

MERENDA ON THE PARK

DEVELOPMENT PLAN
February 2015

Mernda on the Park Development Plan

The Development Plan was approved by the City of Whittlesea on 14 April 2015 in accordance with Clause 43.04 Schedule 27 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.

14/04/2015


Signature of the Responsible Authority

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Mernda on the Park Development Plan (DP) has been prepared by Urbis on behalf of Mernda on the Park Pty Ltd, to establish a framework for the future urban development of the land at 110 and 140 Sackville Street, Mernda, as shown at Figure 1.

This Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 27 to the Development Plan Overlay at Clause 43.04 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, and describes how the key features of the Development Plan area are proposed to be integrated with the emerging residential development to the north.

The Development Plan will facilitate the orderly development of the site, and will provide an appropriate transition to the Quarry Hills Regional Park to the south, as well as the currently undeveloped land to the west, which may be developed for residential purposes in the future.

The key physical elements, which have influenced the design response, are:

- The revised Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and the introduction of new urban land;
- Its southern interface with the Quarry Hills Regional Park;
- Its western residential interface with future development;
- The undulating topography and its elevation above the surrounding low level topography;
- The presence of native vegetation, particularly the most significant River Red Gum incorporated into the passive open space reserve;
- Its location at the immediate edge of the Urban Growth Boundary and its interface with rural Green Wedge land.

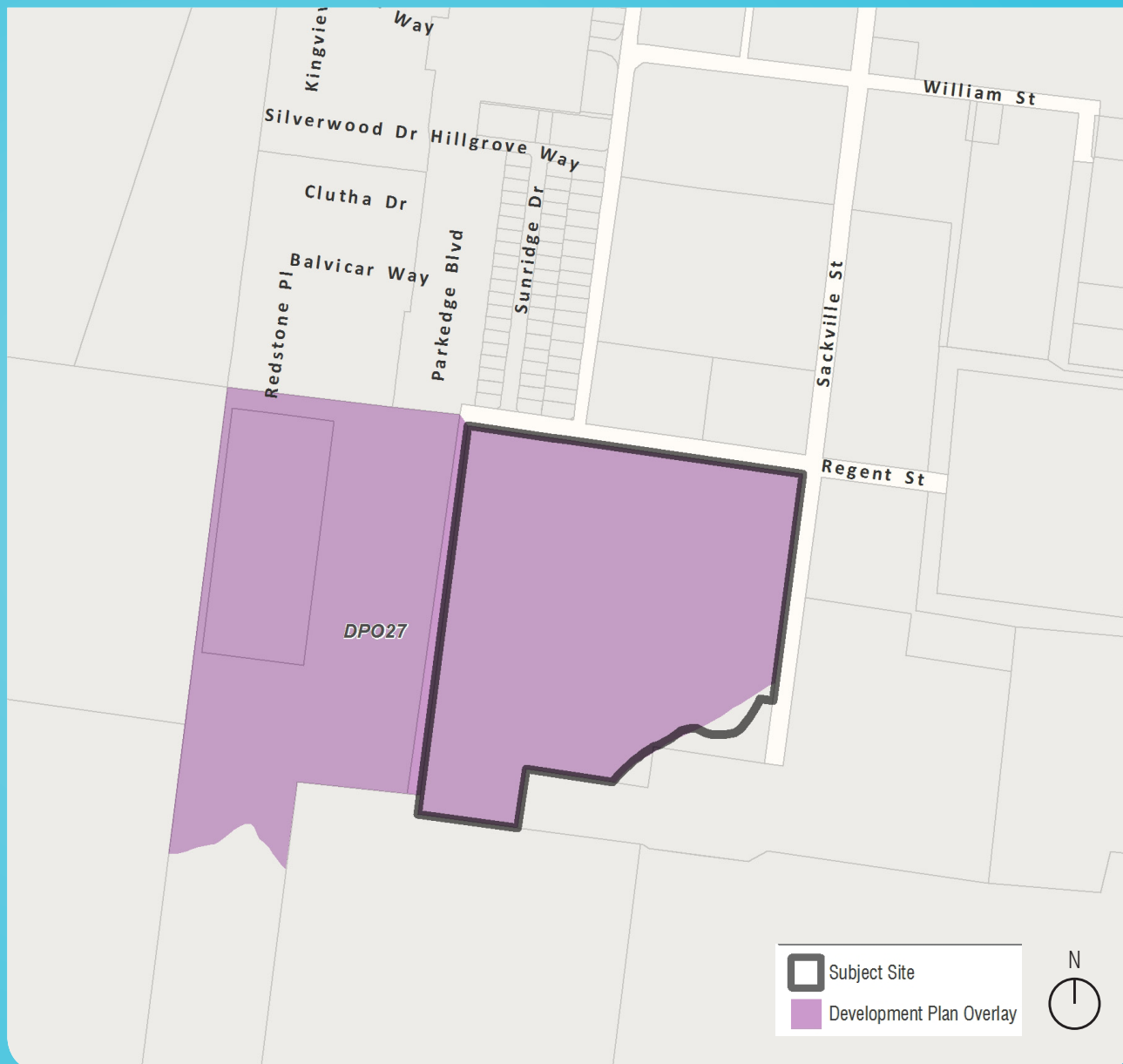


FIGURE 1 – DEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA

2 LOCAL CONTEXT AND SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT

Mernda on the Park is located approximately 25km north of Melbourne Central Business District (CBD) and forms part of the North Growth Corridor Plan, as shown at Figure 2. The subject land was included within the Urban Growth Boundary in 2010, as part of Amendment VC68.

The North Growth Corridor has good accessibility to the CBD and other major employment precincts. It features excellent road, rail, freight and public transport infrastructure, most notably Melbourne Airport and other significant logistics hub. The site is located on the eastern side of the North Growth Corridor adjacent to the identified “proposed regional open space” area, known as the Quarry Hill Parklands. The Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN) is proposed to operate along Bridge Inn Road, which is a major east west link across this part of the North Growth Corridor.

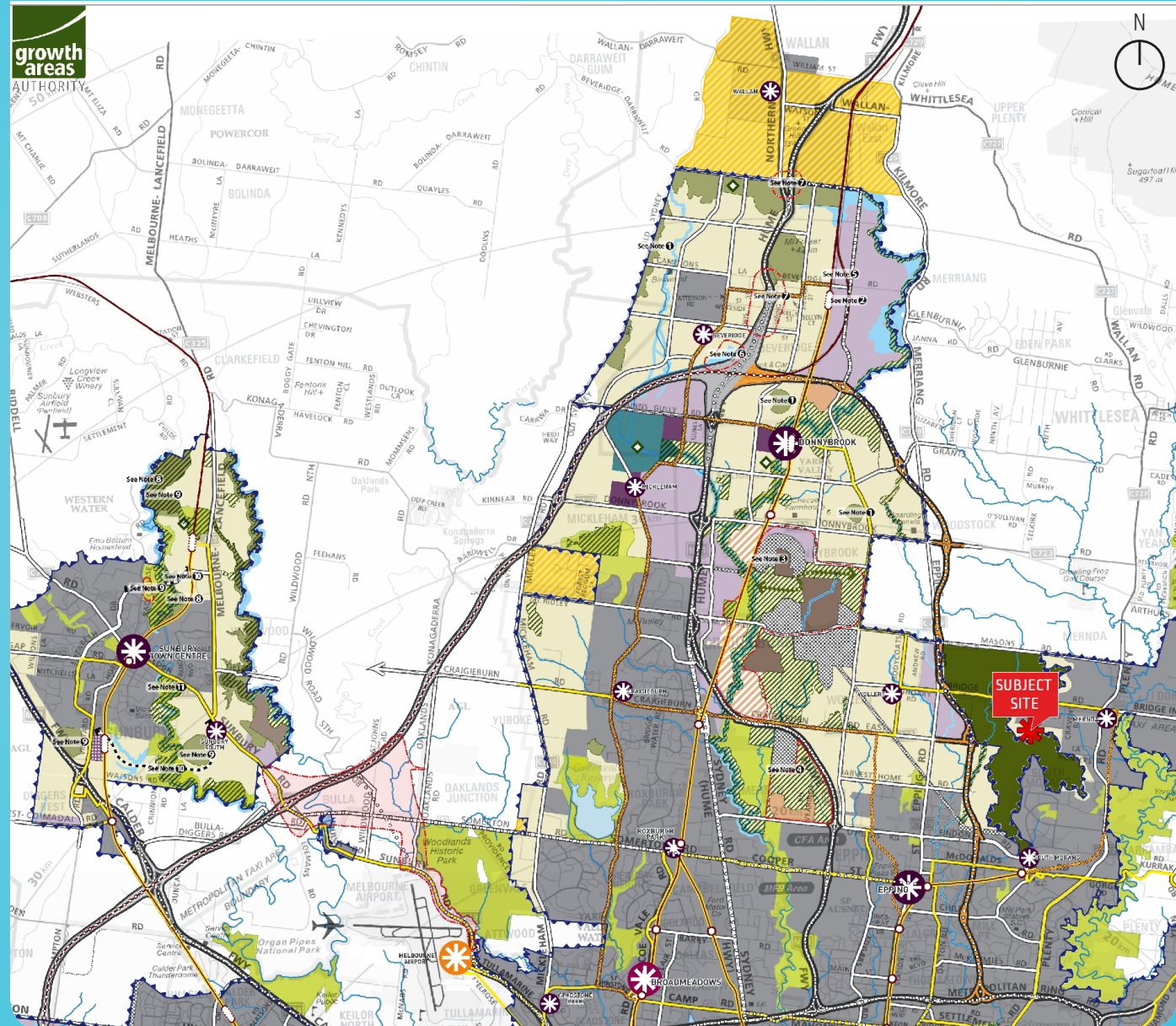


FIGURE 2 – NORTH GROWTH CORRIDOR PLAN

2.2 LOCAL CONTEXT

Land use within the Development Plan area is predominantly residential in nature, with residential development to the north, as well as further east. The proposed Mernda Major Town Centre is located approximately 2.3 kilometres to the east of the subject site. A local convenience centre is located at Breadalbane Avenue, approximately 1.6 kilometres to the east of the Development Plan area.

A number of educational uses are located within close proximity of the Development Plan area, with Gilson College located 500 metres to the north, and approximately 1.5km to the proposed Mernda P-12 State School.

2.3 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA

The Development Plan area is located at 110 and 140 Sackville Street, Mernda. It has an overall area of 10.47 hectares, and has previously been used for farming, and more recently for horse agistment. A dwelling exists on the southern part of the Development Plan area, with associated outbuildings.

The site generally slopes from the rear (south) down to a low point near the Regent Street frontage of the property. The site is largely vacant with minimal native vegetation. This is discussed further in the report. In addition, there is also some presence of European heritage on the site and this is identified on the plan as the 'Wheelers Residence' which is located on the Sackville Street frontage.

The interfaces of the Development Plan area are noted below:

2.3.1 NORTH

Regent Street is located to the north of the Development Plan area, and will ultimately be constructed as a collector street. Further to the north is residential land, associated with the Fairview and Regent residential estates.

2.3.2 EAST

Sackville Street is located to the east of the Development Plan area. Further east is land that is currently used for farming. Although the land located to the east is zoned RCZ it may be developed for residential purposes in the future, as outlined within the northern growth corridor plan.

2.3.3 SOUTH

The land to the south of the Development Plan area is currently used for farming. Further south is the Urban Growth Boundary, with land beyond this being set aside for the Quarry Hills Regional Parklands.

2.3.4 WEST

The west side of the Development Plan Area is currently bound by an unmade Council road reserve, which runs along the western boundary of the site, connecting to Regent Street in the north. Land to the west of the Development Plan area is within the Urban Growth Boundary and zoned Residential 1, indicating that this land will be developed for residential purposes in the future.

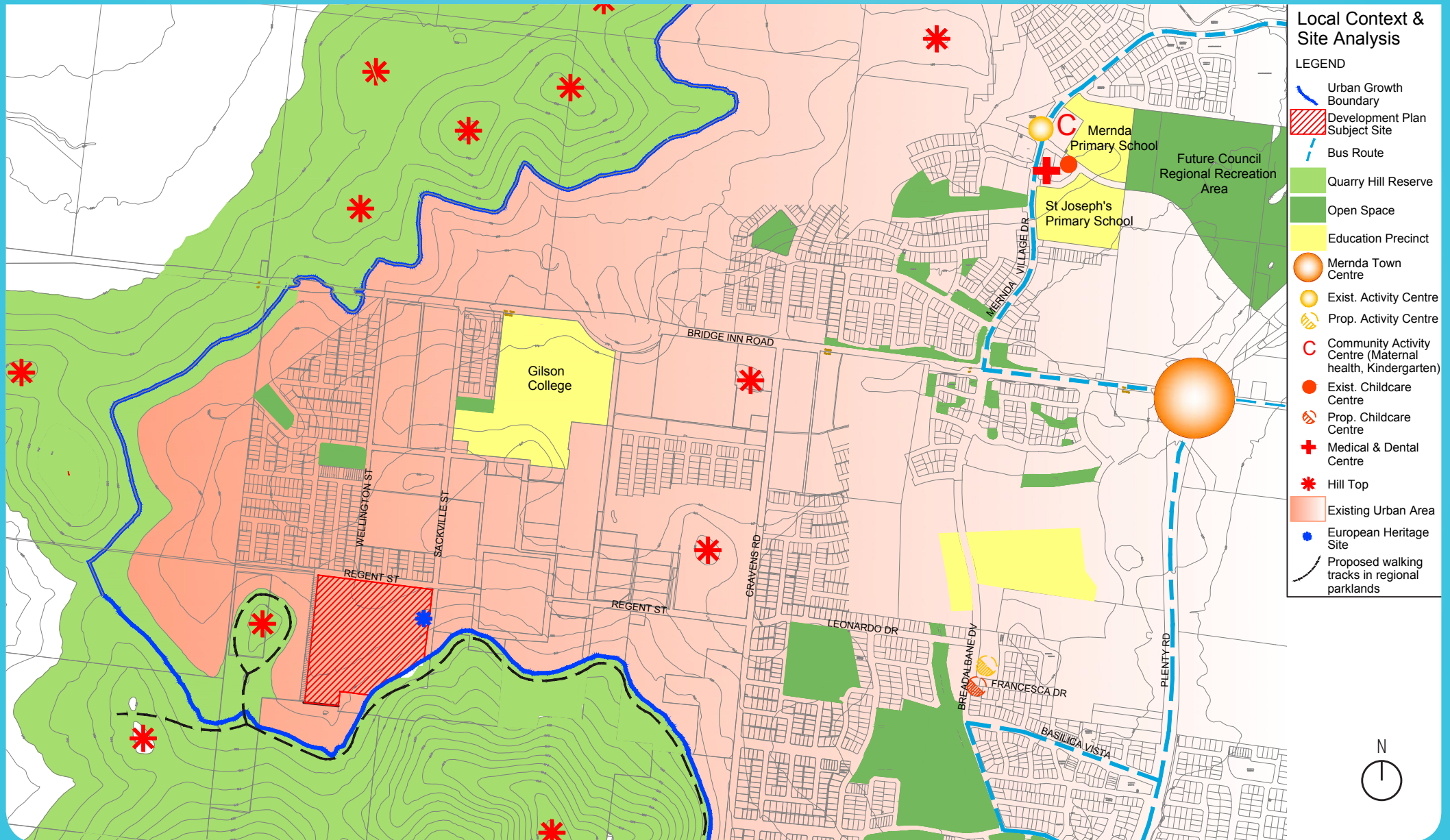


FIGURE 3 - SITE CONTEXT PLAN

3 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Development Plan, as outlined at Figure 4, offers a framework that will deliver:

- A range of residential densities and housing options to respond to the changing household make-up of Melbourne's population, which include lots ranging in size from 300sqm through to over 650sqm.
- Linkages to the Quarry Hills Parklands through the future connection of the pedestrian footpath network.
- A layout which responds to the existing landform and features of the site, which includes a more sensitive interface to the parkland area by introducing larger lots.
- A functional layout that provides for convenient accessibility to the surrounding area, including the existing residential land to the north and future residential land to the west.
- An integrated extension to the emerging neighbourhoods in the adjacent Mernda area;
- A highly permeable and pedestrian oriented development.

The major strength of the plan is that it provides a balanced design solution, between achieving the requirements for the Development Plan, as outlined at Part 3.0 of Schedule 27 to the Overlay, and responding to the site's features and constraints.

LEGEND:	LEGEND:	AREA STATISTICS:
DP BOUNDARY	Residential Land	Site Area 10.47Ha
CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD IN STAGES	Future Commercial Area	• Quarry Hills Parkland (that has not been handed over due to topography) 0.0664Ha
ROUNDABOUT	Passive Open Space	= Gross Developable Area 10.40Ha
	Quarry Hills Regional Reserve	• Passive Open Space 0.05Ha
	Land above 195 contour agreed by council to be retained with existing lot due to topography	= Net Developable Area 10.35Ha
	European Heritage Site	• Commercial Area 0.2Ha
		= Net Residential Area 10.15Ha



FIGURE 4 – DEVELOPMENT PLAN

3.1 OVERARCHING DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following overarching design principles have been central to the design of the Development Plan:

- Integration of the Development Plan area with the existing residential areas to the north, and the future development areas to the east and west.
- Provide a visual link to the adjoining Quarry Hills Regional Parkland to the south-east of the Development Plan area.
- Provide for a diverse range of housing options, which will encourage diversity in housing choice within the Mernda corridor by establishing a broad range of lot sizes which can accommodate various household types.
- Establish a permeable and efficient road network based upon a clear grid pattern, and ensure permeable sightlines for all modes of transport (especially pedestrians and cyclists) are available at all intersections.
- Retain significant native vegetation where appropriate, noting their importance within the landscape.

The residential neighbourhood will offer a diverse mix of housing types. The layout respects the sites contours and natural features and is a technique that will be used as part of the proposed layout.

3.2 COMPLIANCE WITH SCHEDULE 27 TO THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN OVERLAY

The Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 27 to the Development Plan Overlay. The Development Plan:

- Provides a road layout that will allow for integration with adjoining parcels of land, should these be developed in the future. Refer to Section 3.3.3
- Has been developed following an analysis of the Development Plan area's natural, cultural and strategic context of the site. This is discussed further below.
- Provides for an appropriate transition and interface treatment between the Development Plan area and the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland to the south-east. Refer to Section 3.3.4
- A pocket park in the order of 1,500sqm is created to retain the identified River Red Gum tree. This pocket park is located at a key viewpoint of the Development Plan area. Whilst the pocket park is bound by future residential land use, measures will be taken to ensure that the pocket park has a clear visual and physical connection to the surrounding land. Refer to Section 3.3.4.
- Designates future land uses proposed for the Development Plan area, being residential and future commercial. The location of the future commercial site, on Regent Street, ensures that the commercial area can cater to residential properties both within the Development Plan area, as well as the wider area. Its location on a collector road will ensure that the future commercial use is not isolated, and is appropriately located to accommodate expected traffic volumes. Refer to Section 3.3.2.

- Provides for a diverse range of allotment densities and dwelling types, which is comprised of larger interface lots, and smaller internal to the development. Refer to Section 3.3.2
- Provides a layout which responds to the features of the site, including topography and servicing requirements, whilst ensuring that the layout provides an appropriate built form response that takes into account the surrounding development. Refer to Section 3.3.2 and 3.3.4.
- Ensures the development of a landscape strategy (refer to Section 3.3.4) that provides for:
 - The retention of River Red Gum trees within open space where practical.
 - A response to the natural topography and site lines of the site.
 - Visual and physical links between the Development Plan area the Quarry Hills Parkland.
- Provides an arboricultural survey of all existing trees on the land, and takes into account the recommended measures for retention of the River Red Gum tree with a high retention value (Tree 52). Refer to Section 3.3.4.
- Provides a drainage strategy that provides for an appropriate drainage network that is suitable for the Development Plan area and expected development outcomes. Refer to Section 3.3.6.
- Provides for a transport strategy that allows for a high degree of connectivity and permeability. Refer to Section 3.3.3.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT PLAN COMPONENTS

3.3.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING

The land was subject to Amendment VC68, which provided for an expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), around Melbourne's growth areas, and designated the land for future development. The UGB follows the 185-195m contour, with land above the 185-195m contour to form part of the regional Quarry Hills Parkland. Land above the 185-195m contour has already been subdivided, and is now owned and controlled by the City of Whittlesea.

The Northern Growth Corridor Plan (GCP) identifies the site for residential purposes, and notes the proposed regional open space, beyond the UGB. The GCP identifies that the northern corridor will provide for a "variety of housing choices that can meet the needs of the new communities, not only on initial development but also as the community matures and changes over time". In this regard, the proposed Development Plan will guide the future development of the site and provide clear direction on the densities and lot sizes.

Land to the north of the Development Plan area (to the north of Regent Street) was approved for development as part of the Mernda Strategy Plan. Whilst the Mernda Strategy Plan does not apply to the subject site, the Development Plan has been prepared cognisant of the key objectives of the MSP, noting the following compliance with the relevant key objectives:

- *To create an interconnected set of neighbourhoods that each has a distinctive character. They should enable community participation, economic development and adaptation to change over time.*

The Development Plan provides for a layout that will create its own distinctive character. The Development Plan area, being approximately 10 hectares, is of a size that will complement the emerging development and character of the broader area. The Development Plan also allows for economic development, with the designation of a future commercial area to be located on the Regent Street frontage.

- *To put in place an efficient, equitable and environmentally sustainable transportation system that reduces car dependence, encourages walking and cycling for local trips, and supports local economic activity.*

The proposed road layout as outlined within the Development Plan, allows for an efficient and convenient road network, that allows for pedestrian and cycle connections. These connections provide for safe movements within the Development Plan area, from the residential area to the future commercial area, as well as providing for movements external to the Development Plan area.

- *To protect and enhance environmental values by applying the principles of ecologically sustainable design to the designation of open space and the construction of urban areas.*

Part of the original landholding has been transferred to Council to contribute to the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland. This adjoins part of the Development Plan

area to the south-east. The key visual links from Regent Street to the Quarry Hills Parkland are protected through the road alignment as proposed within the Development Plan.

- *To facilitate the timely provision of a range of community and recreation facilities to meet the needs of local residents and promote community health and cohesion.*

The Development Plan provides for a future commercial area on Regent Street. Whilst the use of this site has not yet been established, it may include the provision for recreational use such as a swimming pool / gymnasium and may also include a café. These uses will facilitate in providing a space for residents to meet and engage in local community activities. The final use and detail of this sight will be subject to a separate planning process.

- *To provide a mix of lot sizes and housing forms to cater for a broad range of household types. The design of dwellings should be site-responsive, energy efficient, and contribute to local identity.*

The Development Plan allows for a range of lot sizes and housing forms to be developed to cater to the broad range of housing demands. The Development Plan provides for an overall dwelling density of approximately 18 dwellings per hectare, with a range of lot sizes to be provided.

3.3.2 LAND USE AND DENSITY

The Development Plan area provides for the development of the land for predominantly residential purposes, with a future commercial opportunity provided to Regent Street.

The majority of lots within the Development Plan area will be of standard density, which reflects the existing residential areas to the north. Lots adjacent to the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland to the south-east will be lower density to achieve an appropriate transition from residential to rural land uses. These lots are envisaged to vary in size from approximately 450sqm to over 650sqm.

A variety of housing densities are proposed across the Development Plan area, to increase the diversity of dwelling types. It is expected that the development of the site will yield approximately 185 dwellings. Although the densities on the site are likely to achieve approximately 18 dwellings per hectare, various future densities may also be considered where appropriate.

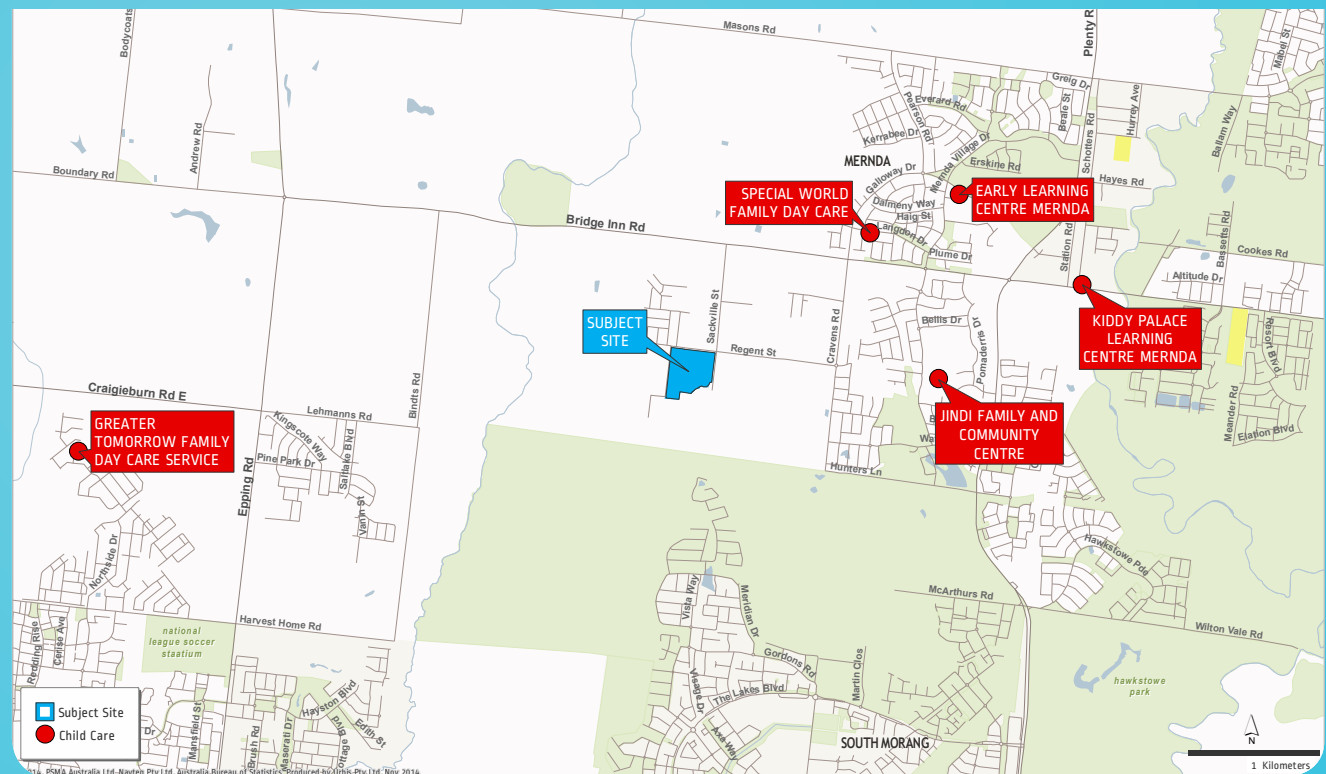
Located in the north east corner of the site, at the intersection of Sackville Street and Regent Street is an area that is nominated as a 'Future Commercial Area'. This area is able to accommodate future localised commercial activities which may include future uses such as a child care centre.

Should a facility of this nature exist in the identified commercial area, it will be relative central to a large residential catchment and is located on the strategic local road network which will allow efficient and easy access for nearby local residents.

In terms of the provision of child care centres within the broader Mernda corridor, there are no other centres within the area defined by Bridge Inn Road to the north, Plenty Road to the east, Quarry Hills parkland to the south and rural properties to the west.

Locating a centre of this nature on the corner of Sackville Street and Regent Street will allow convenient access for the existing neighbourhood and emerging Mernda community surrounding the site.

A future planning permit application in support of a child care facility will need to consider the City of Whittlesea's child care policy.



CHILD CARE CENTRES

3.3.3 TRANSPORT

The internal road network has been designed taking into required overland flow paths to cater for the Q100 storm events, as well as providing a permeable and accessible road network for vehicles and pedestrians.

The Mernda West Development Plan (MWDP) area generally includes land to the north of the subject Development Plan area. The MWDP identifies Sackville Street and Regent Street as future collector roads.

Vehicular access to the Development Area is provided via Sackville Street, Regent Street and the proposed north-south road along the western boundary of the Development Plan area. In total, there are five separate and distinct access points that will ultimately service the development. This will allow an even distribution of traffic onto the wider local road network.

Further, in relation to the proposed road network, the following is provided:

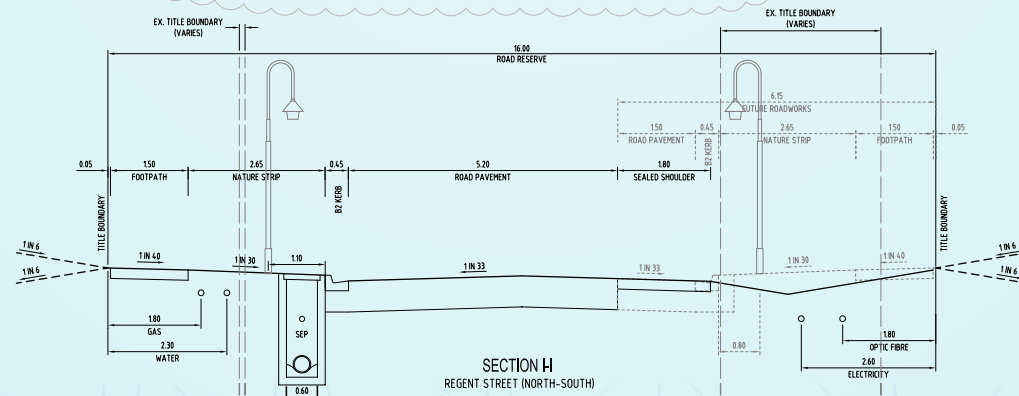
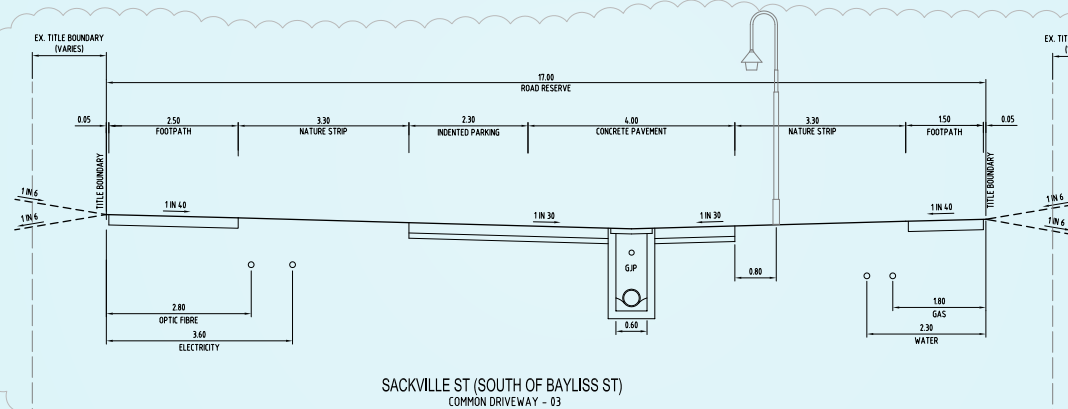
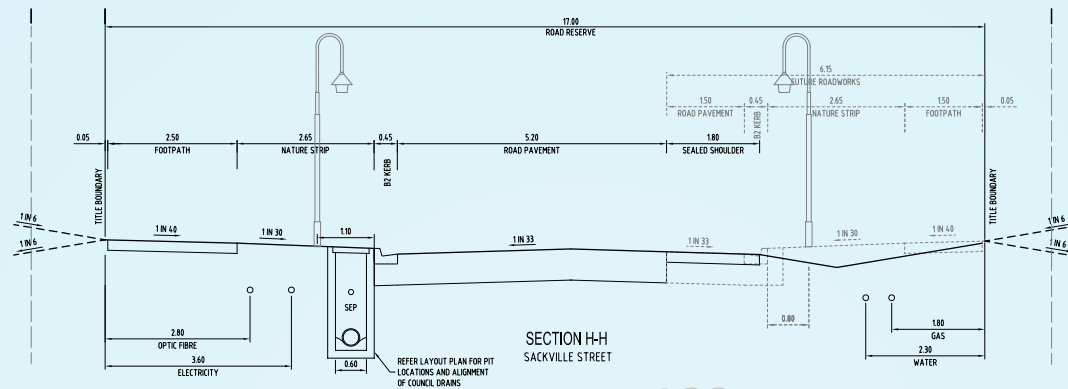
- The internal road network is comprised of access streets and provision for common driveways, with the road cross-sections consistent with the cross-sections adopted within the Mernda West Development Plan area.
- Footpaths will be provided on both sides of the internal road network, allowing for appropriate, permeable pedestrian access through the site. Extensive cycling and pedestrian links will be provided within the development that will connect into the Quarry Hills Regional Reserve and provide for safe off-road connections within the surrounding neighbourhood (Appendix F).
- The proposed road network comfortably allows for garbage trucks to collect household rubbish.
- A proposed roundabout at the intersection of Sackville Street and Regent Street which will facilitate safe vehicle movements adjacent to the north east corner of the subject site. It is anticipated this will be constructed in the early stages of the Mernda on the Park development.

The Development Plan area has good accessibility to the surrounding road network and is expected to utilise Wellington Street, Sackville Street and Regent Street to access the surrounding arterial road network. It is considered that the additional traffic generated by the Development Plan area can be adequately absorbed into the existing road network, with sufficient capacity existing within the network.



PEDESTRIAN & CYCLE PATH

The cross sections illustrated right outline how the external roads can be constructed to accommodate the ultimate design treatment which can facilitate future access to adjacent properties.



3.3.4 LANDSCAPE

The Landscape Concept for the site comprises the following key elements:

- Pocket Park
- Visual Connections
- Arboricultural Considerations
- Conservation Biodiversity

These elements are discussed below.

POCKET PARK

The pocket park, which addresses Sackville Street and the main east-west road will feature an existing River Red Gum tree. In order to retain the majority of the root zone of the existing tree and to allow the grading of the adjoin road, a wall along the northern side of the park is proposed that will retain existing levels within the park, and allow smooth grades along the proposed road and footpath. This wall will also be an important feature of the reserve. This reserve also incorporates the remnants of the 'Wheeler's Residence' and will be managed in accordance with the Historical Heritage Assessment.

VISUAL CONNECTIONS

The road pattern of the development promotes both visual and pedestrian connections across and through the site, particularly from Regent and Sackville Streets. The most important visual connection is looking south from Regent Street to the Quarry Hills Reserve. This view is maintained along one of the internal streets which extend to the south, before turning southwest, forming part of the boundary of the Quarry Hills Parkland. Views to the west will also be maintained through the three local streets accessing the road reserve on the western boundary.

The development features a logical street pattern and footpaths on each street which provides clear and direct pedestrian links through and beyond the site. Access to the proposed pocket park is provided by the internal footpath system which also provides the opportunity for connections to the Quarry Hills Reserve as pathway networks are developed.



LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN

ARBORICULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

The existing vegetation on the site has been assessed by TreeLogic. (Appendix D) They found that:

- Fifty-nine individual trees and twelve tree groups within and adjacent the site were assessed. Overall, trees on site were of low quality on the grounds of structural defects and small stature. Thirty nine native trees were recorded, , and it was established that the majority of indigenous trees within the site were planted.
- This report assessed the condition of trees within and immediately surrounding the subject site and considered their arboricultural merit. The majority of trees onsite were mostly planted ornamental or functional specimens, semi-mature in age and on average less than 6m in height, of varying origin, and quality. The majority of trees did not provide a strong visual contribution to the greater landscape The majority of native trees were not locally indigenous to the site and provided limited ecological value however, if they were to be retained, they may provide a contribution within an urban context
- Most trees attracted low arboricultural ratings on the grounds of structural defects, small stature and to a lesser extent health deficiencies. The following recommendations are made on the arboricultural grounds:
 - Specimen 52, a River Red Gum, attracted a high arboricultural rating. Strong consideration should be given to retaining the tree.
 - Sixteen trees (some exotic) attracted Moderate arboricultural ratings. Their retention should be considered where opportunity exists within the future urban context of the site and surrounds..

- The remaining rated trees that have limited value or contribution to the landscape qualities of the site should be considered whether they are appropriate within an urban context

CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY

Brett Lane and Associates (Appendix C) were engaged to conduct a flora and fauna assessment of the landholding. The conclusions reached included the following:

- Virtually the entire study area was found to support introduced vegetation. Pasture grasses and typical agricultural weeds were dominant within grazing paddocks, and cultivated lawns and planted indigenous, introduced and non-indigenous native trees and shrubs were associated with windbreaks and the homestead.
- Remnant native vegetation was found to occur as a very thin scattering of wallaby and spear grasses throughout the study area, and the occasional Tree Violet and Black Wattle sapling. During the assessment, 55 plant species were recorded. Of these, 16 were indigenous and 39 were introduced or non-indigenous native in origin.

3.3.5 ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

Alpha Archaeology (Appendix A) have assessed the landholding and determined that the activity area is not in an area of Cultural Sensitivity, and therefore does not require a Cultural Heritage Management Plan under Section 47 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act. As outlined within their advice:



Searches of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register and the relevant maps referred to in Division 3 of the regulations, together with a brief site inspection to determine landforms, have been undertaken for the activity area in Figure 1. After examination of all possible triggers it has been determined that the activity area is not in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity and therefore does not require a mandatory CHMP under Section 47 of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act, 2006.

The site has been recorded and a site card lodged with Heritage Victoria. The site is now a registered site under the Act. The Wheelers Residence is included within the open space reserve and will be subject to the recommendations of the Historical Heritage Assessment.

3.3.6 EUROPEAN HERITAGE

Alpha Archaeology Pty Ltd (Alpha) was commissioned to undertake a Historical heritage Assessment of the site. The assessment found it was likely the study area did contain historical buildings and features from the era of Separation Township which are identified by the outbuildings and old shed located on the eastern side of the subject land.

The site comprises an outhouse, well, and potential archaeological deposits at the location of the former miner's cottage (now demolished) and a refuse pit identified during oral history interviews with the former owner. Notable Victorian Sir Kenneth Wheeler resided at the cottage during his childhood in the 1920s.

The site is deemed to be of moderate significance and a number of management recommendations have been made in relation to the site.

3.3.7 SERVICING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The following drainage strategy is proposed for the Development Plan area, as proposed by PGA (Appendix E):

- The site is included within the Mernda South Development Services Scheme (4634)
- The DSS includes Scheme Water Quality Works and before development commences a contribution towards these works may be required.
- Minor (Q5) storm events to be catered for in underground drainage network.
- Major (Q100) storm events to be catered for overland flows.
- Given the size of the landholding, there is not sufficient land available to incorporate a Water Sensitive Urban Design treatment system to achieve best practice guidelines for stormwater treatment. It is more efficient in terms both the land development and for Council from a long term maintenance perspective for the project to contribute to the Melbourne Water Drainage Scheme (Mernda South) by way of Water Quality Contribution payments for which the subject site has already been included in the calculations for determining the applicable rate.
- The final layout of the site will allow for appropriate drainage solutions and will also use local street reserves to convey the flow of water.







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