

# **Overview**

# 5.1 Local environmental plan

It is important that the planning framework supports the initiatives outlined in this strategy in order to ultimately support urban renewal of the Newcastle city centre. An amended planning framework was introduced in 2008 to support the projected housing and jobs growth in the city centre. In addition to zoning changes, this allowed for a significant change in allowable heights and floor space ratios in some parts of the city centre.

The Newcastle LEP was adopted in 2012. The LEP adopts the majority of the city centre controls from the Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008, with adjustments and differences mainly relating to the standard instrument conventions. A version of the LEP was publicly exhibited in 2011.

To inform the work undertaken under the Urban Renewal SEPP and ensure that it aligns with the initiatives, detailed analysis of the current planning framework has occurred, including urban design testing of controls overlaid with a consideration of economic issues and feasibility. This has revealed that some amendments are required to:

- ensure there is an emphasis on Hunter Street and key activity nodes
- define clear activity areas to support the economy and local business
- differentiate between the commercial core and mixed use zones to send a clear message about their future direction and suitable uses
- provide for future employment and housing growth
- ensure the built form responds appropriately to the heritage character and topography of Newcastle
- differentiate other areas of the city centre that are physically separated to reflect the appropriate character and built form and not compete with the city centre as a main activity hub
- address economic viability issues over the life of the plan.

A separate explanation of intended effect has been prepared under section 38 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which outlines the proposed changes to the LEP in full.

# **5.1.1 Zoning**

The land use zone distribution within the city centre needs to differentiate between zones and precincts and to account for projected employment and population growth, and demand over the life of the plan.

The proposed zoning map seeks to:

- adequately provide for employment and housing growth in the right locations in the city centre
- align the commercial core zone with activity nodes and areas of existing and future growth of commercial activity
- recognising the east end of Hunter Street as a mixed use area
- reduce the existing extent of the commercial core zone away from Hunter Street
- reduce the existing extent of the mixed use zone to ensure it supports the commercial core zones and the key activity nodes
- promote high density housing at the edges of the city centre in areas of higher amenity.

The boundaries of the commercial core zone in the west end of the city have been amended slightly to include one additional block on the south side of Hunter Street, bounded by Steel and National Park Streets. The west end of the city will remain as the emerging commercial precinct over time and is in good proximity to the commercial core land in the Honeysuckle precincts, which is likely to develop in the short to medium-term. This emerging commercial precinct extends along Hunter Street on each side of Stewart Avenue to ensure an appropriate supply of commercial land into the future on the sites where it is most likely to occur, and to allow for sub-precincts within the

emerging CBD to develop on either side of Stewart Avenue. There are a number of more substantial potential redevelopment sites in consolidated ownership that are generally unaffected by mine subsidence, particularly west of Stewart Avenue, and these provide suitable land for large floor plate commercial buildings. Commercial building forms and uses are the most appropriate for the key intersections with Stewart Avenue in this precinct, including the site in the south-eastern corner of Wickham that provides an appropriate terminus and book end to the commercial development in the Honeysuckle precinct immediately opposite on Stewart Avenue.

The commercial core zone has been applied to additional sites in Honeysuckle and along Hunter Street between the west end commercial precinct and the civic area. In Honeysuckle, this amendment recognises Hill PDA's recommendation that the commercial component in the Cottage Creek Precinct be a dedicated and marketed business park, due to its existing attributes (which already exhibit business park characteristics), the potential for large floor plates, the preference of the market to be in campus-style large floor plate accommodation and relationship to the city at the west end of Hunter Street (which will be the emerging commercial area in the longer term). This is likely to encourage the refurbishment of existing commercial and retail tenancies along Hunter Street and new activity and investment.

The civic precinct was previously zoned mixed use, but has been amended to a commercial core zone to recognise the agglomeration of its current uses and important role as a civic, educational and cultural hub within the city centre.

The proposed map (Figure 5.2) changes the extent of the commercial core zone on the southern side of Hunter Street between Steel Street and Jubilee Lane, which previously extended down to National Park. Instead, this is proposed to be a mixed use zone supporting Hunter Street and the hubs of the commercial core zone, rather than competing with it. This is to ensure that this area develops as a mixed use precinct over time. This amendment is consistent with the recommendations of Hill PDA's report, which confirms that from an economic perspective, commercial development in this location away from Hunter Street would not be desirable.

Instead, it is acknowledged that a greater number of residents living in this location in close walking distance to Hunter Street will benefit the city centre. To this end, the blocks opposite National Park (bounded by Parry, Ravenshaw, Bull and Union Streets) at the southern edge of the city centre are proposed to have an R4 High Density Residential zoning, to reflect the high amenity of this location and suitability for residential land uses (with possible mixed use at the ground level). Similarly, at the eastern edges of the city centre, a high density residential zone is also proposed. These residential areas on the city's edges, along with other mixed uses, will support the commercial hubs and economy of the city centre, providing activation and vibrancy.

A section of the east end of the city centre, adjacent to Hunter Street Mall has been amended from a commercial core zone to a mixed use zone to reflect its current and desired future character as a retail, entertainment, leisure and residential precinct.

# Wickham

Wickham is physically separate from the city centre and Honeysuckle, and has its own distinct character. Hill PDA has confirmed that the extent of the city centre's B4 mixed use zone in this area needs re-examination and is premature, with the precinct currently an important location for local urban services. It is noted that Wickham has had a mixed use zone since 2003. Extensive work was done by council with the community in 2006 to develop urban design guidelines for Wickham Urban Village, which set the longer term strategic direction for its development. This work has a clear main street local centre surrounded by residential development. Ultimately the zoning should reflect this vision for Wickham, and clearly differentiate it from the city centre. This is indicatively shown in Figure 5.1.

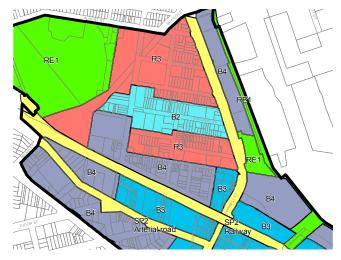


Figure 5.1 Proposed long-term land zoning for Wickham

- B2 Local Centre
- B3 Commercial Core
- B4 Mixed Use
- R3 Medium Density Residential
- R4 High Density Residential
- RE1 Public Recreation
- SP2 Infrastructure

In the short-term, the range of non-residential local service uses including auto-smash repairs, maintenance and wholesale need to be provided for, which the current zone does. It is recommended that council re-examine the appropriate zoning of this area, in conjunction with a master planning exercise to consider the extent of thoroughfares, as part of a local planning strategy. Therefore this urban renewal strategy does not propose to amend the zoning of the Wickham area.





# Objectives and permissible land uses

# Commercial core zone

The commercial core zone in the city centre should encourage, provide for and preserve future opportunities for commercial development, including offices. Supplementary residential uses should only be part of a mixed development, and stand-alone residential flat buildings in this zone are not appropriate. The permissible uses have been amended to delete residential flat buildings and seniors housing from the zone. Residential development can still be provided under the definition of shop-top housing. The objective relating to residential development in this zone is also proposed to be deleted.

Clause 7.7 in LEP 2012, which relates to residential flat buildings in Zone B3 Commercial Core, is also recommended for deletion. Instead, to promote non-residential development in this zone, a clause is proposed that requires any building in this zone containing residential is to have a minimum of 25% commercial floor space. This would be largely in the podium of any building, providing for larger floor plates, with residential above.

# Mixed use zone

The mixed use zone in the city centre should support the commercial core zone and encourage a broad mix of land uses including retail, community, entertainment, and smaller scale commercial mixed with residential. This zone is the preferable location for residential development as is the high density residential zone proposed at the edges of the city centre.

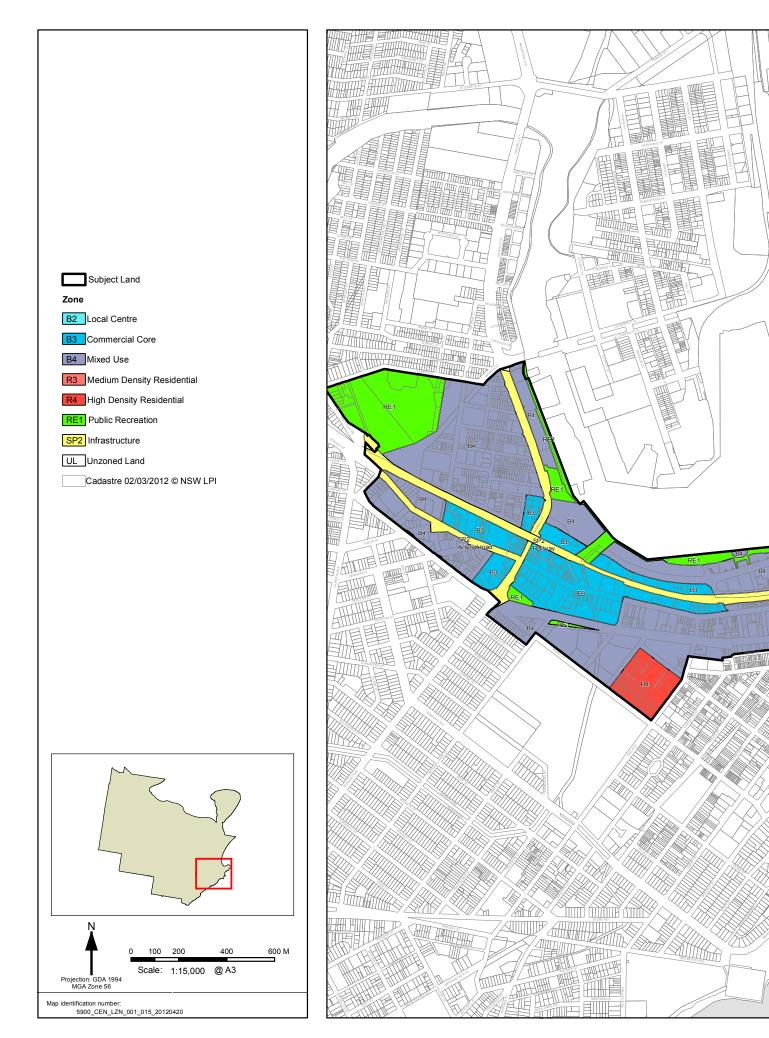
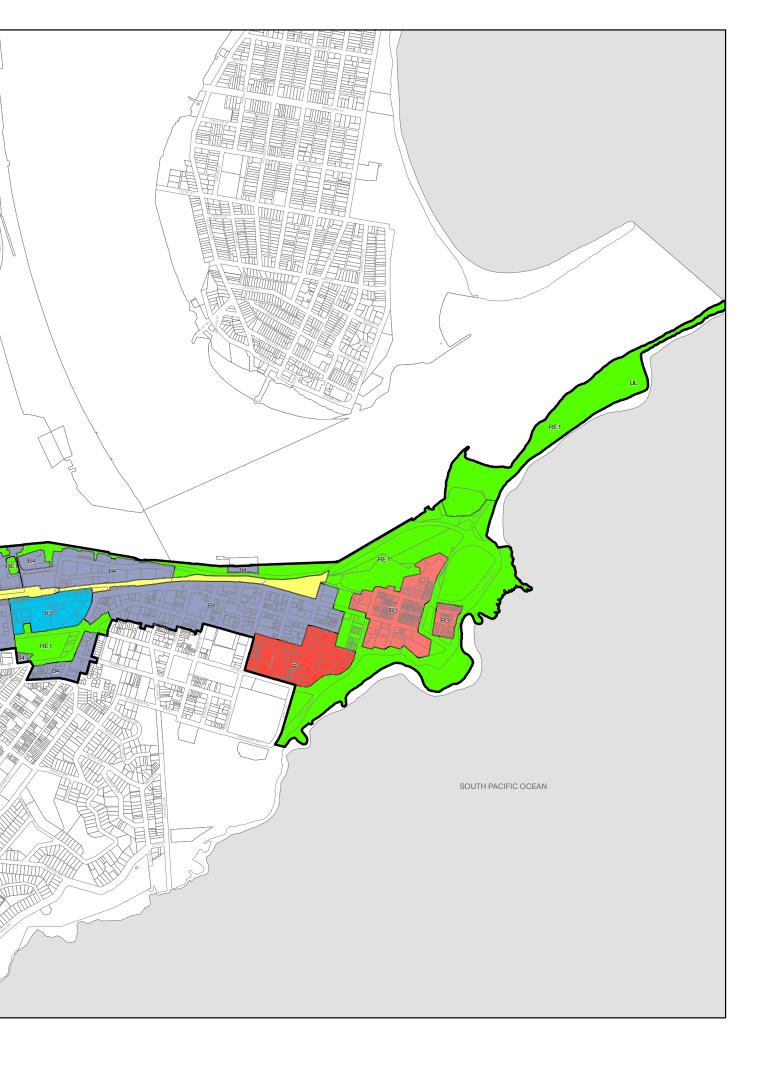


Figure 5.2 Proposed land zoning map for the Newcastle city centre



# 5.1.2 Floor space ratio (FSR)

FSR needs to reflect achievable heights, accounting for different building setbacks, building uses and maximum desirable envelopes.

The current FSR control has been tested widely across the city centre to enable an assessment of realistically achievable controls within the context of maximum height limits, setback requirements, and for different building types. There is a need to recognise that mixed use developments (or those developments that are not purely commercial in the commercial core zone) will have smaller building floor plates and achieve a lower FSR within the overall height limit, than would a purely commercial building. The current controls recognise this via a formula.

The FSR controls currently give a greater emphasis and incentive for commercial development in the west end of the city and a small section of Hunter Street Mall, educational and cultural development in the Civic precinct, and tourist development in the east end and in Honeysuckle.

Advice from Hill PDA confirms that the higher FSRs for commercial development are not being taken up in the current market for feasibility reasons. Advice has also been given about the current complexity of the FSR controls, and that this could be a contributing barrier to development in Newcastle.

It is proposed to simplify and amend the FSR map and clause in the LEP. The proposed FSRs represent the realistically achievable amount of floor space that can be accommodated relative to height, setbacks, land zoning and building types,

while resulting in a good built form outcome. In many respects, they are a direct representation of currently achievable FSRs, taking all of these factors into consideration. In areas of the city centre where height or zoning is proposed to be amended, the maximum FSR has also been adjusted to reflect these changes.

The proposed FSR map (Figure 6.3) and clause will be readily interpreted and will give certainty to land owners, the community, the development industry and council about the controls for various sections in the city centre.

Key areas of amendment on the FSR map include:

- the sites around Birdwood Park amended to reflect current setback and sun access plane controls applying to those sites
- sites in the west end amended to reflect achievable FSRs relative to setback controls
- areas with a proposed zoning of R4 High Density Residential – amended to reflect achievable FSRs of residential building floor plates
- Hunter Street between the west end and Civic

   amended to reflect achievable FSRs as well

   as proposed amendments to zoning and height controls
- Bolton Street amended to reflect the proposed increase to the height control
- Wickham amended to reflect the proposed amendments to the height control.

The proposed amended clause, read in conjunction with the Floor Space Ratio Map, is:

"Floor Space Ratio

- 7.10 Floor space ratio Newcastle City Centre
- (1) This clause applies to land in the Newcastle City Centre.
- (2) Despite clause 4.4 the maximum floor space ratio for a building on a site area of 1,500 square metres or more that is:
  - (a) in "Area A" identified on the Floor Space Ratio Map, and
  - (b) not used wholly for a commercial activitythe ratio specified in Column 1 of the table,and
  - (c) is used only for a commercial activity the ratio specified in Column 2 of the table.

Column 1	Column 2	
5:1	8:1	
5:1	7:1	
5:1	6:1	
4:1	<i>5:1</i>	
3:1	4:1	

- (3) Despite clause 4.4, the maximum floor space ratio for a building that has a site area of less than 1,500 square metres is the lesser of the following:
- (a) the floor space ratio identified on the Floor Space Ratio Map,
- (b) 3:1
- (4) In this clause:

commercial activity, in relation to the use of a building, means the use of the building for the purposes of commercial premises or tourist and visitor accommodation (but not tourist and visitor accommodation that is subdivided under a strata scheme) or a combination of such uses."

The clause distinguishes between commercial development and mixed use development within the commercial core zone. Purely commercial development has the largest maximum building envelope and floor plates, and this is reflected by higher FSRs. For the remainder of the city centre, the maximum FSRs are reflected on the Floor Space Ratio Map (Figure 5.3). Where a site is less than 1,500 square metres, there is a smaller maximum of 3:1 noted by the clause.

In a number of cases, the amended map and clause will result in some sites potentially achieving a higher maximum FSR than is allowed by the current clause and formula for mixed use development.

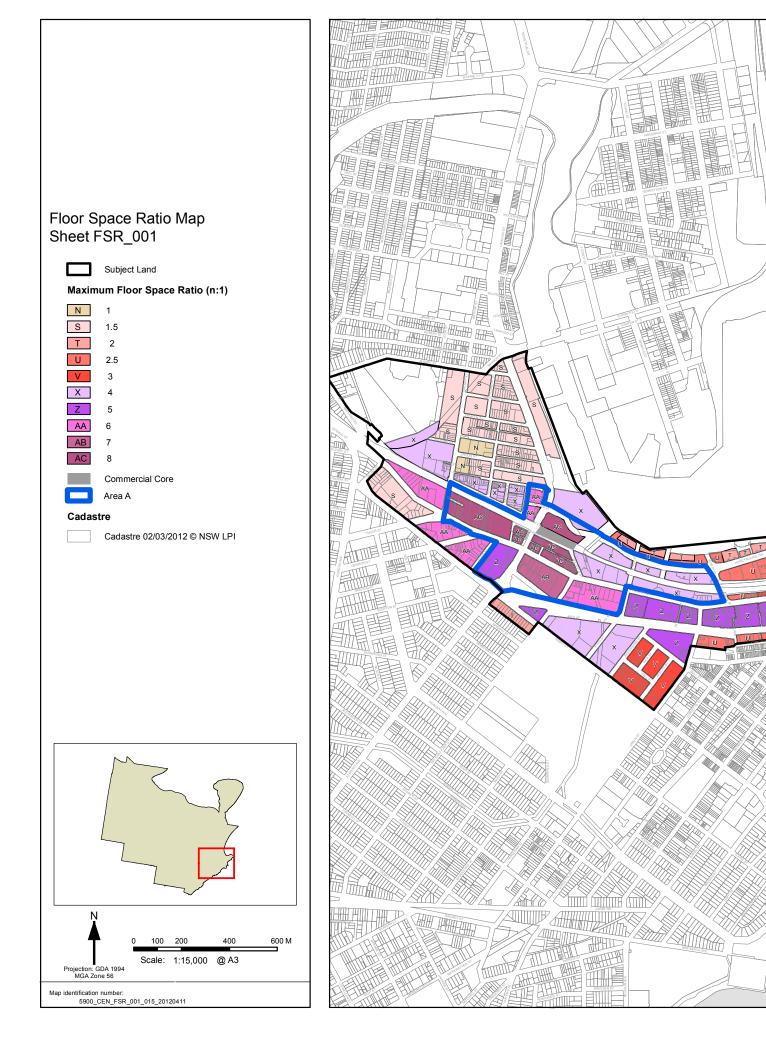
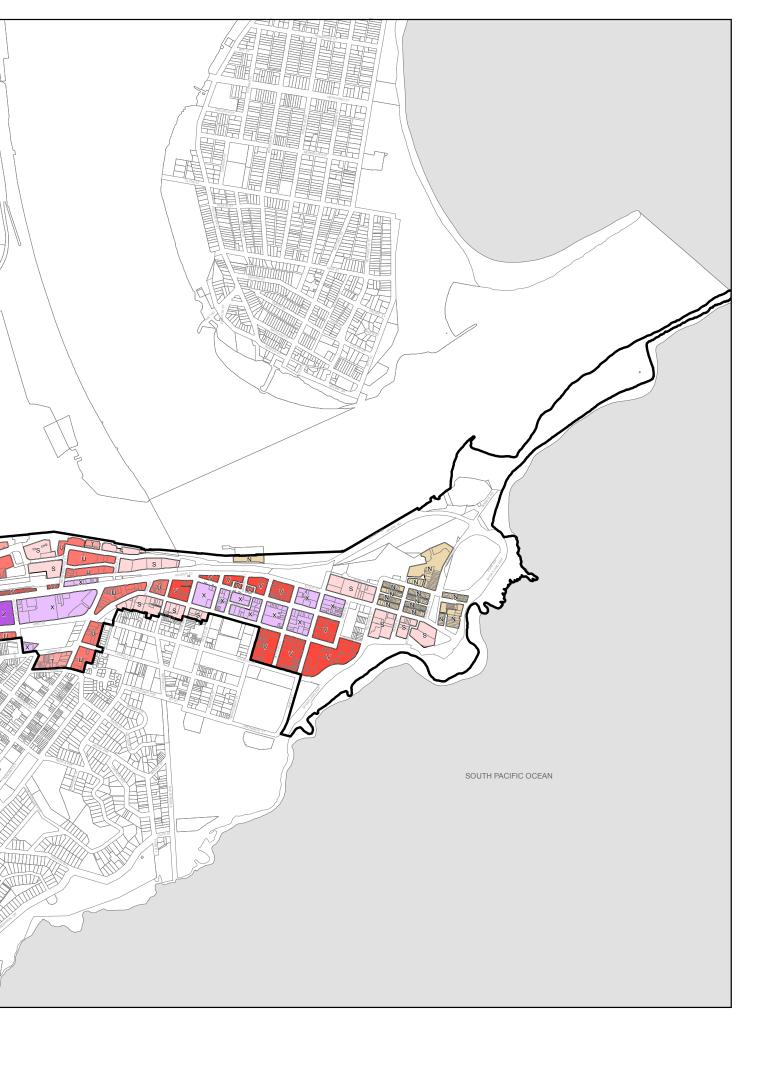


Figure 5.3 Proposed floor space ratio map for the Newcastle city centre



# 5.1.3 Heights

The heights in the LEP need to respect the current built form character of the city centre including its heritage, while also allowing for growth and new development in appropriate areas.

LEP 2008 introduced a significantly different height regime to the previous one, to accommodate growth of the city centre. These heights have been analysed from an urban design and economic perspective. They are generally appropriate, subject to some amendments and the inclusion of additional information in the DCP detailing street wall heights and setbacks for taller building forms to ensure that tower forms develop appropriately and have a good relationship with the street, each other and the wider city centre.

Generally the taller buildings are provided for at the western end of the city where there are fewer constraints, becoming lower towards the eastern end in response to the heritage character, topography, fine grain nature of that area, and to protect key view corridors.

The analysis showed that the number of achievable tall buildings is less than was indicated by the 2008 planning work. This is mainly due to existing lot patterns, strata buildings, setback requirements and the number of available development sites.

The current work proposes some amendments which will refine the existing height controls, deal with the transitional zones between the city centre and surrounding centres and ensure appropriate built form, heritage and public domain outcomes in the city centre.



Figure 5.4 Modelling of existing building heights



Figure 5.5 Modelling of heights based on existing land ownership and potential amalgamations

The proposed height map seeks to:

- reinforce the west end of the city as the emerging commercial area
- reveal areas affected by mine subsidence, with lower heights
- · reflect existing and desired future built forms
- ensure economic feasibility is shown
- encourage development of key opportunity sites with appropriate heights
- align with proposed changes to the zoning map
- promote an appropriate scale of development and level of activity in the Wickham area, consistent with the previously endorsed master plan and character of that area.

Location	Current height	Proposed height
Bolton Street, between King and Church Streets	10 m	24 m
Hunter Street, between Perkins and Wolfe Streets	24 m	27 m
Corner of Hunter and Auckland Streets	30 m	45 m
Hunter Street, between Auckland and Steel Streets	60 m	45 m
Wickham (adjacent to rail corridor)	45 and 60 m	24 m

Table 10 Five key areas where the proposed heights differ from the current plan

Table 10 shows key areas where the proposed heights differ from current heights.

# Bolton Street, between King and Church Streets

This is an anomaly in the current framework as a number of buildings are currently over 10 m in height. There are several buildings and sites in this area that will redevelop over time. This includes one of the heritage adaptive re-use case studies (the Bolton Street carpark), which currently has a height of 24.5 m. The heritage terraces at the southern and south-eastern edges of this block will have a lesser increase to a maximum height of 14 m, reflecting their existing heights.

The recommended increase in height for the wider block is accompanied by a proposed DCP provision for a maximum street wall height of 15 m. This will ensure that the scale of the street retains its character, while framing the view to the courthouse building at the southern terminus of the street.

# Hunter Street, between Perkins and Wolfe Streets

This block provides one of the key redevelopment opportunities in Hunter Street Mall. Unlike the block to the east between Wolfe and Newcommen Streets where there are topographical and view corridor constraints, this block has fewer restrictions. There is justification to increase the height limit of this block from 24 to 27 m.

The recommended increase in height is accompanied by proposed DCP provisions for a setback to the southern side of the block to minimise overshadowing impacts on properties to the south of King Street. Proposed DCP provisions will also include a through-site link to ensure the block is redeveloped in a way that relates to the grain of the surrounding context, minimising building bulk. These provisions are in a proposed special areas clause for the DCP, which is discussed in the following section.

## Corner of Hunter and Auckland Streets

This key corner block within the civic precinct provides one of the main opportunities for redevelopment in the city block. It is noted that the maximum heights on the western side of Auckland Street are 45 m. Further east, the 30 m maximum height limit is appropriate, and covers City Hall, the council administration building and other heritage items. Urban design testing has shown that a height of up to 45 m is appropriate on this corner block, subject to demonstration of design excellence. To support the increased height and ensure the final built form is appropriate, a special area control is also recommended for inclusion in the DCP, and this is discussed in the following section.

# Hunter Street (southern side) between Auckland and Steel Streets

There are currently two maximum height limits in this block, being 45 and then 60 m. The lot sizes, subdivision pattern and built form are all relatively fine grain, with some heritage buildings fronting Hunter Street. The existing zoning of part of this block (where the height limit is 60 m) is commercial core, although it is proposed to amend this to a mixed use zone.

Analysis of the block shows that to achieve the tower form, a number of sites would need to be amalgamated. There are relatively few opportunity sites available that would allow the 60 m to be reached, these tower forms being disparately located, rather than clustered together, which visually detracts from the main emerging commercial centre at the west end of the city (which allows for 60 and 90 m height limits). The analysis has also shown that once setbacks are applied to towers in this location, the yields achieved are less feasible relative to construction costs, compared with a lower building form (as setbacks dictate small floor plates).

The Emporium group of buildings, one of the adaptive re-use case studies, is located in this block. A significantly more appropriate built form outcome is achieved on this site with a lower height of 45 m, while still achieving the current maximum FSR of 4:1. This is applicable to the other larger sites across the block, which have the opportunity to achieve the existing maximum FSR. It is therefore recommended that the maximum height in this block be 45 m.

#### Wickham

The need to reconsider zoning of Wickham to more closely reflect the council's 2006 urban design work has already been discussed. Considering the location of Wickham relative to the rest of the city centre and its desired future character and scale, an amendment to the height controls is also necessary.

Analysis has shown that the majority of the land that currently has a maximum height limit of 60 m is affected by mine subsidence, making it less suitable for development to this height, reducing its feasibility. Additionally, development of this part of Wickham at these heights would provide a significant amount of the city centre's commercial and residential floor space in the one location, which does not support Hunter Street or the identified activity hubs. It would also detract from Honeysuckle.

This part of Wickham is the transitional area from the taller buildings in the west end of the city centre, to the lower predominant building heights of Wickham, which are 10 and 14 m. It is recommended that heights be reduced to a maximum of 24 m in the south-western corner, to better transition to the village character of Wickham. Lower building forms in this location are more feasible and likely to develop.

# LEP provisions relating to height

There is a need to simplify height provisions in the LEP so that it sets key objectives with reference to the Height of Buildings Map. This map should be the only point of reference, setting out the maximum allowable heights across the city centre. Variations to these can be sought via several mechanisms in the LEP (exceptions to development standards, and through architectural design competition (see 6.5: Other matters).

Additional guidance related to height of buildings across the city centre is proposed for the DCP, and is discussed below in detail. The LEP can rely on those additional provisions, without directly duplicating or referring to them.

More specifically, the LEP contains a provision relating to the land bounded by Hunter, King, Newcomen and Perkins Streets. The clause allows a maximum height of up to 40 m Australian Height Datum (AHD) for a site area in excess of 10,000m², subject to the height not unreasonably impacting on view corridors to and from Christchurch Cathedral and the Hunter River foreshore.

Considering the definition of site area, achieving a 10,000m<sup>2</sup> site would require the consolidation of allotments across public roads or lanes. This is undesirable in terms of legibility, permeability and the existing established grid of the east end of the city. It also relies on the agreement of council.

The expression of height relative to AHD differs from the remainder of the LEP, where height is measured in metres above ground level (in accordance with the standard instrument LEP definition and approach). On the King Street side of this block, the 40 m AHD height is approximately equivalent to the 24 m already provided for on the Height of Building Map. On the Hunter Street side of this block, it is significantly higher than the 24 m allowed for on the map, and would equate with 35.5 m above ground level. Specific modelling of this area has demonstrated that this height would not be appropriate on the Hunter Street side of the block. The clause also creates uncertainty about retention of key view corridors and what overall height and massing will be achieved on this city block.

It is recommended that this clause be deleted, and that the maximum development potential be expressed on the height and floor space ratio maps. The maximum height has been increased on part of this block, as discussed above. It is also noted that the maximum FSR for a mixed use development will be higher than the existing, under the proposed FSR clause.

If a large development is put forward within this block, the existing mechanisms within the LEP allow variations to be assessed relative to a specific proposal. A special area control is also proposed for this block in the DCP, which is discussed in further detail below.

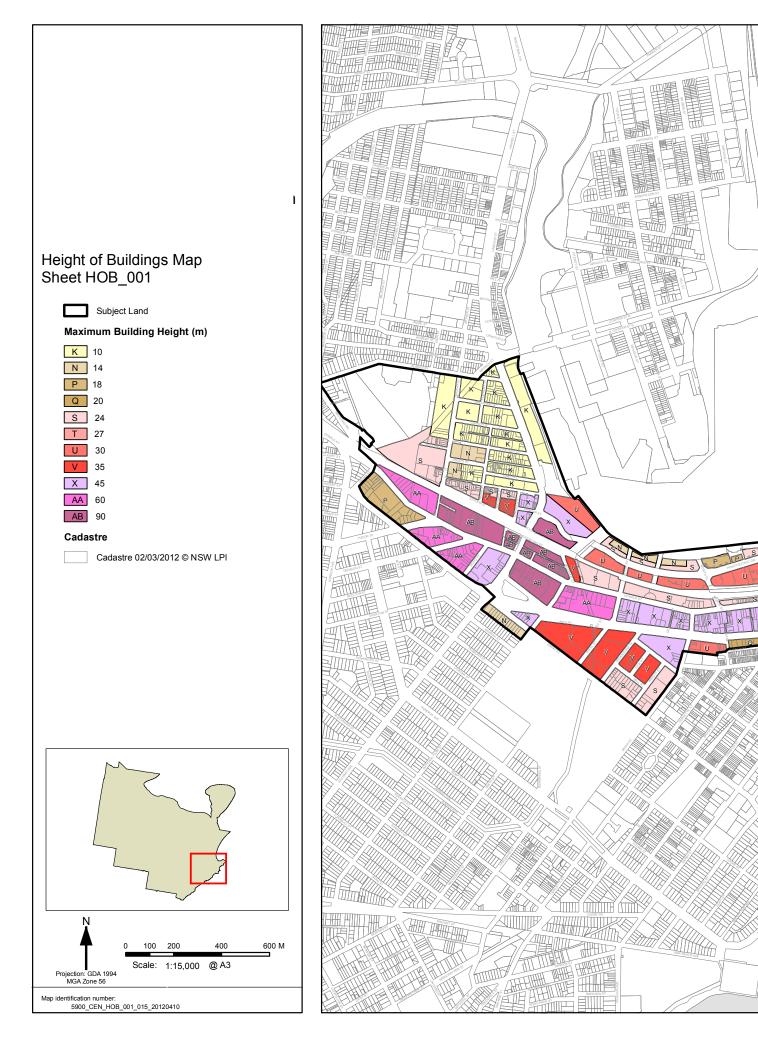
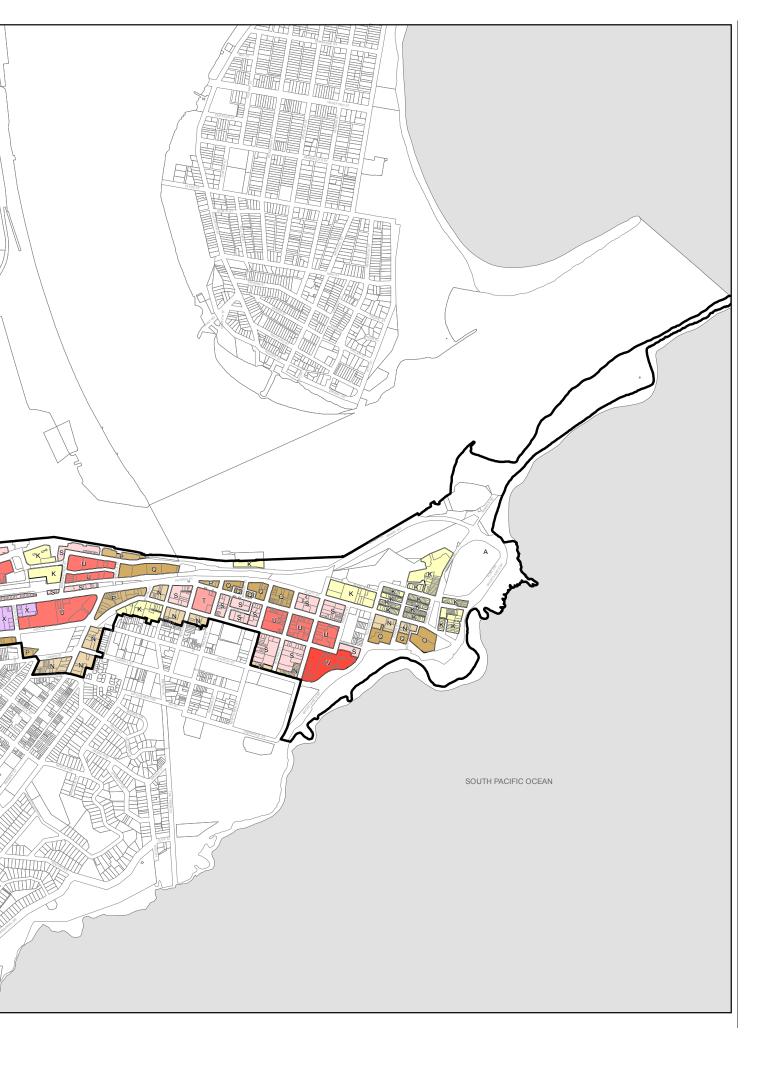


Figure 5.6 Proposed height of buildings map for the Newcastle city centre



# 5.1.4 Other matters

# Residential flat buildings in Zone B3 Commercial Core

There is a specific local clause within LEP 2012 to ensure that residential flat buildings within this zone are part of a mixed use development that also involves non-residential uses. With the proposed removal of residential flat buildings from this zone, it is also proposed that this clause be deleted.

# Proposed clause for land in Zone B3 Commercial Core

It is very important that the commercial core zone be the important location for new commercial development in the city centre and that where a mixed use building is proposed within this zone, it contains a minimum proportion of commercial uses. Testing and analysis has shown that this development would be more likely in the lower sections of the building, within a larger floorplate. The minimum commercial component is proposed to be 25%. This allows for some provision of above-ground carparking within buildings.

It is proposed to include a new local clause, as follows:

"Land in Zone B3 Commercial Core

- (1) The objective of this clause is to achieve a reasonable proportion of gross floor area for commercial premises within mixed use development in Zone B3 Commercial Core.
- (2) This clause applies to development applications which include shop top housing on land in Zone B3 Commercial Core.

(3) Despite any other provision of this Plan, the consent authority must not grant consent to a development application for a mixed use development unless it is satisfied that the development includes commercial premises comprising at least 25% of the gross floor area of the development."

# Amended clause for land in Zone R4 High Density Residential

The proposed amendments introduce some high density residential zoning in two areas in the city centre. The LEP contains a clause (6.4) that requires 75% of the development to be residential and limits any non-residential land use to a maximum of 25% of the development. The existing clause says:

"Land in Zone R4 High Density Residential

- (1) The objective of this clause is to achieve a reasonable proportion of residential accommodation within mixed use development in Zone R4 High Density Residential
- (2) This clause applies to development applications for non-residential land uses on land in Zone R4 High Density.
- (3) Despite any other provision of this Plan, the consent authority must not grant consent to a development application to which this clause applies unless it is satisfied that the development is part of a mixed use development that includes residential accommodation and the residential accommodation comprises 75% of the gross floor area of the building."

The clause currently restricts any permitted non-residential development to a maximum of 25% of any development, which is the intention for commercial and office uses, but not for other uses like tourist and visitor accommodation, educational establishments or health services facilities. It will also impact on development applications for existing commercial uses not currently part of a mixed use building. It is important that these uses are provided for during the period that the zone transitions to a high density residential area and that uses such as the above mentioned can occur in this zone. The following amended clause is therefore recommended:

"Land in Zone R4 High Density Residential

- (1) The objective of this clause is to achieve a reasonable proportion of residential accommodation within mixed use development in Zone R4 High Density Residential.
- (2) This clause applies to land in Zone R4 High Density Residential.
- (3) Despite any other provision of this Plan, the consent authority must not grant consent to the erection of a building for the purposes of commercial premises unless it is satisfied that the development includes residential accommodation and the residential accommodation comprises at least 75% of the gross floor area of the building."

# Wickham redevelopment area

As already discussed this strategy recommends amendments to the height and FSR controls in the Wickham area to reflect the urban design work previously done by council with the community, and a further examination of the zoning.

The LEP has a specific map for the Wickham Redevelopment Area, which aligns with this work, outlining redevelopment sites, a possible future transport corridor, future public thoroughfares and open space.

The extent of future public thoroughfares has been identified as a barrier to achieving redevelopment in Wickham. An analysis of the actual number and location of these would need to be part of a detailed review, which council would be best placed to undertake subsequent to this process. At present the locations of future public thoroughfares and open space are included in both the LEP and DCP.

The inclusion of the Wickham Redevelopment Area Map in the LEP, along with specific requirements needing to be satisfied for development applications on affected land, limits flexibility and could be contributing to these being a barrier. The nomination of these future spaces in a DCP allows a clear articulation about the overall street and public domain network desired, while allowing both council and local landowners some flexibility in determining final outcomes when considering individual DAs.

It is recommended that the local clause relating to the Wickham Redevelopment Area (7.8 in the LEP 2012) along with the Wickham Redevelopment Area Map be removed from the LEP, and that the same provisions remain in Wickham DCP.

# Design Excellence

The design excellence clause in the LEP requires architectural design competition for certain development:

- higher than 48 m
- capital value of more than \$1 million on an identified key site map, or
- applicant chooses to have a competition

This clause is proposed to be amended so that design competitions apply to sites that are:

- higher than 45 m or 13 storeys (or both)
- have a capital investment value of greater than \$5 million in an area identified on the key site map, or
- the applicant chooses to have a competition.

Currently there are two key sites which require a design competition, being the former Regional Museum site and the Cottage Creek precinct at Honeysuckle.

There are some other significant sites within the city centre which would not be captured by the height criteria, but where high quality design outcomes are important in the event of the sites or blocks being redeveloped. These sites are opportunity sites that have significant potential to be catalysts for renewal in their immediate area. Each are subject to special constraints such as heritage or significant view corridors or have significant potential to influence the amenity of the public domain. Because of this, they require special attention to ensure that the redevelopment opportunity is realised in a way that also achieves positive public domain or heritage outcomes.

An amended key sites map (Figure 5.7) is proposed to include these sites, being:

 854 Hunter Street in the west end, known as "the Store" site

- the lots at the corner of Hunter Street and Auckland Street in the civic precinct
- the blocks in the east end bounded by Hunter, Newcomen, King and Perkins Streets
- 309 King Street (bounded by Union, Bull and Ravenshaw Streets, currently the location of Panthers Newcastle club)

# Exemption for low impact signage in Zones B3 Commercial Core and B4 Mixed Use

Under SEPP64 – Advertising and Signage, most types of signage are prohibited in heritage areas, including the city centre. The only exceptions to this are for business and building identification signage or where an environmental planning instrument makes signage exempt development.

There is a range of signage that is of low impact, and which contributes to the character and vitality of the city centre that is currently prohibited under SEPP64. To accommodate this signage, a new exemption will be included in schedule 2 of the LEP, complementing the existing exemption for building and business identification signage. This exemption will cover a range of small scale signs such as under awning signs, as well as temporary signage for purposes such as recreational events and public notices by a public authority. Criteria that this signage must satisfy in order to be exempt will address matter such as size and location, and signage must be relevant to the activity carried out in the building and not be moving or flashing. Except for temporary signs and public notices giving information about a service, signage will not be allowed on land that contains a heritage item. The signage will not have any adverse environmental or amenity impacts.

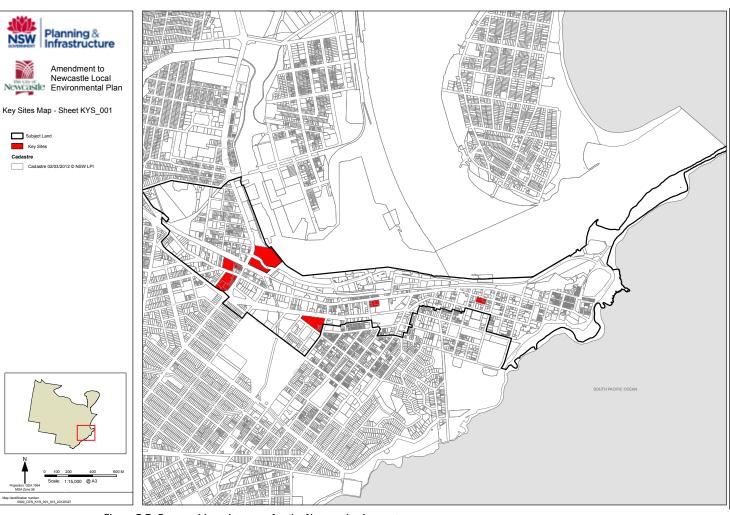


Figure 5.7 Proposed key sites map for the Newcastle city centre

# 5.2 Development Control Plan (DCP)

# 5.2.1 City centre character

Currently, three separate DCPs apply to land within the city centre. The city centre itself is divided into separate documents for east and west, with a separate DCP applying to Wickham. The presence of three plans, each with its own format, makes navigation difficult for users. The DCP would benefit from consolidation into a single document and consistency of format to grouping built form and public domain controls with each other.

Some amendment of DCP planning controls is also necessary to support changes to the LEP. In addition, to promote specific built form and public domain outcomes, the DCP would also benefit from some specific objectives and controls for various parts of the city centre in recognition of their location, size and development potential. These 'special areas' have a key role to play in place making and defining distinct precinct character. Special area controls enable a place to be considered holistically and encompass specific built form and public domain elements for that place such as highlighting of views, promotion of through-site links, or nominating appropriate building envelopes for infill development.

The aspects of the DCP that would benefit from review are outlined in the following sections. Some consolidation and rationalisation of the city-wide strategy will give context to the intentions for the city as a whole. Review and consolidation of detail controls, grouping into different key areas such as built form, pedestrian amenity and the public domain will assist wayfinding within the DCP. The following discussion outlines key areas of change. Detailed drafting of a revised DCP is a subsequent exercise that could be undertaken by the City of Newcastle independently or in partnership with the department.

The existing DCP contains a series of sections that are relevant for establishing and maintaining an overall character for the city centre. These sections are primarily in the City Centre East DCP. A revised DCP should rationalise these clauses and consolidate east and west into a single clause. Clauses such as Edges and Gateways would be better addressed in special area controls as they relate to specific sites or conditions in specific precincts. Other clauses that refer to the whole of the city centre would be better within a general city character section at the beginning of a revised and consolidated DCP.

# 5.3 Special area controls

# **Purpose Statement**

Detailed precinct planning undertaken as a part of this urban renewal strategy identified a number of special areas that would benefit from specific provisions within a revised DCP. These areas were identified in recognition of their location, attributes, size and/or development potential. They have the potential to realise specific outcomes with respect to built form and/or public domain that could make major contributions to the distinct character of each activity node. Any special area controls applying to these areas would need to be considered in addition to the general controls contained elsewhere in the DCP.

Ten areas have been identified and are indicated in Figure 5.8.

# East end

- 1. Hunter Street Mall
- 2. Crown Street

# Civic

- 3. Civic
- 4. Stegga's Emporium & Devonshire Street

# West End

- 5. Cottage Creek
- 6. Birdwood Park
- 7. The Stores site

# Wickham

- 8. Wickham railway edge
- 9. Wickham village

# **Honeysuckle**

10. Honeysuckle precinct

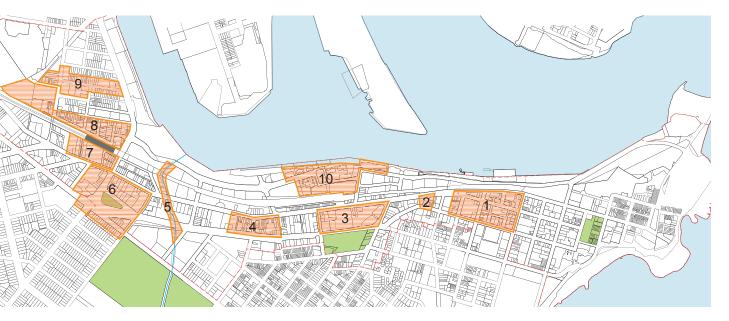


Figure 5.8 Proposed Newcastle city centre special areas

# 5.3.1 General objectives

The general objectives for special area clauses in a revised DCP for Newcastle city centre would be to:

- promote development that contributes to an overall vision for the Newcastle city centre
- reinforce, improve or develop the character of specific areas in the Newcastle city centre
- encourage development that interprets and reinforces important civic elements of the city structure, including public spaces, buildings and views
- strengthen the spatial definition of streets with consistent street wall height and building alignments
- promote development that reinforces safety and amenity in the public domain.



Figure 5.9 Hunter Street Mall upgrade plan (JMD 2012)

# 5.3.2 Hunter Street Mall

The east end of Newcastle centres on Hunter Street Mall and the termination of Hunter Street at Pacific Park. The precinct is characterised by hilly topography and a mix of uses focusing on the retail core of Hunter Street Mall. The subdivision is more finely grained than other parts of Newcastle city centre. A mix of heritage buildings with more recent infill development and a higher proportion of residential development give this part of Newcastle a unique character, distinct from other parts of the city centre.

Hunter Street Mall has the potential to further develop as a unique, main street shopping destination, distinguishing it from nearby suburban shopping centres. Promoting an increase in the residential population here will support the evolution of Hunter Street Mall into a vibrant main street boutique shopping destination with a diverse range of other uses such as small commercial and tourism facilities.

Public domain improvements, particularly in Hunter Street Mall, including improvements to the footbridge to the foreshore, will support urban renewal in the east end, supporting redevelopment and ongoing improvements to the quality of retail offerings. Redevelopment of the former David Jones site and the block bounded by Hunter, Wolfe, King and Newcomen Streets is an opportunity to support the creation of an urbane mixed use neighbourhood with the conveniences of city living, set amongst high quality retail and commercial development.







The objectives for this special area would be to:

- strengthen the sense of place and urban character of the east end
- 2. build upon the existing heritage character to enhance the area's identity
- 3. be an attractive and liveable urban neighbourhood centre
- diversify the role of Hunter Street Mall as a destination for many activities including retail, dining, entertainment, nightlife and events, additional to regular day-to-day services for local residents.
- encourage new businesses that will attract visitors to the area
- interpret the historic significance of Hunter Street
   Mall and protect heritage buildings
- 7. protect views to Christ Church Cathedral
- promote the Mall as the main access way and place of activity, supported by the surrounding street network
- improve pedestrian permeability and reinforce existing links to other destinations and public transport.
- 10. encourage activity at street level.







Figure 5.10 *Potential* Morgan Street, off Hunter Street Mall, impression (ARUP 2012)



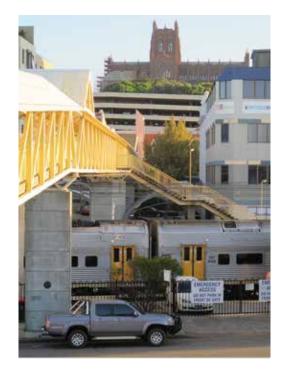
Figure 5.11 Today Morgan Street, off Hunter Street Mall

# Hunter Street Mall controls

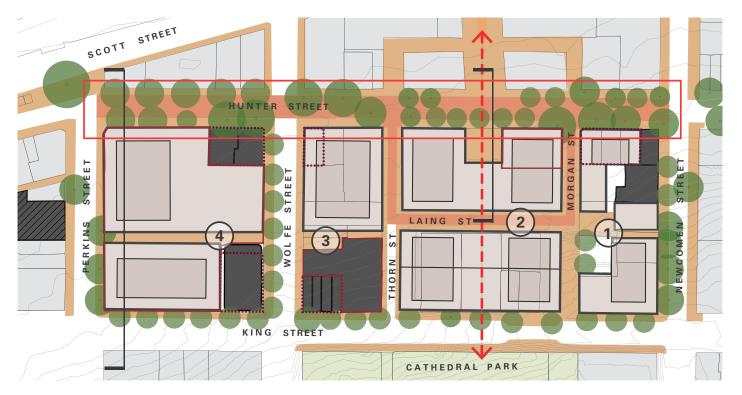
The types of controls proposed to achieve these objectives are outlined below:

#### Access and connections

- provide a continuous pedestrian connection between Newcomen and Perkins Streets, which includes
  - a minimum 3 m wide pedestrian only link (1) between Newcomen and Laing Streets along the existing Laing Street alignment
  - improvement to the existing pedestrian link between Morgan and King Streets to incorporate better landscaping and ease of access
  - transforming Laing Street into a shareway (2) for pedestrians and vehicles
  - a new pedestrian link or arcade (3) between Thorn Street and Wolfe Street
  - a new shareway/lane (4) between Wolfe and Perkins Streets, behind the former David Jones department store, that extends from the existing Wolfe Street lane with a minimum width of 8 m. The view down this lane would be terminated by the Victoria Theatre
- improve the useability and safety of lanes with active frontages and uses that open onto the lane
- encourage service deliveries off Hunter Street where possible. Otherwise, restrict service and deliveries in Hunter Street Mall to certain times of the day to minimise conflict with other activities.



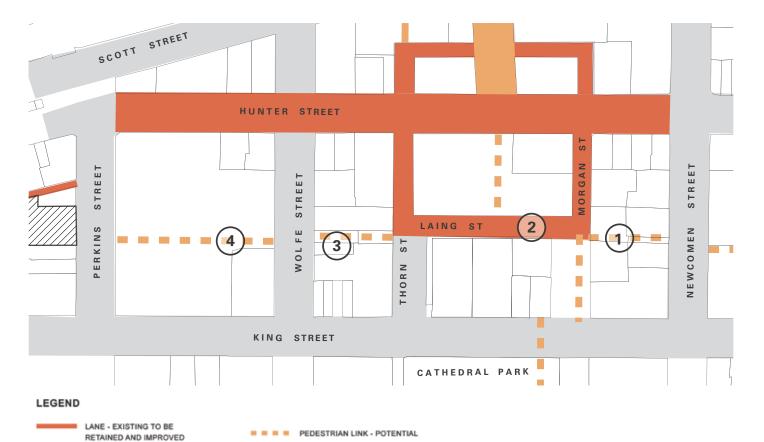




#### LEGEND



Figure 5.12 Hunter Street Mall indicative plan



VICTORIA THEATRE

Figure 5.13 Hunter Street Mall indicative connections and access plan

LANE - POTENTIAL

PEDESTRIAN LINK - EXISTING TO BE RETAINED AND IMPROVED

#### Built form

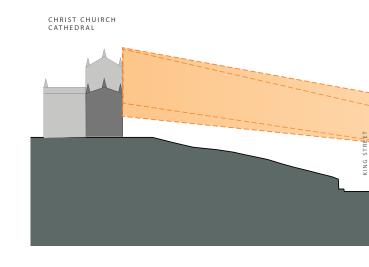
- protect the significant views to Christ Church Cathedral from Queens Wharf and from the footbridge over Market Street from Queens Wharf
  - Future development must provide an opening between buildings along the Market Street alignment towards Cathedral Park to maintain the view to the cathedral as shown in Figure 5.16
  - New buildings within the view corridor alignment should be no greater than 18m in height.
- apply setback controls, as per Figures 5.14 and 5.15
- ensure new buildings respond to the topography of the precinct. For example, a development may step along the slope, or taller elements may reinforce high points on the site.

### Public domain interface

- a mix of land uses should be achieved and focused on increasing after-hours activity along Hunter Street Mall, with increased outdoor dining and improved public domain
- fine grain frontages are to be designed at the street level along Hunter Street Mall. This may include wrapping larger format uses with smaller shops to provide active frontages to the Mall.

### Landscaping

- improve the function of the mall by delineating a central shareway for vehicles and pedestrians and provide space for parking, landscape areas, ample places for rest, opportunities for outdoor dining and other enterprise activities and community events
- minimise clutter within the Mall, by restricting the erection of additional awnings or permanent shade structures. Permanent awning structures should be confined to building awnings, which should be consistent in height and relate to the building design.
   Other covers, outdoor umbrellas, market stalls or the like, should be temporary/removable structures.



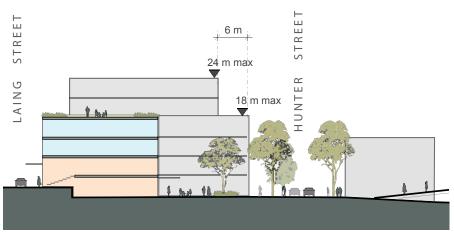


Figure 5.14 Section through Hunter Street Mall, showing building setbacks

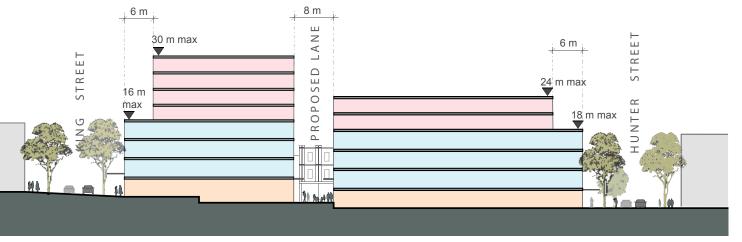


Figure 5.15 Section through former David Jones building, with new lane terminated by the view of Victoria Theatre, and building setbacks

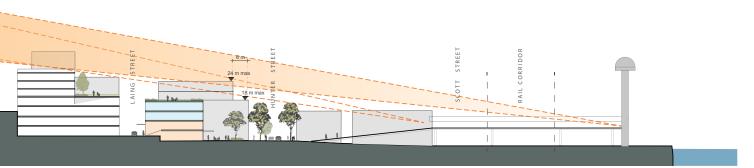


Figure 5.16 Key view corridor from the footbridge to Christ Church Cathedral

# 5.3.3 Crown Street

This area, twinned with the junction of Hunter and Scott Streets, acts as a gateway between Civic and the east end. It is a short street between Hunter and King Street, with a well-established tree canopy. Special area controls could advocate the improvement of the public domain to include more landscaping, public art and street furniture, signalling the transition to a more pedestrian-focused part of the city. Active frontages and activity on the footpath such as outdoor dining would take advantage of the pleasant pedestrian scale of Crown Street and public domain improvements. Outdoor dining would support the cinemas located at the end of the street, and provide lunch opportunities for city workers in the vicinity.

#### The objectives for Crown Street would be to:

- reconfigure Crown Street to be a shared space that allows more opportunities for outdoor dining and other enterprise activities and community events and may include landscaping, public art and street furniture
- retain the sense of enclosure shaped by the scale and character of the heritage buildings and street tree canopy
- protect heritage buildings and complement their setting
- 4. activate the street frontages.



Crown Street today

# Crown Street controls

The types of controls proposed to achieve these objectives are outlined below.

#### Access and connections

- narrow the road carriageway to minimum widths to maximise space on the footpath for pedestrians, landscaping, public art or outdoor dining
- consider raising the level of the carriageway and marking the space with indicators to slow drivers and signal arrival into a shared space
- restrict service vehicle access at certain times of the day to allow for other activities.

# Built form and heritage

- reinstate traditional shopfront elements, including awnings and balconies
- new awnings should be complementary to the character and architectural style of the building
- apply setback controls, as per image shown at right.

#### Landscaping

- retain a tree canopy over the street to provide a sense of enclosure
- provide lighting to improve safety and encourage greater activity at night.



Figure 5.17 Potential Crown Street, impression (ARUP 2012)

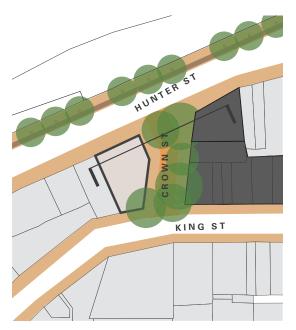


Figure 5.18 Crown Street indicative plan

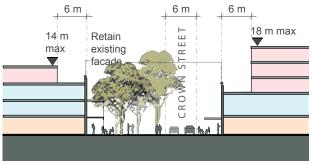


Figure 5.19 Crown Street section, with setbacks

# 5.3.4 Civic

Civic is the administrative, cultural and educational centre of Newcastle. It includes facilities that reflect Newcastle's importance as a major regional city such as the art gallery, the town hall and the Civic Theatre. The precinct is also home to significant public infrastructure such as Wheeler Place and Civic Park.

Redevelopment of significant opportunity sites such as Civic Arcade along with removal of the courts from the east end will stimulate redevelopment of smaller commercial spaces within the civic precinct (as legal support services move to co-locate with the courts). Introduction of new activities such as more educational facilities associated with the University of Newcastle have the potential to stimulate significant change and renewal within this area.

A significant public domain opportunity exists to improve north-south connectivity along the axis stretching from Civic Park, through Wheeler Place and across the rail corridor. Improvement of the public domain quality of this axis is important for reconnecting Civic with the Hunter River foreshore.

The major redevelopment opportunity in this special area is the Civic Arcade site. Any new building on this site should provide an appropriate response to the heritage value of Nesca House, and address both Hunter Street and Christie Place. Building bulk should be located to preserve solar access to Christie Place. This site also presents an opportunity to provide a pedestrian through-site link between Hunter and King Streets.

The objectives for the civic special area would be to:

- develop a civic and cultural precinct that uniquely interprets the city's historic past as well as providing a platform for its contemporary future
- enhance existing connections to the waterfront
- ensure Wheeler Place is an attractive public space that strengthens pedestrian activity and permeability for the whole precinct
- ensure design excellence for new buildings and public spaces that contribute to the identity of Newcastle.







Figure 5.20 Wheeler Place Cluster of Palms, impression (JMD 2012)



Figure 5.21 Wheeler Place Cluster of Palms section (JMD 2012)

# Civic controls

The sort of controls that could be put in place to achieve these objectives are outlined below.

#### Access and connections

- enhance the pedestrian crossing (1) between Wheeler Place and the forecourt of the former station building.
   This may include widening the crossing, as indicated on the plan
- realign the crossing across the railway corridor (2) to provide a more direct and clear route
- establish strong pedestrian links to the bus stops and throughout the site. Strengthen existing links to surrounding blocks and key land uses
- provide a new publicly accessible pedestrian link (3) from Christie Place to Auckland Street that continues the alignment of Christie Street
- provide a new pedestrian connection (4) from Hunter Street to Christie Place to improve permeability. This may be a publicly accessible link, an arcade or foyer space.

#### Public space

- improve Wheeler Place to attract more visitors by providing more shading, places to rest and opportunities for community events
- apply a consistent public domain treatment along the connection from the forecourt of the former station building to Civic Park
- include a plan and images of the public domain once the preferred option is confirmed.



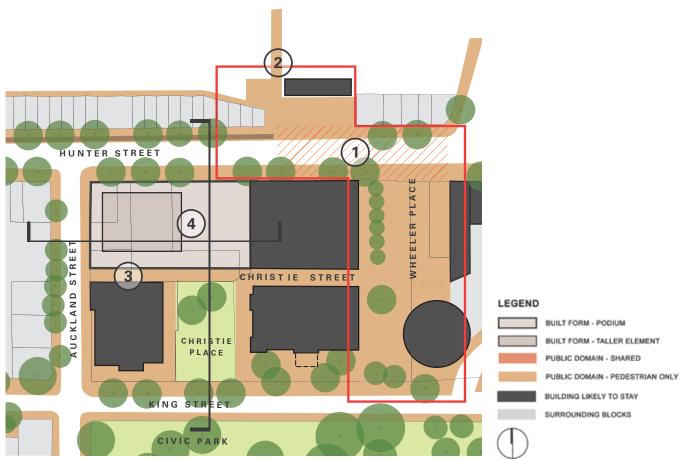


Figure 5.22 Civic indicative plan

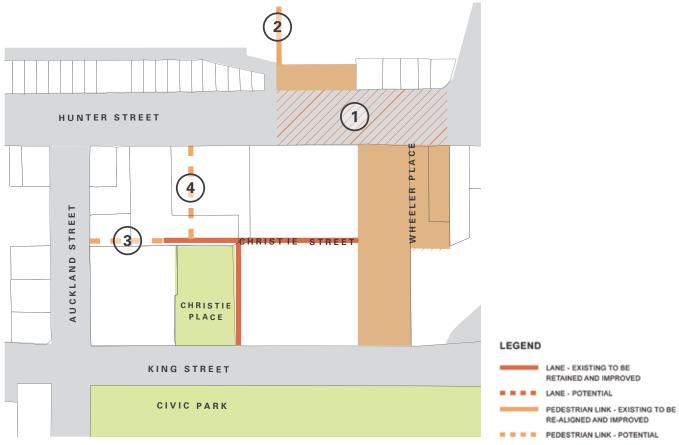


Figure 5.23 Civic indicative connections and access plan

#### Built form

- provide street wall heights and setbacks as per requirements in the current DCP
- locate building bulk in accordance with the figures below to ensure an appropriate interface with adjoining heritage buildings.

#### Public domain interface

 encourage active frontages to all civic spaces and streets with multiple pedestrian entries and/or entry foyers.

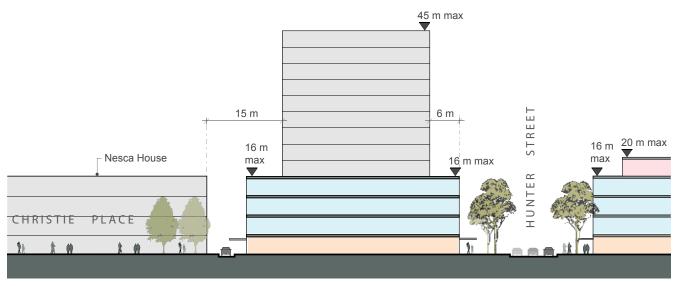


Figure 5.24 Section through Christie Place and Civic Arcade site showing building form and setbacks

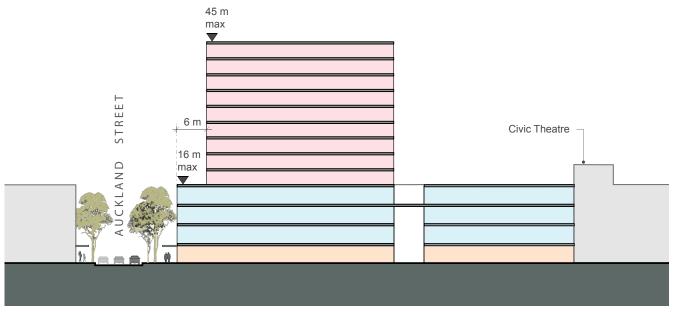


Figure 5.25 Section through Civic Arcade site showing building form and setbacks

# 5.3.5 Stegga's Emporium and Devonshire Street

The area between the Stegga's Emporium at 517-529 Hunter Street and the former Star Hotel on the western side of Devonshire Street contains a number of heritage buildings, redevelopment opportunities and the potential to upgrade Devonshire Street (which is a pedestrianised street linking Hunter and King Streets). Devonshire Street has a pleasing pedestrian scale that needs to be taken into account in the redevelopment of adjoining sites, one being the former Star Hotel. Careful redevelopment of sites in the vicinity will positively impact on Devonshire Street, contributing to the realisation of its potential as a significant part of the pedestrian fabric of Newcastle.

The Emporium is one of Newcastle's significant heritage assets. It was designed by F.B. Menkens in 1886, and is important because heritage fabric is not as significant or widespread in the western end of the city centre. The existing seven shopfronts are currently split between two separate ownerships. The special area controls aim to ensure any future redevelopment of this site results in an appropriate response to the heritage fabric by considering the building as a whole.

The objectives for this special area would be to:

- develop an activity node with an identifiable precinct character
- protect heritage by relating to the existing scale and built form character through appropriate setbacks
- strengthen the urban character of Hunter Street
- 4. support the role and function of the lane network.

The types of controls proposed are outlined on the following pages.

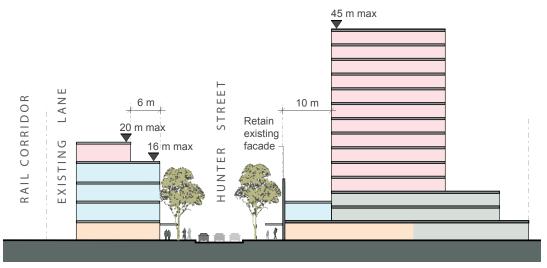


Figure 5.26 Section through Emporium site



Figure 5.27 Potential Devonshire Street, impression (ARUP 2012)



Figure 5.28 Today Devonshire Street

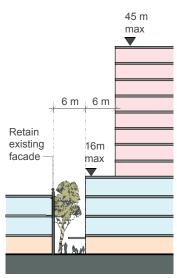


Figure 5.29 Section through Devonshire Street

# Stegga's Emporium and Devonshire Street controls

### Public space

 allow for greater opportunities for seating, outdoor dining and integration of public art.

#### Built form

- retain the pedestrian scale of Devonshire Street
- relate the podium height of new development with the predominate street wall height established by heritage buildings and buildings that contribute to the character of the precinct
- retain the existing street wall height along the heritage shopfronts on the Emporium site, with new development to be set back a minimum of 8 m above the street wall height

- adaptive re-use and infill development should be designed to retain, restore and/or integrate with the fine grain appearance of the shopfronts within this precinct
- encourage amalgamation of sites within the special area to achieve better built outcomes.

#### Public domain interface

 activate Devonshire Street with ground floor uses that address and/or open onto the lane.



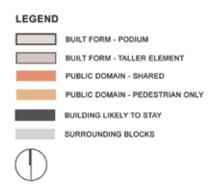
Figure 5.30 Emporium and Devonshire Street indicative plan

# 5.3.6 Cottage Creek

Cottage Creek is located in the western end of Newcastle city centre. This part of Newcastle has fewer public domain assets, so incremental acquisition and improvement of public open space is required to ensure that the precinct is adequately served in the future as it evolves into a future city core with a predominance of commercial uses. Cottage Creek has the potential in the long-term to become an important pedestrian connection between National Park and the Hunter River foreshore. It will become a pleasant landscaped corridor, and one of Newcastle's significant public domain assets.

The objectives for Cottage Creek would be to:

- 1. support the function of the creek
- 2. reveal Cottage Creek as part of the wider creek network
- 3. provide the opportunity to establish an open space corridor along Cottage Creek for pedestrians and cyclists, with landscape areas



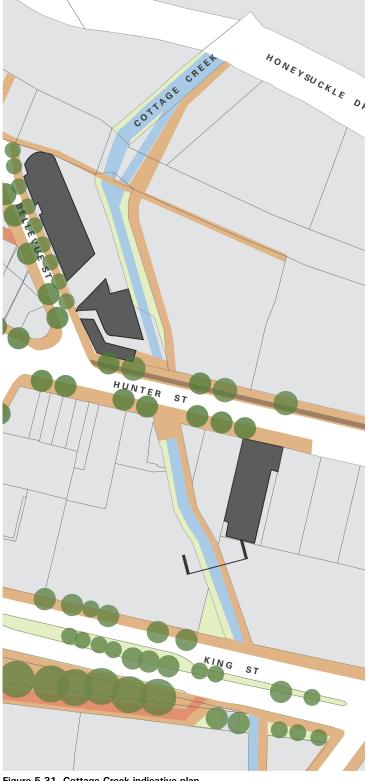


Figure 5.31 Cottage Creek indicative plan

# Cottage Creek controls

The types of controls proposed to achieve these objectives are outlined below.

#### Access and connections

 provide a minimum setback from the creek boundary to provide sufficient width for potential pedestrian and cycle access along the waterway, and to provide for landscape areas that can also manage stormwater discharge from development adjoining the creek.

#### Public domain interface

- provide a sense of address to the creek through building orientation and outlook and, where possible, activate frontages at lower levels
- incorporate passive surveillance of the creek from adjoining development
- design adjoining development to ensure there is no net increase in stormwater entering Cottage Creek.

#### Landscaping

- where pedestrian access will not be provided in the short-term or at all, provide appropriately landscaped areas within the setback
- integrate public squares or courtyards within the design of development along the creek to provide a system of connected open-space and public domain.

#### Flood planning

- avoid obstructions along the creek that would prevent water flow during flood events
- seek to acquire and remove any buildings over the creek that may impede creek flows, particularly during flood events
- ensure any pedestrian access or structures within the creek corridor comply with relevant standards for safety and flood-prone land
- provide robust ground-level spaces designed to accommodate flood inundation.

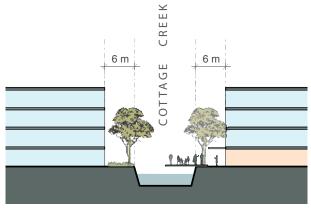


Figure 5.32 Section through Cottage creek



Figure 5.33 Potential Cottage Creek, impression (ARUP 2012)



Figure 5.34 Today Cottage Creek

### 5.3.7 Birdwood Park

Birdwood Park is located in the western end of the city centre. This part of Newcastle has fewer public domain assets, so improvement of public open space is required to ensure the precinct is adequately served in the future as it evolves into a city core precinct with a predominance of commercial uses. There are also major redevelopment opportunities associated with the large consolidated landholdings of the former Newcastle Museum site. The heritage elements of these sites, combined with relatively large land areas, provide ample opportunity for unique developments.



The objectives for this Birdwood Park special area would be to:

- formalise Birdwood Park as an important city park in the west end
- be an attractive, safe and enjoyable place for recreation
- maintain adequate sunlight to Birdwood Park
- protect heritage and provide opportunities for adaptive re-use of buildings, particularly the former Museum
- encourage appropriate uses as the precinct develops over time.









Figure 5.35 Potential Birdwood Park, impression (ARUP 2012)



Figure 5.36 *Today* Birdwood Park

### Birdwood Park controls

The types of controls proposed to achieve these objectives are outlined below.

#### Built form

- ensure building setbacks are as per the solar access clause in the DCP
- ensure a consistent street wall height along King Street to provide a strong built edge to the park and maintain solar access to the public space
- provide flexible ground and first floor spaces, suitable for retail or professional commercial uses to ensure an active footpath
- consider adaptive re-use of existing building stock
- the former brewery (also former Regional Museum) site requires further study to investigate its potential for adaptive reuse. This may be guided by a Conservation Management Plan
- encourage amalgamation of sites to achieve better built outcomes.

#### Public domain interface

- development along King Street and Pacific Highway (Stewart Avenue) is to provide active frontages, such as showrooms and other uses that are more compatible along the busy road
- in the short-term, concentrate retail on the ground floor and at significant corners.

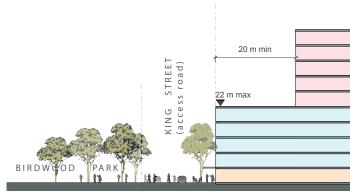


Figure 5.37 Section through Birdwood Park and King Street (access road)

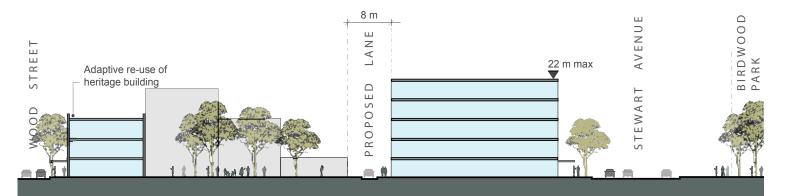


Figure 5.38 Section through former Regional Museum site



Figure 5.39 Birdwood Park indicative plan



Figure 5.40 Birdwood Park indicative connections and access plan

#### Access and connections

- formalise the existing through-site connections

   (1) within the block bounded by Hunter
   Street, Pacific Highway, Parry Street and
   Wood Street
- provide a new lane (2) parallel to Hunter Street between National Park Street and Pacific Highway, with additional through-site connections (3) to King and Hunter Streets
- restrict new vehicle entries from all streets (access to carparking and loading areas should be via rear lanes).

#### Landscaping

- consider King (access road) (4) and Parry Streets (5) to be shareways with greater landscape areas to increase the expanse of Birdwood Park and improve pedestrian useability. Some design considerations include:
  - reducing the carriageway width of King (access road) and Parry Streets and extending the park edge
  - consideration given to raising the street to the footpath level with special paving or marked areas to delineate between vehicle and pedestrian areas
  - decreasing the amount of hard surface road and providing more permeable paving, particularly in parking areas
  - providing new landscaped areas and additional street trees.

# 5.3.8 The Stores site and surrounds

This area is located in the western end of the city centre. The Stores site presents a major redevelopment opportunity due to the large consolidated landholding, long frontage to Hunter Street and proximity to the transport interchange at Wickham. The heritage elements of this site, combined with a relatively large land area, provide ample opportunity for a unique development.

The objectives for the Stores site and surrounds would be to:

- guide development that contributes to the realisation of a future commercial core
- 2. establish connections with surrounding streets and other desired pedestrian routes
- provide new roads, lanes and pedestrian routes to adequately service a new commercial core
- 4. provide new public spaces
- 5. protect heritage and enhance the existing attributes of the area
- 6. create connections with the new transport interchange.









Figure 5.41 Potential the Stores site and surrounds, impression short to medium-term scenario with temporary cycle-way (ARUP 2012)



Figure 5.42 Today the Stores site and surrounds

### The Stores site controls

The sort of controls that could be put in place to achieve these objectives are outlined below.

#### Access and connections

- provide a 10 m setback along the railway corridor for a new access road (1) that will extend the alignment of Beresford Street
- provide a new 6 m minimum service lane/ shareway (2) parallel to Hunter Street, extending the alignment of Beresford Lane
- provide additional pedestrian overpass connections (3) that reconnect with existing street alignments in Wickham

#### Built form

- the podium height for new development should relate to the Store site's heritage façade, with new development set back a minimum 6 m from the street wall height
- new tower development along Hunter Street should be no greater than 45 m, so it is comparable in scale with other areas of the west end, with taller towers over 45 m set towards the railway corridor.

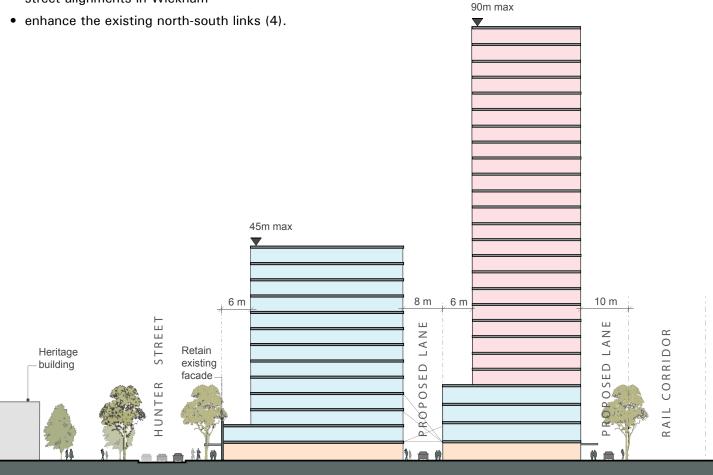


Figure 5.43 The Stores site indicative section

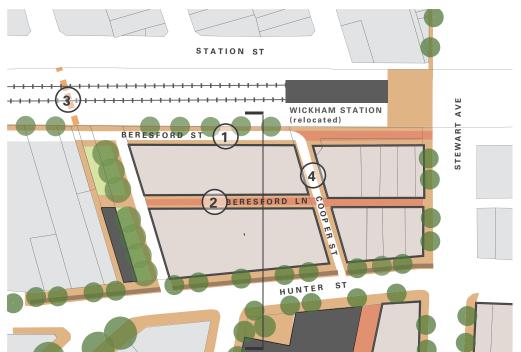


Figure 5.44 The Stores site and surrounds indicative plan

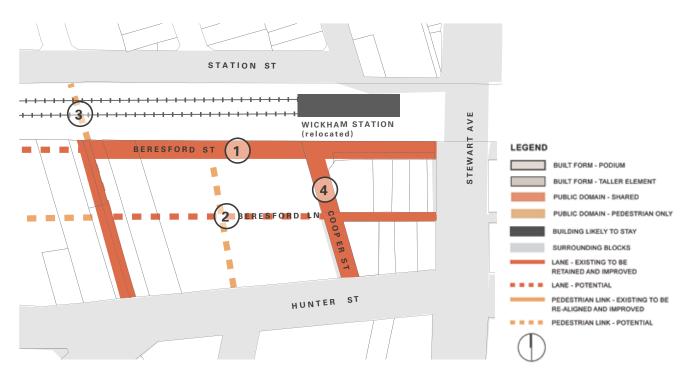


Figure 5.45 The Stores site indicative connections and access plan

# 5.3.9 Wickham railway edge

A special area clause in a revised DCP needs to be put in place to support the proposed outlined LEP changes to Wickham. The part of Wickham adjoining the rail corridor has a number of large sites. Special area controls for this precinct will ensure that redevelopment of the large sites will take advantage of proximity to the rail corridor and the new transport interchange at Wickham, while ensuring new development is designed to provide an appropriate transition in scale to North Wickham urban village. Special area controls will give more certainty for redevelopment by nominating appropriate building envelopes, uses and building locations to mitigate potential impacts (visual and otherwise) on the surrounding North Wickham neighbourhood.

The large sites on Hannell Street act as a northern gateway into the city. Special controls could ensure that redevelopment proposes built form appropriate to this prominent location, which manages the interface with lower scaled development in North Wickham.

Further investigation needs to be undertaken to determine appropriate building envelopes in this special area. This additional work could take place as part of the development of a revised DCP.





# 5.3.10 Wickham Village

A special area clause in a revised DCP needs to be put in place to support the proposed LEP changes to Wickham. The proposed changes reflect the urban design work previously done by council and the community. Further investigation needs to be undertaken to determine appropriate building envelopes, land uses and public domain in this special area. This additional work could take place as part of the development of a revised DCP, subsequent to the urban renewal strategy process.



# 5.3.11 Honeysuckle

Special area controls to promote large format commercial floor plates requires further investigation. Consultation with Hunter Development Corporation is required to determine the final detail of special area controls.



# 5.4 Views, vistas and landmarks

It is recommended that an amended map be prepared for a new DCP. The current map nominates corridors for vistas which are largely street vistas. Nominating a corridor dimension is redundant for street vistas as they are generally 10 – 20 m wide already. The current views and vistas map also nominates a diagonal vista from the Tree of Knowledge to the Cathedral, which is more of a general view than a specific view corridor. The view-shared diagram accompanying the map is only available from within the Cathedral building, probably from the tower.

The primary views recommended for inclusion in a DCP are public domain vistas and views to specific landmarks. These elements are the aspects of a place that distinguish it from other places. Preservation of significant views in the public domain is therefore critical to place-making and the preservation of character. Integrating views and vistas within the public domain is also important to the legibility of the street network.

The most important views in Newcastle tend to be street views terminated by views of the water, or prominent buildings such as the old Courthouse. Other significant views that need to be preserved are those where the tower of the Cathedral terminates a street vista, such as the ones across the block between King, Wolfe, Hunter and Newcomen Streets.

The revised DCP should also nominate potential significant views. The geometry of the street network shifts as it works its way along the peninsula, creating a series of prominent corners that are potential vista opportunities for terminating streets. Figure 5.46 includes some additional potential vistas. Important ones are also recommended for inclusion in the proposed special areas controls.

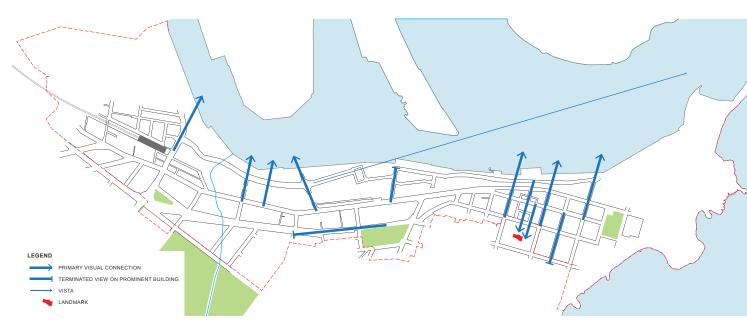


Figure 5.46 Proposed DCP map views and vistas

# 5.5 Landscape and open space

A new section outlining the city-wide strategy for landscape and open space will put in context the public domain works proposed as part of the urban renewal strategy and initiatives. A strong landscape character for Hunter and King Streets will reinforce them as links to the major areas of landscaped open space within the city.

The linear focus of much of the macro work in the city centre along the peninsula has to be balanced by an increasing emphasis in north-south links to promote connections across the rail corridor to the waterfront. East-west linkages are well-established by the street network, but north-south linkages will help reconnect Newcastle to the river foreshore.

It is recommended that a new map be included in a revised DCP that indicates north-south public domain linkages from:

- National Park to the foreshore via Cottage Creek
- Civic Park to the foreshore via Wheeler Place
- the Hunter River to the ocean along Watt Street.

New controls should be put in place to ensure the primary east-west and north-south links are well-landscaped with continuous street trees and quality paving to footpaths. Special area controls discussed in the earlier stages of this strategy outline special provisions for the Cottage Creek corridor and Civic Park/Wheeler Place axis.

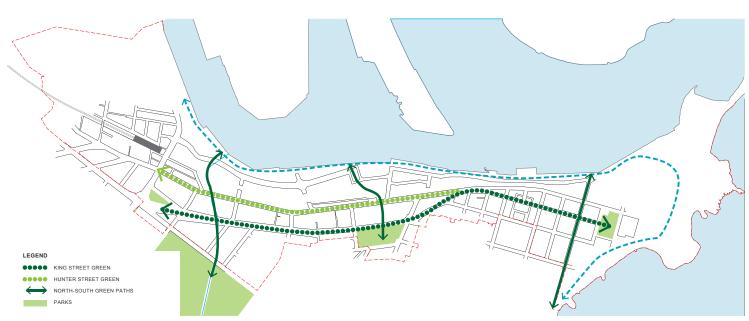


Figure 5.47 Proposed DCP map open space

# 5.6 **Building form**

# Street frontage heights

There is a great deal of variation in the current controls, even within blocks. Ground-truthing surveys conducted as part of the urban renewal strategy have shown that the current controls do not relate to predominant street wall heights determined by existing heritage and character facades. No street wall heights are nominated in the existing East Newcastle DCP despite the predominant character of built form being the parapets of heritage and character buildings.

It is proposed to amend, introduce and/or simplify street wall heights to:

- · give certainty for redevelopment
- · give good scale to the street
- · retain solar access
- ensure new infill development responds appropriately to the existing predominant street wall heights, with greater height setback from the street frontage. This measure will ensure street character is retained, even though development is more intense.

To that end, it is proposed to amend street wall heights in the following locations:

- introduce a 15 m street wall height in the precinct bounded by King, Watt, Church and Newcommen Streets
- introduce an 18 m street wall height along Hunter Street Mall
- introduce a 22 m street wall height around Birdwood Park
- rationalise the series of ranges applicable to street wall heights elsewhere in the city centre to a single 16 m street wall height.

The street frontage heights section should be amended to indicate the relationship between street frontage height and building height. A new map will indicate street frontage heights across the entire city centre (refer to Figure 5.48).



Figure 5.48 Proposed DCP map, street frontage heights map

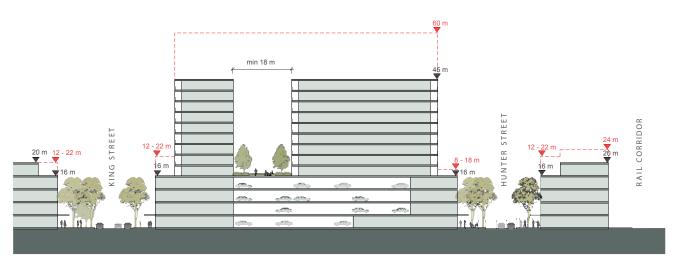


Figure 5.49 Proposed DCP drawing, section showing revised building and street frontage heights

- current controls shown dashed red



### Mixed use buildings

As a large part of the study area is zoned mixed use, objectives and controls for mixed use buildings are necessary to promote concentration of certain types of activity in each node. Specific objectives and controls for mixed use buildings in different areas are also necessary to ensure the character of the different precincts remains distinct. These controls will align with FSRs specified in the changes to the LEP.

For mixed use development in commercial core zones, a minimum proportion of non-residential uses will be required under a local clause in the LEP. Additional controls in the DCP for mixed use will show how this can be achieved. Objectives will be set to provide more guidance for mixed use buildings in different parts of the city centre.



### Solar access planes

The existing DCP controls allow for a solar access plane to be applied to built form facing Birdwood Park. As shown in Figure 5.50, the existing DCP limits the street wall height to 22 m. A 20 m setback is then required to any other built form over and above 22 m.

Detailed examination of the city centre and precinct planning conducted as part of the urban renewal strategy has identified additional locations for sun access planes.

One of these additional solar access planes has been nominated to support the upgrade to Hunter Street. Street wall and building heights on the northern side of Hunter Street will result in overshadowing of the southern side of the street, especially activity zones that are nominated as part of the new street design. A solar access plane and lower street wall and building heights are recommended to alleviate this potential conflict.

A third solar access plane has been identified for the Civic Arcade site. Redevelopment of this site is an opportunity to create a better address to Christie Place. A solar access plane applied to the southern portion of the Civic Arcade site will also protect solar access to Christie Park.

The existing solar access plane to Birdwood Park is still relevant, but could be simplified in the way it is expressed in the diagram in the current DCP. A simple map (such as Figure 5.51) is recommended in place of the diagram in the existing DCP.

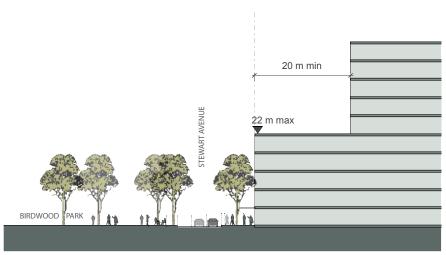


Figure 5.50 Existing DCP section through building subject to a solar access plane



Figure 5.51 Proposed DCP map, solar access planes

# 5.7 Pedestrian amenity

# Active transport and permeability

Promotion of active transport (walking and cycling) is critical to increasing activity in Hunter Street and fundamental to urban renewal. A key focus of the public domain work that was undertaken as part of this strategy has been to facilitate ease of access and movement for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed Hunter Street upgrade includes new footpath and cycleway zones, activity zones, clearways, street tree and parking zones as already discussed in this strategy. In addition to an upgrade to Hunter Street, DCP controls should be included that promote through-site links to improve pedestrian permeability in the city centre. This will make it easier for pedestrians navigating across the long city blocks and encourage more people to walk, which in turn will increase activity in the city centre.

Part of the task of promoting ease of access and movement for pedestrians and cyclists is to ensure the street network is well-connected. Cycleways should be part of a wider network promoting recreational as well as commuter cycling. Figure 5.52 shows new and existing cycleways in a connected network. It should be included in a revised DCP with objectives and controls to ensure that new cycle ways are built that connect to a wider network.

Newcastle has strong linear east-west connections along the peninsula, but north-south connections are not so well-defined. An essential part of public domain improvements should therefore be to promote north-south connections linking Hunter Street to the foreshore across the rail corridor. This measure will bring Honeysuckle and Hunter Street back together, better integrating the different precincts of the city centre. North-south connections should also extend southwards from Hunter Street, enabling residents and workers south of Hunter Street to access the city and river foreshore easily on foot or by bicycle. The easier these access routes are, the more activity will be promoted in the city centre.

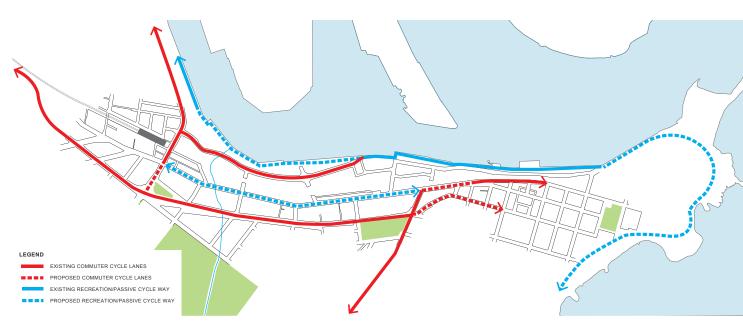


Figure 5.52 Proposed DCP map, cycle ways

Figure 5.53 should be included in a revised DCP and indicates existing and proposed north-south connections that should be fostered as Newcastle develops. Objectives and controls should be included to ensure that existing connections are improved and future connections are put in place in the locations nominated on the map. Particular attention should be paid to inclusion of controls that promote the improvement of pedestrian connections across the rail corridor, specifically ease and equity of access, integration with existing pedestrian networks and clear signage and wayfinding devices that aid legibility.

Priority should be given in the short-term to north-south connections that exist and can be upgraded within the activity nodes. The medium-term focus should be on proposed additional connections within the activity nodes, such as the linking of street alignments across the rail corridor and Cottage Creek. These include pedestrian desire lines such as the route along Steel Street to Marketown. The long-term focus can then be on any additional connections outside the activity nodes.

# **Awnings**

The map in the existing DCP shows continuous awnings over much of the study area. These requirements should be amended to reflect the zoning changes with continuous awnings required on new developments in activity nodes and weather protection to entrances elsewhere. Provisions allowing flexibility for heritage buildings should also be put in place. These requirements may be better covered by controls rather than a map.

The objectives for awnings in the current DCP are still relevant. The controls should be amended to say:

- continuous awnings are required for new buildings in the activity zones nominated on the active frontages map
- awnings on heritage buildings in the activity zones are not required if addition of an awning is inconsistent with the heritage significance or fabric of the existing building
- awnings are desirable but not mandatory for areas outside the activity zones nominated on the active frontages map. If a continuous awning is not provided, weather protection is to be provided over the entrance.

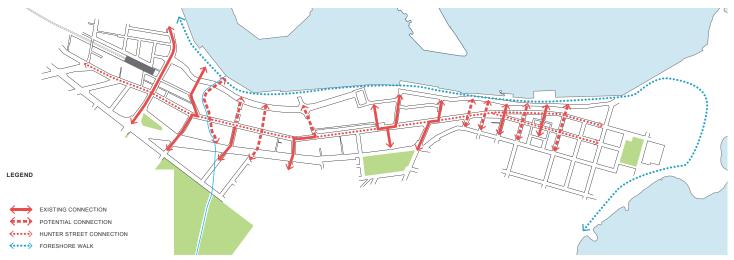


Figure 5.53 Proposed DCP map, pedestrian permeability

# Active frontages

In the current DCP, active frontages are divided into higher and lower order, with higher order frontages required to have the first three levels of the building dedicated to non-residential uses. Virtually every street in the city centre is nominated on the map as having an active frontage. The challenge with this requirement is that it is almost impossible to achieve active frontages over such a wide area. The outcome is that new development incorporates retail tenancies on the ground level, which remain empty for long periods if they aren't in locations that already have a certain level of activity. Empty retail tenancies lining the street result in degraded streetscapes with passive surveillance, increasing the opportunities for vandalism.

Figure 5.54 indicates a preferable approach to active frontage controls in a revised DCP. It shows a concentration of active frontages in the activity hubs. Additional clauses can give clarity to the definition of what constitutes an active frontage

and more lenient provisions should also be included for street frontages in areas outside the activity hubs. For example:

### Active frontages map

For areas nominated on Figure 5.54 that are required to have an active frontage, retail or commercial tenancies are required for at least 70% of the primary street frontage of development.

#### Street address

For areas on the map that fall outside the activity hubs and/or Hunter Street, retail and commercial tenancies are still permitted, but not mandatory. If retail and commercial tenancies are not included in a development, ground floor levels should be designed with building entries addressing the street and window openings that allow for passive surveillance. Ground floor levels should also be designed with 4 m floor-to-floor heights to allow a flexible range of uses. Blank walls should be kept to a minimum and, if necessary, should be designed with high quality architectural treatments and materials that have a tactile quality.

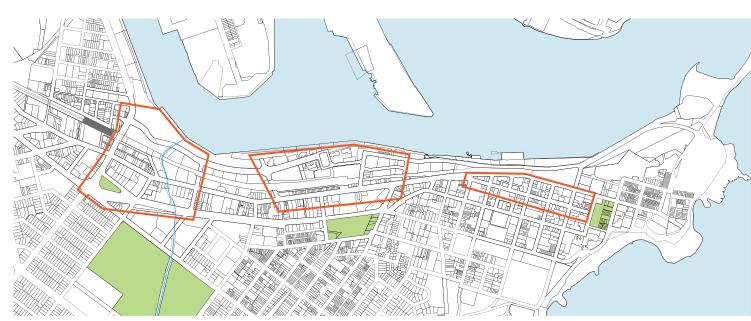


Figure 5.54 Proposed DCP map, active frontages

# 5.8 Access, parking and servicing

### Public transport

It is recommended that a new map (refer Figure 5.55) be included in the DCP indicating consolidated bus stop locations that relate to activity nodes and intervals between them of appropriate walking distances. Figure 5.55 also nominates bus stop locations that align with the proposed north-south pedestrian connection routes indicated in the pedestrian permeability section outlined previously in this strategy.

#### Vehicle access

The principle of restricting additional vehicle entries on Hunter Street is still relevant. The map in the existing DCP shows no new additional vehicle entries over the majority of Hunter and King Streets. It is recommended that this section be replaced by objectives and controls that prescribe a street hierarchy with Hunter Street being the primary consideration for no new vehicle access and King Street being a secondary consideration. Imposing a hierarchy will ensure those Hunter Street properties with a dual frontage to Hunter and King Streets will have their primary vehicular access points on King Street, rather than Hunter Street. This change will support the revitalisation of Hunter Street and urban renewal in the city centre.

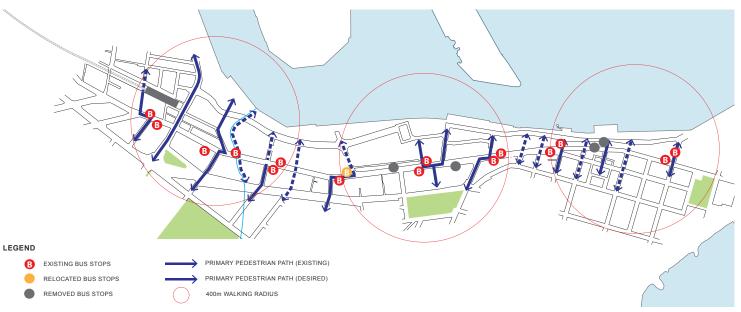


Figure 5.55 Proposed DCP map, bus stop locations