

ARDEN MACAULAY UPDATE – NOVEMBER 2017

FROM CR ROHAN LEPPERT

1. Background

The Arden Macaulay Structure Plan was adopted by Council in 2012, two Council terms ago. The area covers much of North Melbourne and Kensington, and its objective is to transition a largely industrial area to a mix of residential and employment uses, facilitating urban renewal, consistent with state policies for metropolitan growth.

The structure plan divides the area into two for strategic planning purposes: the northern section, (shown in yellow to the right), now referred to as “Macaulay”, and the southern section (in purple), referred to as “Arden”.

Council initiated a planning scheme amendment for new land use and built form controls for Macaulay in 2012 – these have finally been approved five years later, though not in the form requested by Council.

The State Government is taking the lead on planning for Arden, at least the area south of Macaulay Rd and east of the Moonee Ponds Creek, primarily to ensure that it is in control of development patterns in the vicinity of the new Arden station being built as part of the Metro Rail project.

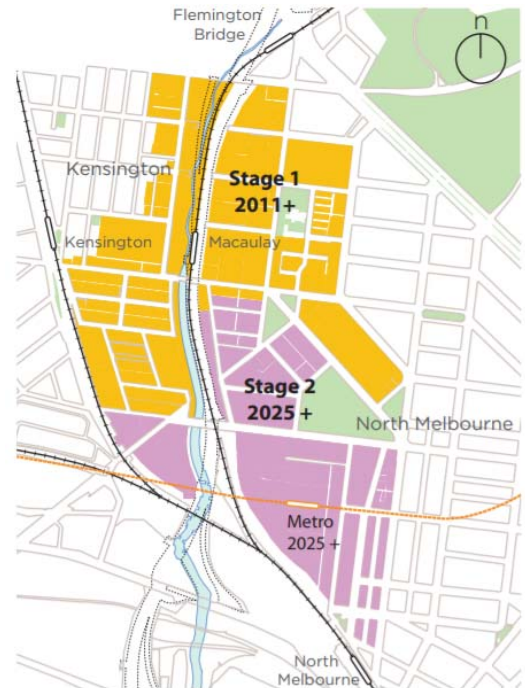


Figure 2.4: Staging of land use transition in Arden-Macaulay

Stage 1, 2011 -
Stage 2, 2025 - Integrated with the delivery of the Melbourne Metro at Arden Central

Arden Macaulay Structure Plan, p. 25

2. New planning controls in Macaulay

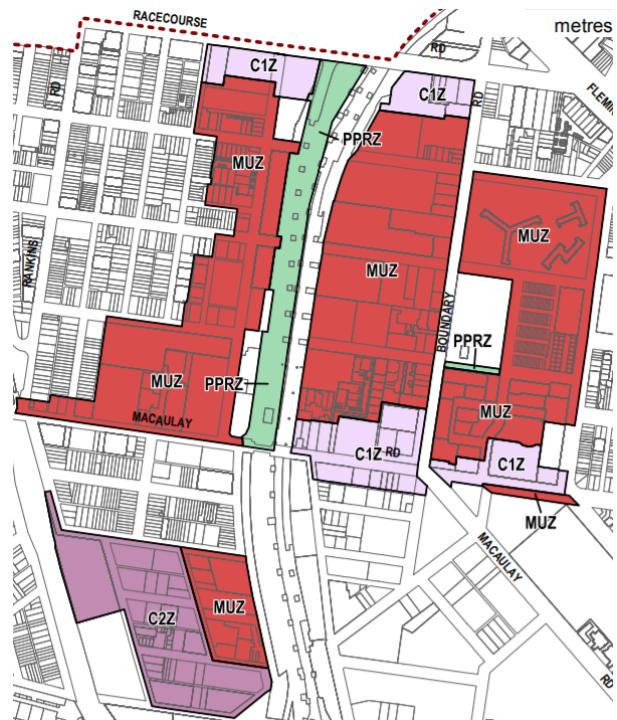
After five years and many delays, planning scheme amendment C190 was gazetted by the Planning Minister in October, implementing new zones and overlays for Macaulay. You can find all of the amendment documentation at: <http://tinyurl.com/NewControls>

The implications for North Melbourne and Kensington are significant.

2.1. New zones

For what was previously predominantly industrial zone, new mixed use and commercial zones have been applied. See the figure to the right for the new zones.

The mixed use zone is primarily a residential zone; while it allows some commercial uses, residential uses are supported by the zone, and so the market has often seen the mixed use zone in the inner city convert land to exclusively or predominantly residential uses.



Zone changes in Macaulay as approved by the Minister for Planning

C1Z	Commercial 1 Zone
C2Z	Commercial 2 Zone
MUZ	Mixed Use Zone
PPRZ	Public Park and Recreation Zone

2.2. Moonee Ponds Creek zoning

While most of the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor has been rezoned to 'public park and recreation' (PPRZ) zone, the Planning Minister has left some land adjacent to Stubbs St owned by VicTrack as industrial.

The community and Council wanted this land rezoned to PPRZ to allow public access to and widening of the creek corridor, facilitating major rejuvenation works and the completion of Moonee Ponds Creek master planning.

The planning panel sided with VicTrack, which wanted its land rezoned to mixed use so as to significantly increase the value of the land. Council split the difference and adopted the amendment without rezoning the land (that is, keeping it industrial for now), but specifically requesting that the Planning Minister put in place a plan to ensure that land along Moonee Ponds Creek be set aside for open space needs.

The Minister has left the land industrial zone, but has so far ignored the request for Moonee Ponds Creek open space. Without this land being given over for parkland, the public open space requirements for a growing population and the goals of the Arden Macaulay Structure Plan simply will not be met. And the creek, of course, will continue to suffer.

Despite the best attempts by the Council and Melbourne Water to coordinate across government to plan for Moonee Ponds Creek rejuvenation and access, I would argue that the lack of coordination across government has once again prevented the public interest being served.

With multiple major new creek crossings downstream (Metro Rail underground and multiple Westgate Tunnel bridges) it is distressing that the State Government has not considered the cumulative impact on the Moonee Ponds Creek and committed to rejuvenating the entire lower stretch of the waterway in conjunction with these major transport projects. The decision to rebuff Council's attempts to contribute to this, by not either rezoning the land or providing a plan to improve access to the land, is extremely disappointing.



L: Zone changes exhibited by Council
R: Scheme as approved

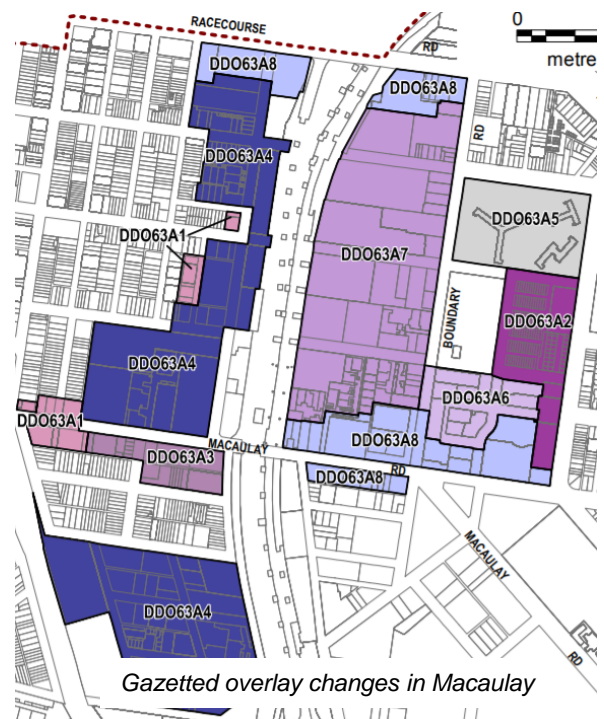
2.3. New overlays

A new schedule to the Design and Development Overlay, schedule 63, has been applied to Macaulay. It contains 7 areas setting out varying height limits:

Area	Preferred maximum	Absolute maximum
1	10.5m (3 storeys)	10.5m (4 storeys)
2	14m (4 storeys)	20m (6 storeys)
3	20m (6 storeys)	26m (8 storeys)
4	20m (6 storeys)	26m (8 storeys)
5	26m (8 storeys)	N/A*
6	20m (6 storeys)	26m (8 storeys)
7	28m (9 storeys)	36.4m (12 storeys)
8	30m (9 storeys)	39m (12 storeys)

*Office of Housing estate. Higher height possible if masterplanned.

Heights above the preferred maximum are only to be granted if the building demonstrates exceptional design quality, does not create additional overshadowing, includes high quality pedestrian links where needed, and good solar access to the public realm. Exceeding the absolute maximum height is prohibited.



Gazetted overlay changes in Macaulay

The height limits are coupled with a series of significant setback and street wall height requirements, ensuring that the higher parts of buildings are not visible from, or overshadow, the street, and that interfaces with existing stable residential areas are treated sensitively. (That is, the height limits in the table – especially above 5 storeys – should not be read as being the height that will rise up directly from the street). The new height, street wall and setback limits were designed, in part, to allow for a gradual step up in height away from existing ‘stable residential’ areas.

The new built form controls (DDO63) have a sunset clause of September 2019. The Planning Minister has asked the Council to review the controls, consider ‘floor area ratio and uplift’ density mechanisms, and explore the potential for affordable housing provision. That means it’s back to the drawing board for Macaulay yet again, and another extended round of planning scheme amendment and public consultation. The directive from the Planning Minister to do this is a considerable resourcing issue for the Council, not to mention the local community which is clearly suffering from planning fatigue!

2.4. New development levy

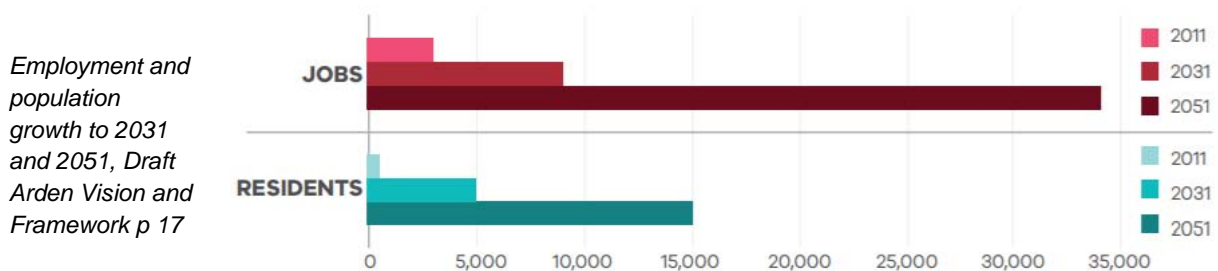
New development in the Macaulay area will be required to make development contributions to contribute to the construction of new community infrastructure. (This is a separate planning scheme amendment to C190 but covers the same area: C295.)

The interim contribution rates to be paid by developers/landowners, which will be indexed quarterly, are:

- \$16,127.58 per dwelling; and
- \$182.58 per square metre of new commercial floor area; and
- \$152.15 per square metre of new retail floor area.

3. Planning Arden

The State Government’s vision for Arden is for an even greater intensification of development, population and employment increases than Macaulay, though the strategic planning work is at an earlier stage than Macaulay.



A draft Arden Vision and Framework was released by the VPA last year for public feedback, and the State Government will release a final Arden Vision and Framework, presumably later this year (it was originally to be released at the end of 2016). The final framework will set the general direction for future planning controls, open space aspirations, mechanisms for levying development to pay for new infrastructure, and – hopefully – provide clarity on future schools construction.

There are a variety of challenges with Arden, not least of which is the flooding potential of the area.

Council provided extensive feedback on the draft Vision and Framework, pointing out the need to ensure that critical enabling infrastructure (transport, IT and comms, public open space, education) is delivered early to make the precinct an attractive place to invest, live and work – and therefore succeed. Metro alone will not facilitate liveability.

Council is also keen to ensure that Arden is not just seen as an extension of the City, but that it is differentiated from its surrounding distinct precincts in terms of its place and economic/community roles.

4. Where to from here?

4.1. Addressing the primary failure of Arden Macaulay planning to date: open space provision

The open space targets and acquisition mechanisms for Arden Macaulay have not been successful so far. While controls have changed to facilitate major intensification of development, mechanisms for new public open space to meet the needs of that growth have failed.

The most important and obvious open space and environmental imperative is to rejuvenate and open access to the Moonee Ponds Creek. The zoning decisions and major transport project issues discussed above illustrate a lack of political leadership to ensure the coordination of government to deliver outcomes in the public interest. I am currently considering what I can do from a Council level to agitate for this leadership from the State Government Executive.

Council will be considering a 'preferred master plan' for the creek corridor later this financial year.

In better news, planning for the Gardiner Reserve (just outside the Macaulay area in North Melbourne) expansion, which Cr Oke and I included in this year's Annual Plan and Budget, is nearing completion, and there will be shovels in the ground by the end of the financial year. The park will expand by approximately 43%. You can find details at <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/gardinerreserve>

(The process for the Gardiner Reserve expansion is similar to the Kensington station park expansion that I proposed and was delivered in the previous term of Council.)

4.2. Improving Racecourse Road

In this year's Annual Plan and Budget, I have included the master planning – street tree plantings, bicycle lane safety improvements, amenity improvements – for Racecourse Rd between the shopping strip and Flemington Rd, including the Flemington Bridge precinct. Ideas and proposals are currently being workshopped and costed with Moonee Valley City Council in advance of public consultation (watch this space!) and capital works commitments to be made in 2018-19.

4.3. Getting Arden right

The State Government is finalising the Arden Vision and Framework and preparing new planning controls to be subject to a planning scheme amendment process. It will be vital to ensure genuine community input into those documents, which will be made available at <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/ardenmacaulay>. The Council is currently in the dark as to what direction the State Government is going in with these key documents.

4.4. New mixed use development in Macaulay

The new land use and built form controls in Macaulay will facilitate new development.

The Kensington Association and local community are already aware of Impact Investment's plans for the Younghusband site; the new controls will facilitate the proposed uses in that planning application, and the assessment and decision on that application is expected to be completed soon. (The decision will come to the Future Melbourne Committee.)

Land owners of the large parcels of land west of Boundary Rd, North Melbourne, have significant mixed use development aspirations. RAID3051 and some locals are aware that there are plans looming; these will also be made public as formal planning applications are made in coming months.

5. Contact

Please don't hesitate to contact me any time to discuss any issues raised here or ask any questions. You can find me at Rohan.Leppert@melbourne.vic.gov.au.