

Department of Planning and Environment


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State Environmental Planning Policy (Church Street North Precinct)

Finalisation Report

December 2023



Acknowledgement of Country

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State Environmental Planning Policy (Church Street North Precinct)

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More information

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Executive Summary

In 2022, the department finalised a planning proposal for the Parramatta Central Business District (CBD) and did not support the proposed controls for land north of the river. A Place Strategy was initially intended to be prepared to guide future planning in this area. In light of the evolving housing crisis, and in response to a request from City of Parramatta Council, the department has instead prepared a rezoning to provide certainty and accelerate housing delivery along the Parramatta Light Rail corridor.

This report outlines amendments to the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023 (PLEP 2023) through a self-repealing State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP), referred to as SEPP (Church Street North Precinct) 2023. The SEPP amends the controls for a section of the Parramatta CBD north of the Parramatta River, as shown in **Figure 1**.

The amendments to the planning controls relate to Part 5 and Part 7 of the PLEP 2023, and the associated Height of Buildings, Floor Space Ratio, Special Provisions Area, Active Frontages, Sun Access Protection, Land Zoning, and Land Reservation Acquisition maps.

Given the previous exhibition of the Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal (CBD PP), exhibition of the SEPP was determined not to be necessary on the basis that:

- the resulting built form enabled by the SEPP is intended to be of less environmental impact than was proposed by the exhibited CBD PP; and
- the SEPP reflects feedback received on the CBD PP through the previous exhibition, and through early engagement on a Place Strategy for the North Parramatta.

This report provides a discussion of relevant matters in finalising the SEPP.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Precinct

The Church Street North Precinct (the precinct) is part of the Parramatta CBD located north of the Parramatta River. The precinct covers the Church Street corridor between the river and Albert Street, and between O’Connell and Wilde Avenue before tapering in north, refer to Figure 1. The precinct is on the land of the Burramattagal people, a clan of the Dharug, who have a close connection to the river.

Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1, due to open in 2024, runs the length of Church Street and will connect Westmead and Parramatta CBD before continuing to Carlingford. The Fennell Street and Prince Alfred Square light rail stations are centrally located within the precinct and will provide improved connections to employment, education and expanded services. The light rail will also provide connection with heavy rail and metro in Parramatta and Westmead.

Existing development within the precinct is of mixed age, size and use. Commercial development is focused along Church Street and includes newer mixed use developments, historic single storey shopfronts and some 1990s smaller scale office buildings.

The precinct includes several heritage items, with additional items and conservation areas in the vicinity with varying levels of significance. Prince Alfred Square, a State heritage listed civic park, is recognised for its layered history and retention as one of the earliest formal parks. St Patrick’s Cathedral and context, including Murphy House, is also recognised as a State heritage item. Several locally significant items are also located within the precinct, including religious institutions, buildings used for commercial purposes and other structures.

Beyond the precinct’s boundary two conservation areas run along the west and east sides of the precinct, the North Parramatta and Sorrell Street Heritage Conservation Areas (HCA). These HCAs also contain local heritage items and two State heritage listed residences. Uses in the North Parramatta HCA are generally more commercial in nature compared to the residential character of the Sorrell Street HCA. Further to the east and north is a mix of lower scale residential uses including walk up apartments typically three or four storeys with other residential types dispersed throughout including town houses and single detached dwellings.

To the west of the precinct is the Parramatta Female Factory and Institutions Precinct, listed on the national heritage list and is proposed as a world heritage listing. Old Government House and the

Government Domain in Parramatta Park to the southwest of the precinct form part of a World Heritage listing for convict sites across Australia.

The precinct houses community facilities and areas of open space including the Riverside Theatres, Parramatta Community College, and Prince Alfred Square, as well as a variety of health services and education opportunities (tertiary, secondary and primary). In the wider Parramatta CBD, outside of the precinct, additional facilities such as Parramatta Library at PHIVE, Parramatta Park, Western Sydney University, Westmead Hospital and a range of recreation facilities and public parks including Belmore Park are within a short distance. Significant cultural attractors lay on the edge of the precinct including Western Sydney Stadium and the Powerhouse Parramatta (MAAS), due to open in 2025.



Figure 1 | Map of the Church Street Precinct (source: Department of Planning and Environment, November 2023)

1.2 Strategic Context

The precinct sits within the strategic context of the Greater Sydney Region Plan and Central City District Plan. The precinct is a key part of Parramatta, sitting within the outer ring of the city’s central business district (CBD).

1.2.1 Greater Sydney Region Plan and Central City District Plan

The Greater Sydney Region Plan (Region Plan) sets the planning framework for the five districts which make up the Greater Sydney Region. It establishes a 40-year vision to 2056 for Greater Sydney to be a metropolis of three cities, enabling most people in Greater Sydney to commute to their nearest city within 30 minutes. Greater Parramatta is identified as the Central River City.

The Central City District Plan (District Plan) provides a guide for implementing the Region Plan at a district level and acts as a bridge between regional and local planning. The District Plan establishes planning priorities and actions to guide planning in the precinct. This includes priorities for the provision of housing supply, choice and affordability with access to jobs, services and public transport (Planning Priority C5) and creating and renewing great places and local centres, together with respecting the District's heritage (Planning Priority C6). The District Plan also supports the emergence of the Parramatta CBD *“as a powerhouse of new administrative, business services, judicial and educational jobs, with Parramatta Square at its heart and Western Sydney University as its knowledge-producing engine”*.

1.2.2 Local Strategic Planning Statement and Local Housing Strategy

Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) provides strategic direction on a 20-year vision for the City of Parramatta. The LSPS sets out the priorities for employment, housing and infrastructure needs and aspirations for the local community. The LSPS concentrates employment growth within strategic centres and the Parramatta CBD where employees can access major transport infrastructure and other high-level facilities and services.

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) delves into further detail specific to the housing needs of the Local Government Area (LGA). The LHS includes analysis of the demographics for the future of the LGA and the housing needs this population will generate. Parramatta CBD will continue to play an important part in housing supply with the strategy identifying a priority to deliver housing in existing centres.

1.3 Background

Urban renewal of the precinct was originally proposed as part of the Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal (CBD PP). However, the changes proposed for the precinct were not supported as part of the finalisation of this proposal in May 2022 as outlined below.

1.3.1 Parramatta CBD Proposal

In July 2017 the City of Parramatta Council (Council) lodged a planning proposal for the CBD PP with the department. The CBD PP sought to establish a new planning framework to deliver the vision of Parramatta as the second and central CBD of Sydney through an expanded commercial core and increased commercial and residential floorspace. The area subject to the CDB PP is shown in **Figure 2**.

The CBD PP proposed a series of changes to planning controls in the CBD, including for the precinct, to facilitate greater density and height. The CBD PP also sought to introduce several new clauses to address specific constraints and place outcomes including sun access provisions, active frontage controls, environmental performance and flood considerations.

As part of the process for the CBD PP, public exhibition was held by Council from September to November 2020.

Summary of submissions and feedback

A total of 309 submissions were received during the public exhibition of the CBD PP.

In relation to the Church Street North precinct, the key issues raised in submissions focused on impacts on heritage. 42 submitters specifically referenced the heritage significance of the precinct, with 35 submitters requesting deferral and/or exclusion of the precinct from the CBD PP and that a precinct specific plan be prepared.

These submissions were concerned that the precinct contains a significant number of heritage items and that the proposed bulk and scale was not compatible with the context of the area, and would diminish heritage values, green streetscapes, amenity, and solar access and consequently its character. Agency submissions from Heritage NSW, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales branch) and the National Trust of Australia (Parramatta branch) also raised concerns about the precinct. These concerns noted that the proposed heights were inappropriate and disregarded the significant heritage items, conservation areas and significance of the Parramatta River. The submissions recommended additional solar access provisions should be introduced, existing controls should be retained, and that State Heritage Registered items should not be subject to increased height and density.

Finalisation of the Planning Proposal

Following exhibition of the CBD PP, Council considered the submissions received and made minor post exhibition changes to the proposal. Council resolved to proceed and submit the proposal for finalisation on 15 June 2021.

In its final assessment of the proposal, the department undertook modelling to comprehensively understand the intended built form outcomes. This analysis identified that the proposed scale of buildings had the potential to impact urban design outcomes, amenity, and character of several areas in the Parramatta CBD. The department had limited scope to include a more nuanced approach to address the key areas of concern. Accordingly, where these issues could not be resolved, sections of the proposal were removed, subject to further investigation including proposed controls for the precinct.

The amended CBD PP for the remaining areas was made as Parramatta Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2011 (Amendment No. 56) on 6 May 2022 with a deferred commencement and came into effect on 14 October 2022.

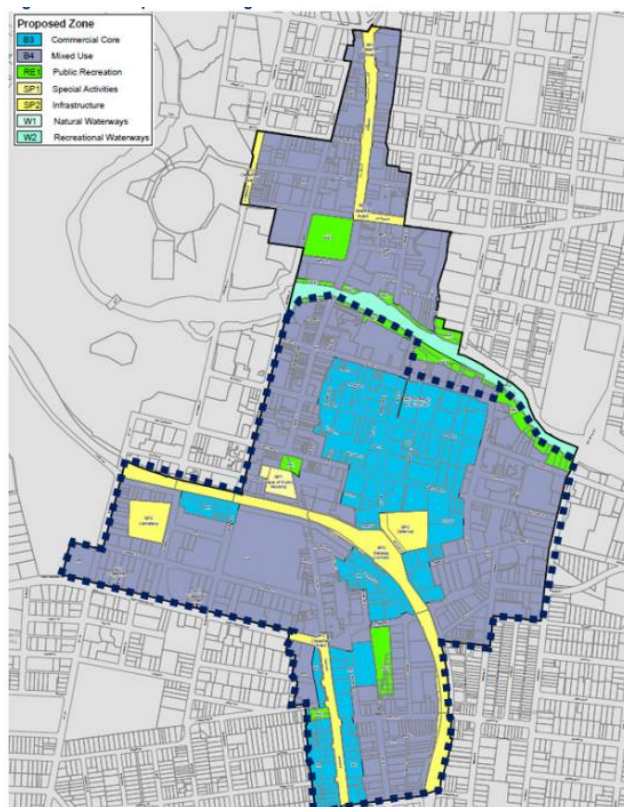


Figure 2 | Map of the Parramatta CBD, areas marked in blue dash proceeded as a part of the Parramatta CBD PP (source: Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal Finalisation Report, April 2022)

Local planning supporting the Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal

To support the implementation of the CBD PP, Council prepared and adopted the:

- Parramatta City Centre Development Control Plan which came into effect on 2 December 2022; and
- Parramatta City Centre Local Contributions (7.12) Plan which introduced increased levy rates of 5% of cost of development for mixed use and residential development, and 4% for other non-residential development. The contributions plan commenced on 14 October 2022.

Continuing to support the Parramatta CBD

Following the making of the CBD PP, Council and the department have reviewed the matters excluded from Amendment No. 56. Council resolved on 25 July 2022 to establish a path for strategic planning in the Church Street North precinct. Following consideration of options to progress, the department commenced preparation of a Place Strategy for an expanded precinct, which is now superseded by this rezoning as outlined in Section 2.

2 This Rezoning

In late 2022, the department commenced preparation of a Place Strategy intended to guide strategic planning for an expanded precinct in North Parramatta.

In response to the evolving housing crisis and at the request of Council, the NSW Government announced the state-led rezoning of Parramatta's Church Street North precinct (**Figure 1**). The precinct matches the area north of the Parramatta River that was removed from the Parramatta CBD PP in finalisation of the Parramatta LEP 2011 (Amendment No. 56).

This rezoning is supported by an urban design review of the controls proposed for the area in the CBD PP, as well as supporting heritage, Connecting with Country, social infrastructure, and urban economics and feasibility advice.

This rezoning will be implemented through a self-repealing SEPP (*SEPP (Church Street North Precinct) 2023*). This SEPP will amend the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023.

The commencement of *SEPP (Church Street North Precinct) 2023* will be deferred until 1 July 2024 to provide Council sufficient time to ensure an appropriate development control guide and local infrastructure framework is in place.

2.1 Consultation and Engagement

Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal

The CBD PP was publicly exhibited by Council from 21 September 2020 to 2 November 2020. Refer to **Section 1.3.1** above for further detail on the submissions received and key issues raised in relation to the precinct.

Place Strategy for North Parramatta

As part of early work on the proposed Place Strategy, the department consulted with key stakeholders through three workshops held in December 2022. Workshop invitations were extended to stakeholders from the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council, local business and community groups, property and business industry representative groups, community members who had made a submission on the CBD PP, businesses and developers with aspirations in the area, schools, City of Parramatta Councillors and the National Trust of Australia. 45 participants took part in the workshops.

Key topics raised in the workshops were:

- **Heritage:** Heritage should be preserved and celebrated, and heritage should be the focus of any planning for the precinct.
- **Development:** New development can revitalise the area and bring new housing supply, but should be sustainable and reasonable so that it protects heritage and green spaces.
- **Infrastructure and Facilities:** Improvements to local infrastructure to meet the current and future needs of the community.
- **Tourism and Investment:** The precinct should be positioned for tourism and investment, in a way which celebrates the area's cultural landscape and history.

This Rezoning

Consultation undertaken through the exhibition of the CBD PP and the early engagement for the Place Strategy has been extensive.

The feedback received through submissions on the CBD PP and engagement on the proposed North Parramatta Place Strategy has been considered in the review of the planning controls and in this finalisation report. These matters are addressed in the sections below.

It is noted that the resulting built form and planning controls will have a lesser environmental impact than what was proposed for the precinct in the exhibited CBD PP.

Given the above, an Explanation of Intended Effect and public exhibition of this proposal is not required.

Council has been consulted on the draft planning controls and feedback has been considered through finalisation of the proposal. It is noted that Council has resolved to support a set of planning controls as outlined in **Section 3.1**.

2.2 Summary of changes

This rezoning uses a self-repealing SEPP to amend the planning controls for the precinct in the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023. The new controls will facilitate renewal of the precinct including the opportunity for additional housing supply and to achieve high-quality urban form, public domain, and heritage protection. The proposed SEPP supports the growth of the Parramatta CBD as well as leverages investment in the Parramatta Light Rail.

The self-repealing SEPP will implement the following changes for the precinct:

- Amend the Height of Buildings for some sites to a mix of 10m, 12m, 18m, 28m, 34m, 40m, 49m, 57m and 63m
- Amend the Floor Space Ratio for some sites to 4.5:1 and 5:1

- Amend the Special Provisions Area map to remove the Church Street North precinct from 'Area A'. This change allows the following provisions within PLEP 2023 to apply to the precinct:
 - 7.3 Floor space ratio which sets a sliding scale for FSR where sites are under 1,800m²
 - 7.14 Competitive design process where the threshold for triggering a design competition becomes a building height of greater than 40 metres above existing ground level
 - 7.15 Additional building height and floor space ratio where there is opportunity for an additional 15% height and floor space ratio subject to a development being the winner of a competitive design process and exhibiting design excellence
 - 7.17 Car parking which sets maximum car parking rates at a reduced level for development
 - 7.22 Managing heritage impacts which introduces additional heritage considerations
 - 7.23 End of journey facilities requirements for commercial development
 - 7.24 Dual water systems requirements to support water supply and future proof development
 - 7.25 High performing building design which sets requirements for energy and water performance targets for commercial development and incentivises higher performance for residential development through additional bonus floor space
- Amend the Special Provisions Area map to identify parts of the Church Street North precinct as 'Area C' and 'Area D',
- Amend clause 7.22 Managing heritage impacts to apply this clause to land within 'Area C' and 'Area D' on the Special Provisions Area map and include the North Parramatta Heritage Conservation Area and the Sorrell Street Heritage Conservation Area as areas to be considered by the consent authority,
- Introduce a new provision allowing for additional height and floor space ratio for sites within 'Area C' on the Special Provisions Area map that meet certain criteria including a minimum site area and requires consideration of several matters including heritage, design and views,
- Amend the table within clause 7.3 Floor Space Ratio to include two new maximum permissible FSRs,
- Amend clause 7.7 Sun Access to introduce a solar plane access control to prevent additional overshadowing of the southern half of Prince Alfred Square and the southern foreshore of the Parramatta River between 11am-2pm on 21 June,

- Rezoning sites east of Villiers Street and north of Victoria Road from R2 Low Density Residential to MU1 Mixed Use noting this was proposed as part of the CBD PP,
- Amend the Land Reservation Acquisition map to include future Regional Cycleway and Local Road Widening within the Church Street North precinct noting this was proposed within the CBD PP,
- Amend Clause 5.1 Relevant Acquisition Authority to identify Council as the authority of the State to acquire the land associated with the Regional Cycleway and Local Road Widening,
- Amend the Active Frontages Map to include active frontages along Church Street, Victoria Road and the Riverside Theatre noting this was proposed within the CBD PP, and
- Amend the Floodplain Risk Management Map to include areas at risk in the Church Street North Precinct to apply the requirements of clause 7.11 Floodplain Risk Management as was proposed within the CBD PP.

The proposed SEPP also seeks to amend Parramatta LEP 2023 to address several housekeeping matters including:

- Clause 5.1 Relevant Acquisition Authority to identify Council as the authority of the State to acquire land currently marked as Regional Cycleway within the southern part of the Parramatta CBD (on land zoned MU1 Mixed Use and E2 Commercial Centre). It is noted this change was supported in the finalisation of the CBD PP,
- Clause 7.42 Aird Street and 12 Hassall Street, Parramatta to refer to the correct map being the Special Provisions Area map, and
- Clause 7.3 Floor Space Ratio to remove reference to 'Area 8' as this no longer exists on the Special Provisions Area map.

Further detail on the key changes proposed is set out in **Section 3**.

3 The Changes

3.1 Built form

Existing building heights and floor space ratios

The current planning controls for the precinct allow for a range floor space ratios (FSR) predominantly 2:1 and 3:1 along Church and Villiers Streets, 4:1 along the river and northern tip of the precinct, and 4.8:1 and 6:1 for specific sites subject to site specific planning proposals. Lower FSRs apply to the education precinct in the west of 0.6:1 and 0.5:1.

The maximum height of buildings (HOB) follows a similar approach, with 15m and 24m heights permitted along Church and Villiers Streets, with gateway sites of 34m at the intersection of Victoria Rd, 40m at the northern tip of the precinct, up to 36m adjoining the river, and 49m and 80m for specific sites. These controls are shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

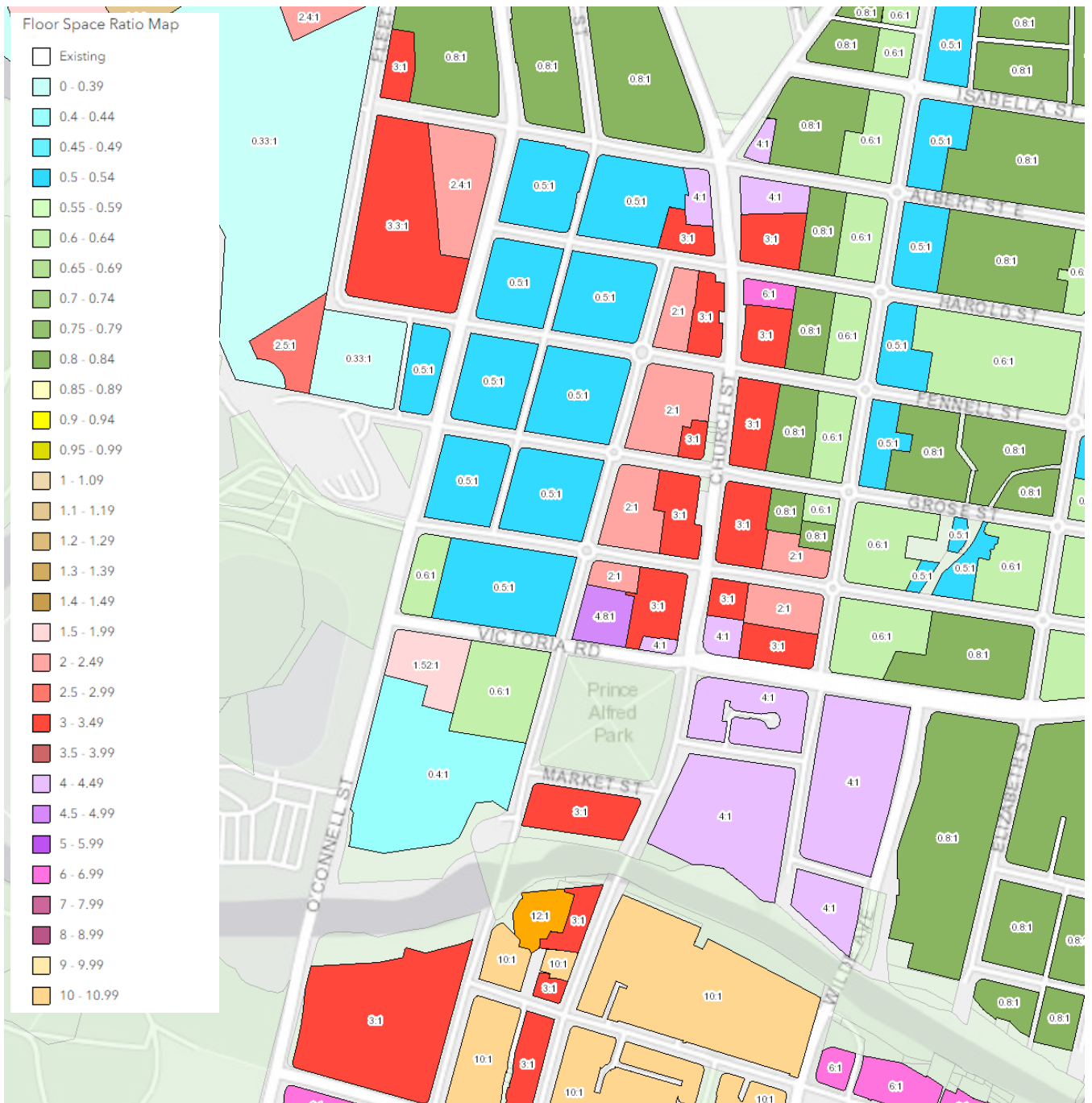


Figure 3 | Existing floor space ratio controls

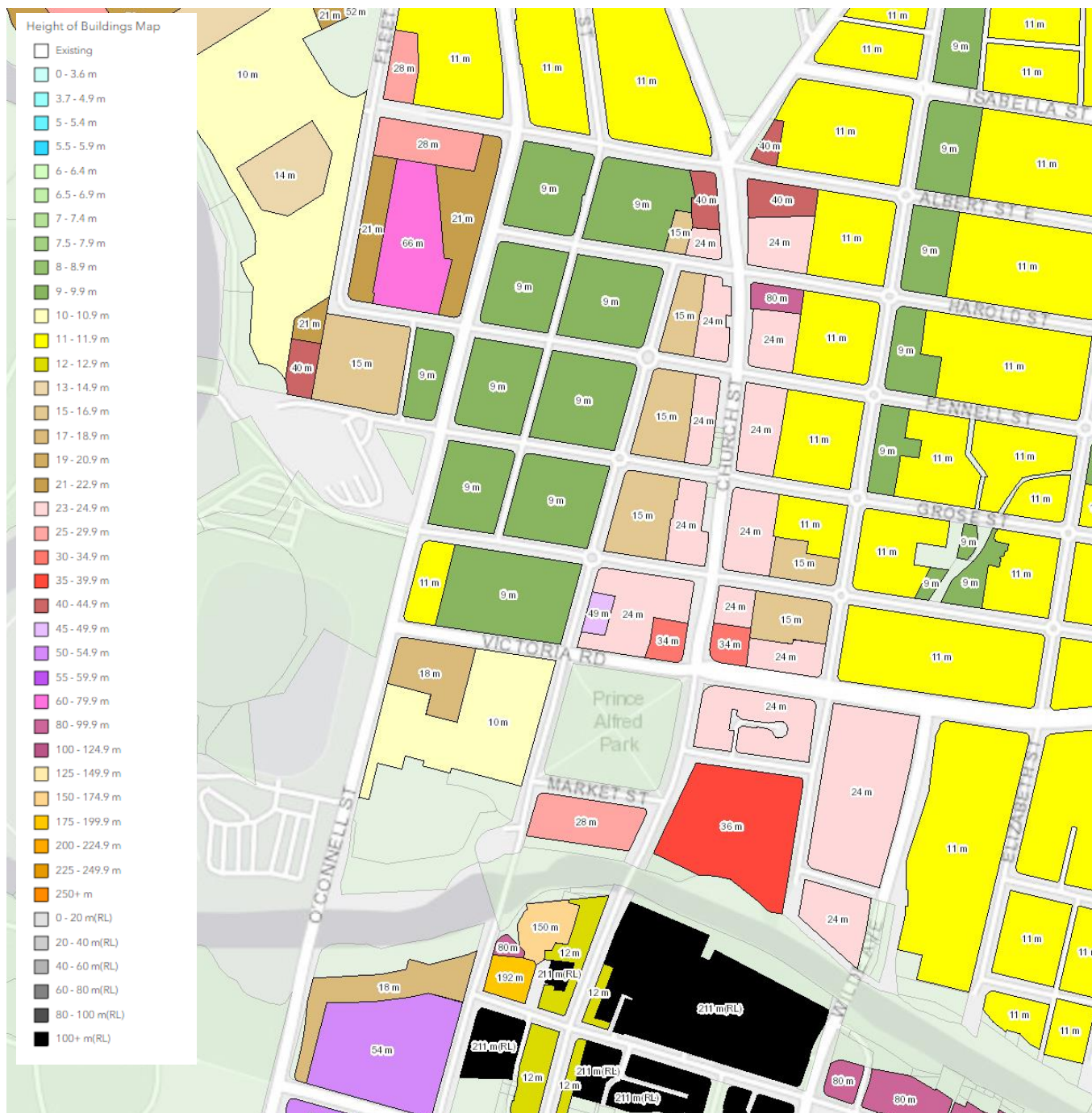


Figure 4 | Existing height of building controls

Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal proposed controls

The CBD PP generally proposed uplift across the precinct through amended FSR and HOB controls, and provisions which provided additional bonuses or limitations. The exception to changing built form controls was the existing education precinct to the west of Villiers Street which proposed retention of existing height and FSR controls.

The CBD PP proposed a base and incentive set of controls for FSR and HOB, with the base being largely as per the current controls. The exhibited CBD PP outlined the circumstances in which

development could achieve the incentive controls where community infrastructure was provided. Due to an evolving infrastructure policy landscape over the time of the CBD PPs progression, the department did not support the dual phase approach to planning controls, instead adopting the incentive controls as the maximum permitted.

The maximum FSR permitted through the incentive FSR maps was 6:1 for most sites in the precinct, with two sites between Lamont Street and the river shown with a maximum of 5.2:1. The maximum incentive HOB for most sites was 80m, however a number of sites were additionally impacted by sun access planes to Prince Alfred Square and the river foreshore which limited maximum height in these areas.

The CBD PP also included additional bonus mechanisms which would allow for increases on the mapped controls. This includes a 15% design excellence bonus and a 5% high performing buildings bonus resulting in maximum FSR of 7.2:1 and HOB of 92m.

What we heard

Built form was a key concern for many of the submissions received on the CBD PP. Submissions generally opposed the proposed controls for the North Parramatta on the basis that the proposed building heights, bulk, and scale was not compatible with the area. Concerns were raised that the CBD PP would diminish heritage values, green streetscapes, amenity, solar access, and consequently its character.

Some submissions supported the proposed CBD PP as it would contribute to the growth of Parramatta. Submissions from landowners also identified the positive impact redevelopment under the CBD PP controls, or variations of this, could provide to further urban renewal in this high amenity area.

Similarly, concerns regarding the protection of heritage values and the appropriate scale of development were key discussion points in the early engagement on the then-proposed North Parramatta Place Strategy. In this engagement there was general acceptance of additional development in the area, with the focus being on the suitability of future development.

Engagement attendees were also asked to nominate where development should occur, with 67% of responses stating that it should be along Church Street spine and near light rail and transport hubs, and 25% saying it should be on the river foreshore or between the river and Victoria Road. The proposed built form controls have concentrated density in these areas along the Church Street spine and between the river and Victoria Road.

New floor space ratio controls and building heights

As part of finalisation the department commissioned an Urban Design Study informed by specialist technical advice including heritage. This analysis led to the definition of guiding urban design

principles and strategies for the precinct that respond to the character and outcomes identified in consultation, including:

- reinforcing the significance and role of Church Street and the Parramatta River by concentrating density near these features,
- responding to the adjoining heritage conservation areas and low-scale residential uses by transitioning building heights downwards towards them,
- protecting solar access to Prince Alfred Square and the Parramatta River foreshore by applying increased sun access planes,
- protecting view corridors of significant historical and cultural value by shaping controls to protect and enhance these view corridors, and
- responding to site constraints and opportunities.

These principles and strategies establish a framework for a more nuanced response to built form outcomes, that has been further explored and tested through a review of case studies and modelling of built form scenarios across the precinct.

This testing led to the development of two urban design and planning options for the precinct that respond to the urban design framework and propose varying scales of uplift. Option 1 has been developed by Hassell based on the site testing, modelling and collaboration across the supporting technical consultant team. Option 1 sets HOB and FSR controls across the precinct and does not propose any additional bonus provisions. Option 2 explores an alternative approach, setting revised base controls for HOB and FSR and adopting a series of additional bonus incentives. The bonuses would provide flexibility for additional height and FSR on top of the base controls, subject to development meeting specific criteria. Option 2 has been largely adopted for the SEPP as this represents the most appropriate balance between mitigation of the department and community's concerns while allowing for urban renewal and bringing forward housing delivery.

This option reflects the strategic importance of the precinct in support of the growth of the Parramatta CBD, and the once in a lifetime opportunity to leverage investment in the Parramatta Light Rail and Sydney Metro West. Option 2 is also aligned to the Government's priorities in providing additional housing around existing transport corridors and will support alleviation of the housing need in this area as the State faces a housing crisis.

In preparing the SEPP, the department has considered advice regarding development likelihood and feasibility, noting there are a range of factors which influence this including ownership, heritage status and constraints. These attributes, together with market demand, land values, take up rates, land fragmentation, construction costs, and state and local development charges, all impact the capacity and likelihood of development. While feasibility of redevelopment is not a determining

factor in decision making, it has been a matter of consideration to ensure the objective of urban renewal is achieved for the precinct.

The new controls intensify the core planning controls for FSR and HOB and strike a balance between providing for development of a density suitable for a major metropolitan centre like Parramatta, while not unduly impacting on local amenity and heritage values.

The department has also further analysed the recommendations of the urban design study and proposed some amendments to the approach, in determining planning controls in the SEPP. These are outlined in further detail below.

Floor Space Ratio

A consolidated and simplified approach to FSR has been adopted, with a standard 5:1 applied across most of the precinct, refer to **Figure 5**. Given the land fragmentation, limited width of the precinct (especially in the north), and the preference for lot amalgamation, the application of a generally uniform FSR of 5:1 will allow more opportunities for alternative design solutions to be pursued.

A reduction of this standard FSR to 4.5:1 is proposed for the block inclusive of 440-458 Church Street to better respond to site specific constraints and block dimensions, in particular the clustering of individual heritage items within the block. This reduction aims to prevent heritage items from becoming isolated, having buildings cantilevering over them, and to retain the scale of street frontages where heritage buildings will exist with new and contributory buildings. No change is proposed to existing FSR of 4:1 for sites between Lamont St and the riverfront. This supports the delivery of appropriate interfaces to the river.

It is noted that although a standard 5:1 FSR has generally been provided, each site is required to respond to its unique context and achieving the maximum FSR for all sites may not be possible.

This proposal also includes refinement to the FSR table set out under clause 7.3 of the PLEP. The intention of this clause is to limit the use of the maximum FSR for smaller sites by setting out a sliding scale that includes the maximum FSR for sites of 1,800m² or greater, together with alternatives for sites less than 1,000m², and sites of 1,000m² to 1,800m². This table currently includes a range of scenarios for FSRs of 4:1, 6:1, 7:1; 8:1 and 10:1. However, content related to an FSR of 4.5:1 or 5:1 is not included. As this amendment proposes the adoption of an FSR of 4.5:1 and 5:1 this table will also be updated to include the corresponding content for a sliding scale of FSRs.

Height of Buildings

A change to the maximum HOB is proposed largely in accordance with the established urban design principles, refer to **Figure 6**. This includes:

- Focusing the highest built form at the centre of Church Street, at 57m, with the site at 355-385 Church Street having a height of 63m, as a gateway site and to respond to the solar plane controls;
- Allowing this 'Church Street' height to transition outward to the west and north to 40m, and south-east to 34m, 40m and 49m;
- Providing a height transition for lands south of Victoria Road that reflects the cultural and historical importance of the river and responds to the future Powerhouse Parramatta (MAAS), by transitioning heights down from 49m to 36m (existing control on some sites) and 28m as proximity to the foreshore increases; and
- Limiting the heights along interfaces with heritage items to protect their setting and prevent cantilevering over, or sandwiching of heritage items, by adopting a HOB of 10m to 12m.

The department has also reviewed the transition in height proposed to the east of the Church North Street Precinct and adopted a 57m height limit to the boundary of these lots instead of the 40m transition interface. This provides additional flexibility and acknowledges that the North East Planning Investigation area provides an opportunity to transition the scale of built form to the Sorrell Street HCA. The department has also strengthened heritage considerations through the provisions added in the SEPP. The 40m height limits proposed for the west in Option 2 has been adopted as the North Parramatta HCA immediately adjoins the precinct. This approach also allows for greater flexibility in the built form transition from the North Parramatta HCA noting detailed design controls for street wall and base building/podium heights are normally determined through a development control plan.

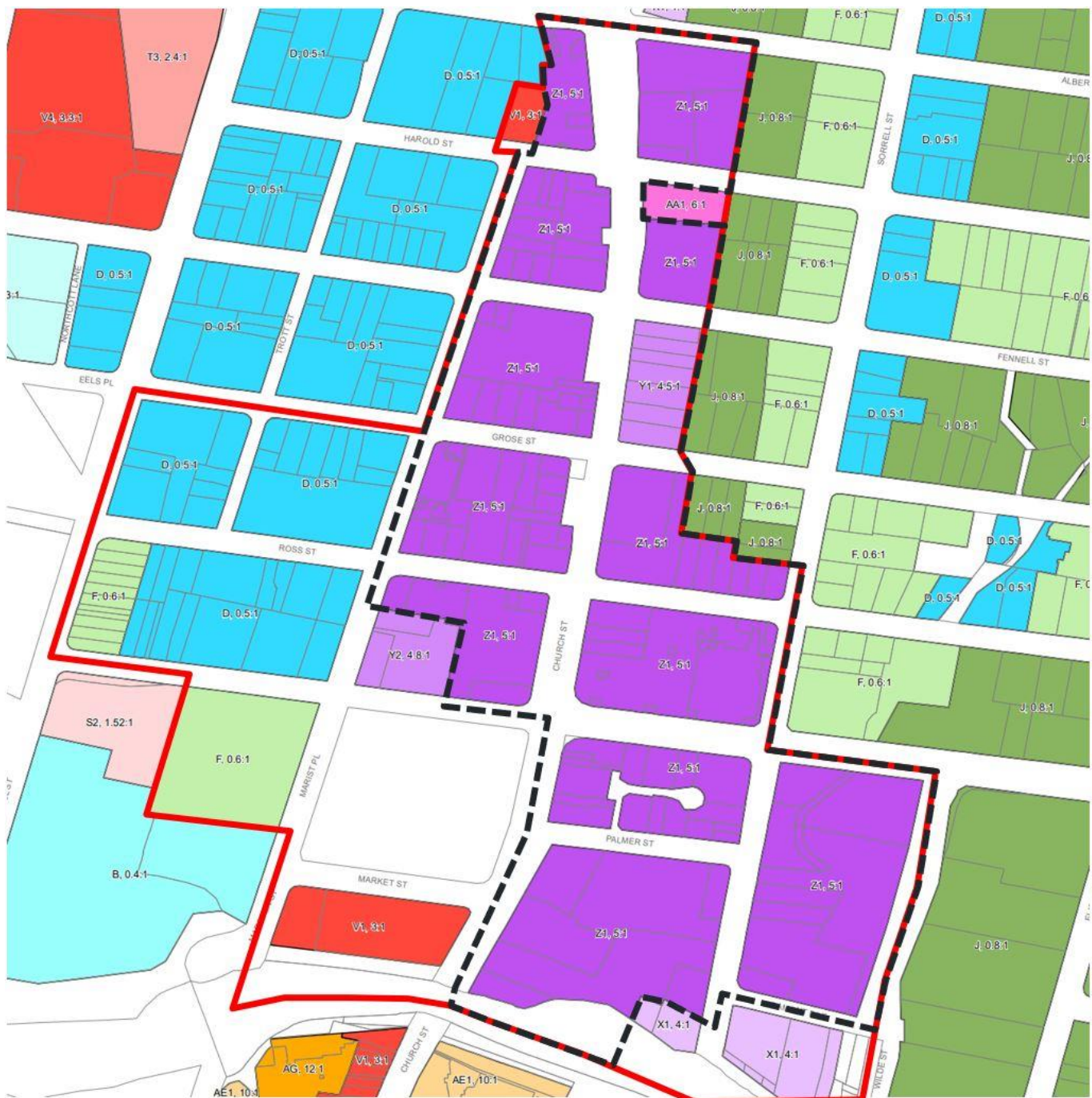


Figure 5 | Proposed base FSR controls for the precinct – the precinct boundary is shown in red, the area of proposed change shown in the black dashed line.

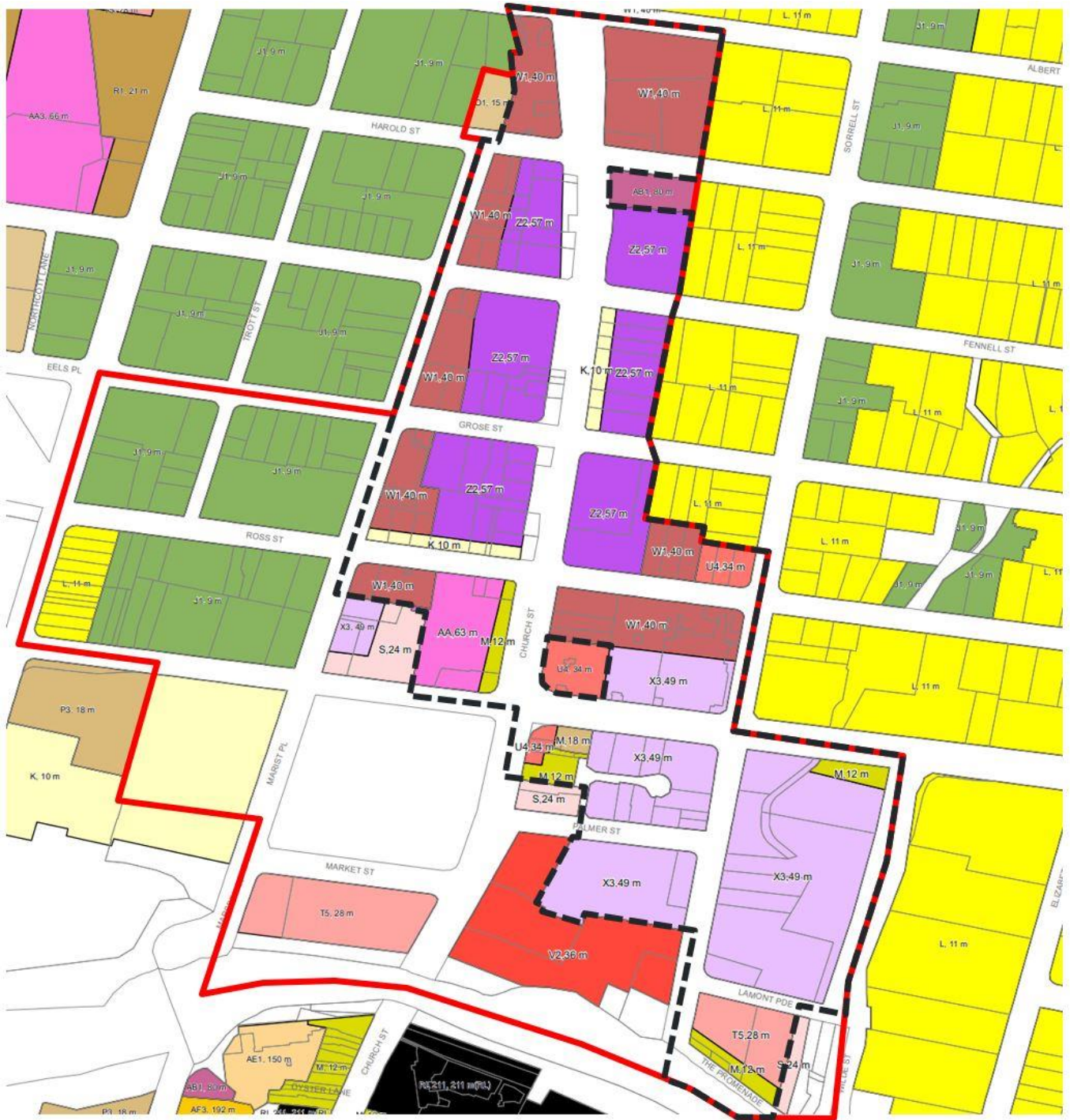


Figure 6 | Proposed base HOB controls for the precinct - the precinct boundary is shown in red, the area of proposed change shown in the black dashed line.

3.2 Bonus floor space and building height opportunities

Existing bonus structures and context

The precinct, excluding land south of Market Street and some land at the corner of Church Street and Harold Street, is currently identified as 'Area A' under the Special Provisions Area Map of the

Parramatta LEP 2023. 'Area A' was introduced at the time of making the CBD PP and allowed for the existing provisions of the LEP to apply to land not subject to uplift, including the precinct.

Under clause 7.15 of the Parramatta LEP 2023 development may exceed the maximum permissible FSR and HOB by up to 15% where it has undergone, and won, a competitive design process and where a consent authority is satisfied that that design excellence has been achieved. Within 'Area A', this 'bonus' can be extended to 25% where the proposal is for a use other than residential in a MU1 Mixed use zone.

The CBD PP generally carried over the intent of the previous design excellence provisions, with some minor changes including a change to the scale of development which triggers the need for a design competition. Of note, the CBD PP intended to remove the extended 25% for non-residential development and set 15% as the maximum bonus awarded for design excellence.

A high performing building bonus was also proposed and introduced through the CBD PP to encourage development to achieve water and energy efficiency targets beyond the requirements of BASIX. This bonus applies only to sites which meet certain criteria and must have a mapped FSR of at least 6:1 or greater.

What we heard

Few submissions specifically raised the issue of planning bonuses or incentives. These submissions questioned the approach to providing incentives through additional FSR and building heights, suggesting that the provision of bonus provisions as a 'norm' would drive high rise tower development, rather than proposing controls that are guided by the surrounding heritage and character elements. One submission sought clarity on the criteria required for a bonus to be applied, while others sought the inclusion of alternative bonus sliding scales for non-residential FSRs.

It is noted that bonus floor space and height may exacerbate the sentiment of submissions outlined in Section 3.1 Built Form.

The proposed approach to bonus provisions and incentives

The urban design analysis explored two options for setting planning controls in the precinct, without bonuses (Option 1) and a balance of base level planning controls with additional bonuses (Option 2).

Urban design analysis and testing has explored the capacity and impact of a range of bonus FSR and HOB provisions and incentives across the precinct under Option 2. This has led to the retention of the current design excellence provisions, and the introduction of a new additional bonus for some sites.

The Department considers the application of the design excellence bonus to the precinct key to achieving high quality development outcomes in this unique area of the CBD through the competitive design process. Addition of a precinct specific Church Street North bonus is deemed to

be appropriate to provide additional flexibility across height and FSR discrepancies resulting from application of the design excellence bonus provision.

Design Excellence

The SEPP will remove the precinct from 'Area A', which will apply the CBD PP framework of controls. This means non-residential development will no longer be able to achieve an extended 25% bonus, and will be limited to an additional 15% additional FSR and HOB. Changes to the triggers and requirements for design excellence and the competitive design process introduced through the CBD PP will also now apply to the precinct. Development seeking this bonus must demonstrate achieving design excellence and undergo a competitive design process which is considered appropriate for the precinct.

New bonus provisions

As part of this proposal, flexibility to provide an additional 10% FSR and up to 15.5m in HOB is also proposed. These new provisions have been carefully considered to address impediments to renewal, mitigate the impact of tower forms, and safeguard site specific heritage values by:

- **encouraging site amalgamation:** through adopting a minimum site size of 2,400m²;
- **promoting slender tower forms:** through introducing a maximum building dimension of 35m; and
- **delivering appropriate transitions:** to neighbouring heritage items and heritage conservation areas and the Parramatta River through the inclusion of specific considerations.

It is intended that the existing 15% design excellence provisions remain the primary FSR and HOB incentive across the precinct, with the new 10% FSR and up to 15.5m HOB only to be used once the design excellence bonus provisions have been met and utilised.

This new bonus provision will apply to much of the precinct, excluding sites close to the Parramatta River (specifically, 354-366 and 350 Church Street, 1, 2 and 3 Sorrell Street, and 14 Lamont Street). These sites will not be eligible for this bonus to ensure they recognise the significance of the Parramatta River and appropriately respond and transition down towards it.

The department notes that the Urban Design advice sets out several place outcomes upon which the bonus provision may be linked. In preparing the SEPP, the department has included matters for the consent authority to consider in assessing development accessing the bonus, including transition to heritage items and conservation areas and tower dimensions to promote slender tower forms. Other place outcomes may be more appropriately delivered through other mechanisms, including at the development assessment stage.

What is the potential impact of the proposed bonuses on the FSR and HOB provisions.

The applicability of the proposed bonus provisions across the precinct will vary based on the willingness in the market to adopt a design excellence process and the size of the site. A summary of the potential maximum impact of the bonus provisions is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 | Summary of the potential impacts of bonus provisions on key sites within the precinct

Area description	Proposed base maximum FSR and maximum HOB (refer to section 3.1)	Bonus 1: Existing Design Excellence, for sites over 1,800m ² (15% increase to FSR and HOB)	Bonus 2: New New bonus sites over 2,400m ² (10% FSR and up to 15.5m in additional building height)	Bonus 1 + Bonus 2 Designs excellence + new provisions for sites over 2,400m ²
Centre of Church Street	FSR: 5:1 HOB: 57m	FSR:+ 0.75:1 HOB: + 8.55m	FSR: +0.5:1 HOB: + up to 15.5m	FSR: 6.25:1 HOB: up to 81m
Church Street – southwest	FSR: 5:1 HOB: 63m	FSR:+ 0.75:1 HOB: + 9.45m	FSR: +0.5:1 HOB: + up to 15.5m	FSR: 6.25:1 HOB: up to 88m
440-458 Church Street	FSR: 4.5:1 HOB: 57m	FSR:+ 0.675:1 HOB: + 8.55m	FSR: +0.45:1 HOB:+ up to 15.5m	FSR: 5.625:1 HOB: up to 81m
Transition zones west and southeast of Church Street	FSR: 5:1 HOB: 40m	FSR:+ 0.75:1 HOB: +6m	FSR: +0.5:1 HOB: + up to 15.5m	FSR: 6.25:1 HOB: up to 61.5m
Key sites, Southeast corner of Ross Street and Sorrell Street and southwest Church Street and Victoria Road	FSR: 5:1 HOB: 34m	FSR:+ 0.75:1 HOB: +5.1m	FSR: +0.5:1 HOB: + up to 15.5m	FSR: 6.25:1 HOB: up to 54.6m

Area description	Proposed base maximum FSR and maximum HOB (refer to section 3.1)	Bonus 1: Existing Design Excellence, for sites over 1,800m ² (15% increase to FSR and HOB)	Bonus 2: New New bonus sites over 2,400m ² (10% FSR and up to 15.5m in additional building height)	Bonus 1 + Bonus 2 Designs excellence + new provisions for sites over 2,400m ²
Land around the corner of Victoria Road and Sorrell Street	FSR: 5:1 HOB: 49m	FSR:+ 075:1 HOB: + 7.35m	FSR: +0.5:1 HOB: + up to 15.5m	FSR: 6.25:1 HOB: up to 71.85m
South of Lamont Street	FSR: 4:1 HOB: 28m	FSR:+0.6 :1 HOB: +4.2m	N/A	N/A

3.3 Heritage

Existing heritage context

Parramatta CBD contains a rich history with significant heritage items of world, national, state and local significance. Within the precinct there are 13 local heritage items, as well as the above-mentioned state significant items of Prince Alfred Square and St Patricks Cathedral precinct. Many heritage items are also located adjacent to or in the vicinity of the precinct including the Lennox Bridge and Roman Catholic Cemetery, as well as items within the North Parramatta HCA and Sorrell Street HCA.

Heritage in and around the precinct is identified in Figure 7 below.

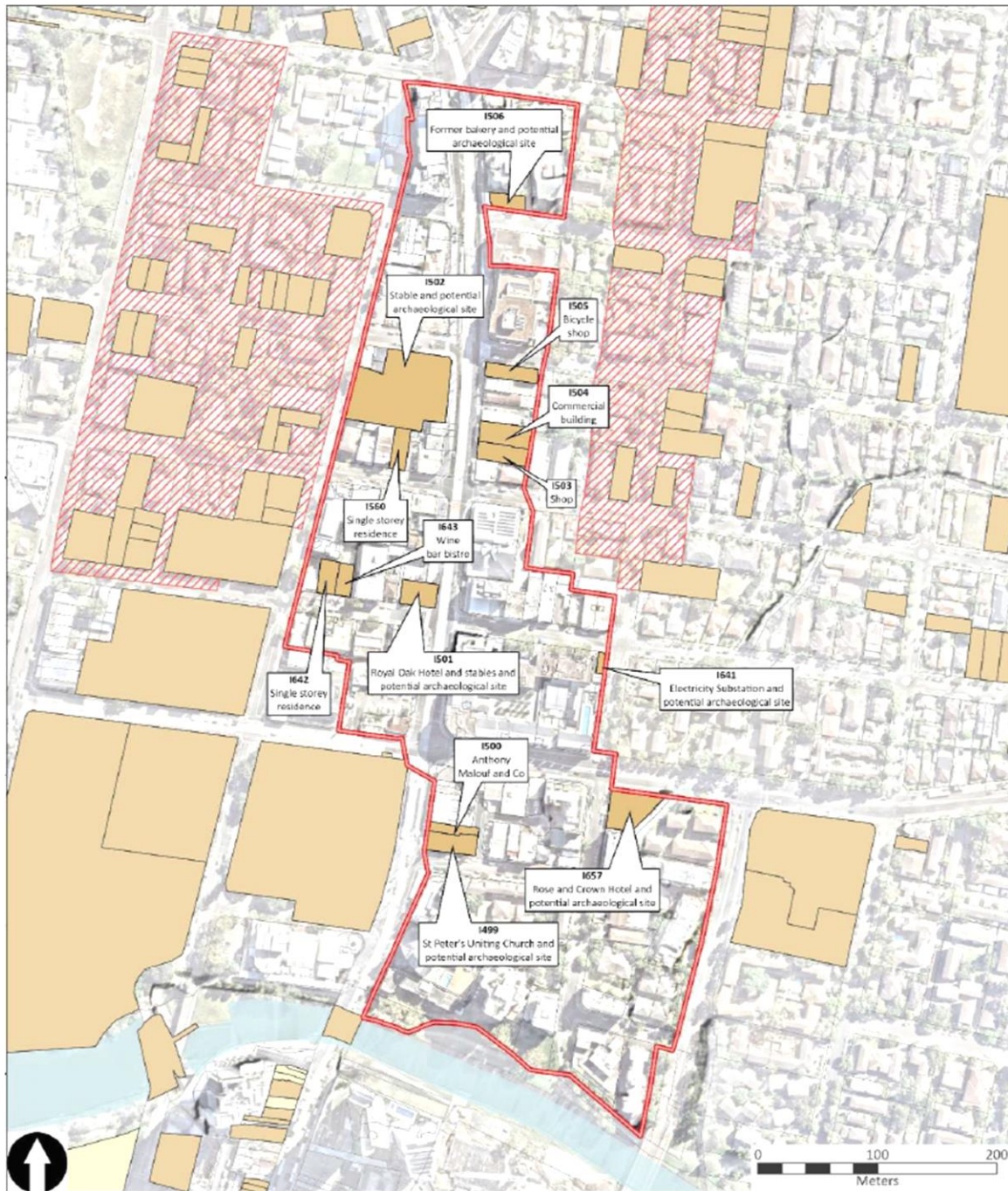


Figure 7 | PLEP 2023 heritage map with the Church Street North precinct outlined in red. North Parramatta HCA to the west and Sorrell Street HCA to the east are shaded in red (Source: PLEP with Extent Heritage overlay, November 2023)

Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal Proposed Controls

Consideration of heritage has been a key factor informing the CBD PP. The management and protection of heritage values including items, conservations areas, interfaces, places and views is an objective of the CBD PP.

A series of studies were prepared in support of its development, including two prepared for Council by Urbis (2015) and Hector Abrahams Architects (2017). To support the assessment prior to Gateway

determination, the department also commissioned a peer review by GML Heritage. Of relevance to the precinct was the question of the appropriate transition and interface to heritage conservation areas to the east and west. Each study had differing views on how this should be managed through stepping scale, or sharper delineation in built form.

The CBD PP adopted the transition approach identified by Hector Abrahams Architects which results in a steeper transition with some buffers identified in the east, for an area later excluded from the CBD PP.

In alignment with the heritage advice the CBD PP also introduced a new managing heritage impacts clause (7.22) which provided additional considerations above the standard Clause 5.10 Heritage Conservation.

What we heard

The potential impacts on heritage values of the area were a key concern in feedback received from consultation. The precinct features numerous heritage items and is flanked on the east and west sides by the North Parramatta HCA and the Sorrell Street HCA.

New provisions

The urban design principles underpinning the proposed built form controls include a series of key strategies and outcomes to safeguard heritage values in and around the precinct including the need to:

- respond appropriately to adjoining heritage conservation areas;
- protect solar access to Prince Alfred Square; and
- protect view corridors of significant historical and cultural value.

To make sure that these heritage values are addressed in future renewal of the precinct, a series of heritage specific considerations have been integrated into the controls. This is achieved through the extension of Clause 7.22 Managing heritage impacts of the Parramatta LEP 2023 to apply to most of the precinct. The application of this clause will require the consideration of a range of heritage specific matters in granting consent to a development, including:

- the extent to which the development is likely to affect the heritage significance of the relevant heritage item or heritage conservation area.
- a heritage impact statement.
- If the development involves lot amalgamations which includes a lot that contains, or is adjacent to, a heritage item, a heritage conservation management plan is required that identifies if further lot amalgamations are needed to support the development of the land,

while retaining the heritage significance of the heritage item, and that the significance of the heritage item has been prioritised in the amalgamation of the lots.

- if proposing a tower, the separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form of the proposed tower and if this results in an acceptable relationship with heritage item(s) or conservation area(s).

The amendment of Clause 7.22, with specific reference to the North Parramatta HCA and Sorrell Street HCA further reinforces the protection and consideration of heritage in the area.

Additional consideration of heritage is also required if utilising the bonus height and FSR available under both Parramatta LEP 2023 Clause 7.15 and the new bonus height and FSR clause for sites within 'Area C' on the Special Provisions Area map. Specifically, use of Clause 7.15 requires a development to achieve design excellence, which includes how the development addresses *"heritage and archaeological issues and the constraints and opportunities of the streetscape"*.

The new bonus height and FSR clause introduced for the area as part of this SEPP requires the achievement of design excellence, and also requires *"if a heritage item is in the site area – the development involves the repair, restoration or reconstruction of the heritage item,"* and that *"there will be an appropriate transition in bulk and scale to neighbouring heritage items and heritage conservation areas and the Parramatta River foreshore."* The inclusion of these matters helps to further the protections provided to heritage items and conservation areas.

3.4 Solar Access

Existing

Aside from bespoke controls for the Riverside Theatre site, there are no solar access protections included in the current planning controls for the precinct.

Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal Proposed Controls

One of the objectives of the CBD PP was to encourage a high quality and activated public domain with good solar access. This was addressed through a number of aspects of the CBD PP including informing solar access provisions to ensure overshadowing on key existing open space and public domain was limited through the introduction of sun access planes. In Church Street North, protection of solar access to a defined area of Prince Alfred Square and the Parramatta River's southern foreshore impacts the maximum heights for buildings to prevent overshadowing between 12-2pm at midwinter. A technical paper supported the CBD PP which reviewed solar access and measured overshadowing to HCAs adjoining the CBD.

What we heard

Solar access and overshadowing were raised as an issue in several submissions to the Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal. Common themes from the feedback received on this matter were:

- support for the inclusion of solar access provisions;
- recommendations that sun access protection should be provided from 10am – 2pm on 21 June;
- concerns that high density development will impact on solar access and will result in overshadowing;
- concerns that heritage buildings, HCAs and public spaces would be overshadowed;
- some submissions requested a detailed urban design plan for North Parramatta be prepared to have proper regard for heritage, orientation, overshadowing and the public domain; and
- many submissions requested a review of the height controls for various sites stating they are likely to result in substantial overshadowing of adjoining properties.

Protections from overshadowing and provision of sun access were also raised multiple times in the early engagement on the then-proposed North Parramatta Place Strategy.

New solar access controls

This proposal provides for built form controls that are lower and less bulky than those proposed in the CBD PP. This will lessen the amount of overshadowing and provide greater sunlight access to adjoining development, heritage and public spaces. Additionally, Clause 7.22 Managing heritage impacts requires consideration of impacts of proposed development on relevant heritage items and/or conservation areas.

The SEPP also proposes protection from additional overshadowing for:

- the southern half of Prince Alfred Square, a key public open space in the precinct and a State listed heritage item; and
- the southern bank of the Parramatta River foreshore.

The proposal includes amendment of the Sun Access Protection Map to identify lands for solar protection between 11am-2pm on 21 June. **Figure 8** illustrates the three-dimensional building envelopes generated from the proposed sun access controls. **Figure 9** shows the indicative overshadowing of a hypothetical proposal that complies with the solar access provisions from 12pm to 3pm mid-winter. It is noted the CBD PP proposed sun access protection to the above areas between 12pm and 2pm on 21 June.

The decision to provide solar access for an expanded window between 11am and 2pm on 21 June rather than 12pm to 2pm on 21 June was made after urban design testing revealed that the additional hour of solar access (from 11am to midday) was achievable while still delivering a suitable built form on adjoining sites. As open space within the precinct is limited, this will extend the amenity of this space while being sympathetic to the heritage values, particularly in Prince Alfred Square, and cultural values for the river.

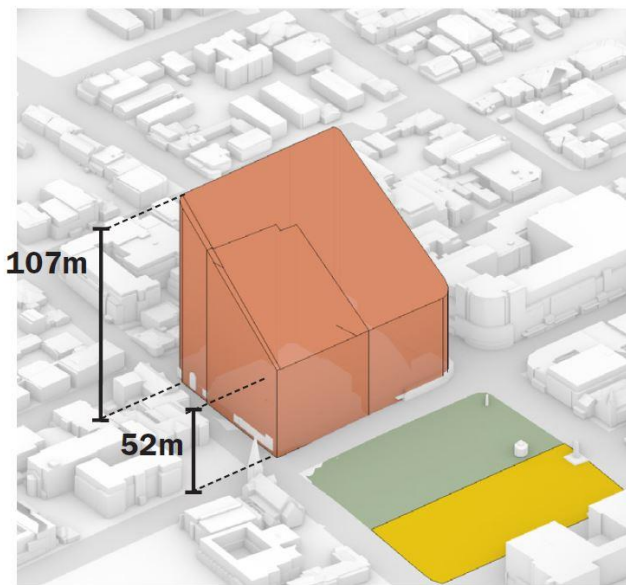


Figure 8 | Three dimensional representation of the proposed solar access plane at 11am – 2pm (source: Urban Design Study, Hassell November 2023)



Figure 9 | Indicative overshadowing of the proposed controls at 11am – 3pm on the 21 June (source: Urban Design Study, Hassell November 2023)

Although this proposal does not achieve the full extent of overshadowing protections requested in some submissions, such as extension of protection from 10am-2pm or all day, it introduces new protections that strike a balance between providing solar access and facilitating renewal of the precinct.

Additionally, if a development is to utilise the additional height and FSR available under Clause 7.15 of the Parramatta LEP 2023 it will need to demonstrate that it exhibits design excellence. A component of design excellence is that the development suitably addresses overshadowing and solar access.

4 Assessment of the proposal

In electing to remove the precinct from the finalisation of the CBD PP, the department raised a number of concerns that could not be adequately addressed in the scope of the CBD PP. Following finalisation, the department has led a series of additional studies and built form testing to further explore these concerns and to inform new controls for the precinct. This section provides an assessment of the proposed controls against each of the concerns raised in the CBD PP. Refer to Table 2 for further details.

Table 2 2 | Assessment of the proposal against the concerns raised on the CBD PP

Category	Concern raised in relation to the precinct in the CBD PP	Assessment of the concerns against the proposed controls
Heritage response	<p>The proposed controls may compromise the area’s unique heritage attributes, either through the demolition of heritage items or through development that poorly or unsympathetically incorporates heritage items or results in built form dominating heritage items. Consequently, this may reduce the heritage fabric and character of Parramatta North and result in a general disruption between heritage items, views, and character;</p>	<p>The proposed controls have been shaped with consideration to the heritage items and conservation areas.</p> <p>Heritage considerations are addressed in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distribution of base HOB controls. • Design excellence provisions. • Embedding through the extension of Clause 7.22 Managing heritage impacts (PLEP 2023). • Inclusion of site-specific heritage considerations in the proposed additional FSR and HOB bonus.
Uniform controls – homogenous built form	<p>The provision of uniform FSRs and building heights may result in homogenous built forms where there is little building modulation, leading to a lack of interesting and varied development.</p>	<p>The proposal provides a range of building heights to respond to the context, such as site specific constraints, adjoining heritage items, and heritage conservation areas. Although a largely uniform approach to FSR is proposed, the controls also frame the unique assets of the precinct and empower these to guide</p>

Category	Concern raised in relation to the precinct in the CBD PP	Assessment of the concerns against the proposed controls
		<p>site specific building forms within the umbrella of the maximum FSR and HOB provisions. This will ensure varied built form that responds to context.</p>
<p>Uniform controls – interfaces and transitions</p>	<p>Uniform controls may also lead to a hard and unsympathetic transitions between the Church Street spine and the adjoining heritage conservation areas.</p> <p>Council investigations into the future of these adjoining areas is still underway, this provides difficulty in understanding the adjoining context.</p>	<p>The department’s urban design testing incorporated the modelling of building setbacks and certain design criteria as set out in the Apartment Design Guide, to adopt best practice floor plate sizes and building separation.</p> <p>The urban design testing resulted in the provision of a stepping down of HOB controls towards at the edges of the precinct. This establishes a transition between the Church Street spine and the adjoining heritage conservation areas.</p> <p>The department has also reviewed the transition in height proposed to the east of the Church North Street Precinct and adopted a 57m height limit to the boundary of these lots. This provides additional flexibility and acknowledges that the North East Planning Investigation area provides an opportunity to transition the scale of built form to the Sorrell Street HCA.</p> <p>The height controls also include select areas where a 10 to 12m height limit is provided, to provide view corridors and physical separation associated with heritage values.</p> <p>It is noted that future controls for the adjoining area will be subject to further investigation by Council.</p>

Category	Concern raised in relation to the precinct in the CBD PP	Assessment of the concerns against the proposed controls
		<p>Future development of site-specific controls in the DCP for the precinct will provide an opportunity for finer grain controls to be established for these interfaces.</p>
<p>Transitions to low density residential and site constraints</p>	<p>The department raised concerns around the potential for the original CBD PP controls to deliver hard and inappropriate transitions to adjoining low density residential areas. A three-dimensional image of the possible ‘worst-case’ hypothetical-built form based on the CBD PP controls is shown in Figure 10 (below this table).</p> <p>Figure 11 (below this table) shows the modelling undertaken by Council as part of the draft planning strategy for the North-East Planning Investigation Area. This shows a more varied skyline due to differing assumptions of the model.</p>	<p>As noted above, the height controls proposed provide for a variety of built forms and provide a transition to the adjoining heritage conservation areas.</p>
<p>HOB and FSR</p>	<p>HOBs and FSRs should be commensurate with the scale of the Parramatta River and should seek to protect the natural, historical and cultural qualities of the river that are central to the identity of Parramatta and its place as the Central River City.</p>	<p>The proposed controls provide for a stepping down of built form towards the river. The building heights on the lots closer to Victoria Road generally have a maximum building height of 49m. This steps down to the existing height controls of 36m, then further to 28m and 12m towards the river. These stepped height controls create a built form that responds to the scale and qualities of the river.</p> <p>To further support appropriate transitions to the river sites located south</p>

Category	Concern raised in relation to the precinct in the CBD PP	Assessment of the concerns against the proposed controls
		of Lamont Street have also been excluded from the additional 10 % bonus.
<p>Protection of solar access to public spaces</p>	<p>The CBD PP sought to protect half of Prince Alfred Park and the southern foreshore of the Parramatta River from overshadowing from 12pm to 2pm. Submissions and feedback received suggest this is insufficient.</p> <p>In addition, the department’s modelling of the proposed CBP PP controls identified some cases where the proposed sun access plane allowed for heights that would be more than the additional heights proposed for adjoining land. This appears to be an unintended consequence of the proposed controls.</p>	<p>It is proposed that refined solar access protection is delivered through a Sun Access Protection Map. This will prevent overshadowing to the southern half of Prince Alfred Square and to the southern foreshore of the Parramatta River between 11am-2pm on 21 June.</p> <p>Although the proposed approach extends solar access protections by one hour in the morning, it is acknowledged this does not meet the extent requested in some submissions to provide protections from 10am to 2pm, or in some cases all day.</p> <p>It is considered that applying overshadowing protection from 11am-2pm strikes an appropriate balance between protecting the amenity of these public spaces and providing for renewal through suitable surrounding built form.</p>



Figure 10 | Image taken from DPE built form modelling of the original CBP PP proposal.

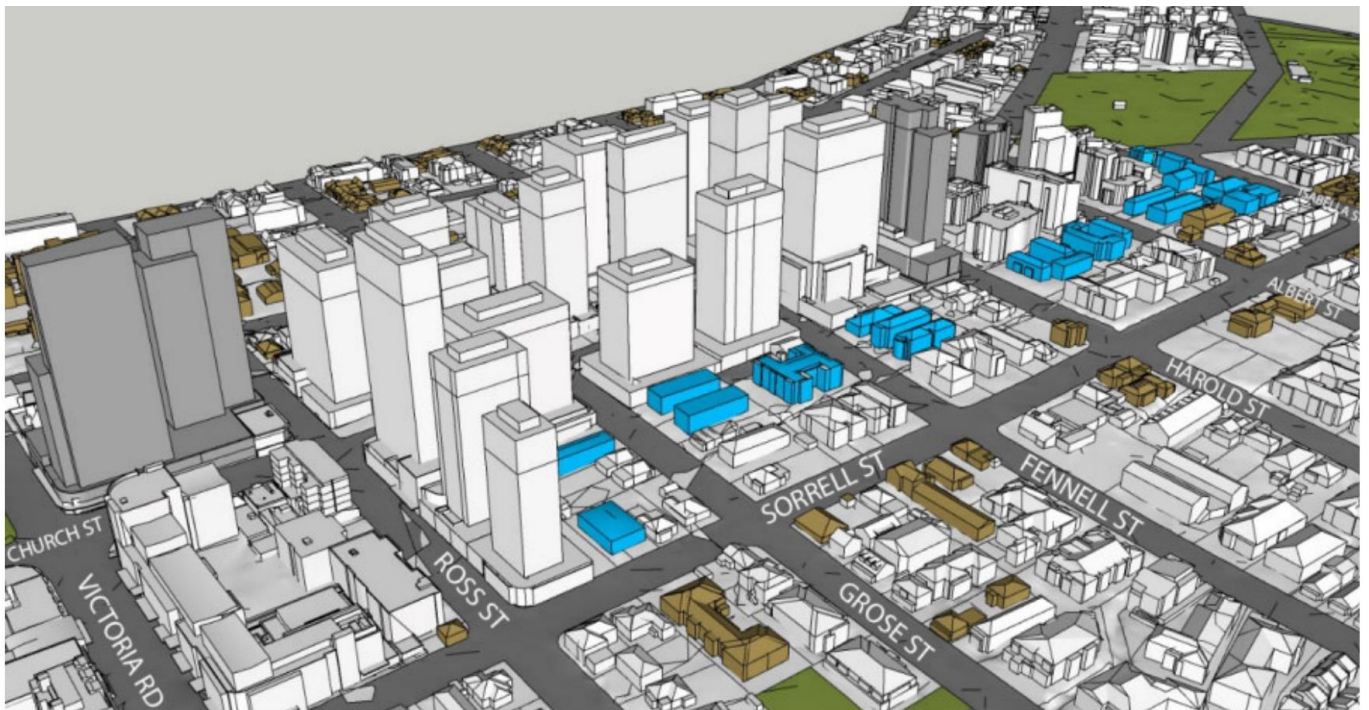


Figure 11 | Image of the City of Parramatta Council modelling of the precinct, as part of the North-East Planning investigation Area Draft Planning strategy, November 2020

4.1 Other matters

4.1.1 Minor refinement of zoning provisions

Changes to the zoning of three blocks in the western portion of the precinct is proposed as part of this proposal as follows:

- The two blocks bounded by O'Connell Street, Grose Street, Villiers Street, and Ross Street, currently zoned R2 Low Density Residential will be changed to MU1 Mixed Use to match the balance of the zoning across the precinct, and
- The block immediately south, bounded by O'Connell Street, Ross Street, Villiers Street, and Victoria Road, partially zoned R2 Low Density Residential and part R3 Medium Density Residential (along the O'Connell Street frontage) will also be changed to MU1 Mixed Use.

Changes to the zoning in these areas from residential uses to mixed use was proposed in the CBD PP and better represents the current and future uses on these sites in support of renewal of the precinct. The extent of this change is illustrated in [Figure 12](#) and [Figure 13](#), below.

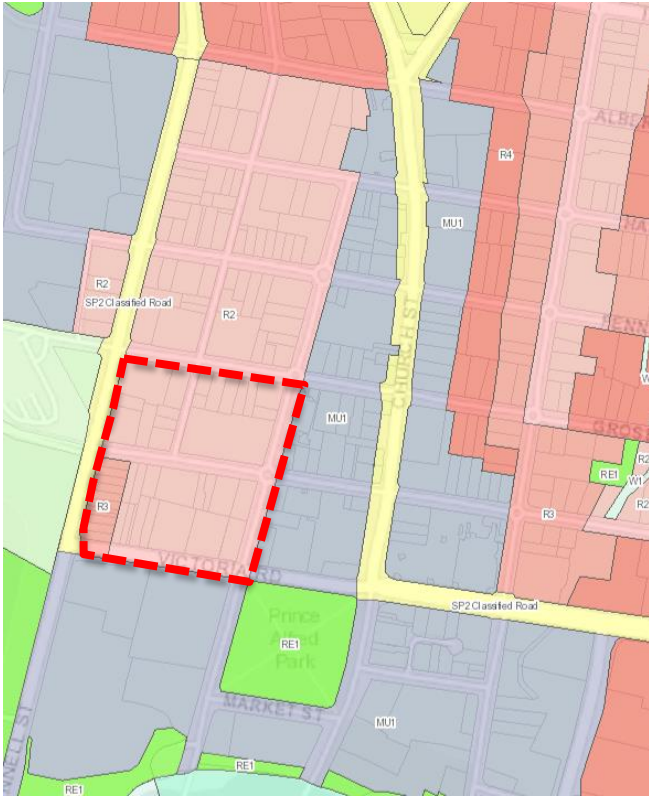


Figure 12 | Existing zoning, with area of change shown in red dashed boundary)

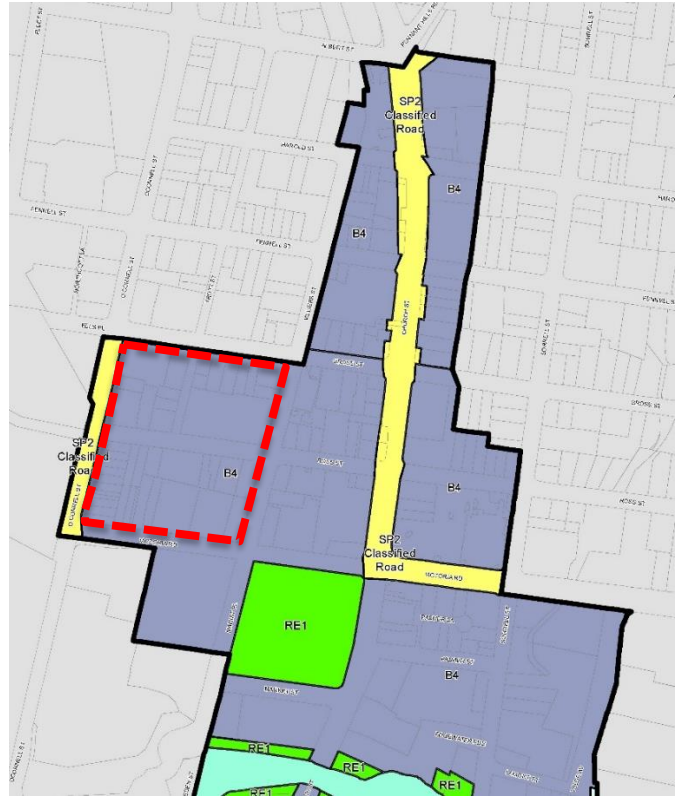


Figure 13 | Proposed area of zoning change (shown in the red dashed boundary) over the CBD PP zoning plan.

4.1.2 Transport

As part of the CBD PP, extensive work was undertaken in relation to transport and traffic, including the preparation of a Strategic Transport Study and an Integrated Transport Plan (ITP) by Council in consultation with Transport for NSW.

Central to both documents is a need for the growth facilitated by the CBD PP to be coupled with a shift away from private vehicle trips, instead encouraging public transport, walking and cycling alternatives.

Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1 will provide connection to Parramatta CBD, Westmead and northeast to Carlingford. This improved accessibility will contribute towards the objective of mode shift to public transport.

The CBD PP introduced maximum and reduced parking rates to limit car use and encourage this mode shift to public transport. Requirements for end of trip facilities for commercial uses was also adopted to encourage active transport use. The SEPP will apply the maximum parking rates and end of trip requirements to Church Street North matching those which apply to the remainder of the CBD area.

The CBD PP also identified a number of regional cycle way opportunities. The SEPP reserves land required to facilitate these and identifies Council as acquisition authority. Council's local contribution plan applying to the city centre includes a number of active transport improvements, including cycle related works.

The controls proposed through the SEPP are of less intensity than those contemplated in the Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal. Accordingly, the impacts are considered acceptable, as they are of a lesser scale than those that have previously been examined through the Integrated Transport Plan and related transport studies.

4.1.3 Infrastructure

Local infrastructure

The City of Parramatta collects development contributions under a range of plans to fund local infrastructure for the community including parks, libraries, traffic and transport infrastructure. The funding of local infrastructure is assisted in part by developer contributions known as Section 7.11 or Section 7.12 contributions.

In response to the proposed rezoning, the City of Parramatta has advised it intends to update the Parramatta City Centre Local Contribution Plan 2022. This is an important consideration to ensure the future population is supported by key local infrastructure, including public open space, community facilities and public domain improvements. The proposed SEPP includes a deferred commencement clause to allow Council the time necessary to update this plan as required.

It is acknowledged that some local infrastructure may also be provided as development occurs through planning agreements and the like, with Council.

State infrastructure

The Housing and Productivity Contribution (HPC) commenced on 1 October 2023 and applies to the Parramatta Local Government Area. The HPC will apply to:

- residential development that intensifies land-use where new dwellings are created, such as houses, apartments, terraces and dual occupancies.
- commercial and retail development such as shops, neighbourhood shops, supermarkets, and commercial office buildings where new floorspace is created.
- industrial development such as warehouses and industrial buildings, where new floorspace is created.

It is noted that some types of development may be exempt from paying the contribution. This may include public housing, seniors housing, affordable housing and secondary dwellings carried out under the Housing State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP).

The HPC will go towards the provision of state and regional infrastructure needed to unlock development and support forecast growth, such as roads, parks, hospitals and schools. Infrastructure investment will align with timeframes for land use planning, rezoning and forecast development. Funds will also be provided to support Council in delivering infrastructure that supports housing and productivity.

4.1.4 Affordable Housing

The NSW Government has identified that housing affordability and availability is the biggest single pressure facing the people of NSW. This issue has exacerbated over the years that planning for Parramatta's CBD has progressed. The CBD PP sought to provide a significant pipeline of housing supply for the centre. However, the CBD PP did not include specific provisions relating to affordable housing. As the SEPP seeks to introduce an amended version of the CBD PP, affordable housing requirements are not included.

Council has recently adopted an affordable housing action plan which includes a range of actions including investigating the adoption of affordable housing contribution schemes in new precinct planning. Council identified the opportunity for this to be explored in the development of the previous Place Strategy. However, due to the change in scope to a rezoning based on the CBD PP, the department has not proposed affordable housing as this new policy would require exhibition. The department will continue to work with Council on planning for affordable housing in the remaining Parramatta investigation areas and more broadly in the LGA.

While the SEPP does not introduce location specific requirements, the NSW Government has announced new measures to boost the supply of affordable and social housing more generally in the state. This includes changes to planning pathways to allow accelerated delivery of social and affordable housing projects. Changes to the Housing SEPP are also being proposed to allow for a new floor space bonus of 30 per cent and a height bonus of 30 per cent for residential developments with at least 15 per cent affordable housing.

4.2 Consistency with Strategic Framework

4.2.1 Greater Sydney Region Plan and Central City District Plan

The Greater Sydney Region Plan introduced the concept of a metropolis of three cities, with Greater Parramatta being the Central River City. Planning for the Parramatta CBD seeks to further this vision

through land use change and uplift in development capacity. This rezoning will contribute additional homes within walking distance of the CBD's employment core and will create a vibrant high street on its northern approach.

Both the region and district plans speak to the provision of housing supply in well located areas and alignment of growth with infrastructure. *Objective 10 Greater Housing Supply* in the Region Plan identifies the need to strengthen the available housing supply in locations within close proximity to major centres and public transport hubs. *Objective 2 Infrastructure aligns with forecast growth* recognises the need to ensure these areas of significant residential and employment growth are supported by new or enhanced local and regional infrastructure.

Planning Priority C5 Providing housing supply, choice and affordability, with access to jobs, services and public transport in the District Plan identifies the need for ongoing housing supply and range of housing types in the right location to support Greater Sydney's growing population.

The rezoning will deliver on these objectives and priorities through facilitating new homes along a new transport corridor and leveraging the investment in Parramatta Light Rail. To strengthen Parramatta's position as the metropolitan centre of the Central River City, planning needs to increase capacity for a greater number of dwellings and housing types with close proximity to the Parramatta CBD.

The District Plan also seeks to ensure growth is aligned with infrastructure provision, as outlined in *Planning Priority C1 Planning for a city supported by infrastructure*. Parramatta CBD is a growth area and is benefited by a number of recent infrastructure investments, including Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1.

As a key part of liveability, the District Plan also identifies that centres need to be vibrant, diverse, high amenity and inviting places to live, work and visit through *Planning Priority C6 Creating and renewing great places and local centres, and respecting the District's heritage*. This priority also identifies the need to conserve, enhance and celebrate heritage which is particularly relevant to Parramatta.

The rezoning will facilitate renewal of this high street and will apply active frontage controls to foster creation of a vibrant and attractive commercial boulevard. As outlined in Section 3.3 the controls proposed through this SEPP have been designed to minimise impact on heritage, including adjoining conservation areas. Additional heritage considerations have also been adopted for future development to address.

Parramatta CBD is at the centre of Greater Parramatta and the District Plan calls for its growth through *Planning Priority C7 Growing a stronger and more competitive Greater Parramatta*. Planning in Church Street North will support additional employment floor space opportunities for jobs growth and will support investment and renewal north of the river.

4.2.2 Greater Parramatta Interim Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan

The Greater Parramatta Interim Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan (LUIIP) is given statutory weight through a Ministerial section 9.1 Direction. The purpose of the LUIIP is to develop a land use framework to guide future redevelopment of the Greater Parramatta Growth Area and identify and plan for infrastructure needed to unlock its potential.

The amendment is consistent with the LUIIP in that it enables the opportunity for additional homes and commercial floor space to contribute towards Parramatta CBD's role as Sydney's central city.

4.2.3 Local Strategic Planning Statement and Local Housing Strategy

The City of Parramatta's LSPS City Plan 2036 establishes a land use planning vision for the City of Parramatta LGA over the 20 years to 2036. The LSPS concentrates job and housing growth within strategic centres and the Parramatta CBD where employees and residents can access major transport infrastructure and other high level facilities and services. The proposed amendment is consistent with the LSPS in that it enables the opportunity for housing growth in the CBD through the introduction of planning controls that increase density in the precinct. Specifically, it supports:

- Planning priority 3 – Advocate for improved public transport connectivity to Parramatta CBD from the surrounding district;
- Planning priority 7 – Provide for a diversity of housing types and sizes to meet community needs into the future; and
- Planning priority 9 – Enhance Parramatta's heritage and cultural assets to maintain our authentic identity and deliver infrastructure to meet community needs.

The City of Parramatta's Local Housing Strategy provides direction on the location and timing of future housing growth in the LGA, and how it aligns with higher-level strategic plans, being the Greater Sydney Region Plan – A Metropolis of Three Cities and the Central City District Plan. The proposed SEPP is consistent with the Local Housing Strategy and aligns with a number of its Objectives, including:

- Liveability Objective 2 - Housing delivery is aligned and sequenced with existing transport and capacity improvements;
- Liveability Objective 4 - Growth precincts innovate excellence in placed-based outcomes with diverse and affordable housing to suit residents' needs;
- Productivity Objective 1 - Housing delivery complements, not compromises, the economic significance of both the Central City and the City of Parramatta;

- Productivity Objective 2 - Additional housing is focussed on growth precincts, aligned with transport infrastructure delivery to facilitate residents' access to facilities, services, social connections and jobs; and
- Productivity Objective 3 - Housing delivery is efficiently sequenced to best use State and local resources and investments.

4.3 Development Control Plan Recommendations

The Urban Design Study, prepared by Hassell in 2023, identified a series of detailed design and planning considerations that build and support the approach set out in this proposal. It is anticipated that further detailed design controls for the precinct would be included in a Development Control Plan (DCP) or relevant section of the DCP for the precinct.

Key elements for consideration in future detailed development controls include:

- **Setback controls** to provide for:
 - Adequate space to support the delivery of new trees canopy, landscaping and generous footpath width;
 - Decoupling controls for active frontage and setbacks, to mitigate against narrowing of streets corners and negative impacts on side street amenity and views;
 - Refined building setback controls including:
 - A minimum 1.5 m to 2m building setback to, Harold Street, Fennell Street, Grose Street, the west of Ross Street and the east of Albert Street;
 - A minimum 1.5 m to 2m building setback along the west of Church Street between Ross Street and Victoria Road;
 - A minimum 1m setback along the south side of Palmer Street; and west side of Sorrell Street southward of Palmer Street;
 - A 4.5m setback along the eastern side of Sorrell Street south of Lamont Street, and along the edge of the riverside parkland between Sorrell Street and Wilde Avenue; and
 - Further exploration of setbacks to Villiers Street to balance heritage and development feasibility.
 - Upper storey setbacks to minimise bulk and scale;
 - Retention of human scaled streetscapes in particular along side streets and adjoining heritage items / conservation areas;

- Consideration of reinstating historic street setbacks, or increasing setbacks where this is not possible, in key areas; and
- Consideration of overall street widths to avoid creation of visual canyons.
- **Controls around podium and tower configurations** including:
 - Potential for precinct specific building typology controls, including further exploration of alternative built form for the precinct outside the CBD PP approach for podium and setback towers;
 - Consider refinement of maximum floorplate area controls (Gross Building Area) to provide greater flexibility at lower levels of residential towers to promote slender tower forms as follows:
 - Maximum 980m² tower GBA for under 45m; and
 - Maximum 900m² tower GBA for towers of 45m or over.
 - Maximum tower building length of 45m;
 - Further review and definition of street wall and podium heights across the precinct.
 - Consider increased podium / street wall height to allow for articulation of street corners on Church Street.
 - Tower setbacks above the street wall of a minimum of 6m to all street frontages; and
 - Minimising horizontal stepping of tower forms. Ideally reducing this to a single step in the upper portion of the tower.
- **Heritage view corridors and vistas:** including the development of view mapping and / or a register of significant heritage view corridors and vistas, together with the provision of finer grain controls around the protection of these. Including consideration of:
 - Significant views from Old Government House and Domain;
 - Views to, and from, Lennox Bridge and consideration of reflections in the water;
 - Views of the river itself;
 - Views between Lennox Bridge and Marsden Street Bridge and causeway;
 - View east from Marsden Street to the Lennox Bridge and riverside setting;
 - Maintaining the open landscape setting of the confluence of Wilde Avenue with the River Foreshore Reserve and views to the sky;
 - Building podiums along the upper northern bank to be broken down and separated to avoid forming a wall along the river's edge;

- Preservation of all existing openings to the river from streets; and
- Visual amenity from the rivers bend in the siting of new towers.
- **Detailed design controls for ground floor tenancies along Church Street:** to promote activation and encourage outdoor eating and a night-time economy, while protecting the amenity of residential uses above.
- **Permeable surface provisions:** to maximise water retention, support tree and landscape plantings and reduce urban heat.
- **Tree canopy cover:** to deliver new tree planting, increased shade to the public domain and communal open spaces areas and reduce urban heat.
- **Public open space strategy / concept designs / principles:** to ensure new parks and publicly accessible spaces, such as through site connections, are suitably distributed, adequately sized, well integrated into the wider public open space network, and are designed to councils' standards / requirements.
- **Vegetation and landscape controls:** to promote the reintroduction of indigenous endemic species and eco-systems.
- **Childcare facilities:** to introduce new planning controls to enable delivery of additional childcare facilities in the precinct.
- **Detailed design considerations for flood affected lands:** to deliver quality activated built form interfaces to the public domain.
- **Temporary activation:** to enable the temporary use of unused spaces for community and creative uses.
- **Lot amalgamation:** to support and promote integrated development outcomes for the precinct.
- **Building articulation, materials and finishes:** to ensure that these respond to site specific characteristics and reflect the heritage context, such as:
 - Articulation of historic subdivision / building patterns,
 - Emphasising corner sites,
 - Frame and cater for views along side streets, and
 - Integrate materials and finishes that are sympathetic to heritage values (where appropriate).

The department encourages Council to address these considerations in the development of refined and new DCP provisions for the precinct.

5 Planning for the Future

The rezoning of the precinct is a significant step in supporting the continued growth of the Central River City of Parramatta. Renewal of the precinct leverages state government investment in public transport infrastructure to deliver more homes close to transport and jobs. The proposal supports the regions vision for a metropolis of six 30-minute cities and provides a framework to deliver up to 1,800 homes.

The department continues to encourage renewal of North Parramatta and supports Council's strategic planning in Planning Investigation Areas adjoining the precinct, such as the draft Planning Strategy for the North-East Planning Investigation Area exhibited in November 2020.