

PUBLIC SPACE CONCEPT PLAN

WILLIS STREET PRECINCT

HAMPTON

Prepared for
Bayside City Council

Date
May 2021



BLADES

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1. INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Introduction and Purpose

The Willis Street Precinct is a large portion of the Hampton Major Activity Centre, located in Melbourne's south-eastern bayside suburbs. Comprised of a number of sites owned by both Bayside City Council ('Council') and private entities, the Willis Street Precinct has long been strategically identified as an ideal candidate for public open space provision and community uses by myriad strategic planning documents, and Council has in recent years undergone a series of exercises to understand and 'unlock' the potential of the precinct to providing meaningful public uses. Most recently, Council has identified the precinct as being a potential candidate for a multi-faceted community hub location (the 'Hampton Hub') with accompanying open space and transportation functions.

In 2021, Council appointed urban design studio Blades (Blades Studio Pty. Ltd.) in conjunction with Lat 37 landscape architects to build upon this vision by undertaking a high-level urban design analysis of the Willis Street Precinct and preparing a series of overarching, high-level urban design principles.

The purpose of this document is therefore as follows:

- To understand the history of strategic design directions of the Willis Street Precinct, and distil this into the fundamental strategic direction of the precinct.
- To undertake a high level urban design analysis of the Willis Street Precinct as a means of understanding it's design strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints.
- To explore existing precedents and benchmarks of comparable public open space urban design outcomes (both locally, nationally and internationally), and identify opportunities and 'lessons' for the future of the Willis Street Precinct.
- To identify a number of overarching, high level urban design principles capable guiding the future design of public open space and community hubs within the Willis Street Precinct.
- To articulate a high level concept plan (or 'vision') that responds to the above.

This document does not seek to repeat previous, existing design analysis of the Willis Street Precinct per se, nor provide confirmation on specific floor area or use mixes for multi-modal community hub uses of the Willis Street Precinct.

1.2 Structure

The structure of this document is therefore as follows:

- **1. Introduction**, which provides a brief synopsis of the purpose of the document and precinct.
- **2. Urban Design Analysis**, which provides a high level analysis of previous Council documents of relevance to the Willis Street Precinct (including relevant strategic design directions) and identifies basic urban design parameters and design opportunities for the precinct itself.
- **3. Case Studies and Benchmarking**, which explores a number of local, national and international examples of comparable public open space precedents that help contextualise future design possibilities for the Willis Street Precinct.
- **4. Urban Design Principles**, which are derived from the urban design analysis of the document and which cumulatively provide basic, overarching design 'parameters' for future public open space in the Willis Street Precinct.
- **5. Concept Plan**, which begins to articulate one potential design response to identified urban design principles.
- **6. Conclusion**, which summaries the findings of the document and its design directions.

1.3 Precinct

The Willis Street Precinct (the 'Precinct') is a broadly triangular parcel of land within the core of the Hampton Major Activity Centre, generally bound by the Koolkuna Lane and the Hampton Train Line to the south (including VicTrack land), Willis Street and residential properties on Willis Street to the north, and Willis Lane and Hampton Road to the east. It has a total combined area of approximately 9000sqm, and is currently occupied by a complex mix of uses including at-grade car parking, community services and a former Scout Hall. Most notable is the presence of established native canopy vegetation toward the south of the precinct, and an approximate NE-SW fall of 3m.

Refer below.



Figure 1 - Willis Street Precinct Boundary Plan

2. URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

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2.1 Strategic Policy Synopsis

The Willis Street Precinct is an important and strategic landholding within the Hampton Major Activity Centre and within the Hampton community more broadly, and there have consequently been a number of key strategic documents prepared by Council in recent years that have direct implications on the design future and broader strategic direction of the precinct. At a high level, these include:

- The **Bayside Planning Scheme**, which identifies the subject site as being zoned a mix of Residential Growth Zone and Commercial 1 Zone. It also identifies the site as being within a Major Activity Centre, and includes the precinct within the Design and Development Overlay Schedule 12 where maximum building heights of three storeys (former Scout Hall and current community-used buildings on Willis Street), four storeys (at-grade car park at 20-22 Willis Street) and six storeys (balance of precinct) apply.
- The **Hampton Street Major Activity Centre Structure Plan (2006)**, which provides the strategic underpinning behind many of the Planning Scheme's strategic and built form aspirations for the precinct and broader Major Activity Centre. It identifies the precinct as being within the 'Primary Activity Area' of the Activity Centre, and envisions the precinct being developed to *'a mixed use development with basement car parking, community facilities, improved links to the station and between transport modes, improved station facilities, and a public space.'*
- The **Hampton Willis Street Precinct Urban Design Framework (2013)**, which has been prepared by MGS Architects and which outlines a high-level urban design framework for the purpose of assisting Council with short, medium and long term design planning for the precinct. It identifies a number of overarching urban design principles based on urban design analysis, and identified a possible design solution for the broader precinct predominantly comprised of residential and community uses to Willis Street and a mix of retail and commercial uses within the balance of the site.
- The **Hampton, Our Centre – Planning for People Project Background Report (2019)** and **Hampton Our Centre – Planning for People Project Land use and Development Options Analysis (2019)**, prepared by Navire Consultants et.al. The purpose of the project was to assist Council in preparing a community infrastructure masterplan and development feasibility assessment for the use of the Hampton Major Activity Centre to drive the provision of community facilities. The document analysed a number of Council-owned sites within the Hampton Major Activity Centre, and – of relevance to the Willis Street Precinct – identified the potential for a 'Centralised Community Hub' to be located in the Willis Street Precinct as one potential design option. Masterplan and design modelling work by BKK Architects helped illustrate the design realities of each option within the Willis Street Precinct, including through the use of 3D modelling.
- The draft **Hampton Public Land Use Masterplan** is a current work-in-progress internal document of Council that has design relevance for the Willis Street Precinct. It conforms a design intention for the precinct to be utilised for a 'Centralised Community Hub' (in which existing community facility user groups will be transitioned into a purpose built facility) with adjoining open space areas (including 'green space', pocket plazas and outdoor seating) and basement car parking. The same document also identifies an intention to make use of the Scout Hall site as a short-term car park that could potentially be transitioned to alternative uses (including open space) in the longer term. The draft document was peer reviewed by Blades in late 2020, and affirmed the suitability of the precinct for the provision of open space and community uses in principle – particularly given the strategic location of the precinct for certain types of future open space relative to Bayside's existing patterns of open space provision and catchments.
- Finally, the **Bayside Open Space Strategy (2012)** is a comprehensive municipal-wide open space strategy that provides the strategic direction for future open space provision across Bayside. Of most note is the identification of a general absence of conveniently-accessible public open space within the core of the Hampton Major Activity Centre and its immediate residential hinterland.

From this, key existing overarching strategic directions for the Willis Street precinct include:

- The clear identification of the suitability of the subject site to provide for future public open spaces in a manner that would service an existing deficiency in public open space proximity within Hampton.
- The long-held identification of the precinct's ability to accommodate redevelopment in-principle, based on it's strategic location and physical attributes.
- The desire to facilitate a 'Central Community Hub' option within the precinct that capitalises upon the benefits of community use cross-pollination.
- The aspiration to create a high quality public realm outcome that strengthens connections to, from and through the precinct – including connections to adjoining public transportation and the retention/upgrade of public transport interchange connections.
- A broad desire to ensure future built form on site generally does not exceed a maximum height of six storeys (within the core of the precinct) and three to four storeys (to Willis Street).

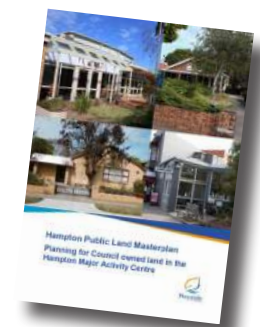


Figure 2 - Various relevant Council strategic planning documents

2.2 Interface and Vegetation Analysis

General observations:

- The precinct interfaces with predominately commercial uses to the east, a train station and mixed-use development to the south (currently under construction for infill residential development), and residential uses to the north (including on the opposing side of Willis Street, at least where opposite existing on-site community uses). As a result, there are only limited sections of direct street frontage along Willis Street, but significant frontages to both Koolkuna Lane and Willis Lane.
- Sensitive residential interfaces to the north of the Willis Street Precinct will need to be carefully managed from a visual bulk, noise and overlooking perspective. Any response to this interface must also balance amenity expectations with the location of these residences in an identified Major Activity Centre where growth, change and intensification is both expected and encouraged.
- Commercial developments fronting Hampton Street to the east have 'benign rear interfaces' to Willis Lane that read as 'back of house' interfaces.
- Willis Lane and Koolkuna Lane will need to continue provide for bus, truck and vehicular access around the precinct. The narrow width of each constrains the ability to accommodate significant volumes of vehicles or two-way travel.
- A number of large canopy trees throughout the present that provide significant shade and amenity within the site, and which should be preserved where possible and practical to do so.
- Planting within car park at 20-22 Willis Street appears to be low maintenance and passively irrigated with stormwater collection integrated into planters.



Figure 3 - Interface and Vegetation Analysis

2.3 Movement and Network Analysis

General observations:

- The Willis Street Precinct is extremely well serviced with a range of public transport options, including several bus routes are easily accessible within or in close proximity to the site. These routes connect with places of interest such as the 708 & 828 (Willis Street/Lane) leading as far South as the Carrum Activity Centre and South East to the Berwick Station Precinct and the 922 (Hampton Street) leading to Southland and the St Kilda Activity Centre.
- The Hampton Train Station in 'on the door step' of the precinct, forming a transport interchange with the bus connections immediately south of the precinct. Trains on the Sandringham line lead into Flinders Street Station or South to Sandringham and leave approximately every 15 minutes during work hours.
- The precinct contains large amounts of at-grade car parking beyond what is provided for the station.
- There is timed street parking available both on Hampton Street (1 hour limit between 8-6pm) and Willis Street (1 hour limit between 7-8pm, permit parking other times) servicing the commercial precinct.
- There are few existing facilities to support walking, such as seating, shelter and water fountains.
- Although the precinct is highly permeable (with a mixture of public and private through-connections to Hampton Street), car parking, loading and some fencing (particularly around community centre) restricts movement around the site currently with many vehicle cross overs present on footpaths
- The precinct is highly walkable precinct in-precinct due to its largely flat nature (the slope of the subject site is largely indiscernible), and proximity to the main shopping street/commercial precinct on Hampton Street (less than 50m to the east) and existing civic facilities within the precinct itself.

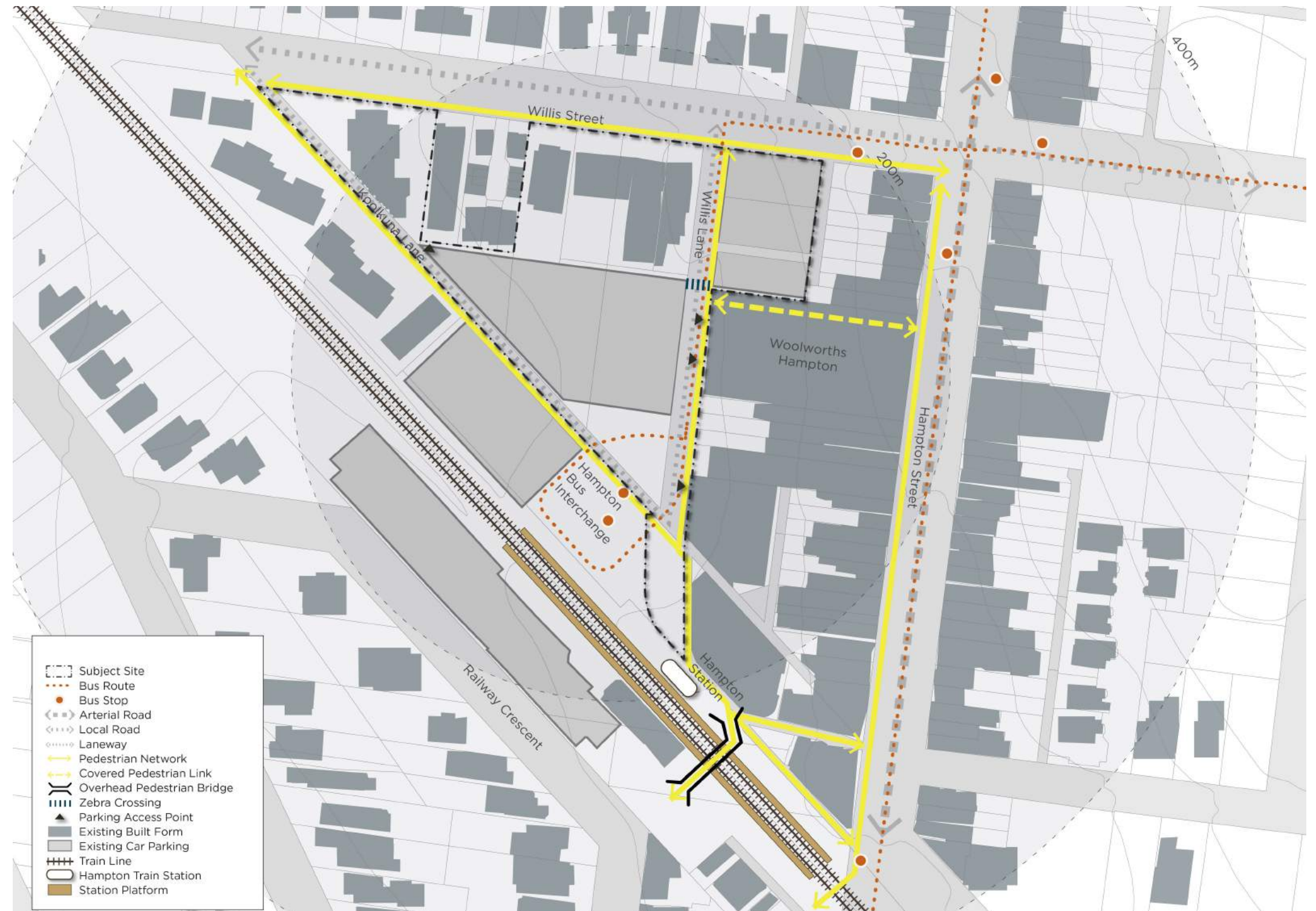


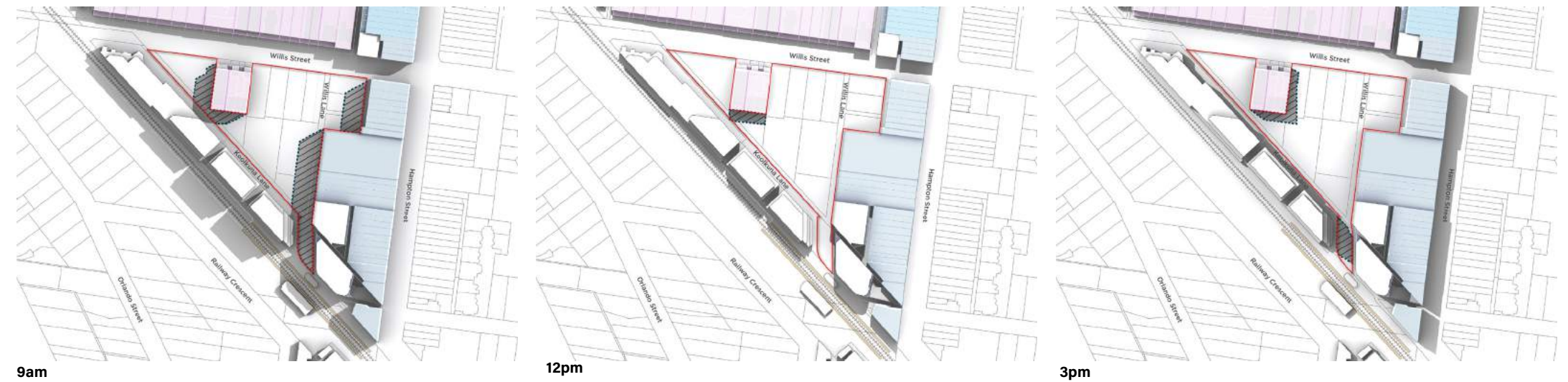
Figure 4 - Movement and Network Analysis

2.4 Solar Access Analysis

General observations:

- Residential development directly north of the precinct (southern side of Willis Street) will not have a significant Equinox or Winter Solstice shadow impact due to the maximum three storey height control that applies under DDO12.
- The station forecourt is best suited to more of an 'urban plaza' design treatment due to it being predominantly in shade in Winter, and during peak commuter times (morning and afternoon) in Summer.
- The carpark in the north east of the Willis Street Precinct is best suited for a public open space use that benefits from sunlight in midday and afternoon periods.
- The area south of the existing Willis Street community facility has and will continue to have excellent year-round solar access. It is best suited for the primary civic open space opportunity, or for potential grassed open space.
- Solar access to the former Scout Hall site (corner Willis Street/Koolkuna Lane) is excellent due to the scale of existing surrounding residential development, and will remain so under the height provisions of DDO12 that apply to surrounding properties.

Equinox (September 22)



Winter Solstice (June 22)

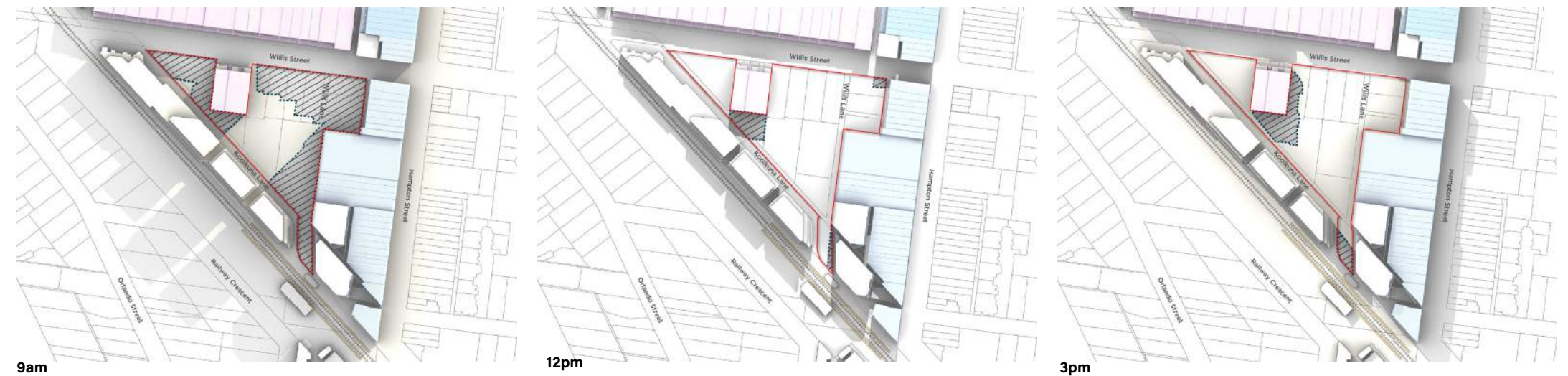


Figure 5 - Equinox and Winter Solstice Shadow Analysis. Note that blue and purple envelopes are derived from the maximum height provisions of the DDO12. They represent future heights in proximity to the precinct.

2.5 Precinct Opportunities Analysis

General observations:

- The largely indiscernible slope of the Willis Street Precinct Relatively makes future development more feasible compared to sloping allotments.
- There is an opportunity to rationalise existing movement patterns and convert into a potential shared space/street (Koolkuna Lane and Willis Lane).
- There is a key opportunity to utilise the visibility of the precinct's north-eastern corner to 'draw people in' from Hampton Road.
- The size of the precinct makes it an ideal candidate for a significant public open space and community services hub offering. Public open space can be myriad, and include programmable spaces such as temporary events and markets.
- New mid-rise development on-site holds the potential to 'frame' the public realm, and combine with approved development to the south of the precinct (VicTrack land) to obscure views to – and noise from – the trainline
- New civic and community facilities can be designed to activate and front existing streetscapes and new public spaces.
- There is the possibility of a new public through-link and visual connection through to Hampton Road
- Retaining and upgrading the existing bus access/transport interchange within the site will provide an additional function and dimension to the ultimate design outcome.
- There is an opportunity to create a 'gateway plaza' for those arriving to Hampton by train.
- Retain high-value existing trees is a significant opportunity that will assist with sustainability, sense of 'place' and precinct microclimates.

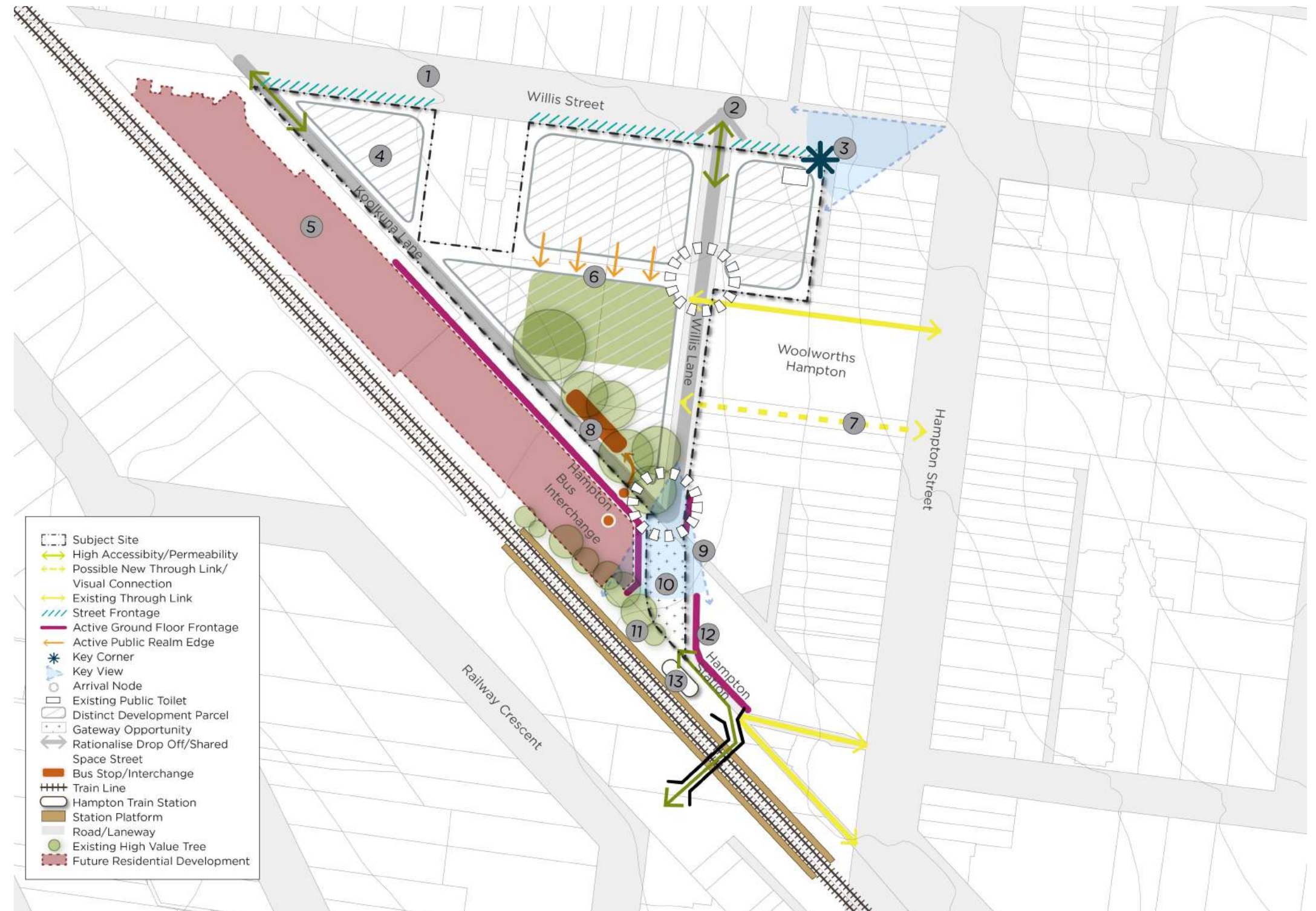


Figure 6 - Precinct Opportunities Analysis

2.6 Precinct Constraints Analysis

General observations:

- Laneway access (Willis Lane and Koolkuna Lane) is currently narrow and will require widening if it is to be used by larger numbers of vehicles.
- The broad 'triangular' shape of the precinct and its constituent parcels do not easily lend themselves to designing efficient floorplates.
- Sensitive interfaces to adjoining residences (both existing and emerging) that will need careful consideration.
- Existing entries to current community facilities are from Willis Street and Willis Lane only, with parking and station access at the rear.
- Vehicle access through the site will likely need to remain, especially for buses and trucks.
- The current perception of the precinct is one of 'back of house' car parking only. It doesn't draw people in.
- There are myriad 'back of house' interface directly east of the precinct due to the alignment of adjoining retailers that primarily front Hampton Street.
- Pedestrian connectivity from the precinct and Hampton Street is available through the Woolworths Supermarket, although this is private and closed after 10pm.
- Vehicle entries/exits to underground car parks and loading dock will need to remain.
- There is no visual connection to Hampton Street from the heart of the precinct.
- A new bus interchange will need to be integrated into the future design of the precinct.
- A curated arrival experience from station is needed that includes wayfinding to future community facilities.

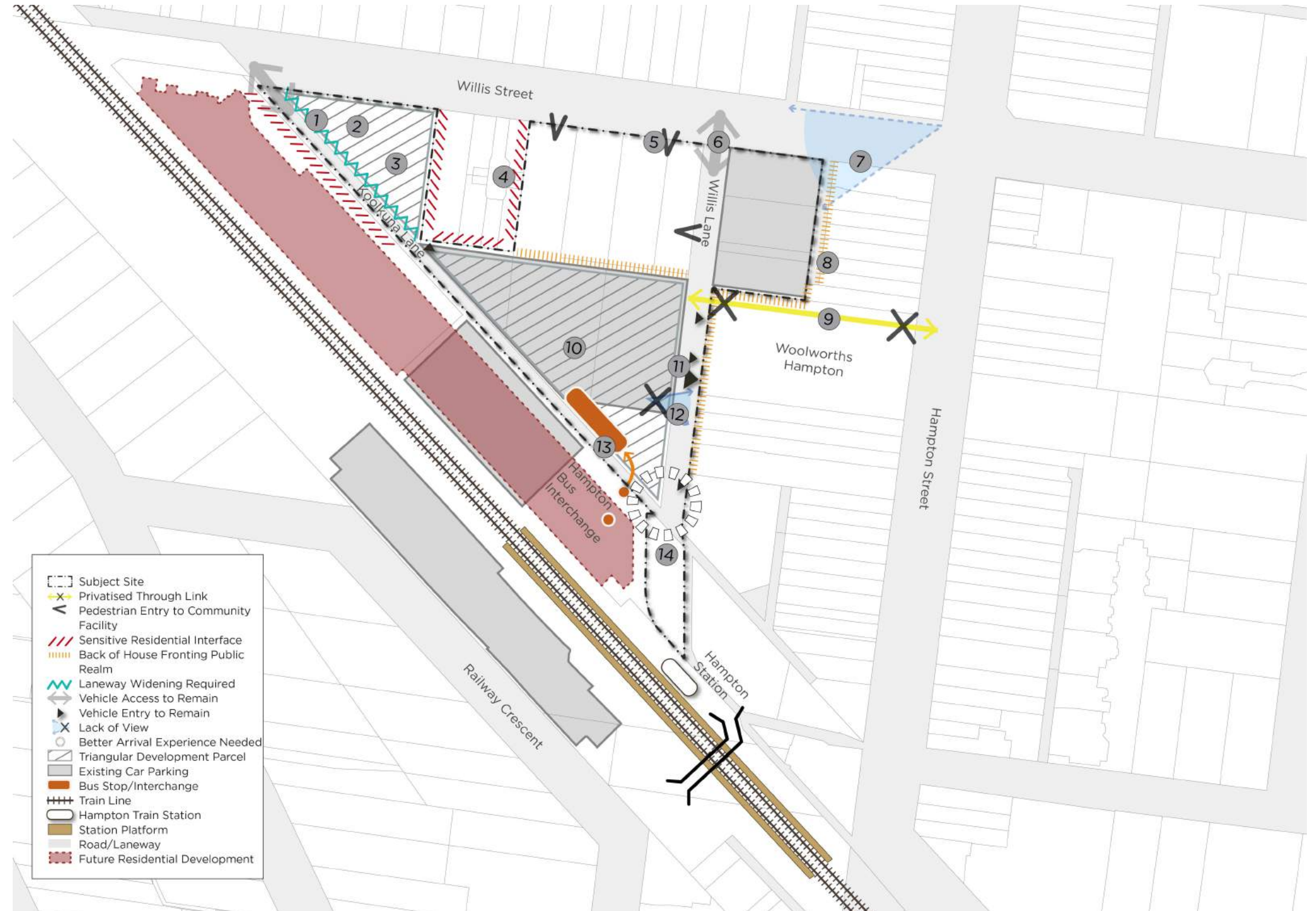


Figure 7 - Precinct Constraints Analysis

3. CASE STUDIES AND BENCHMARKING

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3.1 Benchmarking and Precedents

The intention of Council to understand future design possibilities for the Willis Street Precinct through this document is important, and understanding comparable designs is one way of contextualising an appreciation of design possibilities. Essentially, a greater understanding of the potential of the Willis Street Precinct to meaningfully contribute to community and public open space provision within the Hampton and Bayside community can be achieved through comparing the precinct with other existing public open spaces and community facilities – particularly those aspects of each that work well from a design perspective, and those that do not.

The purpose of this section is to therefore make this comparison, using a number of local (Victorian), national and international examples of existing public open spaces that are directly comparable to the Willis Street precinct both in terms of function and potential form. It does this firstly by cross-comparing the size of the Willis Street Precinct to other existing areas of public open space to help contextualise the physical realities and possibilities of the precinct and it's physical dimensions. It then concludes by introducing a select number of examples of other public open spaces and plazas (some of which have integrated community use and civic functions) using precedent imagery. Observations are shared about the specifics of each, and why each has design implications for the potential design future of the Willis Street Precinct.

3.2 Spatial Benchmarking

Willis Street Precinct

Hampton, Victoria

~9,000sqm

The Willis Street Precinct is host to a number of existing community uses (including the Hampton Community Centre and indoor Children's Playhouse), and is proximate to services, amenities and multiple public transportation options. It does not yet have a public open space function and is predominantly used for at-grade car parking. An existing Scout Hall within the western portion of the precinct formerly accommodated a local community Scout Group.



Ferrars Street Community Precinct

Southbank, Victoria

~12,000sqm

The Ferrars Street Community Precinct is an award-winning example of co-location and clustering of community facilities within an urban context. It features a large range of play equipment, large lawn and public park, terraced amphitheatre, multi-sports courts, picnic and BBQ areas, toilet and change facilities, and car parking. It's predominantly 'parkland' function is response to the significant drainage issues associated with this pocket of Fishermans Bend. Like the Willis Street Precinct, it has excellent proximity to the Principal Public Transport Network (Route 96 and 109 Trams), and is flanked by the Hayball-designed South Melbourne Primary School vertical education campus.



Dockland City Park Stage 2

Docklands, Victoria

~9,000sqm

The Docklands City Park (Stage 2) is a new community parkland situated between the Hoddle Grid and Docklands 'proper'. It links community buildings, multi-purpose courts, public art and existing parklands through a series of recreational and garden spaces. It features a community centre, multi-purpose courts, forecourt and deck, large lawn area, ping pong tables, shade amenity and car parking.

**Balwyn Community Centre**

Balwyn, Victoria

~14,000sqm

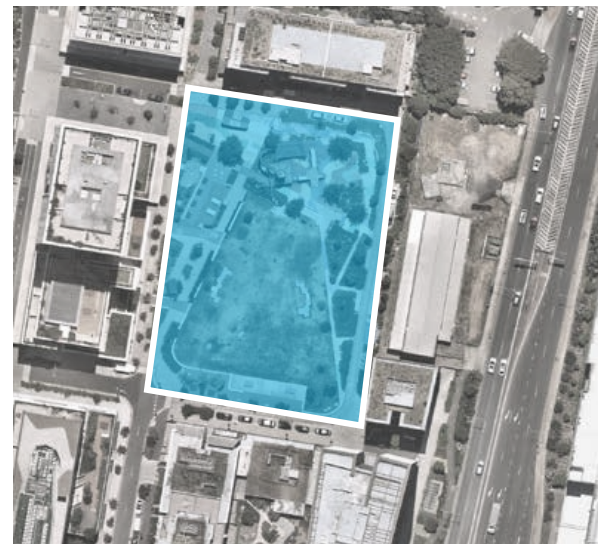
Located in the City of Boroondara, the Balwyn Community Centre is a combined community centre and public open space that includes playgrounds, bike storage, car parking, toilet and change facilities, barbecues and shade amenity.

**Wulaba Park**

Waterloo, Sydney

~7,500sqm

Wulaba Park is a centrally-located park within a brownfield portion of inner-city Sydney that includes a playground, open space facility and the space to 'kick a footy' or retreat under shade. It features a high-quality unique playground design, public art, a rain garden, bike lock up, car parking, toilet and change facilities, electric barbecues and a 'kick around' lawn.



3.3 Precedent Benchmarking

Elsternwick Plaza

Elsternwick, Victoria

For - City of Glen Eira

By - a_space

Area - 3,500sqm (approx.)

Completed in 2016, the Elsternwick Plaza is a recent public open space developed in the heart of the Elsternwick 'urban village' (ie. Activity Centre), located in direct abuttal to the Elsternwick Train Station. It is approximately one third of the size of the Willis Precinct (at a total area of approximately 3,470sqm), but comparable in the way it is sited in abuttal to the Principal Public Transport Network and located at the core of a municipal Activity Centre undergoing intensive change and development. It is predominantly a plaza and public open space and incorporates a range of public open space functions including a playground, picnic shelter, rotunda, BBQ facilities, sloped lawn area, tables and seating and through-park pedestrian and cycling linkages. Although it does not incorporate or abut a community use (the Elsternwick Library is located further east along Glen Huntly Road), it does interface directly to adjoining commercial developments to create a public 'spillover' space for informal seating, dining and static enjoyment of the public realm. .

Key design lessons for the potential future of the Willis Street precinct stem from the manner in which Glen Eira Council has transformed an underutilised portion of the Elsternwick Activity Centre into a central public 'heart' of the Elsternwick Community – a heart that will only be further accessed and utilised by residents, visitors and employees as more development occurs within this particular Activity Centre of Glen Eira. It is also a relatively 'low cost' urban intervention that has restored a strategically-located but underutilised and disconnected portion of an existing Activity Centre. Importantly, the manner in which Elsternwick Plaza has carefully designed the space's existing interface with abutting commercial uses (including the interface with adjoining food and beverage uses) demonstrates how a 'blurring of the line' between the public and private realms can contribute to the amenity, activation and vibrancy of the space in a way that is greater than the sum of its parts.



Figure 8 - Various photos. Image credit (clockwise from top left): Glen Eira City Council, VicTrack, Hidden City Secrets, VicTrack, Glen Eira City Council

Oxford Street Park**Collingwood, Victoria****For** - City of Yarra**By** - Urban Initiatives. Leanne O'Shea**Area** - 500sqm (approx.)

Oxford Street Park is an example of how existing vehicle infrastructure can be repurposed to provide for meaningful public open space and community infrastructure opportunities, even at a smaller scale. Designed and delivered by Urban Initiatives and Leanne O'Shea in conjunction with the City of Yarra, the Oxford Street Park is a 500sqm 'pocket park' created through the closure of a portion of Oxford Street under the City of Yarra's broader 'Roads to Parks' program. It features a tactile materiality palette comprised of timber decking and seating, elevated green-accented garden beds, high quality stone paving, native planting and a mix of in-ground and overhead lighting.

Although Oxford Street park is not abutted by community facilities (the space sits between a private residence and an adjoining commercial land use), it is directly relevant to the Willis Street Precinct as an example of a cost-effective and high-impact transformation of smaller, underutilised portions of the public realm that historically serviced vehicles – such as the small at-grade car park portion of the Willis Street Precinct at 20-22 Willis Street, Hampton (approximately 1,500sqm). It demonstrates how the simple conversion of public land historically utilised for vehicle purposes to provide for a meaningful public offering can recalibrate the use and perception of spaces and provide the opportunity for vibrancy and a greater sense of place irrespective of the size of the space itself.



Figure 9 - Various photos. Image credit (clockwise from top left): ULS, City of Yarra, Urban Initiatives, ULS

Northcote Civic Square

Northcote, Victoria

For - City of Darebin

By - Rush Wright Associates

Area - 900sqm (approx.)

The Northcote Civic Square is an example of a public square that has been designed to serve a number of purposes, including providing for a central public space for the Northcote community and broader Activity Centre, providing for a static 'linkage' between existing community and civic uses/buildings, and providing for a space that emphasises and celebrates the traditions and customs of the local indigenous community. Designed by Rushwright Associates and completed in 2012, the Northcote Civic Square makes use of shapes, forms and imagery that celebrates the indigenous history of Rucker's Hill and which juxtaposes with the neoclassical Victorian architecture of the adjoining Northcote Town Hall and library buildings. It is predominantly a static space, and includes timber seating, stone tiling, native planting and intensely vibrant painted surfaces to provide for a contemporary meeting place for the local community. It is also a new space that builds upon the layers of Northcote's history, stitching the new (the plaza design) with the old (Victorian colonialism) and ancient (indigenous Australian history).

One potential design lesson for the future design of the Willis Street Precinct is the possibility of utilising more of a 'sculptural' approach to public space; a space that provides for a static interpretation of the rich and complex history of Hampton throughout eras and ages in a way that is informative, engaging and interactive. In the same way that the design of the Northcote Civic Square provides for a juxtaposing interpretation of local history in a way that relates to adjoining Victorian-era civic structures (and in a way that provides for a public open space offering that complements and relates to adjoining civic and community uses), so too could the future design for the Willis Street Precinct provide for a public open space interpretation of local history and custom in a way that is 'place-specific' and 'of Hampton.'



Figure 10 - Various photos. Image credit to Rush Wright Associates for all images



Prahran Square

Prahran, Victoria

For - City of Stonnington

By - Lyons Architects and Aspect Landscape Architects

Area - 9,500sqm (approx.)

Prahran Square is a useful precedent for the Willis Street precinct. Like the City of Bayside, the City of Stonnington is an inner-city municipality of Melbourne that had long identified a former at-grade car park within an identified Activity Centre (Cato Street Car Park) as having the potential to provide for far more of a community use and public open space function. Lyons Architects – in conjunction with Aspect Landscape Architects – designed a multi-function public space that uses basement car parking and elevated ‘pavilion style’ quadrants sited around a central civic and play space that itself can be programmed for community and public functions. Each quadrant serves a different public open space function, including a sensory garden using native vegetation, a formal terraced ‘auditorium’ quadrant for seating and observing, a quadrant comprised of a grass slope for informal public recreation activities, and static formalised seating throughout. Elevating each quadrant to the surround street networks provides a sense of built form definition to each streetscape (and provides for Ground Floor tenancies beneath each elevated quadrant), and pedestrian access occurs at logical and natural arrival points from the surrounding urban context at each corner of the square’s broader ‘block’. Materials are high quality and enduring, and the surface treatment of the square is tactile and high quality.

A key design ‘lesson’ from Prahran Square for the Willis Street Precinct pertains to the considered use of multi-function areas as part of the design of the ultimate civic space. In the same way that Prahran Square has programmed a mix of different public open space functions into a central civic and public open space offering, so too could the future design of the Willis Street Precinct contemplate a range of different open space functions and possibilities in the ultimate design outcome. Doing so would provide an enduring and long-term community asset that serves a broad cross-section of the community, rather than certain aspects of the community only.



Figure 11 - Various photos. Image credit (clockwise from top): Concrete Playground, ASPECT Studios, AECOM

Dandenong Civic Square

Dandenong, Victoria

For - City of Greater Dandenong

By - Lyons Architects and Rush Wright Associates

Area - 3,400sqm (approx.)

Dandenong Civic Square is an example of a formal, civic square with 'urban park' functions. It is a relevant precedent for the Willis Street Precinct in that it, too, has provided a mix of community, civic, formal open space and informal open space opportunities within the core of a significant Victorian Activity Centre. It was completed in 2014 and has a total area of approximately 2,250sqm. A key part of the design of the open space relates to its use of high quality tactile surface treatments and formal opportunities for static seating to create a 'meeting point' for the broader Dandenong Community, which in itself can be programmed for community events and activities as required. The formality of this space is supplemented by grassed informal seating areas to provide relief from the distinctly urban context of the square's location, and the opportunity for informal recreation and seating. The use of distinctive 'Cook Pines' is a subtle placemaking exercise that helps distinguish the square as distinct from other local spaces and places, and the abutment of the City of Greater Dandenong's Civic Offices reinforces the multi-modal use of the precinct as a civic and community space.

A key design 'lesson' from the Dandenong Civic Square for the Willis Street Precinct comes from the manner in which civic buildings, community uses and public open spaces are seamlessly integrated at the precinct scale. Each constituent aspect of the Dandenong Civic Square and City of Greater Dandenong civic offices is a destination in its own right, but – through good design and enhanced connections – the ultimate public and design outcome is greater than the sum of its parts.

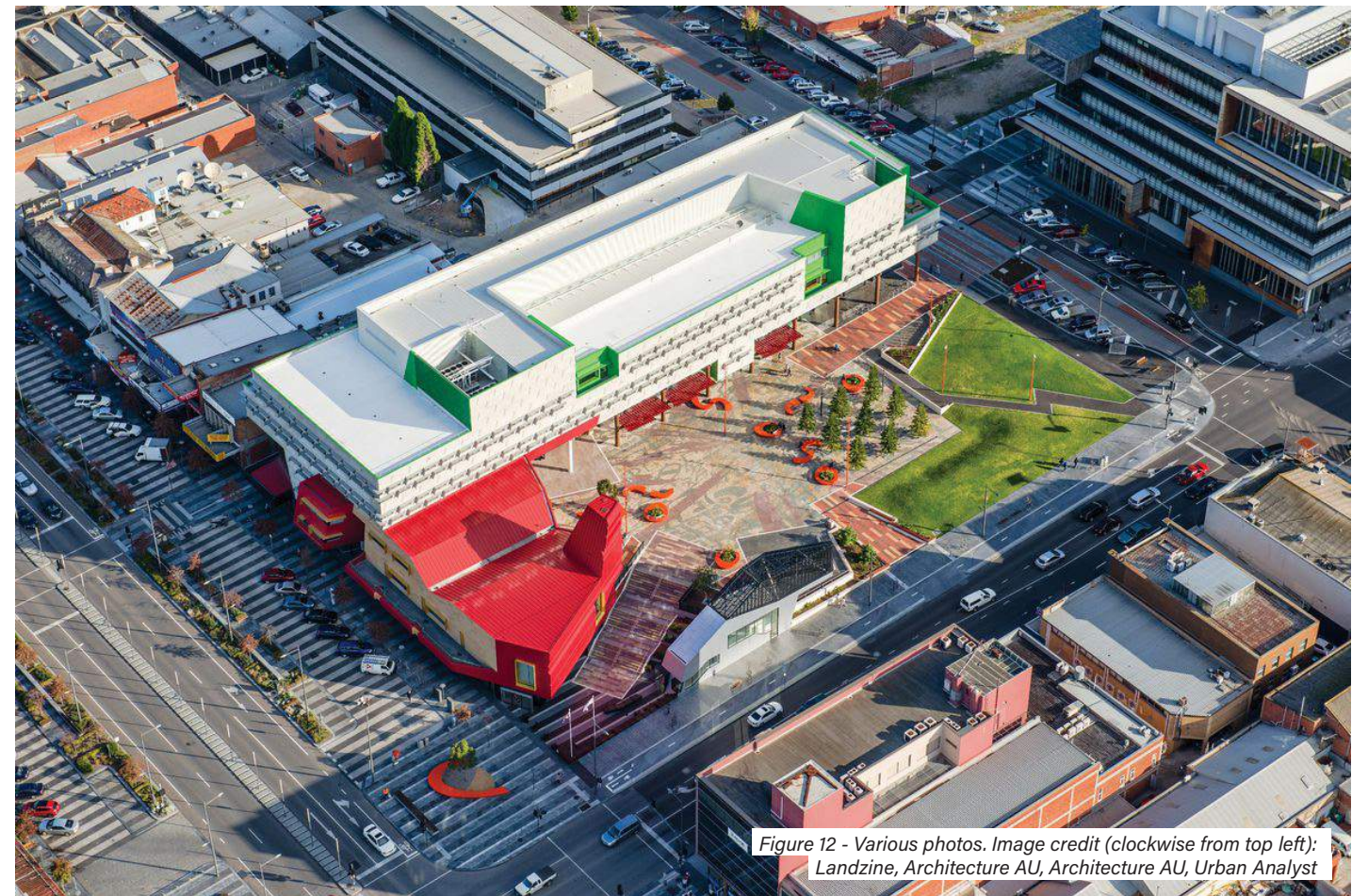


Figure 12 - Various photos. Image credit (clockwise from top left): Landzine, Architecture AU, Architecture AU, Urban Analyst

Darling Square

Darling Harbour, New South Wales

For - Lendlease

By - Aspect Landscape Architects, Denton Corker Marshall, Hassell and Kengo Kuma and Associates

Area - 1,800sqm (approx.)

Darling Square is a recent example of an urban parkland (completed in 2019) centrally located within the Darling Harbour precinct of the Sydney CBD. It serves as a formal and informal public open space opportunity and meeting place for a local resident and worker population, and is comprised of a mix of transient pedestrian pathways and grassed informal seating areas. A particularly notable aspect of Darling Square is 'The Exchange' building, which was designed by Japanese architects Kengo Kuma and Associates and which is colloquially referred to as the 'Birdsnest' due to its distinctive spiralling wooden facade. The Exchange itself is a community building that hosts a City of Sydney Library, further emphasising the hybrid community/open space role of Darling Square as a local community hub.

A key design 'lesson' from Darling Square for the Willis Street Precinct comes from the role that distinctive, unique architecture plays in placemaking of civic and open space areas. In the same way that The Exchange provides a unique, memorable and distinctive image for Darling Square, so too could the future design of the Willis Street Precinct make use of distinctive architecture. This could be in the form of the design of a new community hub for the precinct, or it could be through capitalising upon the distinctive architecture of the approved development immediately south of the precinct on VicTrack landholdings.

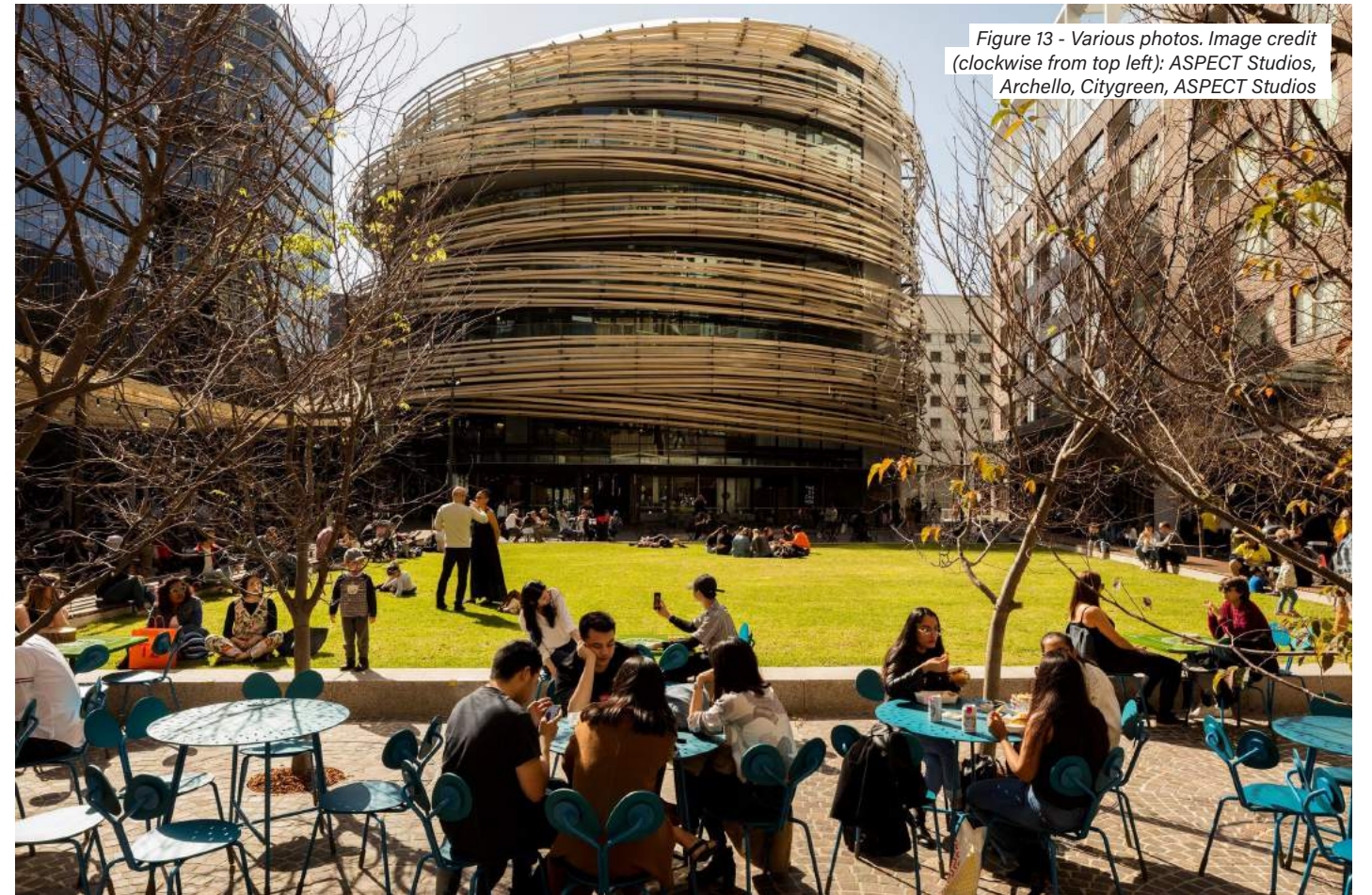
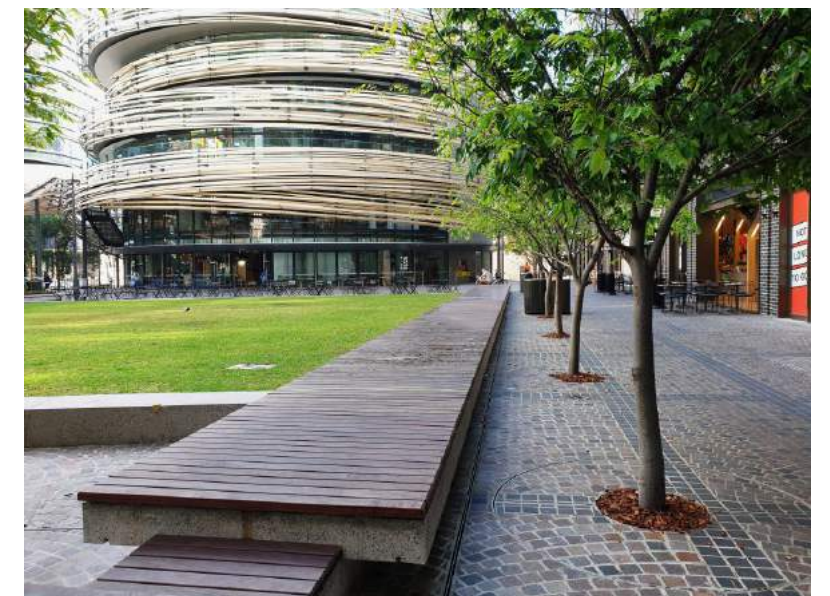
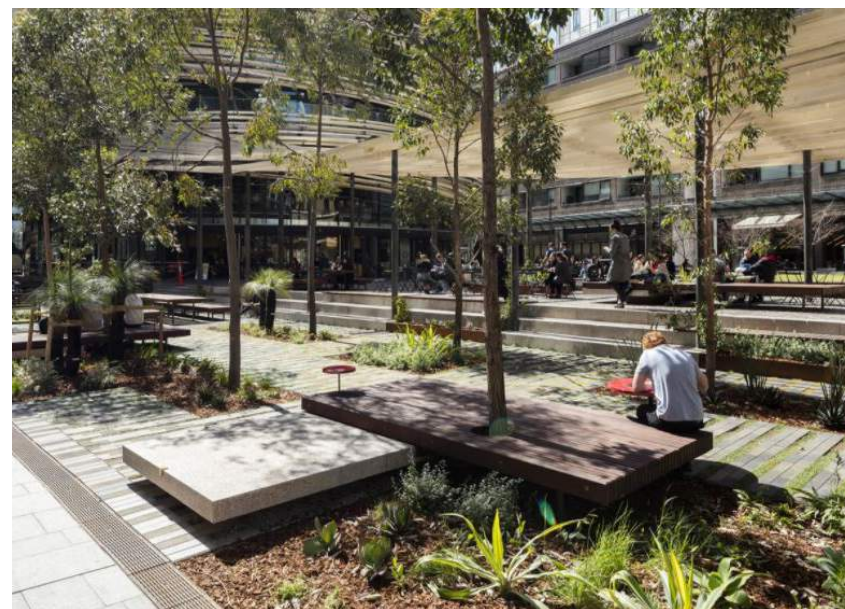


Figure 13 - Various photos. Image credit (clockwise from top left): ASPECT Studios, Archello, Citygreen, ASPECT Studios



Green Square Plaza

Zetland, New South Wales

For - City of Sydney

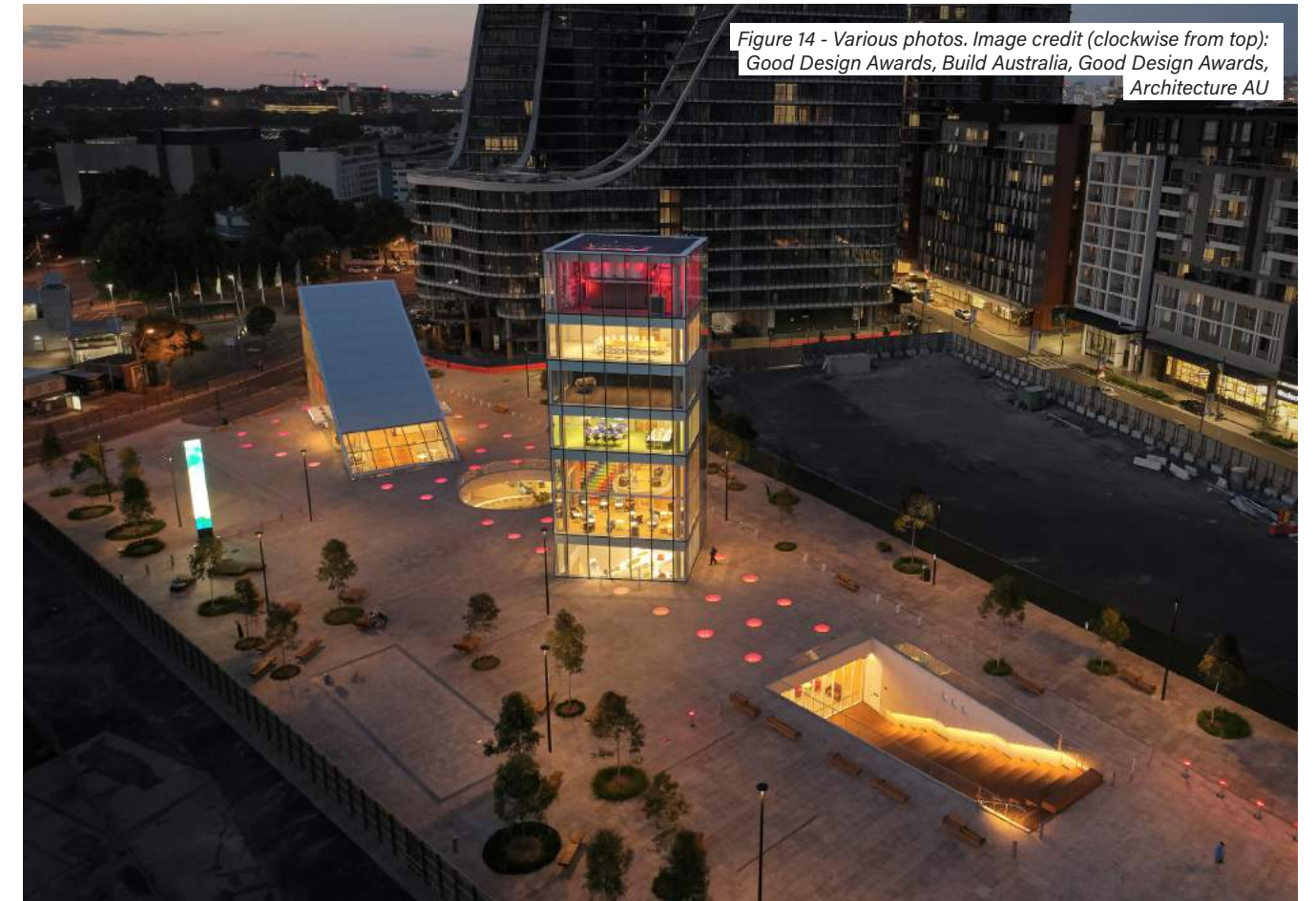
By - Studio Hollenstein

Area - 8,300sqm (approx.)

Green Square Plaza – completed in 2018 – is directly relevant as a precedent for the Willis Street Precinct for a number of reasons. Firstly, at a size of approximately 8,000sqm, it is very comparable in dimension to the Willis Street Precinct itself. Secondly, it too was instigated on behalf of the local Council (City of Sydney Council) to provide for a mix of civic, open space and community functions in an identified growth area that is undergoing rapid change and intensification. However, perhaps most notable is the manner in which Green Square Plaza combined public open space and community functions. Where a typical masterplan might seek to site open space and plazas around a community use or building, Green Square Plaza does the opposite – it has designed and delivered a plaza that sits above a community building.

Beneath Green Square Plaza is a City of Sydney library and community centre that is accessed via a clearly legible and architecturally distinctive travelator core that punctuates through the surface above. 42 landscaped ‘cut outs’ in the surface of the plaza provides light and views down into the library and community space from above, and landscaped relief to the continuity of the plaza itself. The arrangement maximises the availability of public open space at ground level whilst delivering critical community services and functions below.

A key design ‘lesson’ from the Green Square Plaza for the Willis Street Precinct is the manner in which traditional relationships between uses and forms can be inverted to achieve greater design benefit. As applied to the Willis Street Precinct, this could include the provision of subterranean community or even commercial uses and the maximisation of public space above. It also provides a timely reminder of the need to ‘future proof’ car parking and potentially design any future basement car parking for the Willis Street Precinct in a way that can potentially be readily-adapted for other future uses (such as commercial or community uses) in the advent of new driverless car technologies.



Toowoomba Civic Square

Toowoomba, Queensland

For – Toowoomba Regional Council

By – Place Design Group and James Cubitt Architects

Area – 6,700sqm (approx.)

Toowoomba Civic Square is an example of a civic precinct that services as the 'core' of a range of community uses, including the Toowoomba Regional Council civic offices, Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, Toowoomba Town Hall and new Toowoomba Library. Basement car parking beneath the Toowoomba Library provides accessible community access to the precinct, which itself makes use of a range of hard-scaped and tactile surface areas juxtaposed with greenery, grassed lawn and landscaping. It is also centrally located close to the core of the Toowoomba Central Business District, and provides an opportunity for local a local resident and worker population to congregate and enjoy the Queensland climate during lunchtime hours.

A key design 'lesson' from the Toowoomba Civic Square for the Willis Street Precinct stems from the manner in which basement car parking is used to completely obscure the visual impact of public parking on the precinct itself, combined with the manner in which the public open space provides the central link between a multitude of civic and community spaces. It is also useful as an example of how a well-sited community space can cater for passive patronage and use by a local resident and worker population, particularly during lunchtime periods.



Figure 15 - Various photos.
All images credited to Place Design Group.



3.4 Summary

In summary, potential design implications of spatial and precedent benchmarking for the future design of the Willis Street Precinct include:

- The design benefits of integrating public open space as an 'additional layer' of integrated community benefit when co-located with existing or potential future community uses (Dandenong Civic Square, Toowoomba Civic Square and Northcote Civic Square).
 - The importance of achieving meaningful and enhanced connections between internal on-site uses and external surrounds, through enhanced and well-designed pedestrian connections (Toowoomba Civic Square).
 - The design benefit of relegating all vehicle parking below ground in a basement arrangement, and the need to design basement car parking to be adaptable in the future as driving technologies change (Prahran Square and Darling Square).
 - The potential for distinctive architecture and design to 'place brand' public open space and – through placemaking – create new public open space precincts that are distinctive and memorable (Darling Square)
 - The possibility of inverting traditional design relationships between community uses and public open spaces to maximise community benefit, including potentially subterranean community uses (Green Square Plaza)
 - The importance of a mix of different uses and functions within the design of future public open spaces to cater to as broad a cross-section of the community as possible (Dandenong Civic Square).
 - The design possibilities of small, cost-effective urban interventions that provide for significant community returns (Oxford Street Park and Elsternwick Plaza).
 - The long-term value of investing in high quality materials and surface treatments (all precedents).
-

4. URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

21

4.1 Urban Design Principles

Urban design principles are a common way of informing the ultimate design outcome in urban environments, and help to provide general, 'high level' guidance to achieve good urban design outcomes throughout the complexities of the design process. Urban design guidelines are typically derived from an analysis of a precinct and its physical and policy context, and provide the key 'design themes' that should be responded to in the final design.

As translated to the Willis Street Precinct, the following urban design principles have been identified through an analysis of the physical and policy context of the precinct itself, as well as from the 'lessons learnt' from precedent and case study benchmarking. A total of ten urban design principles have been identified, and these – along with the rationale that underpins them and suggestions as to how they can be achieved within the Willis Street Precinct – are as follows.



1. Complement any future Willis Street Precinct community hub with a public open space that is predominantly civic in function.



2. Provide for a mix of static, transient, active and passive spaces within the design of future public open space.



3. The design of any future open space should carefully consider existing and future patterns of solar access.



4. Create enhanced, safe and publicly-accessible pedestrian connections through the Willis Street Precinct at all times of day.



5. Full, public basement car parking should be provided. Any basement car parking should be designed to be adaptable in the future.



6. Retain and strengthen existing transport interchange functions.



7. Retain significant vegetation within the Willis Street Precinct where practical to do so. Supplement retained vegetation with new species appropriate to Hampton's coastal context.



8. Design for universal access, for all ages and abilities.



9. Provide for a palette of high quality, enduring materials and surface treatments.



10. Embed sustainability into the design of any future community use and public open space function.



1. Complement any future Willis Street Precinct community hub with a public open space that is predominantly civic in function.

Why is this required?

There have been significant amounts of previous strategic analysis and design thinking regarding the highest and best use for the Willis Street Precinct, which has affirmed its suitability for a centralised community hub and public open space outcome. There has also been significant analysis confirming that many public open space opportunities currently exist in proximity to the subject site (including 'green space' parkland open spaces within the Hampton residential hinterland, as well as the linear Port Phillip Bay foreshore), but that there is a lack of a 'civic' type of space either within the Hampton Major Activity Centre or within the Hampton region more broadly. Therefore, future public open space within the Willis Street Precinct should be predominantly civic in nature to respond to this (that is, a 'civic square' type space similar to the examples explored at both Dandenong Civic Plaza, Northcote Civic Square and the Toowoomba Civic Square), and to complement and integrate with the intended community hub use of the broader Willis Street Precinct.

Where does this come from?

Previous strategic analysis of the precinct (including the Hampton Street Activity Centre Structure Plan and the Bayside Open Space Strategy), as well as precedent benchmarking analysis.

What could this look like in the Willis Street Precinct?

There are many ways to design a predominantly civic space, and there are therefore a number of potential design solutions for what this could potentially look like for the Willis Street Precinct. Fundamentally, however, a predominantly civic space is typically 'sealed' and paved and provides more of a 'civic square' type function than a recreational or 'green park' type offering. They are typically able to accommodate a range of activities (including 'static' or stationary activities), are largely functional in nature, provide the opportunity for formal events and functions (such as civic ceremonies and festivals), and provide for the capacity to be programmed for community events and functions (including markets or 'moonlight cinema' type events). They are destinations and 'meeting points' for local communities, and also typically feature formal and informal opportunities for seating, landscaping, and high-quality tactile surface treatments.

They also often serve as an open space 'counterpoint' to adjoining civic and community uses and buildings, as demonstrated by precedent benchmarking of the Dandenong Civic Plaza, Northcote Civic Square and Toowoomba Civic Square.



Figure 16 - Various photos. Image credit (clockwise from top left): Place Design Group, Rush Wright Associates, Rush Wright Associates, Concrete Playground, Good Design Awards, Architecture AU



2. Provide for a mix of static, transient, active and passive spaces within the design of future public open space.

Why is this required?

Best practice public open space urban design acknowledges that successful spaces are embraced by the full diversity of the community, regardless of age or background. This is best achieved through layering of multiple complementary functions in adaptable public spaces, which strengthen community ties by offering 'something for all' instead of 'something for the few'. One way of achieving this is to design for a range of uses and activities within public open space to enhance usability and patronage across all sections of the community, but which complement the predominant civic function of any new public open space.

Where does this come from?

Previous benchmarking of comparable design precedents and Section 3 of the Victorian Urban Design Guidelines.

What could this look like in the Willis Street Precinct?

The Willis Street Precinct is a large precinct capable of accommodating a range of potential sub-uses that could stand in addition to its predominantly 'civic square' function, including (but not limited to) an outdoor children's playspace/playground area, an active play area (including multi-function sports court or similar), a BBQ and picnic space, opportunities for community gardens and vegetable-growing spaces, sculptural installations, and/or fixed social infrastructure (such as fixed tables for a game of chess or ping-pong). These all stand in addition to informal uses of a potential civic public open space, including seating and edging to opportunities to simply 'sit and observe.' Refer right.

Designing for a range of multiple complementary uses and opportunities within the Willis Street Precinct will respond to the diversity of the Hampton community, and allow greater engagement, utilisation, participation and – ultimately – vibrancy within the precinct itself.



Figure 17 - Various photos.
All images credited to Lat Studios.



3. The design of any future open space should carefully consider existing and future patterns of solar access.

Why is this required?

Microclimate is a key determinant in the usability, 'feel' and appeal of open space environments. Well-designed public spaces have features that respond to the broader climatic conditions of where a site is located, and often have subtle features within this again that provide opportunities to maximise solar access (particularly in the cooler months) or shade (particularly in the warmer months). As certain parts of the Willis Street precinct are more prone to receiving more sunlight now and within the future (as envisioned by the Bayside Planning Scheme's preferred maximum building heights for surrounding properties outside the Precinct) and certain parts are more prone to being in shade, any design of a future public open space should respond to this and design for a range of spaces with differing levels of solar-access year-round.

Where does this come from?

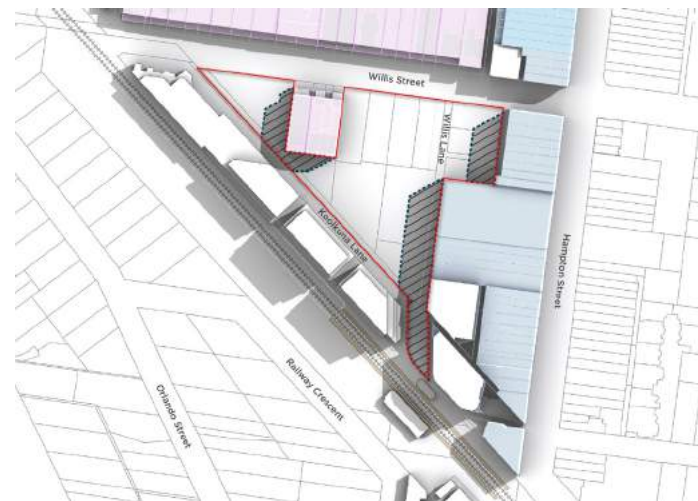
Previous analysis of Equinox and Winter Solstice overshadowing of existing built form in proximity to the Willis Street Precinct (including future DDO12-compliant shadow impacts), and Guideline 3.1.5 of the Victorian Urban Design Guidelines.

What could this look like in the Willis Street Precinct?

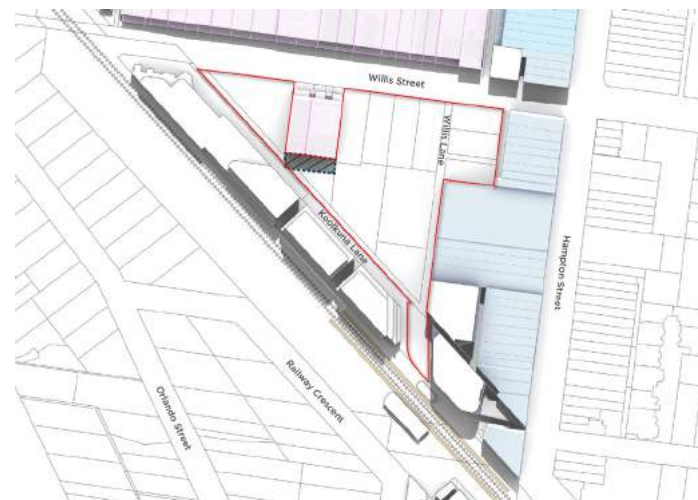
As a general urban design principle, solar access to public open spaces is best preserved to those times of day when they are most likely to be used. For inner-urban environments in Melbourne (including Hampton), this is typically between the hours of 10am – 2pm (as it is during this period when lunchtime pedestrian movements are typically at their highest), but also often in morning periods, too. It is also during the Winter months when solar access is of greatest importance from a microclimate perspective, as ambient temperatures are cooler and sunlight is scarcer compared to the warmer months due to the fact that the sun comparatively rises later and sets earlier.

As translated to the Willis Street Precinct, an analysis of year-round patterns of solar access suggests that the greatest levels of existing and future year-round solar access exist within the north-eastern portion of the precinct (at-grade car park at 20-22 Willis Street, Hampton), north-western portion of the Precinct (former Scout Hall at 6 Willis Street, Hampton) and the centre of the Precinct's interface to Willis Lane (directly west of the existing Woolworths Supermarket). These locations therefore present the best opportunities to site future public open space for excellent year round solar access. Other parts of the Willis Street Precinct – such as the Precinct's interface to Willis Street (12-14 Willis Street, Hampton), or directly south of existing residential development at 8-10 Willis Street – are more likely to be shaded throughout the day (especially in the cooler months) and lend themselves to being locations that are more suitable for future built form, such as a future community hub building. Providing buildings in these types of locations will also help 'encircle' the central public open space and provide for a better wind protection from Hampton's coastal winds, particularly compared a public open space located toward an extremity of the Willis Street Precinct.

Equinox (September 22)

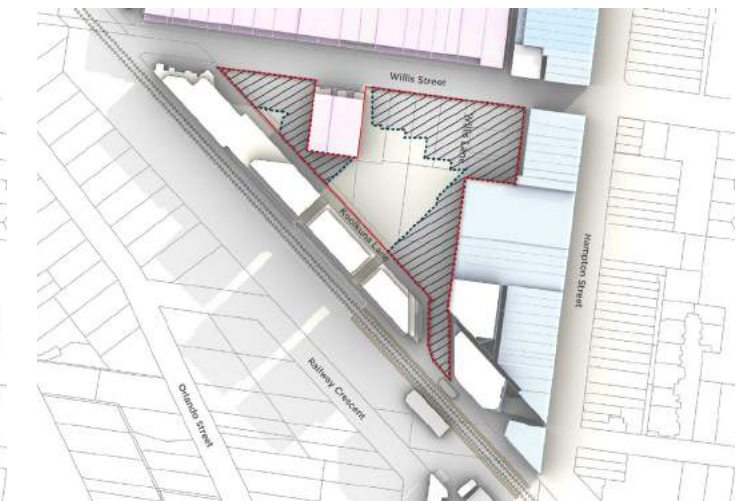


9am

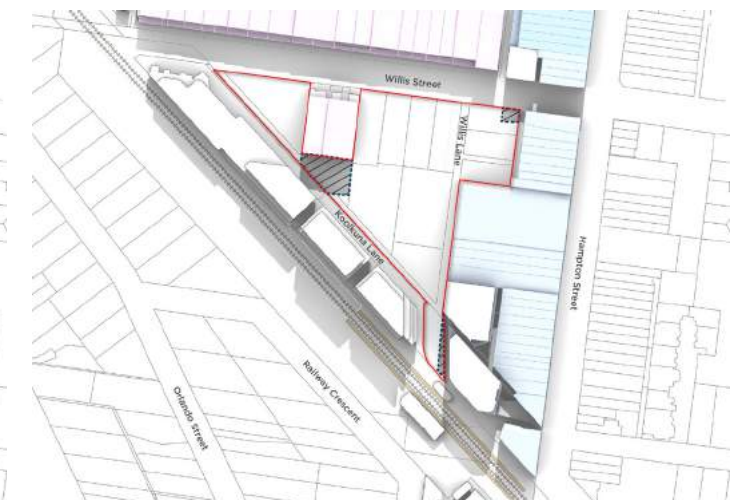


12pm

Winter Solstice (June 22)



9am



12pm

Figure 18 - Morning and lunchtime solar access patterns at the Equinox and Winter Solstice.



4. Create enhanced, safe and publicly-accessible pedestrian connections through the Willis Street Precinct at all times of day.

Why is this required?

Public spaces are exactly that; places accessible to all members of the community at all times of day. The safety, useability and success of public spaces is therefore a design consideration that is intrinsic to the success of the Willis Street Precinct as a future public open space candidate, and fundamental Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles are key to this.

Where does this come from?

Previous analysis of the opportunities of the Willis Street Precinct, and best-practice design CPTED guidance within Section 3.1 and Section 3.2 of the Victorian Urban Design Guidelines.

What could this look like in the Willis Street Precinct?

Safe, attractive environments are achieved through the conscientious application of CPTED design principles. As applied to future public open space in the Willis Street Precinct, this could be achieved through a range of specific design mechanisms, including:

- Designing for active edges to any future public open space (edges that are largely devoid of architectural elements such as solid walls without glazing, loading docks, high fencing and/or service cabinetry)
- Maximising the opportunity for passive surveillance at both Ground Floor (and potential levels above) through high levels of glazing, low levels of solidity and deliberate siting of 'active' uses behind (commercial floor space, apartment habitable rooms and/or balconies etc.)

- Ensuring that the design of future public open space and any building that interfaces onto it does not result in 'places of entrapment', such as building insets or alcoves in which people and activities can occur without being surveyed.
- Simple, fundamental design mechanisms, such as providing for clear, direct sightlines throughout the precinct and providing for adequate lighting throughout the night.

The mix of uses surrounding any future public open space within the Willis Street Precinct and their specific operating hours can also be critical to achieving 'around the clock' activation of the broader Willis Street Precinct itself. For example, uses such as offices and community centres tend to be most active during weekday working hours (9am to 5pm), and uses such as bakeries, cafes and restaurants tend to be most active during morning, midday and evening meal times. Residential uses (such as apartments) tend to be most active after work hours or on weekends, as are gymnasiums or outdoor workout equipment.

Careful consideration of the potential for a mix of uses within and around the Willis Street Precinct (that could potentially complement a future community hub on site) can have a dramatic effect on the achievement of 'around the clock' activation and safety within any future on-site public open space within the Willis Street Precinct itself.

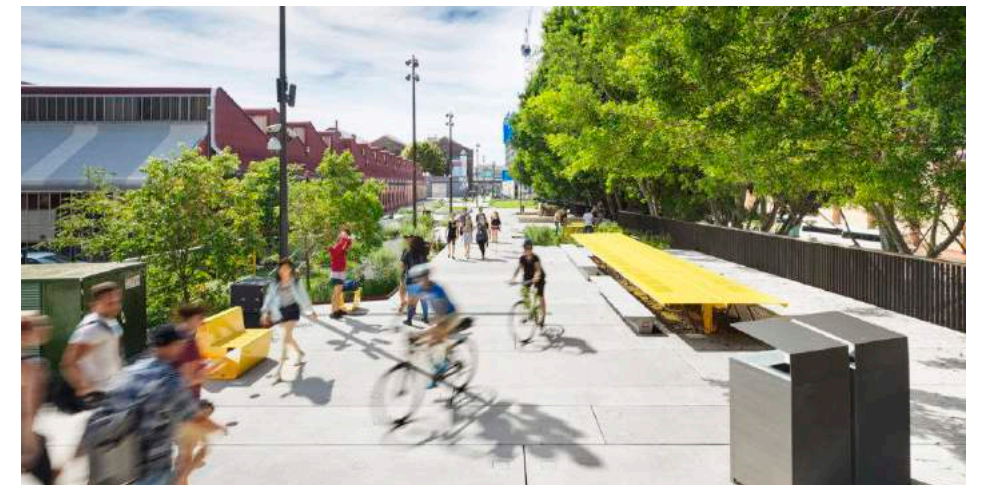


Figure 19 - Various photos.
Image credit (clockwise from top):
ASPECT Studios, Lat Studios (balance)





5. Full, public basement car parking should be provided. Any basement car parking should be designed to be adaptable in the future.

Why is this required?

The Willis Street Precinct is strategically located to provide public car parking to the benefit of a broad cross-section of the community, including patrons of existing on-site community uses, patrons of Hampton Street shops and services, and patrons of the Hampton Train Station. This is a key community function of the precinct, but it is currently the predominant function of the precinct. Pursuing basement car parking will retain this key function in a way that also 'unlocks' the potential for a greater range of other public uses to co-exist within the Precinct, as it allows for other land uses to spatially co-exist with car parking within the Precinct. Any basement car parking must be designed to be adaptable for other potential uses in the future in the event of changes in driverless car technologies, and should also be cognisant of the design implications of other urban design principles (such as retaining significant existing vegetation within the Precinct).

Where does this come from?

Precedent benchmarking, site analysis and Guideline 2.7 and Guideline 2.8 of the Victorian Urban Design Guidelines.

What could this look like in the Willis Street Precinct?

Basement car parking within the Willis Street Precinct will allow for the community to continue to use the precinct for its current, predominant purpose of car parking in a way that will allow for a range of other uses to occur on site – including a community hub with appurtenant integrated public open space.

There is a certain design logic to providing for the opportunity for basement car parking closer toward Willis Street, as it will be more accessible from the higher-order roads surrounding the Willis Street Precinct (both Hampton Street and Willis Street) and avoid the need for private vehicles to travel deep into the precinct itself along either Koolkuna Lane and/or Willis Lane. Although it will likely mean that retention of existing vegetation within the existing community hub and playhouse at 12-14 Willis Street will not be possible (due to the need to excavate for basement car parking, including excavation of existing root systems of established trees on these properties), siting basement car parking toward Willis Street will likely allow for the retention of existing canopy trees at the interface of Willis Street Precinct to Koolkuna Lane. Refer right.

The design of any basement car park should be adaptable and futureproof, and be readily able to be converted to potential other alternative uses in the event that car parking within public land is no longer required. This can be achieved by making use of slightly higher floor-to-floor heights for any basement car park level (ideally in the order of 4m in height) to enable future adaptation for alternative non-residential uses in the future, semi-basement car parking where appropriate, and/or deigning of at-grade public spaces to allow for potential light court conversion in the future. Future potential uses for basement carparking could include subterranean community uses (like the subterranean Council library explored in the Green Square precedent example), internally-illuminated sporting courts, office spaces or similar.

Figure 20 - Various photos. Image credit (clockwise from top left): Architecture AU, Lat Studios (balance)



Figure 21 - Potential basement siting (pink) and tree retention (green) zones



6. Retain and strengthen existing transport interchange functions.

Why is this required?

A key design challenge for public open spaces is the need to deliver 'destinations,' rather than simply 'another park.' A key part of the destination that is the Willis Street Precinct is the role that the precinct plays as a locally-significant transport interchange, in which arrivals to Hampton via the Hampton Train Station are able to shift transport modes to buses, bicycles or simply walking. This should be retained within any future design of the Willis Street Precinct, which will work to contribute vitality and activity into any future public open space design.

Where does this come from?

Precinct analysis, and Section 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 of the Victorian Urban Design Guidelines.

What could this look like in the Willis Street Precinct?

The current transport interchange function of the broader Willis Street Precinct occurs south of the precinct itself (VicTrack land), and stems from the manner in which patrons of the Hampton Train Station are able to conveniently transition between train services and other transport mode (particularly buses) in convenient proximity to the train station itself. As the approved multi-level residential development of this land begins to take shape, the Willis Street Precinct represents an ideal opportunity to capture and retain this function as part of the design of any future public open space on site. The design benefit of doing so is the ability to capture activity within the south of the Precinct, and – in doing so – provide for an additional, specific activity-generating function within full diversity of potential uses and activities that could occur within the Willis Street Precinct. It can also combine with the Hampton Train Station more broadly to

preserve a 'southern anchor' of activity within the Willis Street Precinct, in a way that integrates with any proposed community hub (within the balance of the precinct) and any pedestrian arrivals from Hampton Street (within the north of the precinct) to create the capacity for full activity and pedestrian movement throughout the majority of the Precinct.

With specific respect to bus transport, the design of any future specific bus interchange on site need not dominate or occupy a significant portion of any future public open space on site. Simple design mechanisms – such as a linear indented 'bus bay' along either Koolkuna Lane (northern edge of Koolkuna Lane or Willis Lane (western edge) with tactile 'shared space' surface treatments, clear sightlines and low vehicle speeds – are one way of providing for safe, low-disruption public transport vehicle movements through the Precinct in a manner that does not detract from pedestrian primacy.

With specific respect to cycling and walking, the transport interchange function and potential for the Willis Street Precinct can be reinforced by simply providing relevant infrastructure throughout the precinct, including cycling hoops, cycling storage cages, wayfinding signage, seating and pedestrian water fountains.

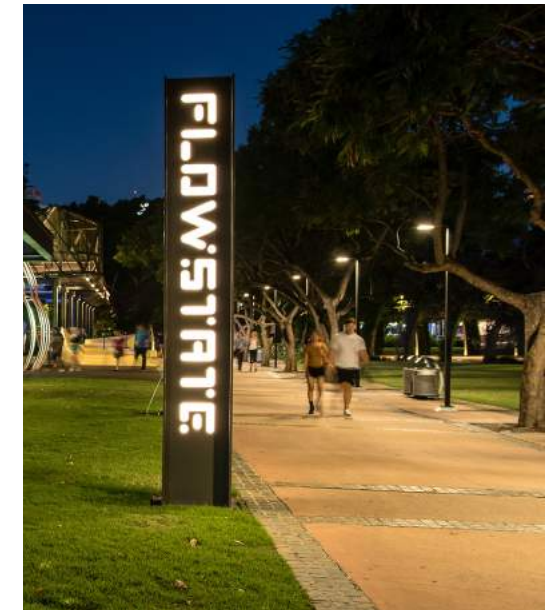


Figure 22 - Various photos.
Image credit (clockwise from top left):
Cepzed, Lat Studios, Lat Studios,
Urbanized, Urbanized





7. Retain significant vegetation within the Willis Street Precinct where practical to do so. Supplement retained vegetation with new species appropriate to Hampton's coastal context.

Why is this required?

Leafy, shaded places promote pedestrian activity, provide significant amenity, assist significantly with sustainability, contribute to the 'sense of place', and provide for habitat and biodiversity. They also provide 'relief for the eyes' in urban environments, assist with microclimate moderation and can often be used to 'screen' unsightly views or interfaces. The Willis Street Precinct has a number of significant established canopy trees that should be retained where practical and feasible to do so, and supplemented with a range of coastal species appropriate to the climate, image and coastal location of Hampton.

Where does this come from?

Precinct analysis, and Section 6.3 of the Victorian Urban Design Guidelines.

What could this look like in the Willis Street Precinct?

A key design asset of the Willis Street Precinct is the presence of a number of large, established canopy trees throughout, particularly within the rear of the existing community and playhouse buildings (12-20 Willis Street, Hampton) and at the southern interface of the Precinct to Koolkuna Lane. Whilst full retention of all existing canopy trees throughout the Precinct would certainly assist in providing for a landscaped and leafy public open space and community hub offering, the reality is that other design realities (such as basement car parking and the need to construct new community hub buildings) will make full retention of every existing significant tree difficult. Therefore, where possible and feasible to do so, as many canopy tree species within the Willis Street Precinct should be retained as possible, and will likely be best achieved through retention of many (if not all) of the existing canopy trees at the Precincts southern interface to Koolkuna Lane.

Retained trees can also be supplemented by new canopy tree species throughout the site, in in raised planter beds or similar. This is particularly so within the north of the Willis Street Precinct, where they could be potentially capable of growing to a height sufficient to provide for dappled shade and solar relief within any future public open space during the warmer months.

Bayside Council have also identified a range of coastal-appropriate tree species that should ultimately be used in the landscape program of any future public open space, and a selection of these are shown right in a potential 'landscape palette'. It is important to use context-appropriate planting such as these for a number of reasons, including biodiversity, local habitat, and the reinforcement of a 'sense of place' within Hampton and the Bayside region more broadly as a location distinct from others within both Melbourne and Victoria.



Figure 23 - Various locally-appropriate tree species examples (all images credited to Lat Studios). The diagram in the bottom right shows potential basement and tree root protection zones in pink and green respectively.



8. Design for universal access, for all ages and abilities.

Why is this required?

The Hampton and broader Bayside community is diverse and varied, and is comprised of different people with different backgrounds and different needs. In the same way that any future community hub on site will be designed to cater for a broad diversity of the local Hampton and Bayside community, so too should design of any future open space within the Willis Street Precinct. It needs to be designed to be inclusive and cater for people of all abilities and ages.

Where does this come from?

Section 3.1 of the Victorian Urban Design Guidelines.

What could this look like in the Willis Street Precinct?

Universal access is about designing to ensure that spaces are accessible by all, including people of different abilities and ages. It seeks to limit stairs where possible, and provide for ramps, gentle gradients, lifts and other mechanisms to ensure that the full diversity of a community can utilise a public open space and community facility. As applied to the Willis Street Precinct, designing for universal access is enhanced by the fact that the precinct does not have a significant slope and does not have terrain that makes access throughout the Precinct potentially difficult, and means that large amounts of stairing or ramping are likely not required to provide access through the precinct and any future public open space. It allows any design to cater for a broad cross section of the community without the need for overt ramps, lifts and stairs.

The design of any public open space within the Willis Street Precinct should ensure that that floor levels align with the Finished Floor Level of the future community hub use, and provide for a range of mechanisms – including stairs, lifts and potentially travelators – to facilitate access between any potential future basement car park and at-grade public open space and/or community hub.

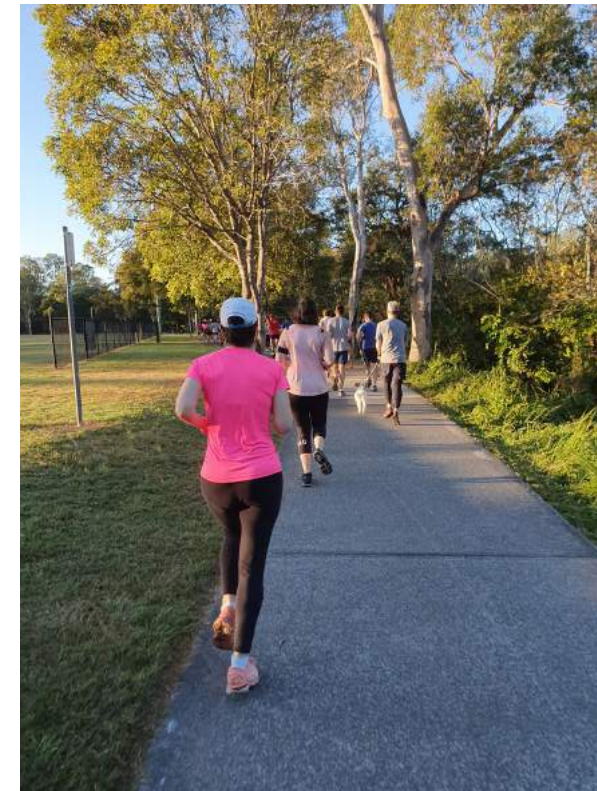


Figure 24 - Various photos.
All images credited to Lat Studios.





9. Provide for a palette of high quality, enduring materials and surface treatments.

Why is this required?

The quality of materials and textures within a public open space is directly related to its success and longevity. Enduring, high quality materials that are robust, rich and tactile are far better suited to withstanding the rigours of public functions than low-quality materials, and work to assist in creating a memorable, distinctive and well-designed public environment. They are also more financially sustainable in the long term, too, as they require less replacement and less ongoing capital investment for maintenance.

Where does this come from?

The 'Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast' document (DELWP, 2020), and Guideline 6.1 and Guideline 6.2 of the Victorian Urban Design Guidelines.

What could this look like in the Willis Street Precinct?

There are many ways to achieve high quality materials and surface treatments within the Willis Street Precinct, including through the specific type of material used as well as its specific application within the ultimate design of any public open space. Stonework, cobblestones, paving and tactile surface treatments make for suitable ground surface treatments in civic public open spaces, with materials such as blockwork, bricks and sheet metal often being appropriate for seating, edging and feature elements. Timber decking, grasscrete and stepping stones often add interest and excitement to 'softer' areas of a public open space (such as landscaped pockets).

The ultimate design of any public open space could also contemplate the role of surface treatments in contributing to the achievement of positioning both Willis Lane and Koolkuna Lane as shared spaces, as simple design mechanisms – such as different shades of the same surface material to designate pedestrian areas with shared space areas – help provide legibility to a public space in a way that 'blurs the distinction' between pedestrian and vehicle and create the perception of a larger public environment.

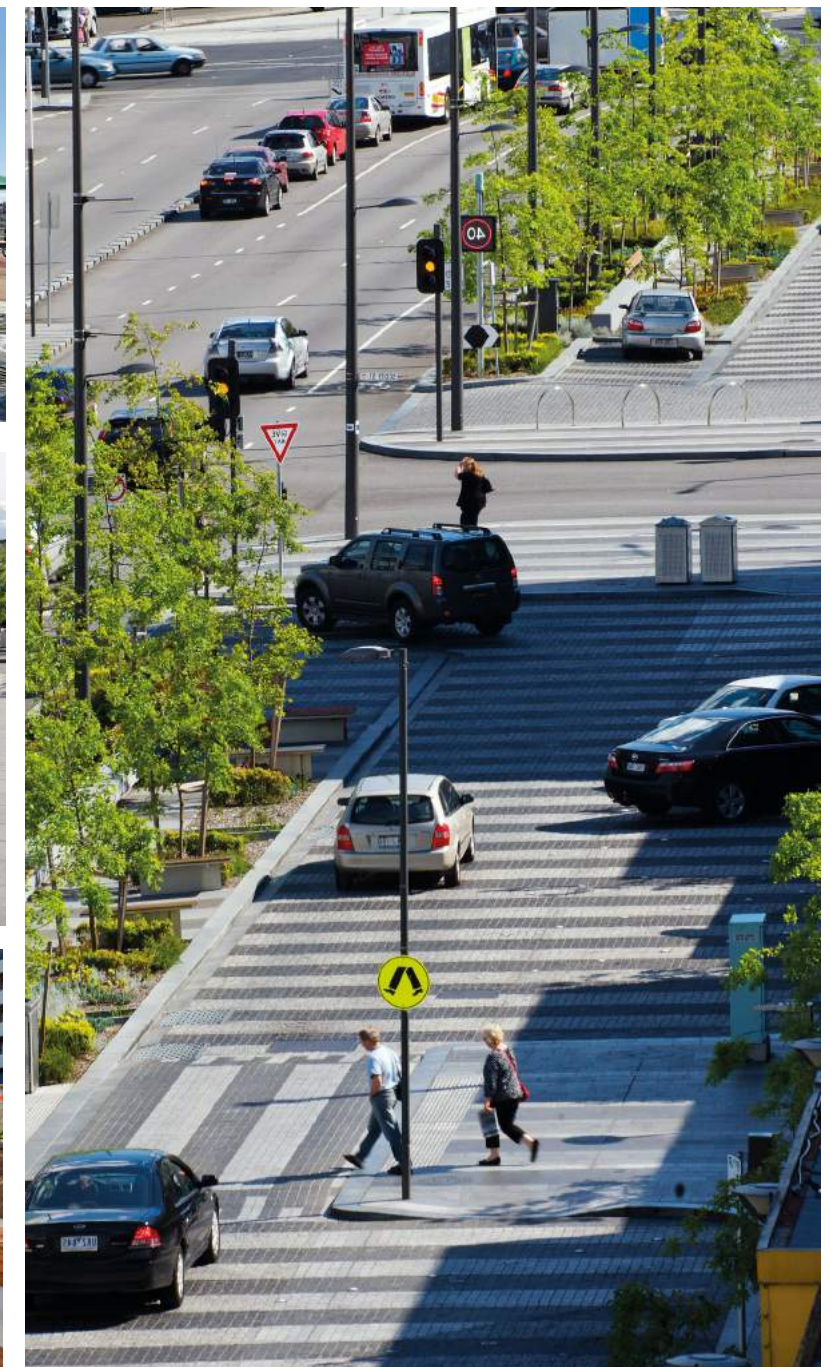


Figure 25 - Various photos.
All images credited to Lat Studios.



10. Embed sustainability into the design of any future community use and public open space function.

Why is this required?

It is important that public open spaces are sustainable environmentally, socially and financially. Sustainable public open spaces can be passively sustainable (through careful selection of materials and considered design) and actively sustainable (including through solar panels, rainwater tanks, community vegetable gardens, and activities designed to sustain existing and new community social connections).

Where does this come from?

Clause 21.05 and Clause 22.08 of the Bayside Planning Scheme.

What could this look like in the Willis Street Precinct?

There are many potential solutions to achieve sustainable design within the Willis Street Precinct, both within any future community hub building and within the design of any future public open space itself. This includes (but is not limited to) water swales, stormwater capture, use of recycled materials, green roofs, solar panels, wind sockets and wind turbines, double-glazing, solar-powered lighting, electric vehicle charging stations, bicycle facilities and infrastructure, community 'swap points' and active sustainable community uses as part of the ultimate program of any future community hub building.



Figure 26 - Various photos.
Image credit (clockwise from top left):
Pinterest, Platiosolar, Inhabitat,
Indian Concrete Journal



4.2 Built Form and Use Design Principles

Whilst these identified urban design principles pertain to the design of an external future public open space within the Willis Street Precinct, it is also important to consider the relationship between potential uses and built form within the Willis Street Precinct, too. This is particularly so given the strategic location of the Willis Street Precinct within the Hampton Major Activity Centre – combined with its physical attributes (including large size, general lack of slope and multiple options for vehicle access) – make it an ideal candidate for other forms of use that complement and stand in addition to a community hub on site.

Potential complimentary uses could include the inclusion of a supermarket on site, the use of the site for office development, or the use of the site for housing (such as ‘shoptop’ apartments). The location and design of each will have urban design implications on the function and experience of the Willis Street Precinct as a whole, and the following high-level urban design principles begin to provide guidance on location and design of each potential scenario.

Supermarket

Typically speaking, the floorplate of a supermarket depends on the specific operator as well as the scale of the supermarket itself. ‘Full line’ supermarkets tend to have a floorplate size in the order of 3,000-3,500sqm, whilst ‘mini-major’ supermarkets (or smaller specific operators, such as ALDI) tend to have a floorplate size in the order of 1,500-1,800sqm. This distinction alone positions certain parts of the Willis Street Precinct as better-placed than others in accommodating a potential supermarket floorplate.

Any specific location of a potential supermarket within the Willis Street Precinct also creates the need to consider a range of other urban design principles, too, to ensure that a potential supermarket appropriately integrates with other potential uses within the Precinct (including a future community hub), the design of any future public open space, and the nuances of each of the external interfaces of the Precinct itself.

In response, the following high-level urban design principles have been identified to help inform the siting and location of a potential supermarket within the Willis Street Precinct. They do not supersede the earlier urban design principles for public open space design within the Precinct, but apply specifically to the potential for a supermarket to ensure that it does not jeopardise the capacity and ability of the Precinct to provide for other uses and meaningful community benefit.

1. Any new at-grade supermarket within the Willis Street Precinct should be no more than 2,000sqm in area (ie. a ‘mini major’). The capacity of the Willis Street Precinct to accommodate a full-line supermarket floorplate at-grade is limited, and would result in the general inability of the precinct to provide for other types of meaningful community uses (such as a public open space) due to the dimensions and size of the Precinct itself. A larger-floorplate supermarket in proximity to the Precinct could potentially be achieved by expanding the existing Woolworths supermarket at 363 Hampton Road northward toward Willis Street by occupying the existing at-grade car park at 20-22 Willis Street.

2. Any new supermarket should be sited toward Willis Street. Although there are many aspects of the Willis Street Precinct that could potentially accommodate a restricted supermarket floorplate, the Precinct’s Willis Street interface is the most desirable location from an urban design perspective as it will be visible from Hampton Street, will be most accessible by vehicles (and avoid the need for vehicles to travel down Willis Lane and/or Koolkuna Lane to access the use), will be well-placed to contribute to a comfortable microclimate condition within the balance of the Precinct, and will avoid the need for full vegetation removal within the Willis Street Precinct itself (including at it’s interface to Koolkuna Lane). From a statutory planning perspective, the current zoning provisions of all Willis-Street fronting properties within the Willis Street Precinct both facilitate the possibility of a supermarket in each location without the need for rezoning (C1Z and RGZ).

3. Vehicle parking should be obscured from view from the public realm, either by way of a basement car park or shop-top parking. The design of any supermarket should either make use of land within the Willis Street Precinct already identified as being suitable for basement car parking. There is also potential for rooftop car parking to be utilised above any proposed supermarket in-principle, provided it is screened from view by active shoptop uses (offices or residences). Access and egress to either option should be from Willis Street so as to avoid high levels of vehicle movements occurring deep within the Precinct.

4. Requisite loading bays should be located to Willis Street, as far from Hampton Street as practical. The most logical location for requisite truck loading bays for any potential supermarket would be to Willis Street, ideally at a point as far as practical from Hampton Street (such as the playhouse at 12 Willis Street). Although street-fronting, such a location avoids the need for truck loading infrastructure to interface with the balance of the Willis Street Precinct, and avoids the need for trucks to be driven deep within the precinct itself. This in turn maximises the availability for meaningful interfaces to any future community hub and public open space and maximises the relationship between any potential supermarket and pedestrians emanating from Hampton Street further east.

5. The Ground Floor Program of any supermarket should prioritise activation to the Willis Street Precinct over Willis Street itself. Although Willis Street is a ‘proper’ streetscape, it is largely a residentially-zoned ‘side street’ to the broader Hampton Street spine of the Hampton Major Activity Centre. It is also located at the edge of the C1Z-zoned portion of the Activity Centre itself. Whilst it would be desirable to activate all public realm interfaces, there is a hierarchy of interface importance from an urban design perspective and accordingly it would be more logical to prioritise the Ground Floor activation of Willis Lane and any southern adjoining public open space over Willis Street itself. This can be achieved through full height glazing at Ground Floor free from ‘stickers’ or other supermarket advertising paraphernalia, with clearly legible and distinct pedestrian entrances to each.

Office

As a typology, offices are relatively flexible land uses in that they have very different requirements for internal amenity compared to apartments and other potential uses. For example, they are able to be designed with deeper floorplates (which provides flexibility for siting and floorplate dimensions), do not require balconies, and typically concentrate amenities within a central location of each floorplate (such as bathrooms). They are effective public realm ‘activators’ at both the Ground Floor or within upper levels of development during operational hours.

Again, the following high-level urban design principles have been identified to help inform the siting and location of potential office floorspace within the Willis Street Precinct. They again do not supersede the earlier urban design principles for public open space design within the Precinct, but apply specifically to the potential for office uses on site to ensure that they do not jeopardise the capacity and ability of the Precinct to provide for a principal community hub use and meaningful community benefit.

1. The preferred location for any office use within the Willis Street Precinct is within the upper levels of any future development. Although office uses can provide for effective Ground Floor activation of the public realm, there is significant flexibility in the design and metrics of their floorplates. For this reason, they can be designed to ‘match’ the floorplate of any Ground Floor community use with ease, and can be more-easily designed to correlate with the internal access requirements of a broader building footprint (including lift cores from potential basement levels below). By locating office uses within the upper levels of any community hub development on site, there will be a stronger relationship between any proposed Ground Floor community hub use and external public open space, which enhances the principal community use and intent of the Precinct’s design as a whole.

2. Any new office should be designed to provide for active interfaces to the surrounding public realm whilst avoiding unreasonable overlooking of the private. As with any upper-level use within the Willis Street Precinct, it is important to consider the design of external facades and the uses behind them so as to best maximise activation and passive surveillance of the public realm whilst also reducing overlooking of the private. If upper level office uses are proposed, they should be designed to interface to Willis Street, Willis Lane, Koolkuna Lane and any future public open space with highly glazed and active interfaces, and incorporate design mechanisms (such as affixed screening or benign walls) to avoid overlooking to adjoining residential sensitivities.

3. Office vehicle parking should be co-located within any basement car park. The design of any office use on site should ideally consider its location relative to land within the Willis Street Precinct that is identified as being suitable for basement car parking, and provide for co-located vehicle parking within the basement accordingly. This will most likely mean that potential office space within the Willis Street Precinct will be massed toward Willis Street, but the ultimate design of any basement car park (including its extent) and lift core access will likely be the ultimate determinant.

4. Consider ESD mechanisms in the design of any future office use on site. ESD (environmentally sustainable design) mechanisms are important for office uses for a number of reasons, not least of all that office spaces tend to be deeper and larger than residential (and therefore have a greater reliance on mechanical heating/cooling/ventilation and electrical lighting) and make greater use of glazing (which affects internal microclimates). ESD mechanisms can include measures such as green roofs atop any office building, solar panels, passive heating and cooling mechanisms and the use of recycled materials in construction, amongst others.

Residential

The Willis Street Precinct is an ideal candidate for residential intensification owing to its convenient proximity to the Principal Public Transportation Network (Hampton Station), services and amenities within the Hampton Street Major Activity Centre, and proximity to outdoor recreation and amenity. In many ways, this principle is only reflected by the existing apartment developments in proximity to the Precinct, including the emerging apartment developments currently under construction on the southern side of Koolkuna Lane. Residential uses are effective activators and passive surveyors of the public realm, as they provide vitality to public spaces at hours of the day when other uses do not (such as early morning or evening, and on weekends).

Many of the high-level urban design principles that have been identified for office uses equally apply to residential uses, with a small number of exceptions. Firstly, residential uses should only be provided at upper levels of any future development, as they are not effective activators of the Ground Floor plane due to the need for privacy for internal residents. Secondly, the design of any floorplate for residential uses will require greater finesse and consideration than office spaces as Victoria’s Better Apartment Design Standards and the Australian Building Code require greater consideration of outlook, ventilation, corridor lengths, escape distances, internal room dimensions, balcony dimensions and dwelling orientation (amongst others). These types of considerations have implications on the dimensions and design of upper-level residential floorplates whose relationship to any Ground Floor community hub use will require careful consideration.



Figure 27 - Indicative full-line supermarket floorplate impact within the WillisStreet Precinct (3,500msqm)

5.1 Concept Plan

Having developed a number of high-level urban design principles based on an urban design analysis of the Willis Street Precinct as well as relevant best-practice examples/ precedents, the following concept plan begins to introduce a design concept of how future public open space may look within the Willis Street Precinct.

As the concept plan is focused on the potential design of a future public open space, it is fundamentally concerned with the ‘spaces between’ existing and potential future built form on site, and does not articulate a design for future built form on site per se. That is, it does not design the specifics of what a future co-located community hub with potential complementary uses (office, residential etc.) may look like on site, nor the massing and scale of any ultimate building form.

The concept plan that follows is based on the following key assumptions:

- The former Scout Hall at 6 Willis Street, Hampton, will not form part of a future community hub development nor form part of the broader future public open space within the Willis Street Precinct itself. It is assumed that the highest and best use of this portion of the Willis Street Precinct lies elsewhere for the purpose of this concept plan.
- The building footprint for a co-located community hub development on the balance of the Willis Street Precinct is an assumption driven primarily by the urban design principles identified for the public open space component of the site (such as tree retention, amongst others). It is not a resolved or dimensioned floorplate that takes into account community hub floorspace requirements or market realities of potential alternative highest-and-best-uses that would complement a community hub development, or their floorspace requirements.
- In the same vein, the height and scale of the assumed community hub development has not been resolved in detail. Whilst it is assumed that this would be consistent with the preferred height controls of DDO21 of the Bayside Planning Scheme, the design of the public open space has not had regard to overshadowing impacts of any potential height and massing of the community hub.
- Assumptions have been made around traffic and vehicle realties, including (but not limited to) the ability to relegate existing on-site parking below ground, the ability to alter vehicle access arrangements through both Koolkuna Lane and Willis Lane (including two-way access along a portion of Koolkuna Lane, and converting Willis Lane to one way), and the ability to facilitate loading of the adjoining Woolworths supermarket (363 Hampton Street) within the design of the Willis Street precinct itself.



Figure 28 - Indicative public open space concept plan. The inset shows indicative basement siting and tree root protection zones.
Image credit - Place Design Group (top), Lat Studios (balance)

It responds to identified urban design principles through the following specific design mechanisms:

- **1. Complement any future Willis Street Precinct community hub with a public open space that is predominantly civic in function:** The design of the concept plan predominantly provides for a level, at grade area within the north that serves as a 'forecourt' to the adjoining community hub footprint. The specific design makes use of a mix of hard-paved and grassed public open space that would be programmable for functions and events.
- **2. Provide for a mix of static, transient, active and passive spaces within the design of future public open space:** In addition to the 'forecourt' area of the public open space design, a range of other activities – including playground, pathways, seating areas and a 'market garden' space within the north-east of the precinct – have been incorporated into the design.
- **3. The design of any future open space should carefully consider existing and future patterns of solar access:** The siting of the primary public open space element responds to the year-round shadow analysis of the Willis Street Precinct that confirmed certain locations are better suited than others for solar access – including areas immediately west of Willis Lane, and within the north-east of the Precinct itself.
- **4. Create enhanced, safe and publicly-accessible connections through the Willis Street Precinct at all times of day:** The public open space concept has been designed to retain sightlines into and from the Willis Street Precinct from the Hampton Street 'spine' of the Activity Centre within the north-east of the site, and facilitates open and direct viewsheds within the balance. In particular, the siting of public open space and potential built form within the Willis Street Precinct creates a sense of openness and avoids an overt sense of enclosure in both Willis Lane and Koolkuna Lane.
- **5. Full, public basement car park should be provided. Any basement car park should be designed to be adaptable in the future:** Full basement car park is provided, directly accessible from both Willis Street and Koolkuna Lane. The design of the concept plan introduces indicative locations for future light-wells to provide amenity and daylight into the basement level so as to protect it's potential adaptability into a suitable subterranean use in the future.
- **6. Retain and strengthen existing transport interchange functions:** The design of the public open space concept plan retains an at-grade indented bus interchange function at the south of the subject site, where it is closest to the Hampton Train Station and where its static function will benefit from the dappled shade provided by retained vegetation.
- **7. Retain significant vegetation within the Willis Street Precinct where practical to do so. Supplement retained vegetation with new species appropriate to the site's coastal context:** The concept plan seeks to site basement car parking within the north of the Willis Street Precinct. Although this will necessitate removal of existing vegetation within the Hampton Community Centre and Children's Playhouse, it will allow for retention of existing native canopy vegetation within the south of the Willis Street Precinct. The public open space concept plan supplements retained vegetation with species derived from Bayside Council's register of appropriate local species.
- **8. Design for universal access, for all ages and abilities:** No aspect of the proposed public open space concept plan makes use of stairing. A range of different functions and 'mini uses' within the concept – including children's playground – provides diversity and universal appeal to a broad range of ages and sections of the local Bayside and Hampton community.
- **9. Provide for a palette of high quality, enduring materials and surface treatments:** The public open space concept plan makes use of high quality, tactile pavement and surface treatments for primary pedestrian spaces (pavers, stonework etc), and supplements these with 'shared space' material treatments for Willis Lane (and a small indent for the loading requirements of the Woolworths Supermarket) to help define the hierarchy of pedestrian and vehicle movement throughout the precinct.
- **10. Embed sustainability into the design of any future community use and public open space function:** The public open space concept plan makes use of landscaping and adaptable basement levels to respond to ESD imperatives, which can be supplemented by more detailed mechanisms in any 'detailed design' stage (water swales, water sensitive urban design mechanisms, use of sustainable materials etc.)

The concept plan is indicative only for the purpose of showing one potential design solution for future public open space within the Willis Street Precinct. It is indicative only, and is therefore not the only possible design solution.

As a large portion of the Hampton Major Activity Centre, the Willis Street Precinct has long been strategically identified as an ideal candidate for public open space provision and community uses by myriad strategic planning documents. The purpose of this document is to therefore build upon this and begin to understand the potential of the precinct to provide for future community uses and public open space from an urban design perspective.

By identifying overarching urban design principles based on precinct analysis and an analysis of comparable best-practice precedents and public open space benchmarks, the urban design principles and public open space concept within this document provide relevant design guidance regarding the 'look and feel' of the form and function of a future public open space within the Willis Street Precinct itself.

As the design future of the Willis Street Precinct begins to evolve and 'take shape,' the design detail of future public open space (and surrounding on-site uses) should have regard to the principles and design direction of this document so as to achieve a vibrant, well-designed focal point for the Hampton and broader Bayside community.



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