

Design & Development Guidelines 30-80 Seymour Road, Viewbank

1. Introduction

These guidelines outline the principles and objectives for development of the land at 30 - 80 Seymour Road Viewbank and seek to ensure that development on the site is designed in a site responsive manner to be environmentally sustainable and sympathetic to its context within the landscapes and environment of the Yarra and Plenty River open space corridor

2. Site Context

2.1 Surrounds

The site is situated on the north-west corner of Banyule Road and Seymour Road. The Yarra Valley Parklands lie to the west and north of the site and contain the North Eastern Horse and Pony Club on the north west corner. The remainder of these public lands are lightly treed and used for grazing. Land to the east and south-east is privately owned with dwellings on each site. The land to the immediate south is the Rosanna Golf Course (private).

The semi-rural area is undulating with scattered remnant trees. The land is generally cleared but there are pockets of more dense vegetation. The main bitumen road link from the west is Banyule Road which meanders through to become Henty Road and join with Cleveland Avenue to the east. Seymour Road is an unmade single lane road approximately 5 metres wide.

2.2 Subdivision pattern

The site is surrounded by Crown land to the west and north. The three privately owned lots to the east are 0.6, 0.9 and 3.1 ha. The remaining lots to the east going down to the Plenty River are Crown lands. On the east side of the Plenty River a new subdivision 'Cleveland' Estate is currently being constructed with lots of approximately 0.4 hectare, and as well as larger blocks to the south east with lots ranging from 1 – 2 ha. The Viewbank area to the west of the Yarra Valley parkland consists of conventional curvilinear subdivisions with numerous courts or cul-de-sacs.

2.3 Built form

The large lots to the east contain substantial dwellings constructed of face or rendered brick, with tile or Colourbond roofs. There are some two storey dwellings, but many are single storey and sprawl over the lot with long drives, tennis courts and semi-formal gardens. Colours vary.

3. Site Opportunities and Constraints

3.1 Description

The site consists of six separate lots which are 0.39, 0.55, 1.38, 1.91 and 1.94 ha in area. One of the lots is land-locked (Lot 13) but it could obtain road access through Lot 15. On this basis of the current zoning (Environment Rural Zone) and overlay (Environment Significance Overlay) a dwelling could be erected on five of the lots subject to planning and building approval.

3.2 Slope and Topography

The land has a ridgeline along its east-west axis and falls away to the north, south and south-east. The south-east gradient down to Seymour Road is particularly steep, with gradients in some areas as high as 1 in 3.3.

3.3 Views

From the ridgeline there are commanding 360⁰ views through scattered River Red Gums to distant views to the Kinglake Range, the Dandenong Ranges and the Yarra River Parklands.

3.4 Vegetation

Originally the vegetation on the site would have been included in the Plains Grassy Woodland Community, with River Red Gums and included in the exposed plain-slope, sheltered plain-slope and terrace/valley sub-communities. (Refer Banyule Vegetation Community map)

The site has been extensively cleared over the years and although there are pockets of mature River Red Gum, there is very little understorey remaining. The south-eastern edge of the site is covered with Blackberries.

3.5 Access and linkages

Under the existing lot configuration, three of the lots can be accessed from Seymour Road and a fourth from Banyule Road, but the fifth battle-axe lot would need to obtain access via Lot 15 to access Banyule Road.

3.6 Services

The site is unserviced. A trunk water main is located near the Banyule and Seymour Road intersection. Sewerage is not available in the vicinity of the site.

4. Existing Planning Controls

4.1 Planning Scheme Context

Any development must have regard to the current approved Banyule Planning Scheme, including relevant policies and guidelines. (See References) In particular the development will need to have regard to provisions of the Planning Scheme in relation to residential neighbourhood character and environment

4.2 Zoning and Overlays

The land is in an Environmental Rural Zone (ERZ) which has the purpose of:

- To conserve and permanently maintain flora and fauna species, soil and water quality and areas of historic, archaeological and scientific interest and areas of natural scenic beauty or importance so that the viability of natural eco-systems and the natural and historic environment is enhanced.
- To encourage development and the use of the land which is in accordance with sound management and land capability practices, and takes into account the environmental sensitivity and the biodiversity of the locality.
- To ensure that subdivision promotes effective land management practices and infrastructure provision.

The Schedule to the ERZ specifies a minimum lot size of 2 hectares for any subdivision in this zone.

The site is also covered by an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) Schedule 1 which relates to the environs along the Yarra and Plenty Rivers and Darebin Creek. The environmental objective of that Schedule is to protect and conserve the watercourses and streamside environs and habitat and to encourage the retention and enhancement of a continuous wildlife corridor of indigenous vegetation along the Rivers. These areas have sites of State and Regional faunal significance and high and medium habitat significance. The Decision Guidelines require that a permit be obtained for works, the construction of a fence, the subdivision of land and for the removal, destruction and lopping of vegetation.

In addition, the following policies and strategies are relevant to any redevelopment of the Seymour Road site.

4.3 Neighbourhood Character

The Banyule Planning Scheme notes that *‘ residential character and amenity are key contributors to the quality of life in Banyule. Some residential areas in the municipality are undergoing change and experiencing new development. Threats to residential character and amenity need to be restricted, and any new development should complement – if not improve – existing streetscape and neighbourhood conditions’*. To ensure that neighbourhood character is protected a Local Policy has been introduced into the Planning Scheme.

The Seymour Road site is described as within a Bush Woodland Precinct BW1. This area is characterised by low scale rural style residential development set amongst the rolling hills and flood plain of the Yarra River. Remnant indigenous vegetation,

complemented by planted native trees, provides an indication of the former woodland environment of the area.

The Neighbourhood Character Guidelines Objectives for the precinct seek to:

- *Maintain the indigenous vegetation landscape vistas.* The retention and replanting of indigenous trees is encouraged.
- *Ensure dwellings do not dominate the landscape.* Buildings should be designed to follow the topography of the site with a minimum of excavation.
- *Ensure new buildings are sympathetic to the landscape context.* Wall and roof materials and colours should be muted with earthy, 'bush' tones and bright very light colours should be avoided.
- *Ensure buildings are sited so as to minimise intrusion into the landscape vistas.* Dwellings should be sited so as to minimise visibility from the road and long distance views and should be set back at least 20 metres from the front boundary. Buildings on a side should be grouped.
- *The height and built form should ensure that the buildings do not dominate the streetscape.* The height of buildings over one storey should be minimised and buildings which penetrate the tree canopy should be avoided.
- *Minimise excavation for vehicle access, and dominance of vehicle access and storage facilities.* Carports and garages should be at or behind the line of the dwelling. Access drives should use a porous surface and should follow the contours of the site.
- *Maintain the spaciousness and rural landscape character through the front boundary treatment and fencing.* Post and rail or wire fencing should be provided. Front areas should be planted with large trees, preferably indigenous or complementary natives.

4.4 Middle Yarra Environs Local Policy

The Banyule Planning Scheme contains a policy to protect the environmental, recreational and heritage values of the Middle Yarra River. In order to implement this policy the decision guidelines require that development proposals have regard to the *Middle Yarra Concept Plan – Burke Road to Watson Creek*.

The relevant objectives of the Concept Plan for the Seymour Road site are:

- To protect and enhance the valley's air and water quality, soil resources, flora and fauna, and open space values.
- Protect and enhance the appearance and landscapes of the valley and views from important recreation areas.

The widely varying landscape of the Middle Yarra Valley is a rich resource and public asset, with much of it in public ownership. The landscape is the background and setting for the experiences of people visiting the park, or living in and passing through the area. Viewing points include those from the riverside parklands from walking and bicycle tracks, from adjacent hillsides looking into and across the river, and from roads crossing or passing along the valley.

Four landscape units were identified and the Seymour Road site is in the Plenty River Unit.

4.5 Environment Policy

The Municipal Strategic Statement acknowledges that:

'... waterways and wetlands are key features of Banyule's natural environment. The Yarra River, Plenty River and Darebin Creek and the parklands along them provides almost continuous corridors of vegetation linking with larger areas of natural habitat to the north and east. There is a need to rehabilitate natural habitats along these waterways and to provide adequate buffers to protect them from development. Stormwater quality is also critical ...'

The Environment Local Policy has objectives, including the following:

- *To ensure the diversity of Banyule's indigenous flora and fauna is conserved and enhanced.*
- *To enhance Banyule's natural environment as habitat for indigenous wildlife and provide for its ecological sustainability.*
- *To recognise the value of waterways and wetlands as major assets of Banyule's environment and to protect and enhance their natural amenity.*
- *To manage Banyule's parks and reserves as a major assets of our community and for the benefit of our natural environment.*
- *To protect vegetation and waterway communities from the adverse impact of pest plant and animals.*
- *To recognise the contribution of vegetation cover to Banyule's environment and to protect and enhance the amenity of our diverse landscape values.*

5. Design and Development Guidelines

5.1 Sustainability

A key objective for the site is the environmental sustainability of the development.

Sustainability of development will be achieved by:

- Siting and building design for solar access and energy conservation. All dwellings are required to have a 5 star energy rating using the Sustainable Energy Authority of Victoria 'First Rate' system or equivalent.
- Water conservation through use of water saving devices, water harvesting, and grey water diversion. This also helps to minimise the disposal to the septic treatment system.
- Management of waste water and solid waste to ensure on-site containment and the protection of waterways and habitat.
- Landscaping to reduce water consumption and improve energy efficiencies. The selection of indigenous and native plants which have low water requirements can reduce water consumption.
- Limiting the use of impervious surfaces to reduce the run-off.

Other elements of sustainable design are covered in the appropriate later sections of the guidelines.

5.2 Neighbourhood Character

Development shall have regard to the Residential Neighbourhood Character Policy provisions at Clause 22.07-4 relating to Bush Woodland Areas. The character of the area shall be sympathetic with the neighbouring areas in terms of scale, style and building materials although innovative design is encouraged.

5.3 Access Treatment

Any access to Banyule Road will need to comply with appropriate engineering standards.

5.4 Master Plan for Landscaping Vegetation and Earthworks

Development must be designed to prevent the removal of indigenous vegetation, in particular any remnant River Red Gums, and preserve and maintain natural drainage lines. A site responsive master plan prepared by appropriately qualified professionals should be prepared to address these issues. A site analysis plan should accompany this plan showing the location, species and height of vegetation (including understorey and weeds) and natural drainage lines.

The Master Plan should:

- Indicate proposed landscaping, and the species and height of any vegetation to be replanted or removed.
- Address the removal of weeds.
- Show earthworks associated with buildings, driveways, sewage treatment and drainage.
- Provide for a buffer along the northern and western boundaries of the site to be heavily planted with indigenous vegetation.

The preferred width of the buffer is 10 metres, but it may be reduced to at least 5 metres where appropriate. The width of the buffer is to be determined through consideration of the constraints imposed by existing environmental conditions, such as slope or location of vegetation, and the visual impact of any proposed building or works on the neighbouring parklands.

It is desirable that indigenous trees and vegetation be extensively planted as habitat for wildlife and to protect and enhance views into the site from surrounding areas. Indigenous species should be selected from those of the original plant community which existed on the site. (Refer to *City of Banyule Vegetation Community Map*)

It is especially important to ensure that the site is not dominated by buildings along ridgelines and hilltops. Large canopy trees should be planted on the ridgeline to provide a vegetated crown when viewed from afar.

5.5 Built Form Including Dwelling Design and Setbacks

Any development should be designed to minimise building mass and not be visually intrusive in the landscape. This is to be achieved by:

- Not locating buildings on the ridgelines.
- Designing buildings to follow the topography of the site.
- Using split-level buildings on sloping sites.

- Minimising excavation and keeping excavation and fill slopes to a gradient of less than 1 in 5.
- Avoiding high retaining walls.
- Restricting of heights so that buildings are contained within the tree canopy.
- Articulation of building design so as to minimise building bulk and avoid a box-like appearance.
- A high standard of innovative contemporary design and avoidance of period reproduction designs.
- Setting buildings back at least 20 metres from Banyule Road.
- Setting buildings back 10 metres from the northern and western boundaries of the site, unless it can be demonstrated that a lesser setback will not detrimentally impact on the adjoining parklands.

5.6 Height

The maximum height of any building should not exceed 6.5 metres to ensure that buildings integrate with the landscape and do not penetrate the tree canopy. For the purposes of these guidelines, building height is measured from the natural ground level and excludes the roof form.

5.7 Colour and Materials

Due to the elevation of the site the dwellings may be exposed to view from some surrounding areas. The choice of building materials should generally complement the long term landscape development of the site. In particular:

- Highly reflective materials should be avoided.
- Muted and 'earthy' tones should be used which in the long term will blend with the indigenous vegetation of the surrounds.

5.8 Car Parking

In any development:

- Car parking areas, carports or garages should be located behind the frontage setback of any dwellings.
- Double garages which are highly visible from the surrounds should be avoided.
- Long hard paved driveways should be avoided. Where site gradients permit, a porous surface such as gravel to reduce run-off should be used. Access driveways should follow the contours of the site.
- Driveways, car parking areas, carports and garages should not be located within 10 metres of the northern and western boundaries of the site unless it can be demonstrated that a lesser setback will not detrimentally impact upon the neighbouring parklands.

5.9 Fencing and Frontage Treatment

The spacious and rural landscape should be maintained by providing post and rail or wire fences. Solid or picket fences must be avoided.

5.10 Services

Any services provided will need to be placed underground.

Satisfactory plans prepared by a qualified soil specialist must be submitted to Council to show how any on-site sewage and effluent treatment system will be designed and constructed to ensure that no effluent is discharged off-site, into the watertable or watercourse. The plan should show the designated site for the effluent disposal system, including additional areas for replacement.

Effluent from a septic tank is to be discharged through a sand filter or an approved sewage treatment plant and then dispersed to buried effluent disposal lines.

All applications must comply with the *Septic Tank Code of Practice* and the *Land Capability Assessment for On-site Domestic Wastewater Management*.

References

Garden Court Precinct GC5 Character Statement. City of Banyule Neighbourhood Character Strategy.

Land Capability Assessment for On-site Domestic Wastewater Management – Environment Protection Authority, Publication 746, February 2001.

Septic Tank Code of Practice, Environment Protection Authority, Publication 451, March 1996.

Vegetation Communities Map. Banyule City Council.