



## balfe park precinct, brunswick east

urban design framework

prepared by hansen partnership pty ltd

on behalf of the proponent

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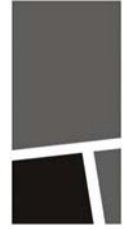
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## 1 introduction

The following report has been prepared to accompany the urban design framework plan prepared for the context of the proposed rezoning area to mixed use to the rear of properties that front Nicholson Street in between Miller Street and Glenlyon Road, East Brunswick. Land to the rear of this mixed use precinct is zoned for industrial use and limits the capacity to realise a consolidated urban form along the spine. This report and review has emanated from a particular development application at 85 Nicholson Street, Brunswick East. Details of the proposal are outlined in drawings prepared by MAP Architecture and Design. no.'s TP01-TP09 (Rev-1).

The study area is designated within Precinct 3B: Nicholson Street Central area in the draft Brunswick Structure Plan (BSP) and is defined as focus for change. The site also is located within Area 77 of the Moreland Industrial Land Use Strategy (MILUS). The land is unusual in that it is affected by 2 zones, with MUZ to the Nicholson Street frontage and IN3Z to the rear. Given the locational attributes of the land and its position on the principal public transport network, both the site and precinct represent an outstanding opportunity for consolidated redevelopment.



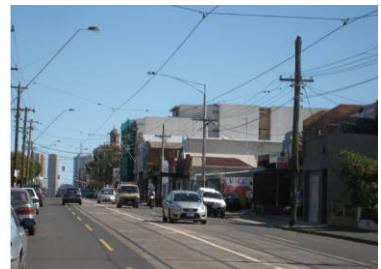
The mixed zonings across the site and subsequent need to simplify the zoning regime for redevelopment is the primary catalyst for preparation of this urban design framework. The objective is to realise a vision for the precinct along Nicholson Street West, between Miller Street in the south and Glenlyon Road in the north incorporating Balfe Park and abutting residential lots. Clear organisation of land use patterns and an relevant overlays are required in order to maximise the opportunity for quality urban form, connectivity and interfaces.

This report introduces the urban design framework and provides contextual analyses in the form of observations and values as a rationale for an urban design vision for the precinct. The plan, built on the foundation of the findings of the Brunswick Structure Plan, consists of 4 key themes and is underpinned by a set of urban design directions that will ensure integration between development on Nicholson Street and its sensitive urban context.

## 2 key observations

The site and context analyses undertaken as part of the framework planning process has defined the following key observations;

- The site is located on a key north-south mixed used corridor with excellent access to public transport including tram services along Nicholson Street and bus services along Glenlyon Road. Nicholson Street and Glenlyon Road serves as key arterial roads accommodating high levels of pedestrian and vehicle movement. A Rear lane to the west of the site provides access to buildings fronting Nicholson Street.
- Balfe Park abuts the rear of the site and provides key open space opportunities include open soccer field and children's playground for the surrounding area. The parkland is approximately 1.5 hectares in area.
- The lots bounded by Glenlyon Road, Nicholson Street, Miller Street and west to John Street are characterised by fine grained subdivision pattern which results in building stock of long narrow profile, mostly built to boundaries with zero front setbacks particularly to the north. There are also numerous examples of large format light industrial lots.
- Active ground level frontages predominantly address Nicholson Street.
- Development scale along the Nicholson Street corridor varies from traditional 1-2 storey forms to medium rise (5 storey) forms. A range of medium density development forms up to 3 storeys exists to the south and east of the area. It is also a wide range of housing styles in the immediate area, including villa units, detached/ attached houses and apartments.



- A rezoning approach has been considered to achieve a more strategic land use outcome so as to resolve some zoning anomalies that currently exist in the precinct.
- Land uses fronting Nicholson Street vary with the coexistence of a range of existing and former industrial stock, warehouses, small workshops, commercial- community uses and residential stock.
- The study area contains a number of small businesses (automotive services etc) which are important, but unlikely to be sustained in the precinct given its future mixed use role.



### 3 vision

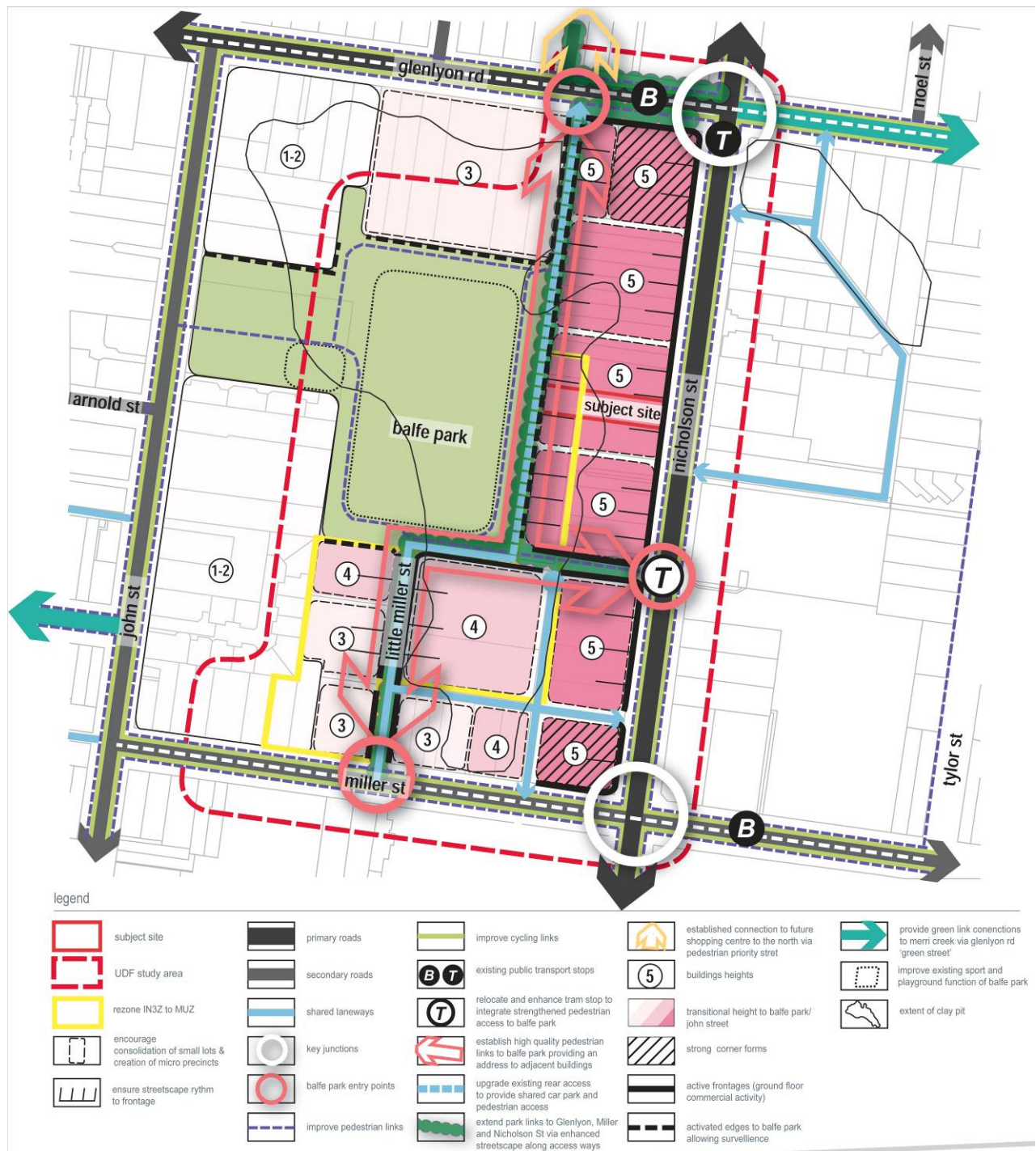
The precinct will build upon the existing connections to public transport and excellent open space to create a safe and vibrant place with a mix of residential and commercial activities. A range of enhancements to both the public and private realm will engender a sense of local identity, grounded in the industrial fabric of East Brunswick and layered with a new regime of sustainable innovative housing projects. In line with key state/ local policy including the Draft Brunswick Structure Plan directions, the urban design framework plan seeks to achieve respectful medium density urban consolidation that responds to the emerging character of Nicholson Street and adjoining areas.



The mixed use format will provide a range of employment opportunities and supporting residential population to take full advantage of the locational attributes of the area. The plan aims to improve access and surveillance of existing open space assets for all. Given the locational attributes of the land in question, the relationships to both Nicholson Street and the Balfe Park to the west remain critical.

## 4 urban design framework plan

In the preparation of the framework plan, particular attention has been paid to the existing and emerging character of the corridor and context and the definition of a place sensitive response. The recommendations are broken into 4 elements which provide a means for achieving the future vision of the precinct. These are a) urban structure, b) built form and activity c) access and movement and d) landscape and environment.





The UDF seeks to identify the future scope of industrial, residential and mixed use zones in parallel with the major development adaptations currently occurring in the area such as the former Tontine site that reflects an ambition for substantial change. The key directions include;

- Rezone the current Industrial 3 Zone to Mixed Use Zone with a control on built form.
- Rezone the current Mixed Use Zone along Nicholson Street to Business 2 Zone.
- Review the existing residential zoned land to the south of the study area which is excluded in the Brunswick Structure Plan, as a future development potential. It is recommended to remain the lots as R1Z or rezone to MUZ to ensure the site to be developed consistent with the Brunswick Structure Plan principles.
- Take the advantage of Nicholson Street key corridor location and proximity to a range of services including retail, public transport and public open space.
- Contribute well to Nicholson Street provision of a retail tenancy at ground level and diversified residential apartments above.
- Achieve a greater mix of uses to enhance the vibrancy of the retail corridor.

#### 4.1 built form and activity

In terms of the development principles, the UDF supports Council's strategies and identifies consolidated ideal development parcels through Nicholson Street to ensure the corridor can be more consistent in its built form and presentation. The key directions include;

- Incorporate a consolidated 5 storey development form along Nicholson Street.
- Demarcate corner lots at the intersection of Glenlyon Road and Miller Street of the study area also at 5 storeys but include design features in corner form to create a strong feature that distinguishes the entries of the precinct.
- Provide transitional heights to Balfe Park and John Street to the west which complies with Brunswick Structure Plan's built form framework.
- Achieve active frontages with a fine grained presentation to address Nicholson Street to retain the references of existing street rhythm.
- Maintain activated edges to Balfe Park to support both surveillance and a sense of address to the rear.
- Provide active ground floor uses through new strengthened pedestrian connection to Balfe Park.

## 4.2 access and movement

The UDF identifies Nicholson Street and Glenlyon Road as main roads that serve as key arterial roads accommodating high levels of pedestrian and vehicle movement. Nicholson Street also supports public transport with other roadways performing a lesser role. The framework seeks to achieve rear access to the Nicholson Street corridor in order to activate Balfe Park. The key directions include;

- Define a 3m shared way connecting Glenlyon Road to Miller Street via Little Miller Street. However traffic calming measures are recommended to avoid heavy traffic flow through the rear access way.
- Establish pedestrian connections to the future former Tontine Site Shopping Centre to the north via landscaped pedestrian connections.
- Extend pedestrian links to Glenlyon, Miller and Nicholson Streets via an enhanced rear laneway.
- Establish a high quality strong pedestrian link integrated with an upgraded tram stop to improve Balfe Park's visibility and presentation (Although Draft Brunswick Structure Plan defines two pedestrian connections to Balfe Park, the UDF rather supports a single catalyst connection to better activate the pedestrian place, effectively utilise Balfe Park and create appropriately proportioned development parcels).
- Locate tram super stop in mid block position to better integrate with the strengthened pedestrian access to Balfe Park from Nicholson Street.

## 4.3 landscape and environment

The urban design framework plan directs that rear site access and a frontage to Balfe Park are key ambitions. These assets will be key to regeneration of the precinct and an incentive to redevelopment. The UDF emphasizes the importance of Balfe Park and its landscape setting, recognising its use as a sports field and local park. It is also critical to ensure that development abutting the park does not overwhelm the setting and/or undermine its function or amenity. The key directions include;

- Improve Balfe Park's visibility and presentation to public with better pedestrian links from Nicholson Street.
- Provide green links connections to Merri Creek via Brunswick Structure Plan's green streets strategy.
- Improve existing sports and play ground functions and allow for formal or informal parking to the east.
- Review drainage plans and storm water network of the area to facilitate water collection and reuse.
- Establish a pedestrian place between Nicholson Street and Balfe Park integrated with the tram super stop.
- Ensure the rear laneway design is not traffic dominated, but treated as a compatible shared space inviting direct pedestrian access from mixed use form on Nicholson Street across to the park.



## 5 conclusion

As defined in the framework plan and associated report, there is a clear rationale for rezoning of the Industrial 3 Zoned land on Little Miller and Miller Street to a Mixed Use and Mixed Used Land along Nicholson Street to the Business 2 Zone. The existing zoning regime is clearly an anomaly of sorts, and hampers the ability for land consolidation and ultimately redevelopment. Rezoning of the land will allow for the facilitation of development of the precinct in accordance with the general principles of the draft Brunswick Structure Plan.

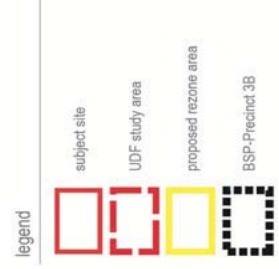
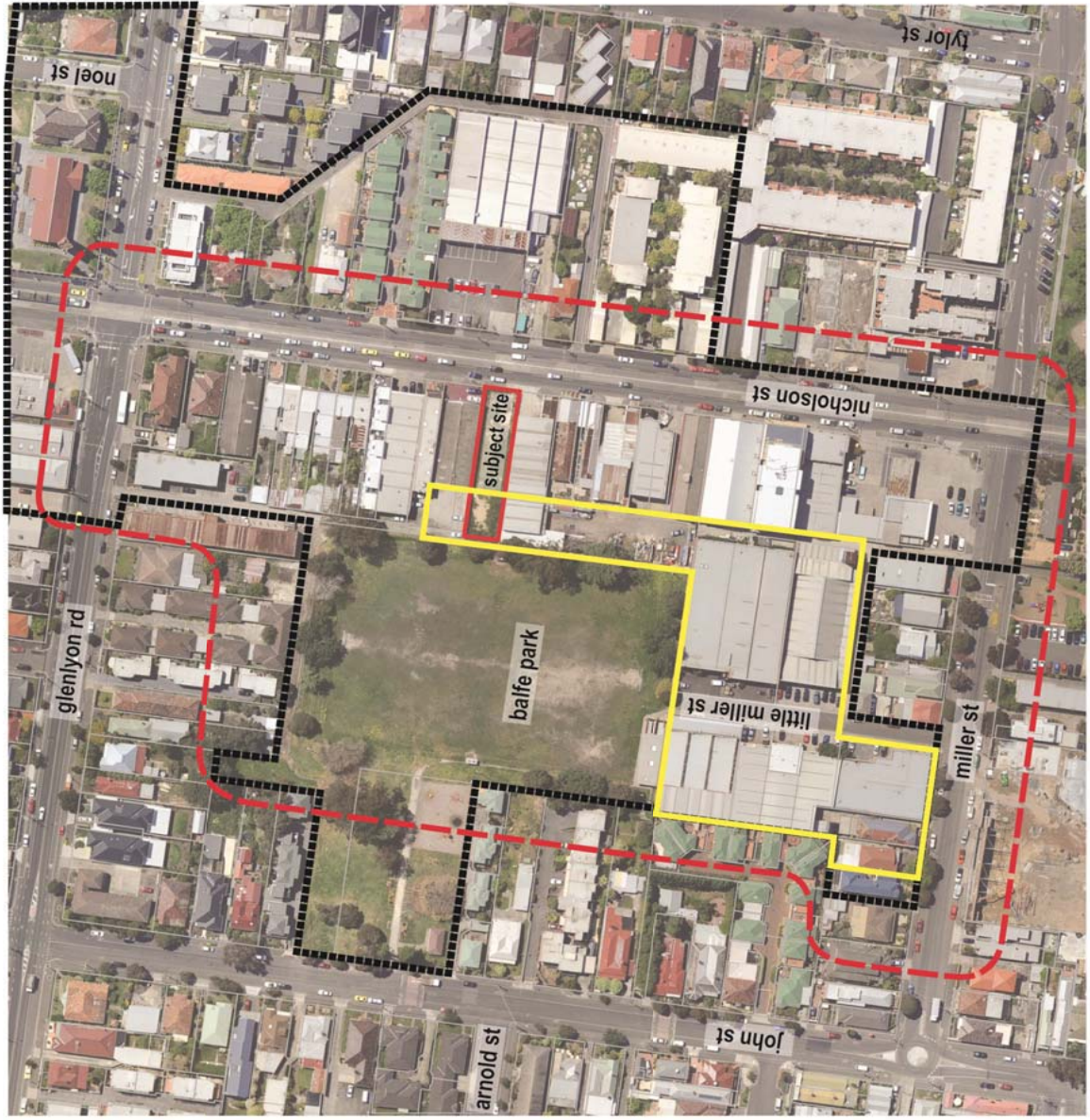
The proposed changes to the planning provisions provide support for development of between 4 and 5 storeys along the spine. When considered in light of the assets of the precinct, this represents an outstanding urban design opportunity. The land is within close proximity to public transport, retail uses and excellent public open space. The urban design framework provides the necessary guidance for the achievement of physical linkages to and through the site and the general nature of urban form to 5 storeys with dual access.

The framework diagram as provided outlines a sound vision anchored in analysis of the land in question. The design response directs urban form to react to corner locations, the existing fine grain frontages of the precinct and the attributes of the public open space to the west. Importantly, access to the rear of the lots and the park edge can be addressed through provision of a 3m wide shared pathway that connects Glenlyon Road to Miller Street and connects into a new active laneway connection emanating from the Nicholson Street tram stop. The framework emphasises the importance of Balfe Park to its surroundings and directs that an active interface is assured into perpetuity.

We believe that the framework demonstrates the proper and orderly planning of the precinct and the dire need to rezone the Industrial land in question to ensure investment and redevelopment as is required in this part of the corridor. With both public transport and public open space assets to either side, it is in our view clear that a rezoning is warranted, together with unambiguous urban form controls that limit development scale to 5 storeys, with active treatments to both east and west. On this basis, we urge Council to support the proposed rezoning.

### Hansen Partnership

October 2011



# brunswick structure plan: overall structure

