

21.16 WHEELERS HILL NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY CENTRE STRUCTURE PLAN

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21.16-1 Overview

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Wheelers Hill is identified as a Neighbourhood Activity Centre in *Melbourne 2030*.

This Neighbourhood Activity Centre is located around, and to the south of the intersection of Ferntree Gully Road and Jells Road, Wheelers Hill. Other activity centres located nearby include Brandon Park Major Activity Centre (2km west of Wheelers Hill), Glen Waverley Principal Activity Centre (approximately 3.5km to the north west of Wheelers Hill) and Waverly Gardens Neighbourhood Activity Centre (3.5 kilometres to the south).

Part of the centre is located at the crest of a significant ridge that provides sweeping views to central Melbourne and the Dandenong Ranges.

It comprises a modest local shopping centre, and a mix of medical and fitness facilities, restaurants and Council facilities that provide day to day services to the local community. Surrounded by prestigious dwellings in garden settings, Wheelers Hill is a settled, affluent and attractive neighbourhood, expecting to experience only limited change.

The Wheelers Hill Neighbourhood Activity Centre has a distinct suburban character which is highly valued by the community and reflected in the City of Monash's Municipal Strategic Statement.

The profile of the local community is consistent with the characteristics and trends seen in the City of Monash. The population and households are predominantly middle aged and older families, mainly comprising households with teenage or older dependent children, and couples whose children are leaving the family home. There are fewer households with younger children. Most of the dwellings are medium to large single and double storey detached houses on single lots, with some medium density unit development.

The average age of residents is forecast to increase, with a growing proportion in the active aged category. Households will become smaller as the children leave home to establish their own households (often in other municipalities). There is likely to be an increased demand for smaller dwellings from one and two person households who are attracted by the lower maintenance of a smaller dwelling, and closer proximity to the facilities in an activity centre. There is also likely to be an increased demand for supported accommodation for frail aged people.

In meeting future housing needs, the challenge is to provide for site responsive residential development in appropriate locations that respect the residential character and amenity valued by existing residents. This suggests the need to maintain the 'status quo' of the built form in residential areas, permitting changes to neighbourhood character only when new developments make a positive contribution to the built environment.

The vision for the Wheelers Hill Neighbourhood Activity Centre is:

By 2030, the Wheelers Hill Neighbourhood Activity Centre will be an attractive, safe and highly accessible place where local residents can access shops and services to meet many of their daily and weekly needs. The centre shall include elegantly designed medium scale residential buildings to enable a greater choice of housing for the local community. The centre will provide a range of employment opportunities in enterprises that provide services to the local community.

The Wheelers Hill Neighbourhood Activity Centre consists of two distinct precincts, surrounded by an interface area mainly used for residential purpose. This interface area is considered to be the extent of the sphere of influence of the Activity Centre.

The two precincts are:

Precinct 1 – The Ridge Precinct

Precinct 2 – The Shopping Centre Precinct

The Ridge Precinct

Location: Includes the land generally adjacent to the intersection of Jells Road and Ferntree Gully Road.

Description: Mainly provides health, fitness, culture and entertainment facilities and services for people from the local area, and the wider region. The precinct is located at the crest of the ridgeline and enjoys prominent views in all directions. The precinct also includes substantial mature trees that may need to be removed as they are reaching the end of their lives.

Vision: Preferred location to provide a more diverse range of dwellings mainly in well designed and articulated medium rise residential buildings that increase housing choice in the Wheelers Hill area. Development can comprise single and mixed use buildings subject to the satisfactory resolution of design, amenity and compatibility issues.

The Shopping Centre Precinct

Location: Includes the land fronting the east side of Jells Road (Nos 190-242 Jells Road) between the rear of dwellings adjacent to the Art Gallery and Grandview Road. It also includes land on the west side of Jells Road between 171 Jells Road (Aged Accommodation) and The Deviation.

Description: Mainly used for a neighbourhood shopping centre that comprises a Safeway supermarket, associated specialty shops, and some commercial offices. The Precinct also contains a motel, some vacant land and a mixed use area comprising dual occupancies and health services.

Vision: Consolidate its role as the focus for a neighbourhood activity centre that provides shopping, restaurant, professional services and public transport services to the local community. The centre should provide civic places for informal social interaction. New development could comprise medium rise residential apartments, or uses that are compatible with the adjoining residential area. Consideration should be given to development of the Centre that comprises smaller retail and commercial tenancies, capable of providing a more diverse mix of uses consistent with the established and continuing role of the centre as a neighbourhood facility.

Interface Area (the sphere of influence around the Activity Centre)

Location: Includes the land generally within 400 metres of the Activity Centre.

Description: Mainly used for residences, comprising a large and prestigious detached dwelling on each lot. There are a few medium density developments. All of the dwellings in this precinct are one or two storeys, and most have been developed within the past 30 years. The precinct includes several local parks and some medical clinics. There are few opportunities for new residential developments due to the lack of vacant land and the relative newness of the existing housing.

Vision: Continue to provide housing for families in single and two storey detached dwellings.

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Key Issues

The key planning principles that underpin the Wheelers Hill Neighbourhood Structure Plan:

- The Activity Centre is, and will continue to be, a Neighbourhood Activity Centre that provides services to its local community.
- New development within the Centre will be subservient to the predominant landscape character of the area, while allowing a development density appropriate to a Neighbourhood Activity Centre.
- New development should be both respectful of the Garden City character and built form of Wheelers Hill, while enhancing the intersection as a focal point in the Neighbourhood Activity Centre.

- New development, adjacent to existing residential development, should respect and integrate with the scale, siting and character of the prevailing built form.
- New development should not dominate the long distance views of the Centre
- The Centre should feature high levels of accessibility, safety and convenience, and provide places that enhance local connectedness and community life.
- There is a need for a more diverse housing stock in the Wheelers Hill area generally and particularly within the Neighbourhood Activity Centre.
- Further development in and around the Wheelers Hill Neighbourhood Activity Centre should be supported by improved public transport services.
- The Monash Urban Character Study and Neighbourhood Character Guides indicate that new residential development surrounding the Centre should generally be low density and low rise.
- Ferntree Gully Road and Jells Road are main roads; however they should be managed in ways that complement the amenity and safety of the Wheelers Hill Neighbourhood Activity Centre.

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Structure Plan Objectives

The Wheelers Hill Neighbourhood Activity Centre will:

Land Use

- Provide convenient access to daily and weekly shopping facilities, primarily serving the local catchment.
- Include leisure and social facilities serving both the local and wider catchments.
- Provide non - specialist health, fitness and medical services to the local community.
- Provide residential accommodation that increase residential diversity and choice for local residents.
- Provide employment opportunities in enterprises that primarily serve the local community.

Built Form

- Be compact and moderate in scale and height.
- Retain and enhance the Garden City landscape character through integrated mature vegetation, street furniture and landscape materials.
- Ensure minimal impacts on adjoining residences through appropriate design of building siting, heights and bulk and appropriate screening.
- Provide attractive and safe civic spaces to enhance community interaction, health and connectedness.
- Positively contribute to environmental sustainability through appropriate building designs and technologies.

Accessibility

- Be highly accessible by all travel modes.
- Encourage people in the neighbourhood to walk and cycle to the various facilities within the Neighbourhood Activity Centre.
- Be conveniently linked by public transport to Principal and Major Activity Centres in the region.

Community Life

- Provide a range of non specialist medical, health and fitness services to service the local community.
- Include informal civic spaces to enable people to interact with their local community.
- Feature well designed public spaces that enhance community safety through informal surveillance, lighting and appropriate landscaping.
- Encourage the existing facilities to become a preferred location and resource for community learning and interaction.

Implementation

These objectives will be implemented by:

Policy and exercise of discretion

- Facilitate the redevelopment of:
 - 161-169 Jells Road (petrol station site) for medium rise residential dwellings
 - 869 Ferntree Gully Road (fitness centre) for medium rise residential dwellings
 - 830 Ferntree Gully Road (east of Sofia's restaurant) for a mixed use development comprising restaurants and residences above
 - 242 Jells Road (International Hotel) and land south of shopping centre for residential dwellings, aged accommodation, motel, or restaurant.
 - 190 Jells Road (Shopping Centre) as a neighbourhood shopping centre featuring civic places, smaller shops and professional services, including: the ground floor of the shopping centre to be used for shops; the development of restaurants, cafes, and outdoor dining; mixed use buildings that contribute vitality to the shopping centre.
 - 177-191 Jells Road, for consulting suites.
- Ensure that the built form is within the approved building envelopes for each site.
- Discourage the development of large scale corporate offices and comparison retailing that serve regional markets.
- Facilitate and support the development of aged accommodation close to the shopping centre, particularly on 21 Coniston Drive if the opportunity arises.
- Support non residential uses if they provide services to the local community, are located on main roads, and do not detrimentally affect the residential amenity.

Zones and Overlays

- Apply a Design and Development Overlay that defines development guidelines for all sites within the Wheelers Hill Neighbourhood Activity Centre.
- Retain the Residential 1 Zone for 161-169 Jells Road, 869 Ferntree Gully Road and 830 Ferntree Gully Road.
- Retain in PPRZ and PUZ6 respectively the Monash Gallery of Art and Public Open Space.
- Retain the Business 1 Zone over the shopping centre and the Residential 1 Zone on land south of the shopping centre to Grandview Road.
- Retain the Residential 1 Zone for the land on the west side of Jells Road.
- Retain the Residential 1 Zone for the area surrounding the Activity Centre.

21.16-4 Reference documents

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Wheelers Hill Neighbourhood Activity Centre Structure Plan - September 2007

Monash Urban Character Study, Gerner Consulting Pty Ltd

- Volume 1 – Assessment Report, January 1997
- Volume 2 – Citations, January 1997

Monash Neighbourhood Character Guide, Gerner Consulting Pty Ltd

- Volume 3 – Private Development, January 1997
- Volume 4 – Public Infrastructure and Assets, January 1997
- Volume 5 – Medium Density Housing, June 1997
- Volume 6 – Business and Industrial Character Types, June 1997

Image Enhancement of Main Roads, City of Waverley, 1992