

THE ST KILDA FORESHORE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

In 2001 the Council commissioned the preparation of the St Kilda Urban Design Framework Plan (UDF). The UDF identified opportunities for improvement and integrated management of the foreshore. In July 2004, the UDF was approved by the Minister for Planning and incorporated into the Port Phillip Planning Scheme along with site specific planning controls to allow for the development of the Triangle Site as an entertainment and leisure precinct, with significant public spaces. The site is subject to a Development Plan Overlay which incorporates the UDF. This requires that a development plan must be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. Any subsequent permit must generally be in accordance with the development plan. The permit is exempt from the normal third-party review rights at VCAT.

For the full Urban Design Framework see [St Kilda Foreshore UDF](#)

EXTRACTS FROM ST KILDA FORESHORE UDF THAT RELATE TO THE ST KILDA TRIANGLE

St Kilda Urban Design Framework presents an integrated approach for the future development of St Kilda Foreshore. It focuses on improving the public domain and the interface of the public domain and private realm.

WHY AN URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR ST KILDA FORESHORE?

St Kilda Foreshore is a special place. It has a particular environmental setting, cultural history and role in the Capital City and metropolitan Melbourne that is unique to anywhere else. These elements have created particular patterns of built form, use, movement, identity and image which, together, contribute to its special character.

This Framework identifies ways to sustain the Foreshore's treasured buildings, structures and places, improve its public spaces and reinforce the distinctiveness of its landscape, built form and established pattern of use. It promotes environmental sustainability, ecological awareness, safe pedestrian access and an equitable sharing of spaces and access.

Many key sites in the area are in Government ownership. The Framework makes recommendations on what uses ought to be encouraged on these sites to maintain valued Foreshore aspects. It specifically looks at how existing, substantial portions of Crown land could be best managed for the future and recommends potentially suitable mixes of use, built form, scale and location for any new buildings and structures.

In the past, there have been numerous attempts to plan the future of St Kilda Foreshore, as well as a number of major redevelopment proposals which have not been seen consistent or cognisant of the vision and values that St Kilda and Melbourne people have for this place.

This Framework was prepared to address these concerns and the perceived shortcomings of previous plans. It includes a design and a planning strategy, which seek to balance the needs of local residents with the Foreshore's important metropolitan and tourism role to retain the viability of its leisure and entertainment aspects and the ecological future of the Bay.

Importantly, once endorsed, it will guide Council and State Government decision making on development and improvement of the Foreshore—its future use, built form and landscape.

For the purpose of this Framework, the St Kilda Foreshore area comprises the foreshore from West Beach and St Kilda Harbour to St Kilda Marina, including inland the associated sections of Beaconsfield and Marine Parades, Alfred Square, Upper Esplanade and its intersection with Acland Street, O'Donnell Gardens, Shakespeare Grove and the VegOut community gardens site. A major element for the Framework is the St Kilda Triangle Site, comprising Luna Park, Palais Theatre, Palace Nightclub and associated car parking.

Opportunity 9

St Kilda Triangle site

A new public space to the west of a reinvigorated Palais Theatre, supported by a variety of indoor and outdoor entertainment and cultural venues envisaged in a new contemporary building. The feasibility of retaining and improving the existing Palace should be assessed as an option.

The objectives and strategies section outlined general approaches to improving the public realm. It also identified a number of **specific design principles** for St Kilda Triangle site:

- Define and strengthen the visual and spatial qualities of public open space with sympathetic new development, specifically on the St Kilda Triangle site.
- Ensure the continued viability of existing landmarks and attractions including Palais Theatre.
- Improve the attractiveness of places that embody the cultural heritage of St Kilda and ensure the continued viability of existing landmarks and attractions including Palais Theatre.
- Encourage new uses that will support existing attractions and assets including Palais Theatre.
- Ensure that iconic buildings, items and places, such as Palais Theatre, are maintained

and that any development around them is coordinated with them.

- Maximise the identifying and visually organising potential of existing vista termination points and create new ones at key locations, such as the St Kilda Triangle site.
- Recover ‘lost space’—spaces that are dominated by vehicles or are unkempt—by creating new attractive and interesting places particularly along Shakespeare Grove and next to Palais Theatre.
- Implement standardised, controlled, at grade intersections, where possible, and minimize the distance pedestrians need to cross.

How can the design principles be achieved?

The St Kilda Triangle site is a public asset that should be improved and maintained for future generations to enjoy. Maintenance of the Palais Theatre building and improvements to surrounding public space require substantial financial investments to ensure long term use and viability, which depends on a mix of private and public investment. It is imperative that public benefit is maximised by private investment in facilities that maintain the traditional, cultural use of this site.

Framework recommendations for the site emerge from a number of considerations: There is a need for backstage space for Palais Theatre, which can only be achieved by a new building at its rear. The land west of the Palais needs to be kept relatively open to preserve views from Upper Esplanade. The Palace Entertainment Complex building does not currently provide sufficient flexibility for cultural activities. Consequently, there is a need to include more floorspace on the site to get the right mix of complementary activities and to provide future space.

The Framework envisages a new building at the western end of the site, which would repeat the Foreshore pattern of a pavilion building in open space and complement the Palais Theatre building. It further recommends the creation of a new public plaza on the site to interlink existing and proposed buildings and associated activities, as well as to provide durable space for festivities. This space needs to be protected from the elements and, to make it attractive, shops or studios are proposed under a terrace extension of Upper Esplanade.

In the development of the St Kilda Triangle site, the feasibility of retaining and improving the existing Palace Entertainment Complex should also be assessed as an option, applying the proposed design principles for the Triangle site and the Foreshore as a whole.

In any development of the St Kilda Triangle site, it will be important to:

- provide security of leases and allocation of additional space where required,
- set design parameters for future improvements including three-dimensional relationships and maintenance of views and vistas from Upper Esplanade,
- develop complementary activities on the site,

OPPORTUNITIES AND PROPOSALS

- ensure that the shape and fabric of any additional buildings improve the visual amenity of the site in keeping with its setting, and
- ensure that any new development is constructed to minimise noise transference through high quality facility design, landscaping and buffer zones.

Is a western building a good idea?

The vision to include a building on the western end of the St Kilda Triangle site was made for a number of reasons:

Leases on Palais Theatre and the Palace Entertainment Complex building are due for renewal in the near future and need to be considered in the context of viability. A new building and (or) improvements to the existing building would allow floorspace for activities that support cultural heritage. Without increased floorspace, opportunities will be lost.

Furthermore, new and (or) improved development will help define and strengthen the proposed creation of public open space on the St Kilda Triangle site, providing activities which increase its attractiveness and sense of security in the way Vineyard Restaurant contributes to O'Donnell Gardens and Kirby's Café to the end of St Kilda Pier. Importantly, it will provide pedestrian activity along Jacka Boulevard.

Community consultation revealed an alternative desire to develop the site as a quiet contemplative space. The Framework recognises the need for contemplative spaces along the Foreshore, but proposes that these are already provided in Alfred Square and Catani Gardens. It is not envisaged, however, that any new public space at the St Kilda Triangle site would always be buzzing with activity. For the most, it is likely to be a relatively quiet space due to protection from traffic and the provision of ample room for users.

How high should new buildings be?

Before determining the height, layout, or design of any new building on the site, there is a need for detailed analysis. New buildings need to be carefully sited and kept relatively low so as not to block views to Palais Theatre, or important seascape views from Upper Esplanade.

It is particularly important to retain the serial seascape and beachfront views and glimpsed vignettes across the St Kilda Triangle site from locations, such as the Jesse Fairchild Memorial on Upper Esplanade to:

- Williamstown,
- the Sea Baths domes,
- Marina Lighthouse,
- Stoke House restaurant,
- Catani Arch, and
- the horizon.

Decisions on any new built forms on this site must also take into consideration the views towards the Luna Park entrance—Mr Moon—and St Kilda Hill from the view arch at the

lower Foreshore level between Upper Esplanade and the Beach.

Any building on this site will be visible in places from Upper Esplanade, but overall, with the recommended improvements including the removal of the existing three-storey Palace Nightclub building, it is certainly possible to retain the views.

What about car parking?

While it is important to provide better public transport access to St Kilda Foreshore, there will still be a need to provide for car parking, as well as to reduce the impacts of on street parking. The St Kilda Triangle site currently accommodates approximately 300 parking spaces. This number will need to be retained and additional spaces provided for any new uses and to retain and enhance the attractiveness of Palais Theatre as a venue. There is also an opportunity on this site to replace surface parking currently existing elsewhere on the Foreshore and provide car spaces for St Kilda Harbour and other uses. These can be provided underground. The final number of car spaces provided needs to be determined in association with final plans for the site, but it appears from the Framework investigations that a total of approximately 900 spaces could be possible.

Proposals

P9.1 Construct a new building at the rear of Palais Theatre to provide for backstage facilities. Preferred supporting uses for this building would relate strongly to the precinct's cultural and entertainment heritage, and could comprise dance and entertainment venues, cinemas, galleries, a bar or nightclub. Other possible uses may include a small hotel, reception and conference centre, restaurant, artists' studios or retail.

P9.2 Investigate the opportunity to remove surface car parking and replace with underground parking in association with new development.

P9.3 Create a forecourt space to Palais Theatre incorporating Lower Esplanade and with steps leading to Upper Esplanade.

P9.4 Improve the forecourts to both Luna Park and Palais Theatre, using complementary surface treatments and improving pedestrian interconnectivity.

P9.5 Create a predominant new public plaza west of Palais Theatre, incorporating some structures for shops, studios and activities to front it. Some of these can be located under a viewing platform extension to Upper Esplanade.

P9.6 Replace the Palace Entertainment Complex building with an improved, contemporary building adjoining a new plaza, which retains views from Upper Esplanade to the horizon and which creates a sense of visual connection to the beach and with other key destinations. The Framework envisages replacement of

the Palace Entertainment Complex, but the retention and improvement of the existing building is also an option. Any new building(s) should retain the use of the Palace Entertainment Complex, be publicly accessible and provide for cultural and entertainment uses, such as a dance venue, cinema, ice skating rink, and artists' studios, craft shops and gallery space. The new and (or) improved building(s) could incorporate basement car parking and an upper level pedestrian link across Jacka Boulevard.

P9.7 Construct a sound shell/performance space in association with the new plaza and provide high quality landscape treatment, including both hard surfaces and parklike spaces. Landscape themes can include both hard and parklike spaces.

P9.8 Improve landscaping in Cavell Street and investigate its use for bus parking

P9.9 Create active frontages to buildings that face Jacka Boulevard, where possible and appropriate.

P9.10 Protect views to the entrance of Luna Park, including unobstructed views from Upper Esplanade.

P9.11 Consider the siting and height of any new built forms on the St Kilda Triangle site in relation to:

- the range of distances from which the various parts of the development and important features of its surrounding context can be seen,
- the relative number of people likely to see views such as the Luna Park entrance—Mr Moon— from South Beach and approaching vehicles on Jacka Boulevard,
- the length of time during which each view can be experienced, and
- the quality of the view experience.

Refer to Fig. 23: Proposed statutory boundaries of the St Kilda Triangle site.

See also: Opportunities and proposals—Fig. 19: Spatial clusters —Proposed boundaries, Appendix 3/1—Fig. 29: Illustration, Appendix 3/2—Fig. 30: Framework concepts.