



10 Alvina Street, Oakleigh South

Application for Review P2171/2015

Expert Urban Design Evidence

Mark Sheppard

August 2017

Instructed by

Maddocks

On behalf of

Monash City Council

Date of site inspection:

12 August 2017



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1.0 Introduction

- [1] I am a Principal of town planning and urban design consultants David Lock Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd. I hold qualifications in architecture and urban design. I have over twenty-five years' professional experience and have practised exclusively in the field of urban design since 1993. Further details of my qualifications and experience are outlined in Appendix A.
- [2] In August 2017, I was engaged by Maddocks on behalf of Monash City Council to provide an independent urban design assessment of a proposed Development Plan for 10 Alvina Street, Oakleigh South (the subject site), for the purpose of informing its planning review at VCAT.
- [3] In my view, the key urban design questions raised by this proposal are:
- Does the proposal respond appropriately to the preferred neighbourhood **character** of the area?
 - Will the proposal create an acceptable **public realm** within the site?
- [4] The proposal will influence the character and amenity of **Alvina Street**, that experienced from the neighbouring **backyards**, and that experienced within the **balance of the site**.
- [5] Therefore, I have organised my assessment under these headings.
- [6] I have summarised the key aspects of the site's physical and planning context from an urban design perspective in Appendices B and C.

2.0 Context



Figure 1 – Aerial photo showing subject site (in red) and surrounding context (aerial source: Nearmap)

2.1 Physical Context

- [7] The subject site is large (2ha approx.), and square in shape with an additional pedestrian entry to the east from Scotsburn Avenue (approximately 3m by 54m). It contains mature vegetation scattered throughout the site. It is bounded by Alvina Street to the west, which provides vehicle access to the site, and the rear of residential properties to the north, east and south. It also sits adjacent to the former Huntingdale Quarry along the western boundary.

- [8] The subject site is located within the residential neighbourhood of Oakleigh South, approximately 1km south of the Oakleigh Major Activity Centre (MAC) and approximately 1km west of the Clayton MAC. Bus route 704 runs along Scotsburn Ave, approximately 100m north of the pedestrian entry to the site.



Figure 2 – Alvina Street entry to the subject site (August 2017)



Figure 3 –Subject site showing existing conditions (August 2017)



Figure 4 – Pedestrian exit from the subject site towards Scotsburn Avenue (August 2017)



Figure 5 – Pedestrian entry to the subject site from Scotsburn Avenue (August 2017)

2.2 Planning Context

- [9] The subject site is within the General Residential 1 Zone (GRZ1), which seeks to encourage a diversity of housing types and housing growth, whilst respecting the neighbourhood character of the area.
- [10] To the north, east, south and west are GRZ2 properties, predominantly developed for single storey detached dwellings.
- [11] There is extensive State and local policy requiring the form of new development to respond to its context in terms of urban character (see Clauses 15.01, 21.04 and 22.01). However, this must be considered alongside other State and local policies supporting increased housing provision and diversity in established areas (see Clauses 11.06-2 and 16.01).
- [12] Clause 21.03 'A Vision for Monash' seeks to '*Plan for attractive and environmentally sound use of land that allows for diversity while remaining sympathetic to existing neighbourhood character.*' Clause 21.03-5 emphasises the importance of Monash's Garden City Character, which development proposals are required to consider.
- [13] Clause 21.04 'Residential Development' maps the neighbourhood character precincts in Monash. The site appears to sit outside any of these precincts. Clause 21.04 also encourages a variety of housing that is appropriate for the character and amenity of the area.
- [14] The Residential land is subject to Clause 22.01 'Residential Development and Character Policy' which encourages new development in the area to '*positively contribute to neighbourhood character*' and '*generally be low rise*'. It also encourages the provision of a variety of housing types.
- [15] The general policy of Clause 22.01 includes that '*development complements the current character*'. It also seeks the retention of the Garden City and Streetscape character of the neighbourhood, including front setbacks, spacing and rhythm.
- [16] DPO5 applies to the subject site, it sets out the requirements for a Development Plan from an urban design perspective. The key requirements include:
- Create a composition of varied building forms and heights across the site;
 - Provide for a high quality of internal amenity for future residents;

- Respect the amenity of adjoining interfaces for providing for a maximum of 2 storey built form adjacent to or opposite any existing single storey residential development;
- Any taller buildings across the balance of the site should be carefully graduated with reference to analysis of shadow, visual amenity impacts and the character of the area;
- Apply appropriate buffer treatments at the interface with any non-residential uses on adjoining properties; and
- Create opportunities for improved local permeability through provision of new pedestrian/cycle pathways or new local street networks where appropriate.

^[17] In summary, policy clearly promotes additional housing on underutilised land such as this, provided it has appropriate regard to the neighbourhood character of the area.

3.0 Assessment

3.1 Alvina Street

Context

- [18] The current Alvina Street streetscape is predominantly single-storey 1940s to 1960s brick, detached dwellings with large front and rear gardens. A separate garage is often at the rear of the site along a side boundary.
- [19] Front setbacks along Alvina Street generally range between 6m and 8m (approx.), whilst dwellings are separated from their neighbour by 3-4m (approx.). (Refer below.)



Figure 6 – Alvina Street character and subject site (shown in red)

[20] Clause 22.01-3 contains policy that:

- *Buildings be set back from street frontages in context with the surrounding environment and to maintain open and spacious streetscapes.*
- *Building design reflect the spacing and rhythm of existing streetscapes.*
- *Building spacing and setbacks off side boundaries maintain the spacing and rhythm of existing dwellings to respect the built form character of the streetscape.*
- *Similar building materials to that within the surrounding neighbourhood be utilised.*
- *Higher degrees of articulation be provided where double storey development is sought in streets where the predominant built form is single storey.*

Assessment

- [21] The proposed Development Plan presents three rows of townhouses along Alvina Street of varying lengths. All of these townhouses are 2-storeys. This responds to the DPO requirements.
- [22] The southernmost row fronts the dead-end section of Alvina Street. Therefore, I consider that it will have limited impact on the character of the streetscape perceived by passers-by.
- [23] The northernmost row is only two attached dwellings, which have a similar combined width as an existing detached dwelling in the street. They are also set back from the street generally in line with the neighbouring dwelling. Therefore, I consider that their siting and form will complement the prevailing character.
- [24] However, the middle row is approximately 35m long, compared with the average existing dwelling width along Alvina Street of 15m (approx.).
- [25] Therefore, should this Development Plan be approved, I recommend that the middle row of townhouses fronting Alvina Street be broken into two pairs of dwellings (by deleting lot 54) with side separations to reflect the built form rhythm of the existing detached houses along Alvina Street. This is illustrated below.



Figure 7 – Alternative townhouse configuration fronting Alvina Street

3.2 Backyard Interfaces

Context

- [26] The surrounding residential properties that back onto the subject site almost all contain significant private open spaces at the rear, adjacent to the site. This means that their backyard character and amenity is sensitive to the impact of the proposal.
- [27] Clause 22.01-3 contains policy that:
- *The scale and bulk of double storey buildings at the rear of properties, adjacent to single storey dwellings, be low key.*

Assessment

- [28] Similarly to the Alvina Street frontage, the proposed Development Plan presents long rows of townhouses along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries of the subject site. All these are 2-storeys. This responds to the DPO requirements.
- [29] However, despite being well set back and landscaped, I consider that their length is inconsistent with the backyard character of the area, and will present unreasonable visual bulk to neighbouring properties.
- [30] The proposed townhouse rows range in length from 22m to 39m (approx.). This compares with the 12m (approx.) typical width of adjacent residential dwellings.
- [31] Therefore, I recommend that the long rows of townhouses along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries be broken into shorter rows of dwellings that reflect the neighbouring conditions, with landscaped separations to reflect the existing neighbourhood character. This is illustrated below.



Figure 8 - Alternative townhouse configuration on the northern boundary



Figure 9 - Alternative townhouse configuration on the eastern boundary

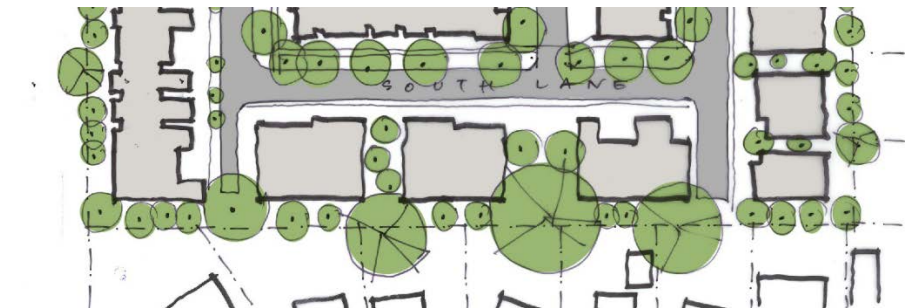


Figure 10 – Alternative townhouse configuration on the southern boundary

3.3 Balance of the site

Context

[32] The proposed development within the central part of the site (bounded by North, East, South and West Lanes) will not affect the surrounding streetscape, backyard character or amenity. Therefore, I consider that it is appropriate for it to be developed more intensively to contribute to housing diversity. However, it should still contribute to a reasonable level of public amenity.



Figure 11 – Proposed development plan masterplan, drawing TP1.10 (source: Rothe Lowman)

[33]

- [34] Clause 15.01-2 contains an Objective *'To achieve architectural and urban design outcomes that ... enhance the public realm'*, and a principle that *'Design of interfaces between buildings and public spaces ... should enhance the visual and social experience of the user.'*
- [35] Clause 22.01 contains policy *'discouraging car parking and accessways that have a significant impact on or cause fragmentation of the streetscape'*, and seeking *'the number of vehicle crossings be minimised.'*
- [36] Clause 55.03-9 requires that *'the number and design of vehicle crossovers respects the neighbourhood character'* and Standard B14 requires that where street frontages are less than 20m (like the proposed townhouses), no greater than 40% of the street frontage should be for vehicle access ways or car spaces.

Assessment

- [37] The proposed Development Plan incorporates a new pedestrian/cycle path through the site connecting Alvina Street and Scotsburn Avenue, it also incorporates a central pocket park. These respond to the DPO requirements.
- [38] The proposed townhouses within the central part of the site are a mix of 2 and 3-storeys. This responds to the DPOs requirements for varied building forms and heights.
- [39] The location of 3-storey dwellings well away from the boundaries of the site avoids any impacts on the surrounding properties in terms of shadows, visual amenity and character.
- [40] The internal streets are proposed to be dominated by garages and crossovers fronting the public realm, except those served by a rear lane. This fails to comply with ResCode Standard B14. It also reduces the opportunity for footpaths and street trees.
- [41] Reducing the number of dwellings around the perimeter of the site as recommended in Section 3.1 and 3.2 will reduce the dominance of car spaces. Replacing double garages with tandem garages would also reduce vehicle dominance.
- [42] Relocating lots 57 to 64 to the north side of South Lane and moving lots 65-79 northwards would address this concern within the middle of the site, as shown below.

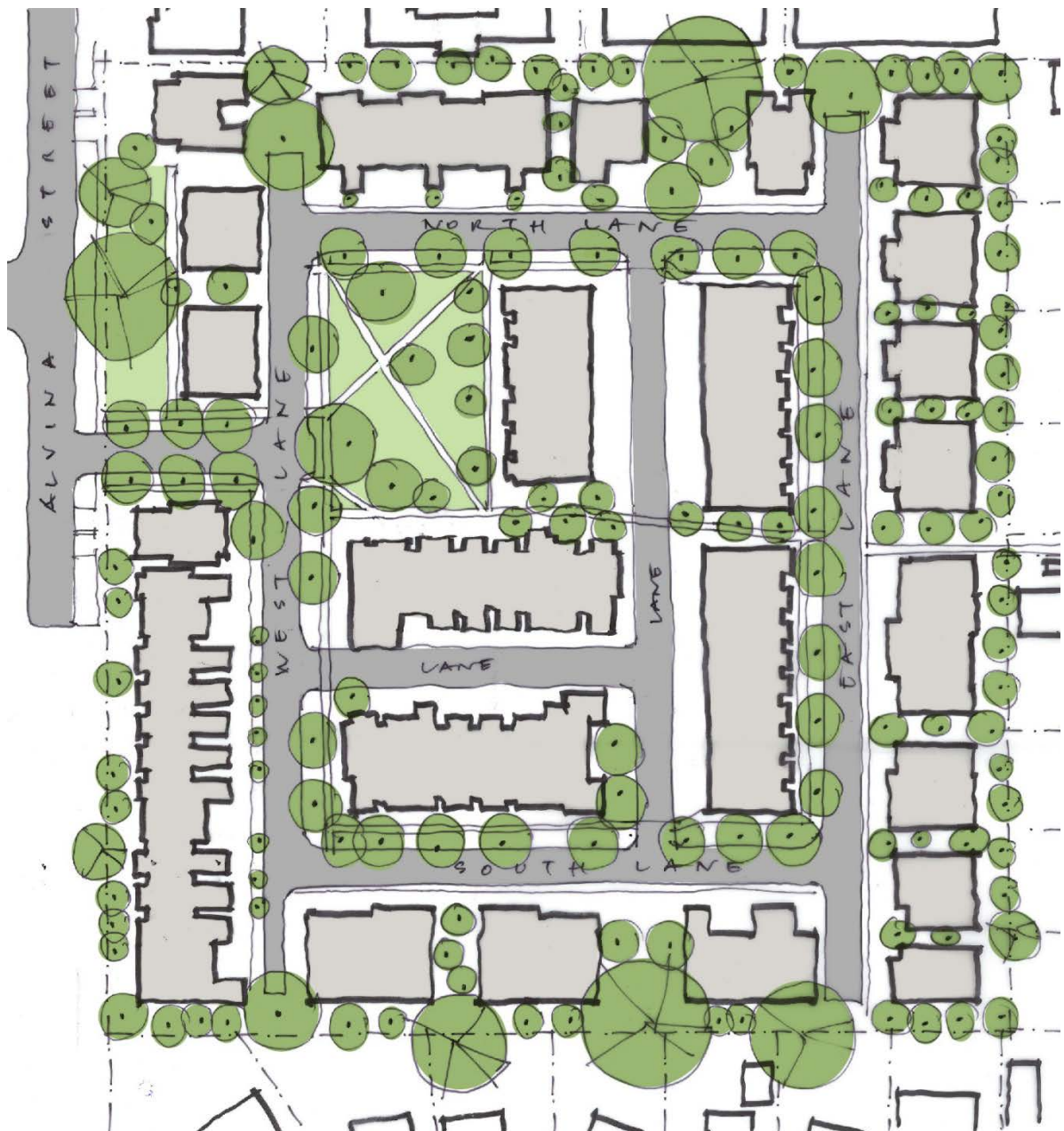


Figure 12 – Alternative townhouse configuration

[43] Therefore, should the Development Plan be approved, I recommend that it be required to reduce the extent of street frontage occupied by crossovers and car spaces.

4.0 Conclusion

[44] In conclusion, I do not support the Development Plan as currently proposed from an urban design perspective.

[45] Whilst I support the introduction of townhouses to contribute to housing diversity in this location, I recommend that the Development Plan be amended to show:

- lot 54 deleted and replaced with landscaping;
- the long rows of townhouses around the northern, eastern and southern edges of the site broken into shorter rows, separated by landscaping;
- the central part of the proposal reconfigured generally in accordance with the sketch on page 16; and
- double garages fronting North, South, East or West Lane replaced with tandem garages.

Appendix A: Summary of Experience & Personal Details

Name and Address

Mark Peter Sheppard
Principal
David Lock Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd
2/166 Albert Road
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205

Qualifications

- Recognised Urban Design Practitioner (Urban Design Group, UK), 2014
- Corporate Member of the Planning Institute of Australia, 2008
- MA Urban Design, Oxford Brookes University, UK, 1992
- Diploma Urban Design, Oxford Brookes University, UK, 1992
- Bachelor of Architecture, University of Auckland, NZ, 1990

Professional experience

- Director, David Lock Associates (Australia), 1997 to present
- Urban Designer - Associate, David Lock Associates, UK, 1993 – 1997
- Architectural Assistant, Sipson Gray Associates, London, UK, 1990 – 1993
- Architectural Assistant, Kirkcaldy Associates, Auckland, NZ, 1988 – 1990

Area of Expertise

I have over twenty-five years' experience in private practice with various architecture and urban design consultancies in New Zealand, England and Australia, and have practised exclusively in the field of urban design since 1993. I am the author of *Essentials of Urban Design* (CSIRO Publishing, 2015).

Expertise to prepare this report

I have been involved in the design and assessment of numerous activity centre and urban infill projects in Victoria. These have included:

- Structure Plans for Montague, Preston Central (2007 National PIA Urban Planning Award), Highpoint, Forrest Hill, Wheelers Hill and three urban villages in Moreland;
- Urban Design Frameworks for Darebin High Street (2004 National PIA Urban Design Award), Highpoint, Central Dandenong, South Melbourne, Carlisle Street Balaclava, St Albans and Footscray;
- Built form controls for the Brunswick Major Activity Centre, Port Melbourne and Ormond Road, Elwood; and
- Numerous independent urban design assessments of development proposals to inform VCAT hearings.

I have been assisted in the preparation of this statement by Danielle Cull (Urban Designer) of David Lock Associates.

*Instructions which define
the scope of this report*

I am engaged by Monash City Council.

I have received verbal and written instructions from Maddocks and various documents relating to the proposal.

*Facts, matters and
assumptions relied upon*

- Inspection of the subject site and surrounding area; and
- Review of planning controls and policies affecting the area.

Documents taken into account

- The Monash Planning Scheme and reference documents;
- Development Plan submission prepared by Rothe Lowman dated 24th July, 2017;
- Council's officer report and internal referral comments; and
- Various correspondences relating to the proposed development.

Summary of opinions

Refer to the conclusion of this statement (Section 4).

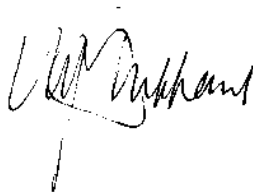
Provisional Opinions

There are no provisional opinions in this report.

*Questions outside my
area of expertise,
incomplete or inaccurate
aspects of the report*

This report does not address questions outside my area of expertise, and is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and confirm that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Tribunal.



Mark Sheppard

Appendix B: Urban Context



Figure 13 – Site context map, showing subject site in red and surrounding context (aerial source: Nearmap)

The following aspects of the site and its physical context are most notable from an urban design perspective:

Wider Context

- The site's location within the residential hinterland of Oakleigh South;
- The site's frontage to Alvina Street; and
- The site's relative distance from activity centres and the Principal Public Transport Network;

Immediate Interfaces

- The residential properties immediately north, east, south and west of the subject site ;
- The existing predominantly 1-storey built form of surrounding properties; and
- The existing streetscape character of Alvina Street and the Garden City neighbourhood character;

Site

- The relatively large (2ha) size of the subject site in comparison to nearby properties;
- The mature vegetation on site;
- The gentle slope of the site from northeast to south west (approximately 4m); and
- The absence of existing built form on site.



Figure 14 – Existing site conditions (August 2017)



Figure 15 – Existing vegetation on site and southern boundary (August 2017)



Figure 16– Pedestrian access to site looking west (August 2017)



Figure 17 – Existing streetscape character of Alvina Street looking north (August 2017)



Figure 18 – Existing streetscape character of Alvina Street looking north (August 2017)

Appendix C: Planning Framework

From an urban design perspective, the key planning controls, policies, Incorporated and Reference Documents in the Monash Planning Scheme include:

Zones & Overlays

Clause 32.07: General Residential 1 Zone (GRZ1)

To encourage development that respects the neighbourhood character of the area and encourages a diversity of housing types and housing growth particularly in locations offering good access to services and transport.

Clause 43.04: Schedule 5 to the Development Plan Overlay (DPO5)

Identifies areas which require the form and conditions of future use and development to be shown on a development plan before a permit can be granted to use or develop the land.

SPPF

Clause 9: Plan Melbourne

Encourages planning and responsible authorities to consider and apply the Plan Melbourne metropolitan planning strategy where relevant.

Clause 11.02: Urban Growth

Seeks to ensure a sufficient supply of residential land through the consideration of urban consolidation potential of existing areas. Encourages neighbourhood character and landscape to be considered when planning for urban growth.

Clause 11.06: Metropolitan Melbourne

Seeks to provide a diversity of housing in defined locations that cater for different households and are close to jobs and services.

Clause 15.01: Built Environment and Heritage

Encourages development to respond appropriately to its context, landscape and valued built form. Promotes good urban design to make the environment more liveable and attractive and contribute positively to local urban character while minimising detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.

Clause 16.01: Housing

Seeks to increase the supply of housing in existing urban areas by facilitating increased housing in appropriate locations.

MSS

Clause 21.04 Residential Development

Identifies the 7 residential character types within Monash based on the Monash Housing Strategy (2004).

Local Planning Policies

Clause 22.01 Residential Development and Character Policy

Applies to all residential land and prescribes the desired future character for each character type within Monash.

Reference Documents

Monash Housing Strategy (2014)

Underpins the objectives and strategies for each housing character type within Monash and prescribes the preferred future character of each precinct.

Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria (DSE 2005)

Seeks to facilitate the planning and design of safer urban environments for all Victorian communities.

Urban Design Charter for Victoria (DPCD, 2009)

Encourages best practice urban design throughout Victoria based on a series of principles. Seeks to make cities and towns throughout Victoria more liveable through high quality urban design.



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