

Strategic directions:

3. Built form

New development creates a distinctive and liveable new place.

3. Built form

OVERVIEW

The urban structure and built form of Montague is influenced by its residential and industrial past and its current service industrial role.

Consequently, Montague consists of a diverse mix of buildings reflecting different forms and eras of development. These variations contribute to the potential for a unique built form character to develop within each neighbourhood across the wider Precinct.

The area's former industrial zoning has kept building heights low (one to three storeys) punctuated by two taller heritage buildings – the Dunlop Building on Montague Street and the Laycock Building on Normanby Road.

The physical attributes of Montague, such as its strategic inner urban location, its well-defined urban structure and connections, public transport accessibility and relative lack of sensitive interfaces presents a significant opportunity for urban consolidation.

The intensification of residential and employment activity will require an increase in development heights and density.

To create a unique, highly liveable and sustainable new place, it is vitally important to ensure that new development contributes to rather than erodes existing character attributes, such as the fine grain and historic lanes and buildings.

ACHIEVING LIVEABILITY AND A HIGHER DENSITY BUILT FORM

As a 'brown-fields' renewal Precinct, Montague presents the opportunity to achieve a new higher density built form whilst also delivering on liveability, sustainability and vitality.

Compact cities with high densities are emerging as the most robust in the challenges posed by climate change. They are capable of operating on lower consumption and often produce more equitable social characteristics and access to essential services. The Precinct does not however, need to provide high-rise development throughout to deliver significant new housing and business space.

Cities such as Barcelona with 200 persons per hectare, and more recently Malmö Bo01 in Sweden (through highly sustainable buildings of two-five storeys) with a density of 120 persons per hectare dispel the myth that high density requires high rise.⁴

There are many other examples from around the world of dense cities that 'score' highly for liveability, sustainability, prosperity and cultural vitality where the dominant building typology is mid-rise.

A compact, walkable and liveable environment can be achieved through mid-rise developments of six to eight storeys, and still deliver significant density.

In the southern portion of Montague, where the historic street layout and subdivision pattern reflects a finer grain, this form of development is most appropriate and will create a unique and well-defined urban character – a real point of difference to nearby high-rise Precincts.

Higher rise opportunities do present in the area north of the light rail, where lot sizes are larger and there is no need to transition from established low-rise areas.

The quality of development and its impact on the public realm remains critical. Planning controls for Montague must ensure design outcomes which deliver a highly liveable environment with active and attractive streets.

Lessons from earlier developments in the Southbank renewal area (with attempts to now rectify) need to be heeded. As identified in the *Southbank Structure Plan 2010* "the evidence of the developments done to date is that these building heights, paired with the delivery of podiums dominated by car parking, are creating streets that are dark, windy, unwelcoming and unattractive."⁵

Built form is a major determinant of public domain amenity. Montague's future built form must be about how the place feels and functions at street level – a pleasing eye-level experience for people on the streets is critical.

⁴ City of Melbourne and Victorian Department of Transport, *Transforming Australian Cities for a more financially viable and sustainable future* (2010)

⁵ *Southbank Structure Plan*

It is important to ensure that building heights and density do not create an uncomfortable and unwelcoming experience for the pedestrian, but rather make a positive contribution to create great 'people' streets.

RETAINING THE CHARACTER OF MONTAGUE

An important but often overlooked component of place is connection to the past. An understanding of the history of a place and the things that give a place character adds greater meaning to the experience of place for both the resident and visitor.

The Precinct features a number of significant heritage buildings which reflect its industrial and residential past. New development should respect the scale and context of these important buildings.

A key characteristic of the Precinct is the fine grain pattern of subdivision and network of lanes and small streets. If not carefully managed, the consolidation of sites to achieve larger building footprints can reduce pedestrian permeability and erode this character.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR MONTAGUE

The following design principles will underpin the development of detailed planning controls (built form provisions) for new buildings across Montague.

Specific design requirements are also established in the individual actions under this Direction and in the Built Form section of each Neighbourhood.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- New building heights and density must create a positive street level environment through ensuring access to daylight, sunlight and minimising of wind effects.
- A vibrant street life must be achieved through active ground floor frontages and upper floors which overlook the street.
- New buildings must provide a clear definition between the public and private realm, to assist in delineating the street space and creating a sense of street enclosure.
- A high standard of internal and external amenity must be achieved for dwellings within the Precinct and at the interface with existing residential areas.
- New development across the Precinct must achieve urban design and architectural excellence, including best practice environmental design.
- Cultural heritage will be protected, including significant buildings and laneways.
- New development will contribute to a unique urban character for each of Montague's Neighbourhoods and support the specific land use objectives for these areas.

DESIGN ELEMENTS

The following design elements will contribute to achieving these 'principles':

- A consistent street-wall height to act as a unifying element across the Precinct.
- The characteristic hard edge alignment of built form to the street (zero setback of street-wall).
- A complementary height limit applied on both sides of the street.
- A visual distinction between the podium and upper levels of a building, through setbacks / recessed upper levels, well articulated design and the use of materials and colour.
- Ensuring development on larger sites expresses the finer grain of the wider streetscape.
- Ensuring all visible sides of a building are fully designed.
- A sensitive transition down in height to lower scale established neighbouring residential areas.
- Development which contributes to reinforcing and extending the fine grain 'grid' pattern of streets and laneways.
- Awnings or verandahs providing weather protection constructed at a consistent height above the street.
- Balconies are designed as an integral part of the street-wall.
- Buildings on corner sites address both frontages.

Create distinct built form characters across different parts of the Precinct

ACTIONS

- Create a distinct built form character in different neighbourhoods across the Montague Precinct as follows:

City Road Corridor / Boundary Street

Lower-rise development (up to five storeys) within the City Road Corridor and along Boundary Street (with street-wall height of three storeys).

Development should express a fine grain and incorporate vertical design elements to complement the adjoining established residential areas.

A lower-scale built form in these locations respects the existing urban fabric (the fine grain subdivision pattern and proximity to existing residential properties) and will provide appropriate 'edges' to the Precinct. This lower scale of development along Boundary Street will address the sensitive interface with the established residential area immediately opposite.

Southern Neighbourhood

Mid-rise development generally up to eight storeys.

Mid-rise development will allow for increased development capacity while reinforcing the existing urban structure (fine grained lane network and small sites) and ensure that the Southern Neighbourhood is distinctly different to other renewal areas.

Northern Neighbourhood

Higher-rise tower / podium style development potentially ranging from 60 to 100 metres (16-27 storeys) in height (subject to achieving design objectives).

The Northern Neighbourhood presents the most significant opportunity for substantial scale development within Montague. Taller buildings in the form of towers with podiums can take advantage of the Neighbourhood's strategic location and relative lack of constraints to development.

Interface areas

- Transition building heights and scales to the neighbouring low rise, fine grain established residential areas to the west and south of the Precinct.
- Ensure development does not adversely overshadow, dominate (through excessive building bulk), or compromise the amenity of adjacent dwellings and the character of existing residential areas.

RATIONALE

Urban renewal will establish a positive and unique new identity for Montague, while respecting the valued attributes of the Precinct and the character of adjacent areas.

The future built form of the Montague Precinct will transition from the low-rise scale in the established residential areas of South Melbourne through to existing tower forms in Southbank and Docklands.

This new built form capitalises on its proximity to Docklands, Southbank and the CBD, while recognising development constraints including smaller lot sizes, fragmented land ownership, heritage attributes and neighbouring established residential areas to the west and south.

An homogeneous built form character is to be avoided, and a tailored approach to development within the three neighbourhoods has been developed (refer Section 4.0 - Neighbourhoods).

Developing a point of difference from the high-rise development of Docklands and Southbank is also fundamental to creating a distinctive new urban renewal area.

Development in the interface areas will seek to minimise impacts on adjoining residential areas by:

- limiting building heights at the edge of the Precinct
- ensuring a compatible street-wall height is applied.

(Refer to Section 4.0 - City Road Corridor and Southern Neighbourhood.)



Ensure the scale of buildings contributes to a positive street environment

ACTIONS

- Require a zero setback of the street-wall to maintain the characteristic hard edge alignment of the built form to the street.
- Adopt a consistent mid-rise podium height of 19 metres (or not more than five storeys) generally across the Montague Precinct.
- Apply a maximum street-wall height of three storeys along City Road and Boundary Street to respond appropriately to the established lower heights in adjoining areas. This will achieve complementary heights across both sides of these streets.
- Apply a maximum five storey street-wall in Active Laneways, Connecting Laneways and mid-block links (identified in Figure 11 - Laneways framework) to protect the significant character and function of Montague's key lanes.
- Require a setback from the street-wall to upper level development to a minimum depth of five metres, to achieve a visual separation between the lower and upper levels of a building.
- A visual distinction between the street-wall / podium and upper levels of a building should also be achieved through well-articulated design and the use of varying materials and colour.
- Require a maximum tower dimension (width and depth) of 35 metres.
- Ensure the height, form and orientation minimises the creation of wind downdrafts from tower buildings. Wind modelling must be conducted early in the design process to assess the cumulative impacts of wind at ground level.

- Ensure design detail contributes to a positive street environment through:
 - Incorporating awnings or verandahs to provide weather protection along the full width of the frontage, along *Primary Pedestrian Streets* (see Strategic Direction 5 – Access and Movement, Strategy 5.1).
 - Ensuring visible service areas (and other utility requirements) are treated as an integral part of the overall design and fully screened from public areas.
- Make provision on building facades for the location of external lighting to give interest to streetscapes at night and enhance public safety.

RATIONALE

Street-wall

The first five floors in a building provide a vital interface with the street and play an important role in contributing to street life and the identity of the Precinct.

The street-wall heights in Montague will range between three and five storeys (depending on the Neighbourhood). These heights create a sense of enclosure and reinforce the pedestrian scale while maintaining sky views.

Street-walls of a consistent height will help to unify otherwise disparate and fragmented collections of buildings into a visually cohesive streetscape. The sense of enclosure is reinforced by a requirement for a hard edge to the street, where buildings are built to the front (and side) boundary.

Streets in Montague will therefore have an urban feel whilst ensuring buildings do not overwhelm pedestrians on the street. Some streets will have a more spacious, open feel, while others (such as lanes) will have a stronger sense of enclosure.

Across most of the Precinct, the required street-wall will achieve a building height to street width ratio of 1:2 as the road reserves are a generous 30 metres wide. A ratio of 1:1 is achieved on narrower streets such as Gladstone Street and Munro Street.

Upper Levels and Tower Forms

Tall buildings on larger sites must not adopt slab-like forms. Slender tower forms are sought so as not to reduce the amount of daylight to the street or to adjoining buildings, create excessive visual bulk or limit view corridors.

Application of a maximum tower dimensions will ensure daylight penetrates through to parts of the building, the street and adjoining buildings as well as reducing perceived visual bulk and maintaining sightlines between buildings.

Wind effects are usually the result of tall buildings or sharp changes in building heights. Tall buildings with minimal setback variation can increase the amount and velocity of wind, resulting in an unpleasant and uninviting pedestrian environment at street level.

Wind effects can be ameliorated by upper level setbacks, orientation and other measures to deflect downdrafts. The provision of five storey podiums and tower setbacks will also assist in minimising these impacts.

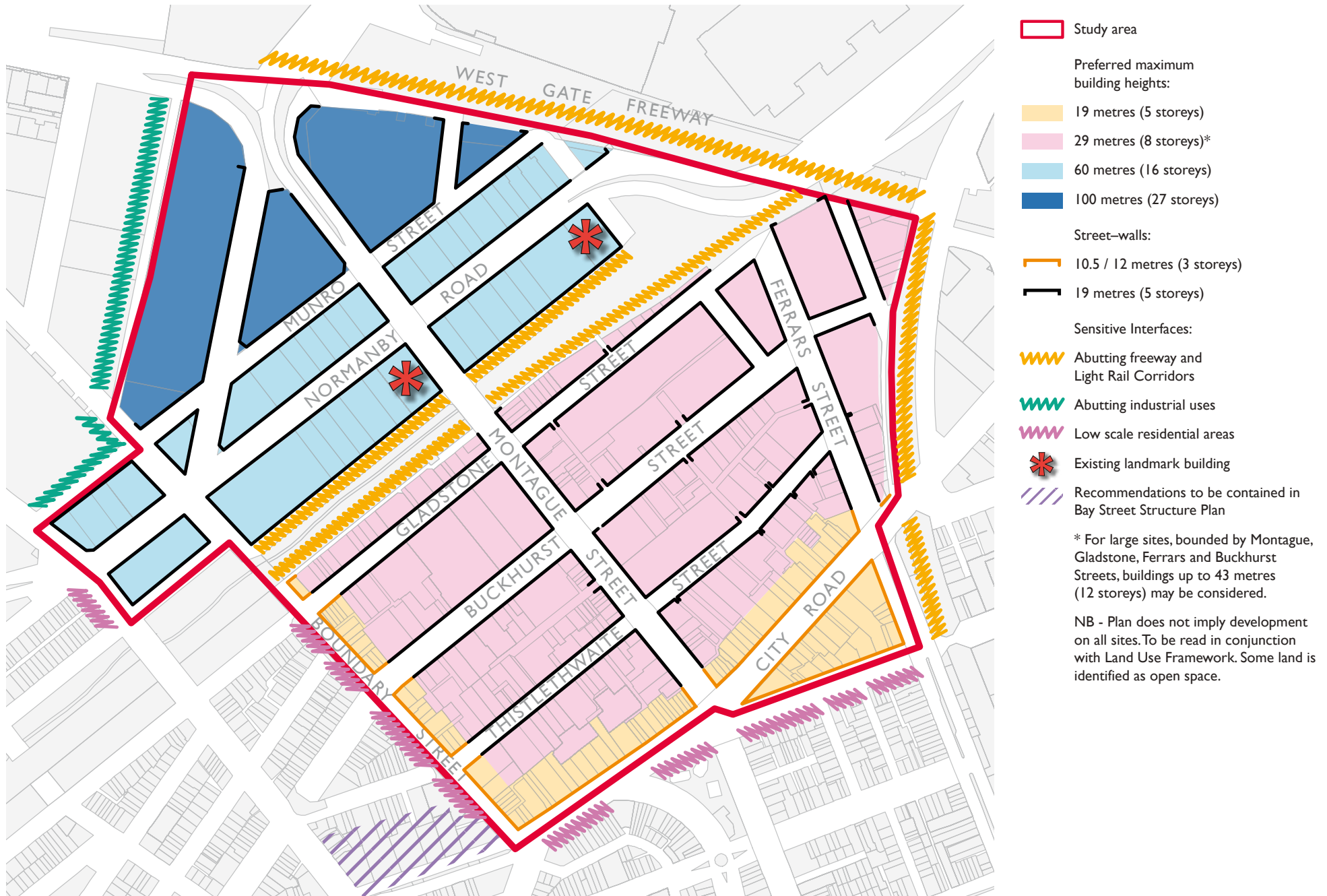
Applications for tall buildings in Montague will be require a wind report to be submitted early in the planning permit process.

Heights, Tower Spacing and Solar Access

The height, spacing and orientation of towers also contribute to (and impact on) public and private amenity, including solar access to streets and overlooking between buildings. These issues are addressed specifically in Strategies 3.3 – Solar Access and 3.5 - Amenity.



Figure 4 – Built form framework



Strategy 3.3

Maintain solar access to streets and public open space

ACTIONS

- Develop planning controls to ensure that overshadowing from new buildings does not result in significant loss of sunlight and will not diminish the enjoyment of public spaces for pedestrians.

Specific controls will ensure:

- Solar access is maintained to the footpath on primary and secondary pedestrian streets and is achieved for a minimum of two hours between 10.00am and 2.00pm at 22 September (Equinox).
- Development must not reduce the amenity of public spaces by casting any additional shadows on public open space between 11.00am and 2.00pm on 22 June (Winter Solstice).

RATIONALE

Access to sunlight makes streets and public spaces more pleasant places to be in. New buildings should be designed to avoid unreasonable impacts on the public realm.

Some overshadowing is inevitable where buildings are tall and relatively close together. Therefore, efforts to avoid overshadowing should be focused on key pedestrian streets and public spaces.

Overshadowing differs between the Northern and Southern Neighbourhoods due to the potential height of buildings.

At the Equinox (22 September) in the Northern Neighbourhood, building heights of 60 and 100 metres mean that:

- The southern side of the east-west streets (eg Munro Street and Normanby Road) receive sun in the morning but after 12 noon they are in shade.
- Montague Street, running north-south, is shaded in the morning but receives sun from 12 noon.
- The requirement for slender building forms in the Northern Neighbourhood will ensure that shadows move quickly.
- Spaces between towers will also ensure shards of sunlight at street level.

In the Southern Neighbourhood, building heights of eight storeys (or 29 metres) mean that:

- The southern side of the east –west streets (eg Buckhurst and Thistlethwaite Streets) receive sun until 3.00pm.
- The north-south streets such as Boundary, Montague and Ferrars are in sun for most of the day.

Given the high density development that is proposed, public open space is considered key to Montague's future liveability. Accordingly, stringent overshadowing requirements have been applied. A mandatory requirement has been applied to ensure overshadowing of public open space at key times of the day is minimised.

The primary and secondary streets will receive different levels of sunlight during the day depending on their orientation and the proposed building heights.

Requirements have been included in Strategy 3.5 to ensure sunlight to dwellings in the established residential areas adjoining the Precinct is protected. Clause 55.04-5 of the Planning Scheme - *Overshadowing Open Space* seeks to ensure buildings do not significantly overshadow existing secluded private open space.

Create active frontages and a vibrant street life

ACTIONS

- Develop 'active edges' at street level to primary and secondary pedestrian streets to invigorate street life and contribute to a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Require 'active edges' in the following forms (refer Figure 5 – Active edges framework for specific locations):
 - **Active 'Retail' Edge**
A predominantly clear-glazed façade (80 per cent of frontage) from footpath level to a height of two metres with pedestrian entries at least every 15 metres. This will ensure the design of new ground level premises provides for the establishment of retail activity, including cafes.
 - **Active 'Commercial' Edge**
At least 50 per cent clear-glazed between a height of one and two metres above footpath level with pedestrian entries at least every 30 metres.
 - **Active 'Residential' Edge**
Multiple entries to individual dwellings from the public realm to create a residential address to the street and clear glazing.
- All ground floor facades should be rich in detail and interesting for pedestrians.
- All buildings must also provide an active edge at upper levels, using windows and balconies oriented to the street to facilitate passive surveillance and a connection between building occupants and persons in the public realm.
- Minimise the impact of vehicle crossovers and car parking on the public realm and pedestrian experience through requiring new development to:
 - Limit the visibility of car parks from the public realm.
 - Conceal car park entries / exits and 'sleeve' car parks to a depth of 10 metres with other uses to ensure no car parking is provided at the street edge of buildings.
 - Avoid 'half' basement car parks.
 - Strongly discourage new vehicle access points along primary and secondary pedestrian streets.
 - Provide vehicle access from the rear of buildings where ever possible.

RATIONALE

The streets in Montague will be vibrant and feel safe - day and night – through the promotion of active street frontages along all primary pedestrian and secondary streets.

Active frontages allow a high degree of connection between the public realm or street and the interior of the building, providing a vibrant and interesting public realm. Active frontages also contribute to casual surveillance and perceptions of improved safety through more eyes on the street.

Across the Montague Precinct, there will be three different degrees of 'activeness' depending on the ground floor uses i.e. active 'retail' edges, active 'commercial' edges and active 'residential' edges.

Active frontages are also required at upper levels. Up to about five storeys, the presence and visibility of human activity behind upper floor windows improves perceptions of safety and interest.

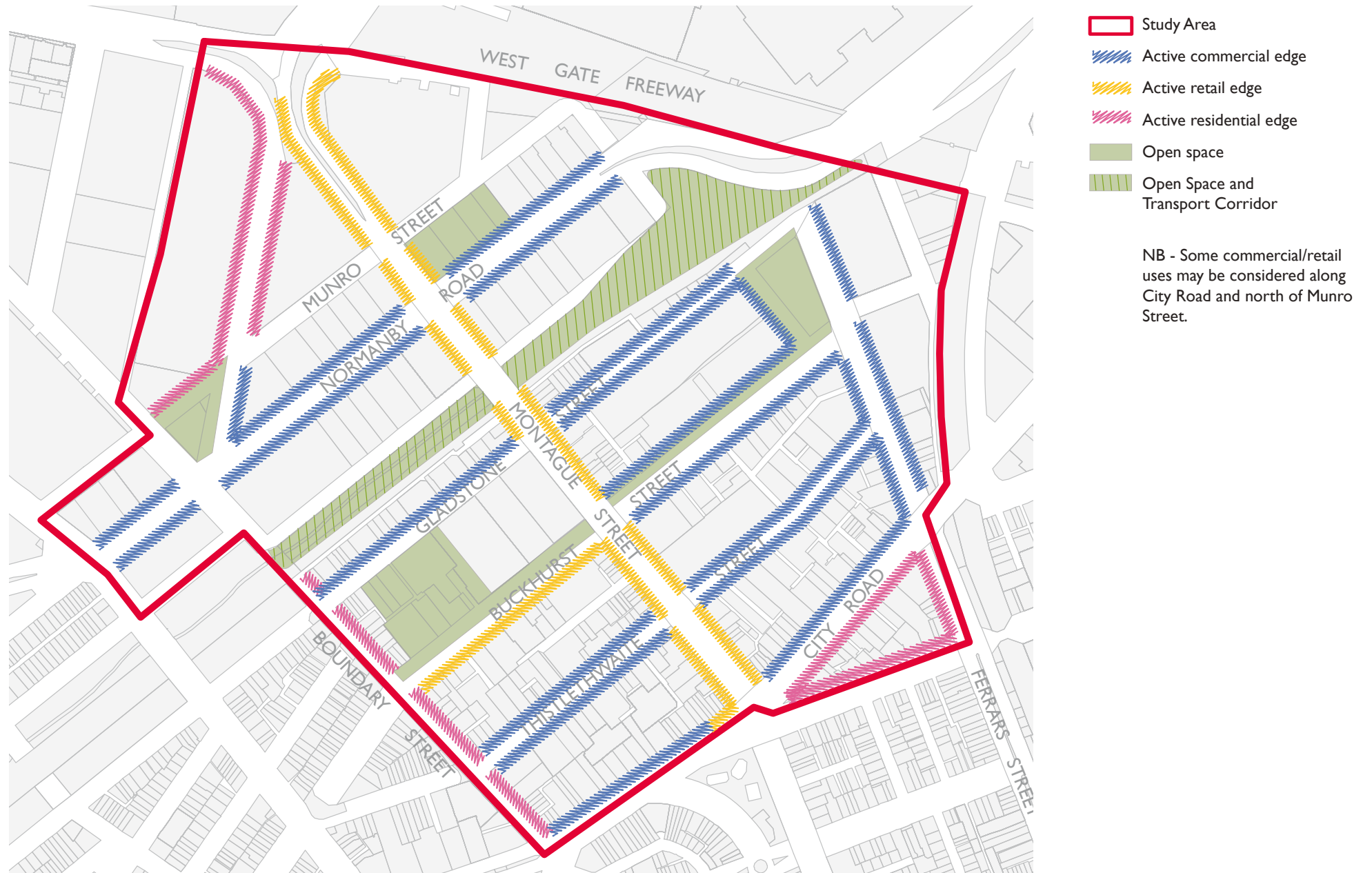
Buildings at upper levels must provide passive surveillance through orientating windows and balconies to streets. Increasing the actual and perceived surveillance can play a role in encouraging a safe and viable place.

The location of car parking in the first five storeys of a development can also have a detrimental impact on the streetscape if not well designed.

In Montague, car parking will be internalised away from the street and sleeved with apartments or business spaces. The practice of placing car parking in the street frontage of podiums is not supported as it reduces the potential for active frontages.

Crossovers and car park entrances which reduce active frontages, impede pedestrian access and undermine safety will be strongly discouraged on Primary and Secondary Pedestrian Streets.

Figure 5 – Active edges framework



Ensure a high level of amenity for housing in the Precinct

ACTIONS

- Ensure all new developments achieve high levels of internal amenity, including visual and acoustic privacy, daylight and solar access, ventilation between buildings and outlook.
- Require tower forms to achieve a minimum spacing of 12 metres.
- The height and setback of new buildings must meet the objectives of Clause 55.04-5 (*Overshadowing Open Space*) of the Victoria Planning Provisions in relation to any properties in a Residential 1 Zone.
- Require new dwellings to have access to either communal or private open space in the form of rooftops, podiums, balconies or courtyards.
- Require the provision of communal spaces, including meeting rooms and facilities, such as pools and gyms in high rise developments, to provide opportunities for social interaction.

RATIONALE

Tower spacing to protect daylight and privacy

Buildings at higher densities must not compromise access to natural daylight, outlook and privacy, including to adjacent tower forms.

Tower spacing and orientation can assist in maintaining private amenity through providing an outlook from towers, daylight access and minimising noise and overlooking.

The spacing and orientation of towers can also contribute to public amenity, through providing open sky views from street level, solar access to streets and reducing extreme wind effects.

Buildings at the Interface

The proposed built form should be compatible with surrounding land use and built form, especially established residential areas to the west and south of the Precinct. Land uses and the scale of development at these 'interfaces' must create a sensitive transition.

Communal spaces

Communal spaces should be available within all developments. Green roofs and balconies will be encouraged to achieve this aim. Shared internal spaces can also facilitate the interaction of building occupants and support the development of a strong sense of community.

Few dwellings will have private open space (other than balconies); with townhouse style developments the only ones likely to incorporate open space at ground level.

The provision of significant areas of high quality public open space areas is essential within higher density communities to off-set the absence of private space. They must offer a diversity of active and passive recreation opportunities and provide essential greening within a highly urbanised environment (Refer Strategic Direction 4.0 – Streets, Lanes and Open Space).

Maintain a fine urban grain and a highly permeable Precinct

ACTIONS

- Maintain the fine grain of existing shopfronts and commercial premises along City Road and the southern end of Montague Street.
- Maintain the finer grain of the Southern Neighbourhood through ensuring the facade of buildings with wide (or consolidated) street frontages are broken into smaller vertical sections of five to 10 metres in width to reflect the predominant scale of the wider streetscape.
- Throughout the Montague Precinct, all building façades on sites with a frontage over 10 metres must be well-articulated through variations in forms, materials, openings, colours or the inclusion of vertical design elements.
- Ensure new development reinforces and, where necessary, reinstates and extends the network of laneways within the Southern Neighbourhood and City Road Corridor.
- Ensure that new development within the Northern Neighbourhood contributes to a fine grained street system*, by establishing 'mid-block' links through larger blocks to achieve permeability and increase accessibility.

(Specific opportunities to retain and extend laneways and create new mid-block links are identified in Strategic Direction 4 – Streets, Lanes and Open Space.)

RATIONALE

The Southern Neighbourhood and City Road Corridor of Montague are characterised by a fine grain subdivision pattern and smaller scale buildings. The consolidation of smaller sites, especially along and across lanes could undermine this distinctive character.

Site consolidation can result in the loss of active frontages, a reduction in the variety of land uses (due to a number of small lots becoming a single use), and reduced pedestrian permeability through the loss of a lane or its replacement with an arcade or privatised space. Achieving permeability is also an issue in the Northern Neighbourhood where larger lots exist and there are few existing lanes or accessways and this can be further eroded through consolidation.

It is recognised that development potential (yield) may not be achievable on sites with insufficient size and that site consolidation will be necessary and desirable for this reason.

It is however crucial (and possible) to ensure that any development on large or amalgamated lots, present a fine grained appearance to the street and contribute to a permeable ground plan. This finer grain will support the provision of active frontages (through the rhythm, scale, architectural detail and window openings of development facades) to provide visual interest to the pedestrian on the street.

*A fine grained street system is defined as:

"A street and block pattern that encourages more intensive pedestrian use by ensuring parallel streets are spaces not more than 80 – 100 metres from each other; and each block has a perimeter no greater than 400 metres".

Evidence of common pedestrian behaviour suggests larger blocks discourage regular pedestrian use and therefore reduces street activity.

(*Activity Centre Design Guidelines*, Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment)

Integrate heritage and character buildings into urban renewal

ACTIONS

- Identify and protect all significant heritage places through the Heritage Overlay provisions of the Planning Scheme.
- Remove the Heritage Overlay from sites where heritage places have already been demolished.
- Encourage the adaptive re-use of both heritage places and identified character buildings which will contribute to the layering of built form and place identity of the Precinct.
- Ensure that new buildings and forms respect the historic subdivision and street / laneway pattern of the Precinct, in particular in the Southern Neighbourhood.
- Ensure new buildings which adjoin heritage places have regard to their height, scale, character and proportions.

RATIONALE

A number of sites in Montague are an important part of the cultural heritage of the area and can make a significant contribution to the future identity of the Precinct. In addition to contributing to the sense of place, look and feel, and people's aesthetic appreciation of the area, heritage and character buildings are attractive settings for business activities to establish (eg creative industries).

Facilitating development opportunities that support the adaptive re-use of character buildings will retain important cultural heritage fabric while, at the same time, providing for the transition to new more intensive employment uses.

Places currently included in the Heritage Overlay are reflected on the Heritage Framework Plan (Figure 6) are:

- City Road Industrial Area
- Wayside Inn Hotel, 448 City Road
- House, 108-116 Gladstone Street
- Rail overbridge, Montague Street
- Council Houses, 83-89 Montague Street
- Golden Fleece Hotel, 120 Montague Street
- Former Talbot Inn, 144 Montague Street
- Former Laycock Son and Co. Woollen Mill, 179-185 Normanby Road
- Former Dunlop Pneumatic Tyre Co. Mill, 66 Montague Street
- Former residence and shop, 146 Montague Street.

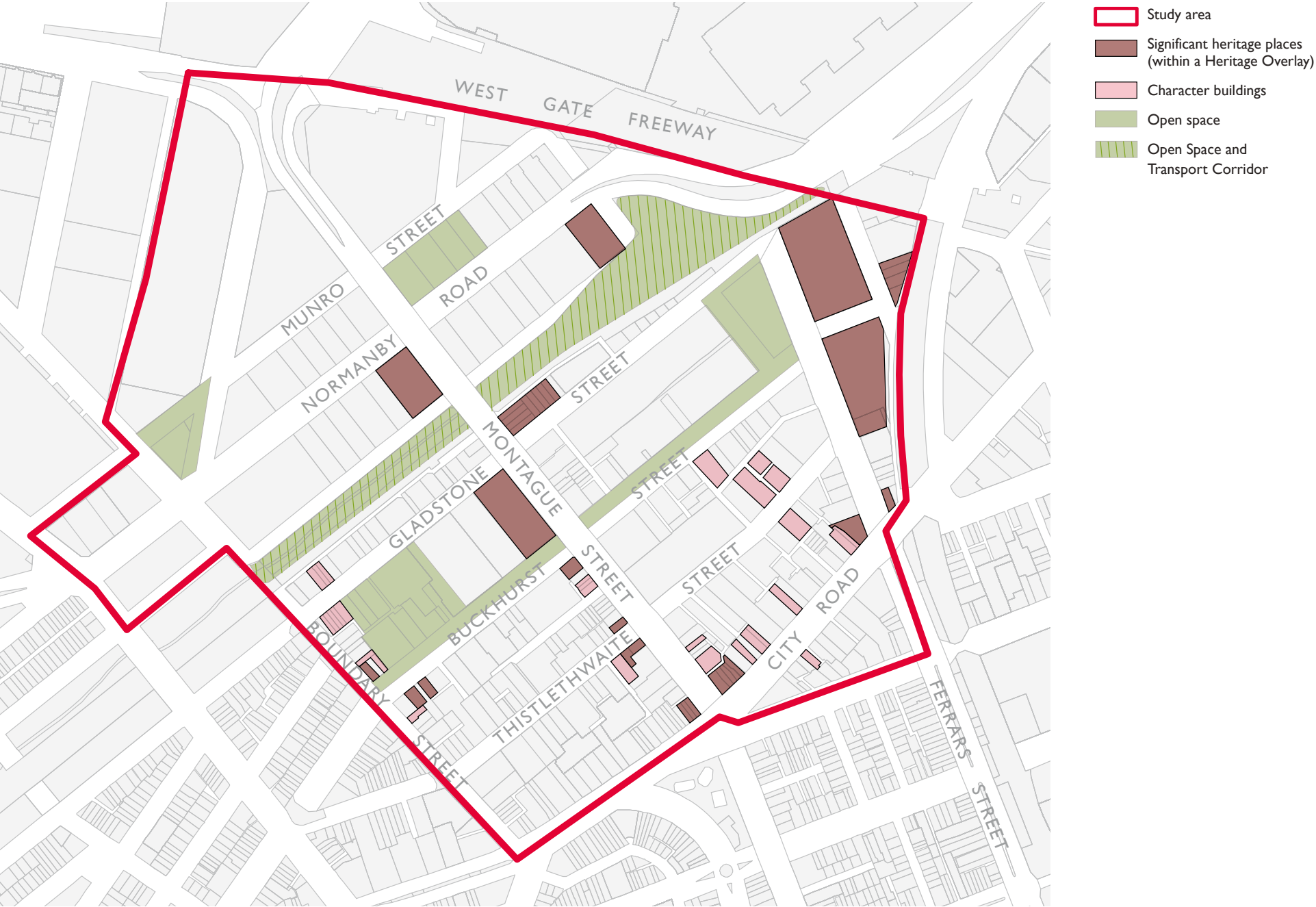
The Precinct also contains a number of buildings which, although they are not significant heritage places, do contribute significantly to the character of the Precinct.

The retention and adaptation of these buildings, through innovative design and re-use is sought. These buildings are defined in the Heritage Framework Plan. They include a number of one and two storey red brick warehouse buildings abutting laneways, which contribute to the gritty and intimate character of the Precinct.

The adaptation of these character buildings provides alternatives to new developments, and can offer more affordable spaces for residents and businesses choosing to live and locate in the Precinct.



Figure 6 – Heritage framework



Strategy 3.8

Develop buildings that are flexible and adaptable

ACTIONS

- Ensure ground floor premises are designed to enable commercial uses (and maintain the potential for conversion to alternative uses in the future) through requiring a minimum floor to floor height of 4.5 metres.
- Require a minimum floor to floor height of 3.5 metres for all upper floor levels.
- Construct car parking included in the podium with a minimum 3.5 metre floor to floor height to allow for future adaptability to residential or commercial uses.
- Design car parks with flat floor plates to allow future re-use and adaptation.

RATIONALE

Buildings that are designed to be flexible in use are more sustainable as they can be adapted over time. Commercial buildings that can convert to residential buildings (and vice versa) create a flexible living and workspaces of different types, sizes and costs that can meet different needs and respond to social and economic change.

This approach will ensure buildings that can be easily retrofitted, or reconfigured to better meet the changing needs. It can extend a building's useful life and reduce demand on raw materials and energy.

