

Trees and open space

Dunlop Avenue, Ascot Vale

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During our engagement with the community in late 2017 and early 2018, we heard that the community values the existing parks and open spaces in the area and would welcome more spaces like this. It is also important to the community to be able to keep the mature trees on the site.

The new buildings will be built with trees and plants along the northern boundary to make the site look attractive when viewed from the homes facing Francis Street. The building layout has also been designed to protect a number of significant mature trees on the site. The planning scheme¹ requires protection of one tree on Dunlop Avenue and an additional assessment has classified another tree as high value. Both of these trees will not be removed. We will keep a further 13 moderate value trees as part of the redevelopment. In total, we will replace 36 moderate value trees with 217 new trees.

We're proposing a variety of open spaces to meet the needs of the neighbouring community and future residents. We know that public housing residents would like an outdoor area that they call their own. This is why every apartment will have a dedicated balcony or courtyard for private enjoyment. We're also providing larger communal open spaces between the new buildings which all future residents will share. The requirement for communal spaces has resulted from the government's *Better Apartments Design Standards* project which seeks to improve the liveability and sustainability of apartments across Victoria.

New residents on the site will share the proposed communal spaces, regardless of whether they are a public or private resident, encouraging social interaction.

We are proposing 1,260m² of publicly accessible open space to be located at the end of Vasey Street. This space is eight per cent of the total site area and exceeds the council requirement for provision of public open space which is five per cent. We expect this space could include facilities such as a playground, a BBQ area and other recreational uses for the residents and wider community to enjoy.

Table 1: Overview of planning requirements for open space and what is proposed

Type of open space	Description	Planning scheme requirement	Proposal
Public open space	Open spaces that are open for all members of the community to use and enjoy.	5% of the site ²	8% of the site
Communal open space	Semi-public or semi-private outdoor spaces that are designed to be used by residents of the new development, and their guests.	2.5m ² per dwelling or 250m ² , whichever is lesser ³	4,008m ² (20m ² per dwelling)
Private open space	Balconies and courtyards for the sole use of the occupant.	Balconies ranging in size from 8-12m ² with a minimum width of 1.8-2.4 metres ⁴ Courtyard of 15 m ² , with a minimum dimension of 3 metres ⁵	Details to be provided at planning permit stage. Approx. total: balconies 1,404m ² and courtyards 4,340m ²

¹ Environmental Significant Overlay (ESO2), Clause 42.01 of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme

² Clause 52.01 of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme

³ Clause 55.07-2 of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme

⁴ Clause 58.05-3 of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme

⁵ Clause 55.05-4 of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme

Frequently asked questions

How do you know which trees are rated high, medium and low value?

An assessment of the quality of the trees has been prepared by independent consultants Tree Logic which provides information on the type, condition and the value provided if the trees are kept on the site.

What species of trees and plants are proposed?

A landscape architect will provide advice as we develop the plans. We haven't decided on the specific species of plants, but we will use a range of native and non-native species that respond well to the local environment. This includes consideration of such things as physical space, moisture, soil type and nutrients, slope of the ground, sunlight and temperature.

Our approach will be to choose tree and plant species that are well suited to the local climate, soil and water drainage characteristics of the site. We will also select low maintenance, drought tolerant trees and plant species that will likely live for a long time. All of these things will increase the likelihood of the plants' survival.

Why are you proposing a mix of native and non-native species?

We will select trees species based on several criteria including; height and spread, how thick the roots are, shape, thickness and type of leaves, how good the environment is for the trees, how long they will live, whether branches will fall, toughness and attractiveness. Some areas like the larger public and communal open spaces will benefit from large evergreen shade trees. Other areas such as the northern boundary will benefit from medium sized trees that lose their leaves when they mature (deciduous). These trees have a more open branch and leaf structure which maximises sunshine in winter. We will plant small and dense evergreen trees in other areas such as the border between private courtyards and common open spaces. We will select a range of trees that include a mix of native evergreen and exotic deciduous trees that are suitable for various areas throughout the site.

Will you plant mature trees along the northern boundary?

We understand that the most sensitive part of the site is along the northern boundary that borders the homes facing Francis Street. For that reason, we are proposing a buffer of trees and plants along that edge to increase the visual attractiveness to those homes. We intend to plant trees along that boundary that will have an approximate height of two metres on day one and will grow to an overall height of eight to 12 metres over 20 years.

Will there be fences to separate the public and private communal spaces?

No, the communal spaces will be available for all the new residents to enjoy. We may provide fences to some of the semi-private areas to prevent members of the public from accessing these spaces without being invited.

Will there be roof-top gardens?

No roof-top gardens are proposed. We heard that that community has concerns about roof-top gardens. Instead we are proposing communal spaces at the ground level.

Related reports and plans

- Tree Logic 3 January 2017, *Arboricultural Assessment, DHHS Public Housing Estate, Epsom Road - Wingate Avenue, Ascot Vale*
- Plan 7: Types of open spaces
- Plan 8: Trees - new, retained and removed
- Plan 9: Illustrative landscape plan

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