

**22.08 NORTHCOTE ACTIVITY CENTRE**15/10/2015  
C138

This policy applies to all land in the Northcote Activity Centre as identified on Map 1 Activity Centre and Precincts forming part of this policy.

**22.08-1 Policy Basis**15/10/2015  
C138

The purpose of this policy is to implement the recommendations and strategic directions of the *Northcote Activity Centre Structure Plan, April 2007* (NAC Structure Plan).

The NAC Structure Plan provides the strategic basis for this policy by building on:

- the MSS objectives for activity centres
- Council's Activity Centres Policy (Clause 22.03)
- the *High Street Urban Design Framework, 2005* and *High Street Precinct Guidelines, 2005*
- Clause 12 of the SPPF.

**22.08-2 Objectives**15/10/2015  
C138

- To ensure use and development within the Activity Centre is generally in accordance with the NAC Structure Plan.
- To ensure the Activity Centre is developed in accordance with preferred built form outcomes including as set out in the *High Street Urban Design Framework 2005* and *High Street Precinct Guidelines, 2005* where relevant.
- To reinforce High Street as the core retail and commercial activity spine.
- To provide physical form and services that seek to create a more ecologically sustainable activity centre, including through incorporating principles of environmentally sustainable design.
- To encourage a diversity of use and development focused around walking, cycling and public transport as the preferred forms of access.
- To preserve and protect key public views and vistas from the All Nations Park hilltop and the central city skyline from Ruckers Hill.
- To improve pedestrian access between key destination points.
- To encourage increased residential development throughout the Activity Centre.
- To support a mix of uses, activities, services and facilities that enhance the economic, social and environmental viability of the centre.
- To develop the Activity Centre as a regional arts and culture node through a range of visual arts and live music venues and support services to the arts and design community.
- To encourage innovative solutions that enable a diversity of living and working opportunities, with a focus on maintaining and providing affordable housing and employment spaces.
- To maintain strong historic links to social and cultural diversity, including recognition of indigenous cultures and migration.

**22.08-3**15/10/2015  
C138**Policy****General**

- Consider the NAC Structure Plan when assessing land use and development proposals in the Activity Centre.

**Centre roles and boundaries**

- Consolidate development within the Activity Centre in order to promote a walking catchment to economic, transport and community facilities.
- Establish a focus for business and social activity through a range of day and night time activities within a central core.
- Create a focus for convenience retailing, supporting business and community activities around the intersection of High Street and Separation Street / Arthurton Road.
- Support development and redevelopment that encourage pedestrian based activity in and around the High Street and Separation Street / Arthurton Road pedestrian spines.
- Ensure proposals for late night uses minimise amenity impacts on residential uses, particularly those located in residential zones.
- In business zone areas support and encourage a mix of:
  - day and night-time activity to consolidate and enhance the Activity Centre's regional retail function and role
  - entertainment uses which are operated and designed to minimise land use conflict
  - business use at ground level with residential above.
- Support opportunities for incorporating mixed use living and work spaces throughout the centre.

**Housing**

- Promote increased density in housing in designated areas of moderate and high change.
- Ensure new development advances the social and community values of Northcote by providing a range of housing types and floor plans to maximise housing affordability and accessibility for all members of the community.
- Support the provision of social and community based housing.
- Encourage new residential use above ground floor levels in the retail core.

**Economic Development**

- Increase and improve the provision of locally based jobs and business growth.
- Encourage the development of office accommodation to complement the core retail area of High Street, particularly on large development sites on Arthurton Road and High Street.
- Ensure housing is located in places that can support employment and entertainment activity in the Centre.
- Reinforce High Street as the core retail and commercial activity spine through encouraging within the strip:
  - a variety of businesses, particularly those that offer quality fresh food, and other convenience household items
  - convenience retailing from Robbs Parade to the Town Hall, with primary convenience shopping promoted between Robbs Parade and Hawthorn Road

- the addition of a fresh food based supermarket that reinforces and facilitates active frontage
- promotion of a range of day and night time activities, including niche retail and entertainment facilities.
- Nurture further development of the emerging creative arts sector in an identified Creative Communities Precinct through continued support for arts, design and related small and home-based businesses in new and older adapted buildings.
- Encourage opportunities for growing the evening economy.
- Ensure potential conflicts between business and residential uses in mixed use precincts are managed to ensure long term economic viability.
- Promote the redevelopment of properties along Helen Street to provide a better interface with the Arthurton Road car park with a range of live/work developments.

### **Transport and Access**

- Maintain an attractive living environment by:
  - supporting pedestrian activity as the primary form of access, including through infrastructure improvements
  - improving pedestrian links between Northcote Plaza, High Street and Northcote Station, including through development designed to increase personal safety.
- Minimise the impact of travel on the local character by:
  - supporting public and community based transport as the secondary form of access
  - ensuring new development improves linkages between public transport and key destinations, incorporating better transport interchanges and waiting areas where appropriate.
- Maintain economic viability for businesses by:
  - ensuring vehicle access is the third and subsidiary form of access
  - maintaining, upgrading and providing additional pedestrian and cycle links/paths.
- Make the most effective use of existing car parking for a range of day and night time users.
- Support the provision of off-street car parking associated with new development that is accessible to multiple users as part of a shared use arrangement.
- Ensure built form and development is focused around public and community based transport systems that support the majority of resident and workforce travel needs.

### **Urban Design and Heritage**

- Conserve and incorporate heritage elements into new development where viable to acknowledge and enhance the social and cultural history of Northcote.
- Improve civic and streetscape spaces to promote social and economic vibrancy within the centre.
- Focus High Street as a pedestrian promenade for convenience and niche retailing and entertainment.
- Recognise and conserve the significant heritage and valued urban character elements of the Activity Centre.
- Ensure new development creates human scale spaces that promote casual interaction, including between neighbours.

- Incorporate preferred building heights, setbacks and other design principles to encourage a pedestrian friendly environment at street level and consolidated built form that promotes sustainability.
- Encourage the incorporation of public seating and public and community art works into major new developments and redevelopment of existing forecourts.
- Encourage development that incorporates best practice environmentally sustainable design features.
- Encourage active frontage at ground level and opportunities for casual surveillance from upper levels to enhance personal safety.
- Maintain, improve or create key public destination points in identified areas.
- Design development to minimise noise impacts from entertainment and commercial uses and ensure new residential use and development in business zones incorporates noise attenuation measures to protect occupants from such activities.

### **Community Identity**

- Make appropriate provision for community services to meet the needs of Northcote and the broader region
- Provide a range of open spaces for community gathering and enjoyment of views.

### **Precinct requirements**

The following policies apply to the ten precincts identified in Map 1 Activity Centre and Precincts. These should be read in addition to the general policy requirements detailed above and should also be met.

#### **Arthurton Road – Precinct AR**

This precinct provides opportunities for a revitalised office and commercial-based mixed use hub. Redevelopment should maximise employment opportunities and activities which support the retail spine of High Street and facilitate active frontage to Arthurton Road.

#### *Use*

- Encourage a range of:
  - uses with a focus on business, employment and mixed use activity, including complementary retail, to support the retail core of High Street
  - housing types including a proportion of affordable housing and provision for flexible dwelling floor plans.

#### *Built form*

- Design new development and re-development to:
  - maximise opportunities for intensive multi-storey development and avoid underdevelopment
  - provide an appropriate built form transition at identified interface areas within and between precincts
  - respect the key views from the All Nations Park hilltop to the west
  - facilitate active frontage to public and private streets, car parks and pathways
  - incorporate additional or improved walkways or streets to improve access within the precinct and between the precinct and key destination points within the activity centre.

**Central Northcote – core convenience retail – Precinct CN**

This precinct is an area of high change. New development should support an integrated public, pedestrian and street-based continuous retail edge along Separation Street between High Street and Northcote Plaza to complement the enclosed shopping centres.

*Use*

- Increase diversity and intensity of use on sites, particularly between Robbs Parade and Separation Street.
- Encourage retail and/or business frontage along Separation Street between Northcote Plaza and High Street.

*Built form*

In addition to the general policies:

- Design new development and re-development to:
  - modify the street network to facilitate bus and local vehicle movement through Robbs Parade between High Street and Northcote Plaza
  - orientate retail development outwardly to address public streets and spaces and provide active ground floor frontages
  - integrate redevelopment sites in identified areas with off-street public car parking, pedestrian links to High Street and better service vehicle access between specified streets
  - protect the access and operational requirements of the Northcote Police Station Complex.

**High Street North – Precinct HN**

This precinct is an area of moderate change. The precinct should reflect a mix of activities supporting the core convenience retail area along High Street.

*Use*

- Support redevelopment with an emphasis on office use, commercial and non core retail use at ground floor level with intensified residential use above.

**Croxton Precinct CR**

This precinct includes large sites, providing opportunity for large-scale mixed use multi-storey commercial and residential development that can reinforce both the Thornbury and Northcote Activity Centres and Croxton railway station.

*Use*

- Ensure there is a clear distinction in use between other precincts in the Activity Centre and between the Thornbury Activity Centre to the north.
- Consider ground floor residential use on the east side of High Street, provided safe and active surveillance can be maintained.

*Built form*

- Design new development and re-development to:
  - provide a clear distinction in built form between other precincts in the Activity Centre and between the Thornbury Activity Centre to the north
  - introduce additional landscaping on the east side of High Street
  - maintain the existing ground floor small commercial and retail scale on the west side of High Street to complement existing character

- allow for the widening of rear laneways to facilitate better service access to the rear of premises.

### **High Street South – Precinct HS**

This precinct is an area of moderate change, and a core pedestrian, cycle and transport spine. Development should support a mix of uses subject to addressing heritage, character, access and land use conflict issues.

#### *Use*

- Support a mix of local convenience retail, restaurants and speciality retail uses, and upper level office and residential uses which consolidate the retail and entertainment core.
- Encourage a range of day and night time uses that can add to the vibrancy of the centre.

#### *Built form*

- Retain consistent building setbacks with occasional interruption through additional setbacks to provide visual interest.
- Design new development and re-development to incorporate or improve public access through shops to rear parking areas including links to the south of 250 High Street and through the Uniting Church to Eastment Street.

### **Town Hall - Precinct TH**

This precinct supports the civic function of the Town Hall and Civic Square, and promotes the area as a key destination point. Significant view lines into and out of this precinct need to be considered in the form and location of any new development.

#### *Use*

- Encourage the reuse of the former Police Station building at 43 James Street as an art/business incubator.
- Support residential, office or commercial uses that consolidate and support the Activity Centre.

#### *Built form*

- Facilitate clear safe access links in new buildings and redevelopment to help draw people to the precinct.
- Incorporate an active frontage with the former Police Station building in any development on the car park site, west of the Town Hall.
- Support higher built form that frames the Town Hall and Civic Square and respects the landmark status of the Town Hall building.
- Support the redevelopment of identified parcels of land in accordance with specified design outcomes and design requirements.

### **Creative Communities Precinct CC**

This precinct comprises areas of moderate change. New development should offer the opportunity to live/work in the same premises and conserve the area's heritage value as an active workplace environment.

#### *Use*

- Support new uses that acknowledge the mixed use character of the precinct, including mixed live/work environments designed for flexibility in use over time.
- Ensure new night time use proposals respond appropriately to the mixed use character of the precinct.

*Built form*

- Retain and conserve the existing building character of the area.
- Design new building form to integrate with adjoining and nearby building forms.
- Design development in Helen Street and Eastment Street to improve surveillance of the following spaces:
  - Arthurton Road car park
  - Helen Street Park and adjacent parking areas.
- Design development to achieve a new pedestrian link from High Street to Eastment Street.
- Support service vehicle access in Eastment, Frederick and Wimble Streets and the Arthurton Road car park without dominating street frontages.
- Accept zero building setbacks to:
  - front and side boundaries in Eastment Street (provided some relief exists for alternating setbacks and landscape spaces along the frontage)
  - the rear of High Street
  - fronting the Arthurton Road car park.
- Design new development abutting existing laneways to facilitate potential widening to improve east-west pedestrian links.

**Northcote Railway Station – Precinct RS**

This precinct focuses on the Northcote Railway Station and its integration with the Activity Centre. Increased patronage of the rail service and passive surveillance of the area is encouraged.

*Use*

- Retain the use of existing station buildings for railway purposes.
- Retain open space around the railway station for passive recreation and public use.

*Built form*

- Encourage enhanced pedestrian links between the railway station and High Street.
- Support streetscape works to enhance the station's visual connection to Arthurton Road.
- Support the conservation of the station buildings as elements of community value and significance.

**Medium Change Residential – Precinct MCR**

This precinct will absorb more extensive change whilst remaining principally residential in use to support the Activity Centre.

*Use*

- Support increased housing densities and intensification of development.
- Support discretionary semi business use/s in Dennis Street recognising the interface between core commercial and core residential areas.

*Built form*

- Require applications for development to address heritage considerations in writing where relevant.
- Encourage redevelopment in specified streets.

- Allow higher building forms (3-4 storeys) where off-site amenity impacts can be minimized.

#### **Low Change Residential – Precinct LCR**

The future role and character of these areas will continue to reflect Northcote's signature small scale, relatively dense, conventional residential housing, minor infill development, and larger family dwellings in the eastern parts of the Activity Centre.

##### *Use*

- Support discretionary semi-business use/s in Dennis Street recognising the interface between core commercial and core residential areas.

##### *Built form*

- Support infill development within low change residential areas.
- Require applications for development to address heritage considerations in writing where relevant.
- Consider the retention of dwellings of heritage significance and/or that contribute to the valued urban character of the area.
- Maintain rear yards and streetscape elements that contribute to urban character.
- Ensure that new development respects the character of the area.

**22.08-4**  
15/10/2015  
C138

#### **Application Requirements**

All applications must include a written statement outlining how the proposal meets the objectives of this policy.

**22.08-5**  
15/10/2015  
C138

#### **Decision Guidelines**

Before deciding on an application the Responsible Authority must consider, as appropriate:

- The extent to which any application meets the objectives of this policy.
- The matters contained in the Northcote Activity Centre Structure Plan, April 2007.
- The matters contained in the *High Street Urban Design Framework, 2005 and High Street Precinct Guidelines, 2005* where relevant.
- Use of environmentally sustainable techniques.
- Whether development reinforces the existing building forms of Northcote.

#### **Policy References**

*Northcote Activity Centre Structure Plan, April 2007*

*High Street Urban Design Framework and High Street Study Precinct Guidelines 2005*

*Northcote Activity Centre Medium and Low Change Residential Areas Precinct Guidelines, 2008*



Map 1 Activity Centre and Precincts

