and relevant ‘foundation’ influences as set out in Figure 4 and as follows:

Topography & Views

Along much of the Smith Street corridor, topography is relatively flat with the exception of a noticeable fall in the section north of Johnston Street down to Alexandra Parade. While, landform does fall considerably from west to east to either side of Smith Street. The west comprises the residential streets of Fitzroy ‘perched’ on higher ground in contrast to the ‘Collingwood Slope’ and predominantly former industrial land to the east. As a result views along the side streets are terminated by Smith Street frontages of the opposite side. However, from along Smith Street distant views towards the east are available.

Off-set side streets

A legacy of the area’s initial subdivision and development pattern, with Smith Street defining the then eastern edge of Melbourne’s first ‘planned’ suburb (Fitzroy) and evolving in a less controlled pattern Collingwood. As a result, there is limited direct connectively (both physical and visual) across Smith Street except of the main roads of Gertrude/Langridge Street and Johnston Street (and Westgarth -Mater Streets). This street pattern of terminating T-intersections with Smith Street reinforces the street’s role and function as the primary activity and movement ‘spine’ for the neighbourhoods to either side.

Northern End

There is opportunity for development at the northern end of Smith Street (north of Argyle-Sackville Streets) in response to generally larger lots and limited heritage fabric, reinforced by the lack of the Heritage Overlay. To the north of Argyle Street, properties on the western side of Smith Street are strongly influenced by their industrial past and along the eastern side (north of Keele Street) is an emerging strip of prominent contemporary mixed use developments with clear street wall definition and setback taller form. Further consolidation of this northern end presents considerable opportunity for development of a commemorate scale.

Grand Retail Legacy

The central section of Smith Street (between Gertrude and Johnston Streets) was at the turn of the 20th Century Melbourne’s premier retail destination. Dominated by the grand department store buildings of Foy and Gibson and Patersons, the emergence of the Coles Variety store and serviced by cable trams Smith Street was booming. The street blocks reflect this legacy with the provision of Little Smith Street and Little Oxford Street which mimic the big and little street arrangement of the CBD. Although some of these significant retail buildings have been lost, their built form legacy remains evident as Smith Street comprises a streetscape diversity of prominent grand buildings interspersed with traditional heritage shop fronts.



View north along Smith Street towards Johnston Street and low lying land beyond.



Terminating view along Leicester Street, looking east towards Smith Street.



Prominent recent developments defining northern end of Smith Street.



Former Foy and Gibson department store at 145 Smith Street.

Southern End

The prevailing Smith Street character dissipates to the south of the Gertrude/Langridge Street junctions and retail activity wanes due to the lack of tram provision. On approach to Victoria Parade to built form comprises a relatively consistent 2 storey street wall and rhythm although the architectural detail is less prominent with the presentation of simple façades and the presence of a few warehouse forms.

Local landmarks

Like many traditional high streets, Smith Street comprises a number of local landmarks which act as wayfinding devices along it's length. These more distinct and noticeable buildings often relate to more 'civic' services, articulate corners and punctuate the streetscape with distinguishing architectural features. Along Smith Street, 12 such 'local landmark' buildings have been defined in collaboration with GJM Heritage and are as follows:

- The Gasometer Hotel - 484 Smith Street;
- Former State Saving Bank - 337 Smith Street;
- The Birmingham Hotel - 333 Smith Street;
- Corner shop - 257 Smith Street;
- Ackman's Furniture Warehouse facade (Woolworths) - 243-247 Smith Street;
- Paterson Furniture Warehouse - 231 Smith Street;
- Former Post Office - 174-180 Smith Street;
- Patersons Building - 173-181 Smith Street;
- Former Union Bank Building - 165-167 Smith Street;
- The Grace Darling Hotel - 114 Smith Street;
- Foy & Gibson Store - 145 Smith Street; and
- Stanford Block - 119-129 Smith Street.

Key Junctions

The precinct comprises several prominent junctions along the Smith Street spine, which act as important gateway elements and anchor sections of the streetscape. Key junctions include the boulevard bookends of Victoria and Alexandra Parades to either end, with notable junctions of Gertrude/Langridge Streets and Johnston Street which are anchored by consistent streetscapes and corner forms and define the central section of Smith Street.

Movement Corridors

Smith Street is the primary movement corridor and spine for the Precinct. It comprises main north-south movements for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. North of the Gertrude/Langridge Street junction it also comprises public transport provision, accommodating Tram Route 86. The provision of kerbside parking restricts vehicle movements to a single lane (in each direction), with cars and trams sharing the lane. This leaves limited move for cyclists and slows traffic speeds and discourages through traffic movements. Designated north-south cycle movements are encouraged to either side of the Precinct along Napier and Wellington Streets.



Buildings along the western side of Smith Street, looking south.



Local landmark, the former Ackman's Furniture Warehouse - now Woolworths.



Junction of Gertrude/Langridge and Smith Streets.



Tram route 86 along Smith Street.

Adjoining Built Form Precincts

As a narrow linear corridor, Smith Street traverses varied abutting conditions to either side and along its length. To the west, on higher ground sit residential streets of Fitzroy fronting predominantly north-south tree lined streets of Gore and George Streets. To the east, is the 'Collingwood Slope' which is located within the Collingwood Precinct and dominated by the former industrial Foy and Gibson complex which presents a robust but consistent built form. Both the Gertrude Street and Johnston Street Precincts terminate into the Precinct at east-west main street spines. North of Johnston Street the abutting conditions become more varied to either side with mixed use and commercial abuts transitioning to residential streets on approach to Alexandra Avenue.

Borrowed Landscape Amenity

The Smith Street spine is devoid of street trees between Gertrude/Langridge Streets and Johnston Street. The southern and northern end comprise provision of relatively recent street trees, which are yet to mature and become a prominent visual component of the streetscape. The central section of Smith Street 'borrows' some landscape amenity from the established street trees within the 'green streets' of Moor, Stanley and Peel Streets which project into the Smith Street streetscape and are reinforced at ground level through the provision of expanded public realm provision.

Heritage

The vast majority of the precinct is subject to the Heritage Overlays (H0333 and H0464), comprising individually significant and contributory buildings of varying typologies including fine grain shops, former department stores, bank buildings, corner pubs and a few former factories. Several buildings of individual significance are subject to a site-specific Heritage Overlay including the 15-17 Bedford Street (H095), 33-47 Bedford Street (H096), 2 Derby Street (H099), The Grace Darling Hotel (H0135), Former Post Office (H0136), 2 Stanley Street (H0137), 165-169 Smith Street (H0187). While the HO extents across most of the Precinct, there are notable clusters of buildings north of Johnston Street which comprise non-contributory buildings.

Traditional Shop fronts

Located in clusters along Smith Street and to either side of the key junctions of Gertrude/Langridge and Johnston Street and attached rows of intact, heritage shop fronts which present a highly consistent streetscape character and build from rhythm. These sections of Smith Street are distinct from other more diverse parts of the streetscape.



Looking south along Little Oxford Street, abutting the Foy and Gibson complex.



Established street trees within Condell Street projecting into Smith Street.



The Grace Darling Hotel (H0135).



Consistent traditional shopfronts along Smith Street to south of Perry Street.

Recent Development Trends

Substantial medium to high density development has occurred along the corridor, particularly to the northern end with forms ranging in scale from 7 to 10 storeys. In the central section of Smith Street development has been far less frequent and generally limited to upper level additions. The key exception being the significant mixed use development (Smith & Co) comprising a Coles supermarket on a large consolidated site which presents a varied 2-3 storey street wall and overall scale of 6 to 8 storeys. Recent planning permit approvals within the Precinct are typically 6 to 9 storeys and there has been a single 7 storey development in the stretch, south of Gertrude Street.

Open Space

There is a lack of notable open space in the Precinct. The nearest public open spaces are the pocket parks to the east, within the 'Collingwood Slope' and Smith Reserve, to the north and west. Therefore, the importance of the expanded public realm provision at 'green street' junctions with Smith Street is heightened. This provision of corner 'pause places' occurs at the junctions of Peel, Stanley, Otter and Moor Streets with Smith Street. Maintaining solar access to these locations will be important to ensuring their continued utilisation.

There is also a perceived public open node at the corner of Gertrude and Smith Street, however this open corner which comprises public benches and landscape provision is privately owned and utilised primarily for advertising purposes.



'You and I' 7 storey development at 450 Smith Street.



Expanded public realm incorporating flexible seating at Otter Street.



Privately owned 'public' space at 246-248 Gertrude Street.

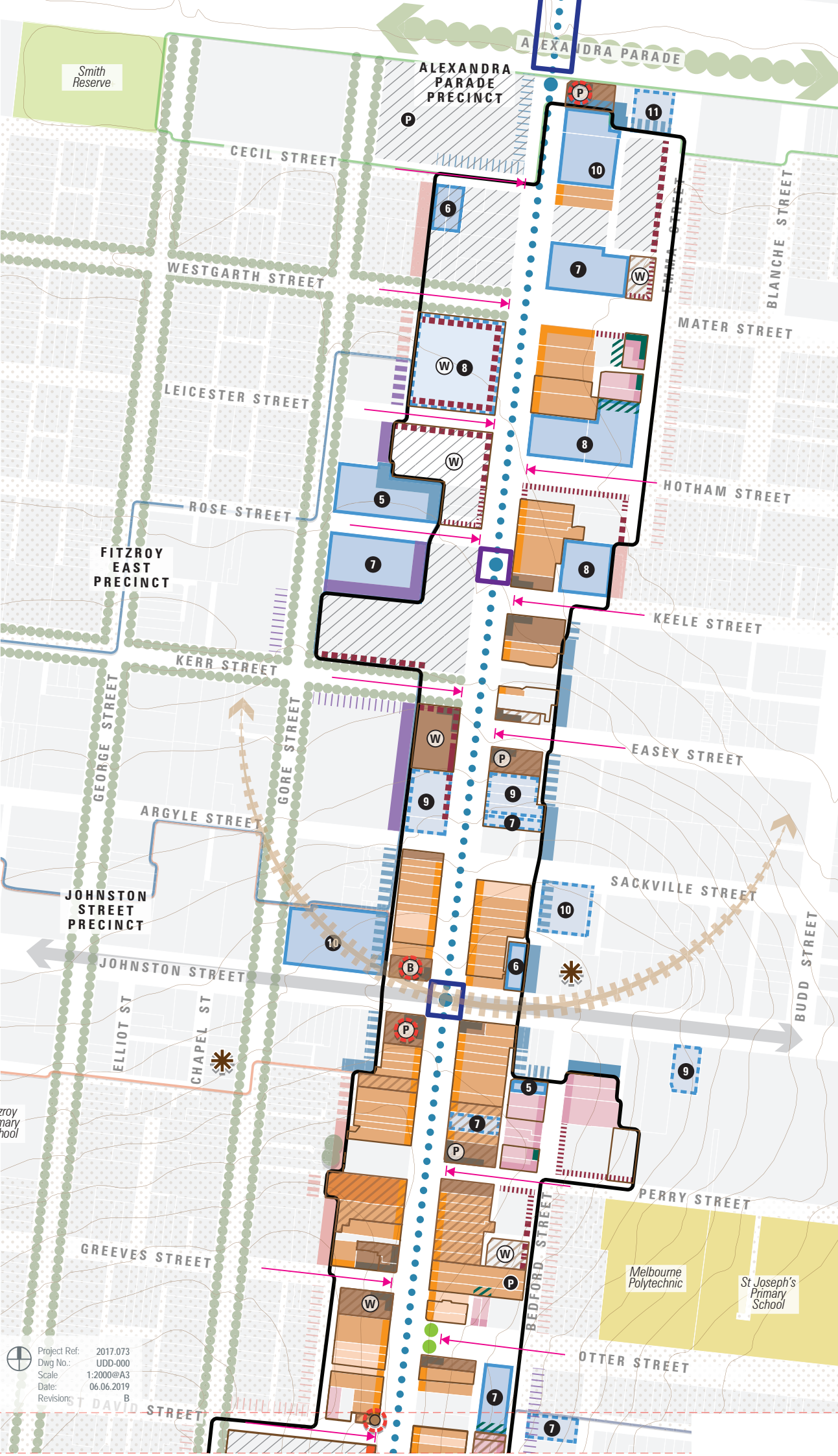
Brunswick & Smith Street Built Form Review

Smith Street
Foundation Information
Part 1/2

Figure 4

Legend

- Smith Street Precinct Boundary
- Tram Route 86 / Stop
- Signalised junction
- Pedestrian operated crossing
- Terminal View
- Views across topographic fall
- Constructed redevelopment
- Approved development
- Building/Approved Height
- Fine grain residential
- Fine grain residential (garden setback)
- Fine grain commercial (1 storey)
- Fine grain commercial (2 storey)
- Fine grain commercial (3 storey)
- Department store commercial (4+ storey)
- Institutional form
- Heritage corner form
- School
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone
- Warehouse streetwall: Low
- Warehouse streetwall: Medium
- Warehouse streetwall: High
- Department Store streetwall
- Victorian Heritage Register
- Individual heritage significance
- Contributory heritage building
- Local landmark (GJM, 2019)
- Local Feature - Turret
- Public Open Space
- Kerb Outstand
- Green streets
- Mature native trees
- Boulevard
- Warehouse building
- Bank building
- Pub building
- Department store building
- At-grade car park
- interface - residential zone + street
- interface - residential zone + laneway
- interface - residential zone + no laneway
- interface - commercial zone + laneway
- interface - commercial zone + no laneway
- interface - mixed use zone + street
- interface - mixed use + laneway
- interface - mixed use + no laneway
- Internal residential abuttal
- Opportunity Site

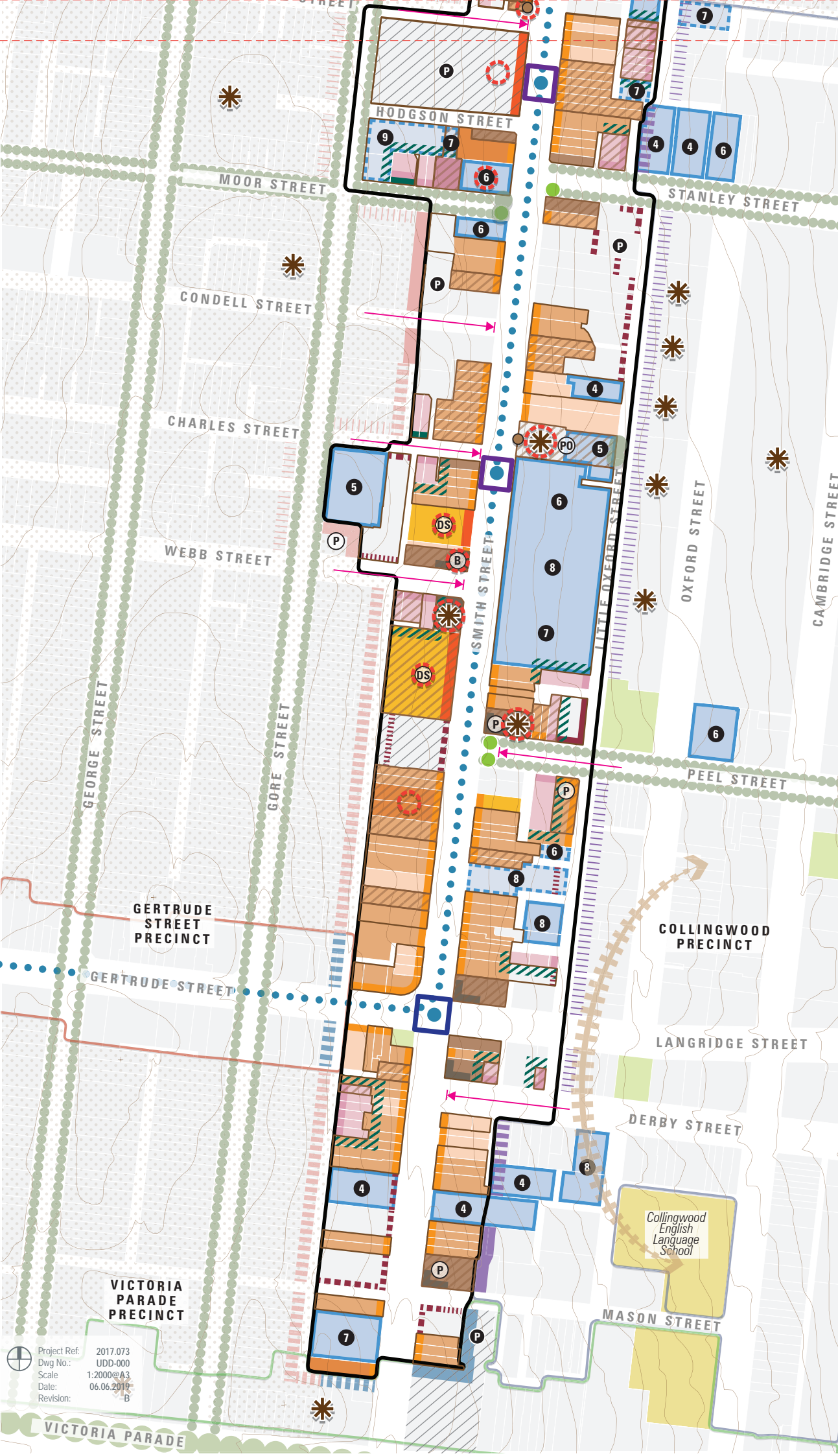


Brunswick & Smith Street Built Form Review

Smith Street
Foundation Information
Part 2/2
Figure 4

Legend

- Smith Street Precinct Boundary
- Tram Route 86 / Stop
- Signalised junction
- Pedestrian operated crossing
- Terminal View
- Views across topographic fall
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- Approved development
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- Warehouse building
- Bank building
- Pub building
- Department store building
- At-grade car park
- interface - residential zone + street
- interface - residential zone + laneway
- interface - residential zone + no laneway
- interface - commercial zone + laneway
- interface - commercial zone + no laneway
- interface - mixed use zone + street
- interface - mixed use + laneway
- interface - mixed use + no laneway
- Internal residential abuttal
- Opportunity Site



2.2 : A Smith Street Precinct Built Form Framework

In response to these foundation matters, a Built Form Framework has been advanced to reinforce indicative locations for varying level of change within the locality. A Framework is not definitive (like a Built Form Control Plan). It seeks to identify 'gestures' that shape the look and feel of the city. In this instance, the framework recognises the importance of the following attributes- Refer to Figure 4:

Grand Retail

Central to the Smith Street spine and the strongest built form legacy of its rich history is the presence of grand retail buildings which project above the predominant datum of otherwise finer grain 2 storey shop fronts. These former large format stores are all located on the western (Fitzroy) side of the street and are all defined as local landmarks, given the presence within the broader streetscape. This section of Smith Street has always been the 'core' of activity along the corridor, confirmed by the positioning of the former Post Office and heritage bank buildings and still contains the main retail anchors and associated activity.

Order

Positioned beyond the central section of Smith Street and anchored by the key east-west main road interfaces are stretches comprising a consistent streetscape character of predominantly traditional 2 storey shop fronts. Comprising a fine grain rhythm with continuous street wall provision and verandahs to Smith Street resulting in a uniform presentation with individual façades being defined by subtle changes in colour, material and architectural features.

Capacity

These 'bookend' precincts lack heritage fabric and control present along the remainder of the Smith Street spine. Located to the periphery, at either end of the street and in proximity to the broad boulevards of Alexandra and Victoria Parades they are also distinguished from the more consistent sections due to the broader lots, comprising either heritage factory forms and warehouses. Both these precincts already contain recent developments which seek to provide a streetscape response, while also providing rising forms above.

Heritage Values

The precinct has considerable heritage values, comprising large stores, the post office, banks, heritage factories, corner hotels. The buildings are mainly located within the middle section of the corridor, between Gertrude/Langridge Street and Johnston Street junctions and on the western side of the street. Given the broad heritage control and street wall definition, there is potential for moderate infill for much of the Smith Street spine. However, there is no heritage control at either end of the corridor, which provides greater opportunity for infill development to occur.



Former Paterson Furniture and former Ackman's Furniture stores.



Former Foy and Gibson and Patersons Buildings on western side of Smith Street.



Consistent heritage shopfront presentation to western side of Smith Street.



Former MacRobertson factory towards northern end of Smith Street.

Allotment Depth and Width

The precinct has a moderate level of growth opportunity in response to its generally consistent rhythm of block sizes and heritage/ residential abuttal constraints. The level of moderate growth is apparent along the majority of the spine and overall scale will be particularly influenced by lot depth and rear interface factors. In contrast, to either end of the corridor significant infill can occur in response to larger lot sizes and as landform falls away to the north.

Large Non-Contributory Sites

Are generally larger, non-contributory sites which contain wider than normal frontages and also often occupy corner positions with secondary street addresses. Along Smith Street, they also tend to terminate views from side streets. These subdivision attributes are favourably to future development. They are also sites that have not recently been developed. Therefore, clear built form guidance will be required to ensure that future forms on these sites, which more likely to experience built form change in the short to medium term is critical to ensure that the prevailing and valued streetscape character is respected.

Back Blocks

Behind the Smith Street spine are discrete pockets of 'back block' sites which front side streets or parallel 'little streets'. Traditionally these areas have serviced as an informal transitional area, between the rear of 'main street' forms and abutting residential or industrial areas. While these areas can accommodate new forms their development opportunity is strongly influenced by the proximity and sensitive of neighbouring properties beyond the Precinct. The existing hierarchy of primary and secondary street addresses will assist in managing future 'fronts' and 'backs', of development contributing to the strengthening of pedestrian activity to the Smith Street spine.

Junctions

Future built forms can contribute to junction definitions to assist with wayfinding and sense of place. Where Smith Street intersects with other 'main streets' at Gertrude/ Langridge Street and Johnston Street, future forms should be shaped to retain primacy of local landmarks when viewed in the round. Higher pedestrian footfall can also be expected along these commercial streets, where pedestrian amenity (solar, sense of enclosure and ground level activation) should be prioritised.

Green Streets

The Precinct is punctuated by the east-west 'green street' of Peel, Stanley, Moor, Kerr and Westgarth Streets, all comprise 20m road reserves and are defined by the large established canopy trees. The junction of these higher amenity streets are acknowledged through the provision of kerb extensions and public nodes or 'pause places'. It is imperative that future development continues to support high pedestrian movement. Opportunity to realise additional 'pause places' at Kerr and Westgarth Streets should be investigated as part of future Smith Street improvement.



Northern end of Smith Street, comprising varied lot sizes and associated form.



Junction of Gertrude and Smith Street.



Built form transition to Emma Street 'back block.'



Green Street - Moor Street, looking east towards Smith Street