THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

BUILT FORM TESTING

PAKINGTON NORTH PRECINCT

—

JULY 2025

CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Greater Geelong acknowledges the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of this land, waterways and skies. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

We acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of the Greater Geelong community today.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The built form testing for Pakington North demonstrates how the adopted built form aligns with the objectives of the Pakington North UDF. Through comparison with alternate development scenarios, it confirms the adopted built form as the most appropriate outcome for this precinct.

Overview

The Urban Design Framework (UDF) for Pakington North was developed to set an overall direction for growth and development of the precinct. It sets out objectives and guidelines that facilitate land use, built form and public realm outcomes.

Deliberative engagement was chosen for the Pakington North UDF as it enables the community to participate actively. The community provided recommendations for the future development of the Pakington North precinct.

An independent engagement consultant facilitated the deliberative engagement. A diverse community panel of 60 participants were selected, who then worked with the City in a co-design process, where the panel influenced decisions by providing recommendations and identifying preferred solutions. The advice and recommendations were assessed by the City and incorporated into the UDF.

The community panel were briefed by the city on built form design principles and the panel voted on heights on a block by block basis. These heights were then tested by the City and incorporated into the UDF, which has been adopted by Council on 28 May 2024.

Purpose of the built form testing

The built form testing presented in this report demonstrates how the adopted building heights deliver a built form outcome that is consistent with the vision and objectives of the Pakington North Urban Design Framework (UDF).

It also includes a comparative assessment of alternative development scenarios tested against the same criteria. This approach confirms that the adopted built form is the most appropriate and effective response for the precinct, offering the best alignment with the UDF's intended urban design and planning outcomes.

Methodology

Establish Assessment Criteria

Key built form principles and objectives outlined in the Pakington North UDF form the basis of the evaluation criteria used to assess the different built form scenarios.

Adopted Built Form

The adopted built form, including height controls that have been co-designed with the community panel, is tested to illustrate compliance with the assessment criteria identified above. See Chapter 01.

Alternate Development Scenarios

During the deliberative engagement process, the panel was presented with a range of building height scenarios representing varying scales of built form intervention—from a low-scale, minimal intervention scenario to a high-intensity maximum development scenario. These scenarios were illustrated through indicative height bands and supported by a digital 3D model, enabling participants to visualise and assess the potential impacts of the different heights on surrounding lot amenity and street character.

In the Appendix to this document, the two alternative development scenarios (that correspond to the lower and upper bounds of the height range that the community voted on) are illustrated. These tested scenarios represent the minimum and maximum feasible heights and built form envelopes that are able to maintain baseline amenity, while achieving functional floor plates.

Built form options that fall outside these parameters—such as those that would result in excessive overshadowing and unfeasible floor plates or development configurations—have been excluded from this analysis on the basis that they do not meet minimum urban design and planning performance standards.

Comparative Assessment

The adopted built form, and the two alternative development scenarios are comparatively evaluated against the assessment criteria. See Chapter 02.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Context Sensitivity

New development in the precinct must respond to the fine-grain, heritage-rich character of Pakington Street and its surrounding neighbourhood residential areas. It is essential to manage how the proposed development interfaces with its context, particularly at residential interfaces and along streetscapes with established built form character. We consider how each built form option responds to sensitive edges and contributes to a cohesive, and context sensitive streetscape. This aligns with the UDF's objective of appropriately transitioning to sensitive hertiage and residential interfaces.

Solar Access and Overshadowing

Solar access is a key urban design consideration addressed in the UDF to ensure comfortable, liveable spaces throughout the precinct. Built form must preserve adequate solar access to the public realm—particularly open spaces and footpaths—as well as to the private open spaces of surrounding residential properties, which is required by the planning scheme. We examine the extent to which each scenario maintains acceptable solar performance, minimises overshadowing, and supports overall amenity outcomes in line with the framework's objectives.

Scale and Proportion

The scale and proportion of new development must contribute to a coherent and visually balanced urban environment, while respecting the character and rhythm of the existing built form. It is important to maintain appropriate street wall heights and upper-level setbacks to reinforce human scale, provide visual interest, and frame the public realm effectively. In Pakington North, this also requires careful consideration of the established scale of surrounding residential areas and the fine-grain character of the heritage precinct to the south. We consider how each scenario manages the relationship between building height, street width, setbacks and neighbouring built form to ensure the new development integrates seamlessly, and responds to the UDF's objective to reinforce the mid-rise scale of the precinct.

Development Potential

The City's Settlement Strategy identifies Increased Housing Diversity Areas (IHDAs) as key locations for accommodating urban infill and increased housing supply. Pakington North is a key development site, positioning it as a strategic area for targeted growth. Considering that Geelong is expected to provide 77,500 new dwellings within its non-greenfield areas, as per Plan for Victoria, infill sites such as this are crucial in achieving this target. This assessment considers the potential for urban renewal that supports both housing and employment opportunities through well-managed intensification. While additional development is encouraged, it must be balanced with strong amenity outcomes and high-quality urban design. Each option is evaluated for its development potential—measured through building height and floor space capacity—while ensuring alignment with the desired character and context of the precinct.

ADOPTED BUILT FORM

01

1.1 OVERVIEW - BUILT FORM RESPONSE

The adopted built form provides a nuanced response, balancing development potential with residential sensitivity. It directs greater scale towards less sensitive interfaces, enabling a gradual transition from the surrounding residential and heritage precinct towards the northern end of Pakington Street.

Heights

Incremental increase in height from south to north, starting at 4 storeys and peaking at 10 storeys where no direct residential interface exists, on the corner of Pakington Street and Church Street.

Upper-Level Setbacks

Generous setbacks from the street wall to maintain a low density street experience and limit visual bulk. Additional ground level setbacks on side streets to allow for wider footpaths.

Street Wall

Varies with context, starting at 2 storeys in the south and gradually increasing 4 storeys at the northern end of Pakington Street. This ensures a seamless transition from the Heritage Core precinct to the south.

Residential Interface

Sensitive setbacks and upper-level recessions are applied to reduce overshadowing and overlooking, ensuring privacy and solar access for existing homes is maintained.

1.2 BUILT FORM MASSING

Figure 01. View from South to North

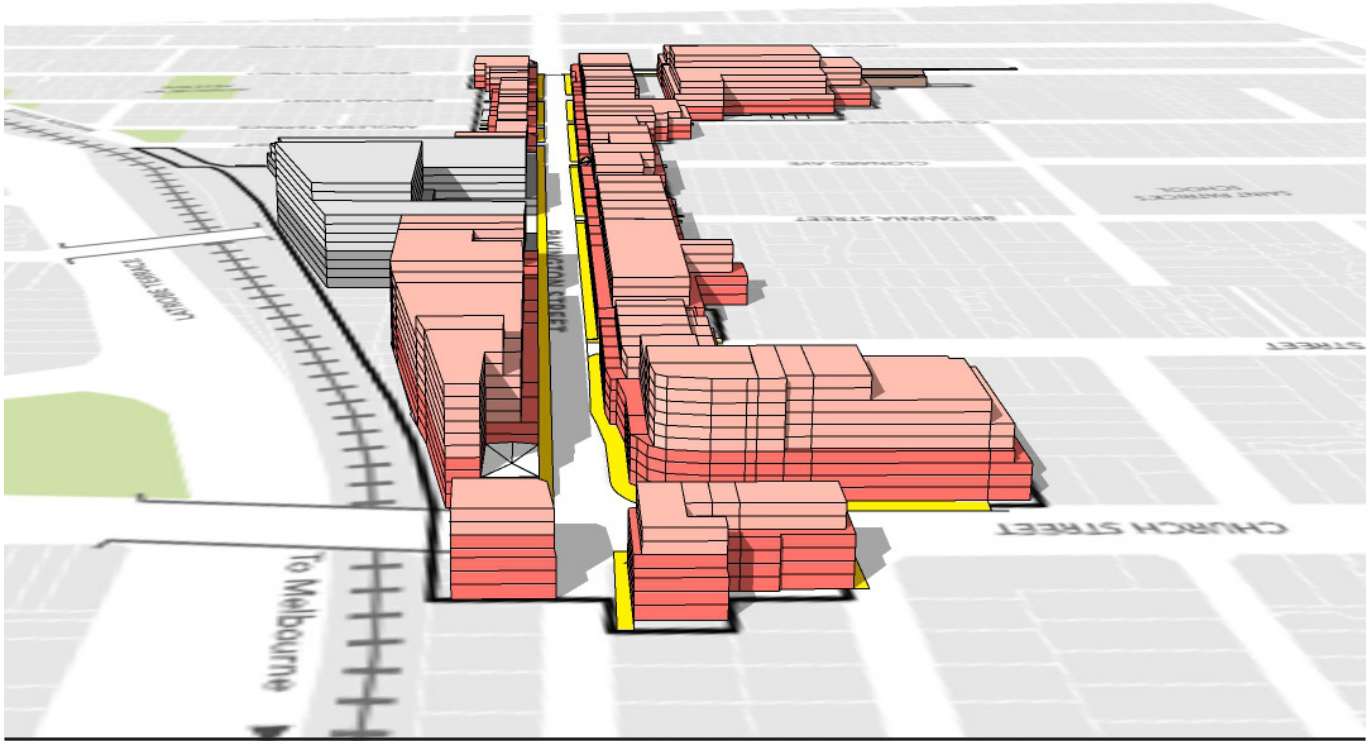


Figure 02. View from North to South

NB: The images above show the maximum building envelope and not the proposed building. While the rail sidings yard is included within the UDF, it is not part of amendment c433 and is shown in grey in the images on this page.

1.3 RESPONSE TO ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Context Sensitivity

This option demonstrates a measured response to context by concentrating height increases away from residential interfaces—particularly to the north of the precinct—while maintaining a more modest scale along sensitive edges. Gradual transitions support visual cohesion with existing built form, including the heritage precinct to the south. This achieves a strong balance between contextual fit and urban renewal.

Scale and Proportion

Well-proportioned street walls and recessed upper levels maintain human scale. Varied height adds visual interest and draws focus to the northern end of the street. Gradual intensification with lower perceived impact. It strikes a considered balance between human scale, public realm definition, and development feasibility.

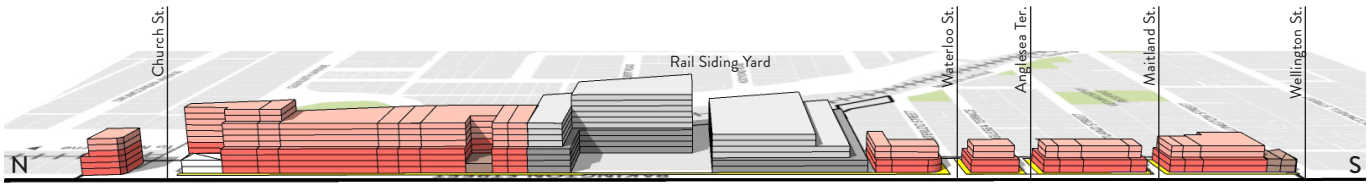
Solar Access and Overshadowing

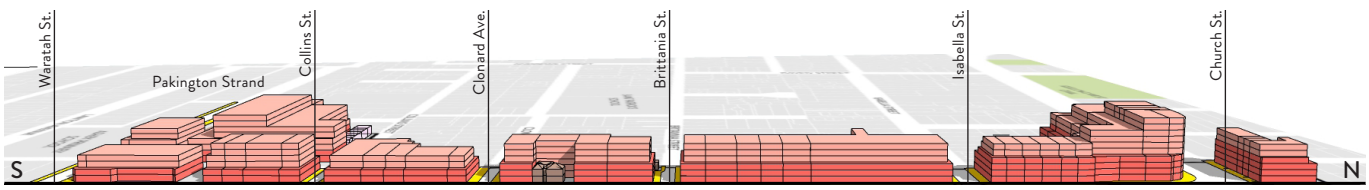
This option successfully manages solar access by allowing greater height in locations that have minimal overshadowing impact, such as to the north and away from direct residential interfaces. It maintains solar access to the opposite side of Pakington Street and to southern footpaths, and protects the amenity of adjacent residential properties.

Development Potential

This approach enables meaningful uplift in development capacity, while retaining strong alignment with built form principles. It allows for infill and intensification in strategic locations, without undermining key amenity outcomes. This option achieves the best balance between urban renewal and design quality, consistent with the objectives of the UDF and broader housing strategies.

This option offers a mid-scale, calibrated built form response with increased height concentrated away from residential and only along non-sensitive interfaces. The street wall heights are also gradually increasing in response to surrounding context.





COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

02

2.1 COMPARATIVE SUMMARY TABLE

Criterion	Adopted Option	Minimum Development Scenario	Maximum Development Scenario
Context Sensitivity	✓	✓	✗
Solar Access	✓	✓	!
Scale and Proportion	✓	!	✗
Development Potential	✓	✗	✓

Following a comparative assessment of three built form options, the adopted built form is considered the most suitable response to this site. This option offers a strategic balance between enabling sustainable growth and protecting existing residential amenity. It provides an adaptable and context-responsive framework that supports future development while minimising negative impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood.

The Minimum Development and Maximum Development options are illustrated in the Appendix below.


Two Tins Patisserie
Two Tins Patisserie
MAITLAND ST
GIVE WAY
Rural Turf
IRRIGATION
Two Tins Patisserie
OPEN

A

APPENDIX

MINIMUM DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

A1

A1.1 OVERVIEW - BUILT FORM RESPONSE

The minimum development scenario prioritises compatibility with the existing surrounding neighbourhood character. Building heights and setbacks mirror adjacent residential properties to maintain a consistent low-rise scale, with limited increase at the northern end of Pakington Street and Church street.

Heights

Heights are aligned with the neighbourhood residential zone, at two storeys, where they interface with residential and the Heritage Core precinct. Towards the northern end of Pakington Streets, heights have been increased to 4 storeys where there is no residential interface.

Upper-Level Setbacks

5m upper level setbacks applied above 2 storeys towards the northern end of Pakington Street. This is considered sufficient setback to limit visibility of the upper storeys from the street level such that the built form presents as a two storey structure.

Street Wall

The street wall height is limited to two storeys, aligning with the existing low-rise character of the street and echoing the scale of adjacent residential frontages. This also ensures the continuity of built form from the Heritage Core Precinct.

Residential Interface

Building heights are kept consistent with the surrounding Neighbourhood Residential Zone, maintaining a low-rise character. The interface treatment reflects that of a typical residential subdivision that would be expected if the site were developed as conventional residential lots.

A1.2 BUILT FORM MASSING

Figure 01. View from South to North

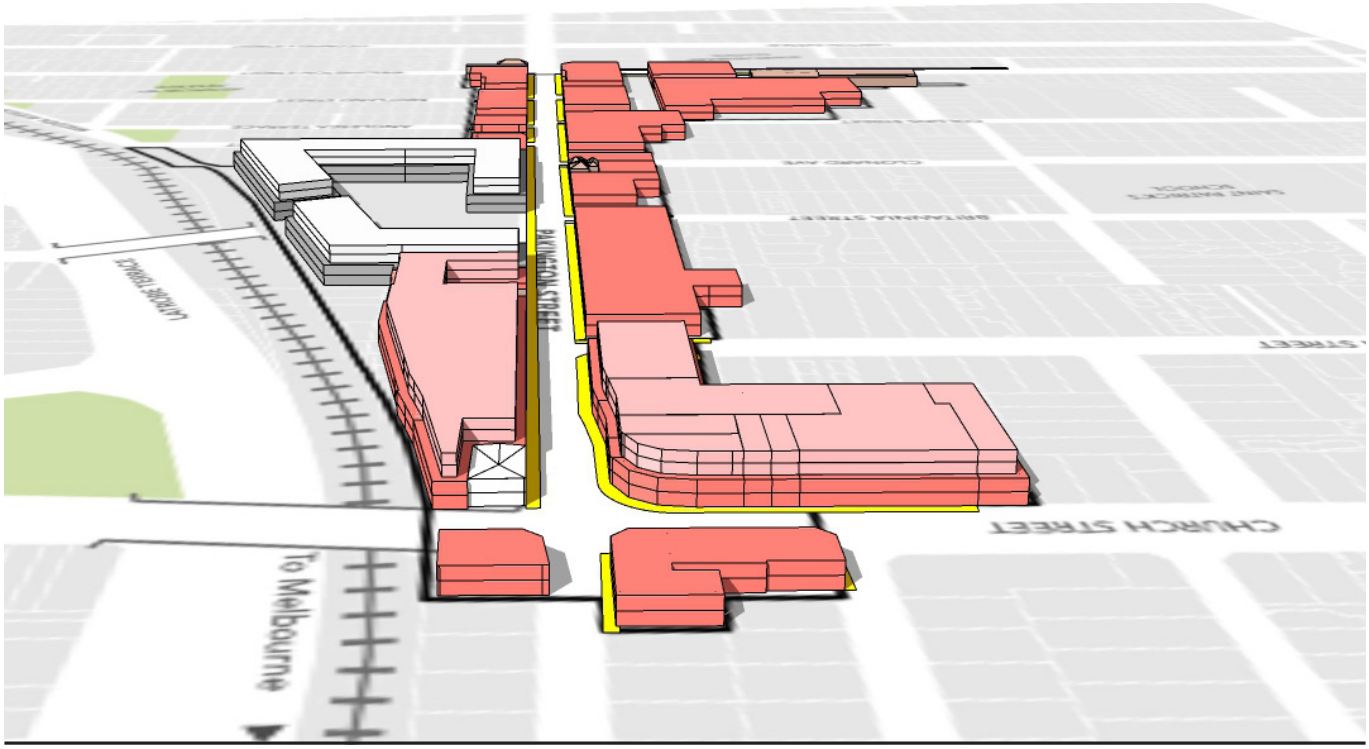


Figure 02. View from North to South

NB: The images above show the maximum building envelope and not the proposed building. While the rail sidings yard is included within the UDF, it is not part of amendment c433 and is shown in grey in the images on this page.

A1.3 RESPONSE TO ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Context Sensitivity

This option maintains the existing built form scale and applies minimal changes, ensuring a high level of sensitivity to the surrounding residential and heritage context. Heights are consistent with adjacent properties, with only minor increases at the northern corner sites. While being sympathetic to context, this approach offers limited opportunities for urban renewal or improved public realm outcomes.

Scale and Proportion

This scenario preserves the existing scale and street proportions, with development limited to two storeys in most sites. While highly compatible with existing conditions, it misses the opportunity to create a stronger built edge or reinforce a defined street wall condition, especially considering Pakington Street is 20m wide, and therefore additional height could improve its sense of enclosure.

Solar Access and Overshadowing

Due to the conservative scale of development, solar access to both the public realm and adjoining residential properties is fully retained. Overshadowing is negligible, ensuring optimal conditions for pedestrian comfort and private open space. However, the opportunity to re-frame the street with better enclosure or improve underutilised sites is not fully realised.

Development Potential

While the most conservative in terms of change, this option provides the least opportunity for increased housing or commercial uses. It does not capitalise on the precinct's strategic location within the Increased Housing Diversity Area, limits the precinct's contribution to urban consolidation objectives, as set out in the City's Settlement Strategy and does not contribute towards the City's infill housing target of 77,500 dwellings by 2050, as set out by Plan for Victoria.

This option offers a conservative built form envelope with heights matching surrounding residential character, maintaining existing scale and setbacks, and allowing slightly greater height at the northern end of Pakington Street where there are no sensitive interfaces. While it is sensitive to the context, it offers limited opportunities for development and urban renewal.

MAXIMUM DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

A2

A2.1 OVERVIEW - BUILT FORM RESPONSE

The maximum development scenario seeks to maximise built form yield, and create a well-defined street edge. It explores the maximum height envelope, while still allowing feasible floor plates.

Heights

A maximum height of 10 storeys is applied across the entire precinct. While this has limited impacts on the streetscape at the northern end of Pakington Street, the interface with the Heritage core precinct to the south is considered very abrupt.

Upper-Level Setbacks

5m upper level setbacks applied on all sides above 4 storeys. This is considered sufficient setback to limit visibility of the upper storeys and reinforce the street wall on Pakington Street and to maintain a reasonable interface with adjacent residential lots.

Street Wall

Street wall height of 4 storeys is applied uniformly along Pakington Street. This allows for a 1:1 ratio between the street and its edge.

Residential Interface

5m upper level setbacks applied on all sides above a four-storey podium.

A2.2 BUILT FORM MASSING

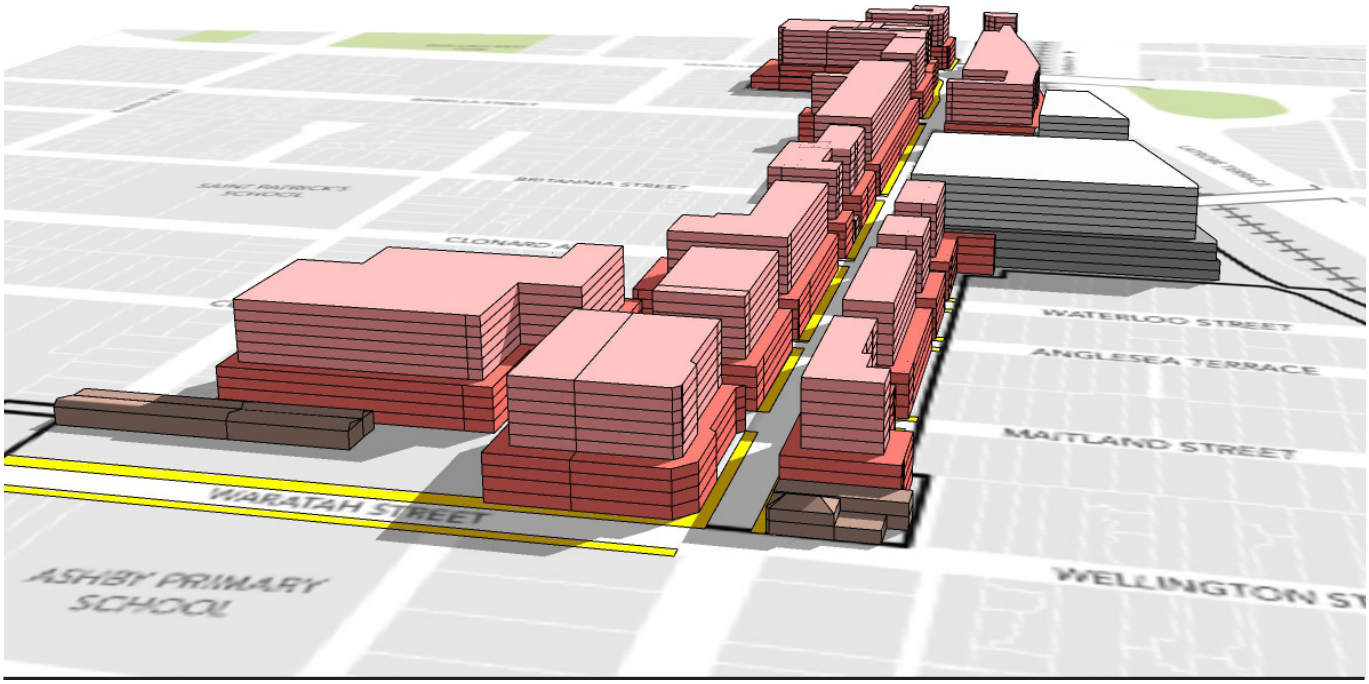


Figure 01. View from South to North

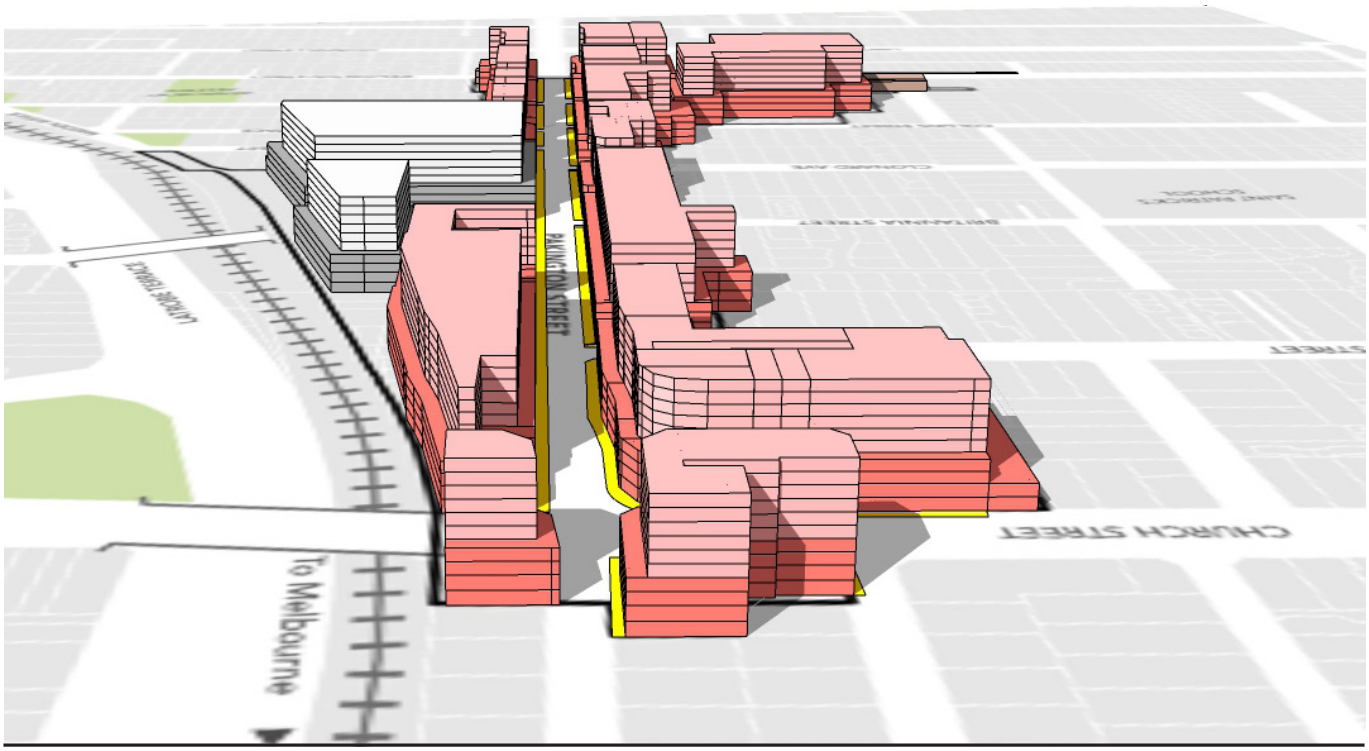


Figure 02. View from North to South

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A2.3 RESPONSE TO ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Context Sensitivity

This option prioritises development potential, introducing significantly greater building heights throughout the precinct. The magnitude of change is less responsive to the finer grain of surrounding residential areas and heritage elements, particularly at sensitive southern edges. Abrupt height transitions at these interfaces are not considered compatible with the surrounding developments.

Scale and Proportion

Taller buildings with a defined street wall edge along the entire length in this option creates a more urban street character, particularly through consistent 1:1 street wall-to-street-width ratios. However, in some areas, the scale may overwhelm existing low-rise character, especially near heritage and residential areas.

Solar Access and Overshadowing

Higher building envelopes increase overshadowing to private residential open spaces as well as to the southern footpaths and footpaths of the opposite side of Pakington Street. Significant setbacks would be required at upper levels to be able to prevent overshadowing, which in most cases would result in unfeasible floor plates due to limited lot depths.

Development Potential

This option unlocks the greatest development capacity, supporting high levels of housing and employment potential. However, it is imperative to appropriately manage amenity to the surrounding context to ensure equitable outcomes.

This option offers the highest development potential with a consistent street wall that is of a more urban scale. This is however, achieved at the cost of the amenity of the surrounding residential lots as well as has a poor interface with the Heritage Core precinct to the South.

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