

SAVE THE PRESTON MARKET

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- SAVETHEPRESTONMARKET (650 Fb members)
- DADA (Vice President)

Our ever-growing and passionate group appreciate the opportunity to Have Our Say and to respond to the VPA's Draft Structure Plan for the Preston Market Precinct.

We urge you to listen and focus carefully to our concerns now, as the vast majority in the community, who have consistently and steadfastly supported retention of the whole market and believe that our voices have been largely ignored or dismissed through the Community Reference Group meetings undemocratic process conducted by the VPA and the previous Darebin Council.

We will refer to two relevant State documents that all parties at the 2017 VCAT hearing were asked to read and respond to after the hearing but before their findings were made public. These documents that are now legislated into the Darebin Planning Scheme are the Urban Design Guidelines and Clause 58 or the Better Apartments Amendment as well as relevant clauses in the Darebin Planning Scheme.

Introduction

- In opening, it is our view that the VPA Draft Plan should be regarded as an excessive over development, overreaching on previous application proposals for the Preston Market site.
- While some claim that we are resistant to change and opposed to any development, we are not.
- However, we are keen to see modest and appropriate development on the site, but the starting point as a design response, must be to retain the whole of the market footprint in its current location, keeping in mind that this precinct will not satisfy all housing needs for future growth of population in Melbourne or indeed in Darebin.

- We note that Darebin, particularly Preston and Reservoir are already shouldering their share of new housing in infill development burden, taking into consideration the large blocks and the minute amount of NRZ at some 12% in Darebin. These factors have helped to radically change our suburbs already, so we are not afraid of change.
- What is it then, that's different about the Preston Market Precinct that the public stand behind us in opposing the VPA's Design Draft Response?
- We asked some simple/straight questions devoid of a hidden agenda as opposed to the VPA's.
- The Save THE Preston Market Group asked of its 650 members the three clear and unambiguous questions in order to join the Group, outlined below:

1. Should the market remain in its existing footprint on the site? Yes/No

2. Should there be height restrictions on new buildings on the site? Yes/No

3. Should there be a Heritage overlay on the market buildings in order to protect what is significant?
Yes/No

- So, when we hear Mr. Stuart Mosely and the VPA claim that 'We're protecting the Preston Market for generations to come', we feel betrayed, since keeping two of the six sheds as shown in their draft proposal is simply unacceptable and a misrepresentation of the truth of the matter and of community expectations.
- In our view, with a little creativity, there are many other options of truly protecting the whole of the Heritage Market structures that have not been explored, rather than persisting with plans that are based around the original grid of the 2014 Incorporated Plan.
- The numerous assumptions and inconsistencies in the VPA Draft Structure Plan do not imbue us with assurance that what is proposed, will benefit the precinct or the broader community socially, culturally or financially and that in time, an important sentinel landmark will be unnecessarily lost.
- Our support is generally aligned with that of the traders and the City of Darebin's reasons for rejecting the VPA's Draft Plan as the newly elected Council is more aligned with community sentiment which is to retain all of the market buildings as is and in the same place with a refurbishment of the infrastructure.
- Refurbishment should have occurred back 2015, when the owners announced the \$4.5 million 'facelift' to the market, that failed miserably and more should have been done to rectify issues even before that time while under their watch.
- The VPA draft proposal is to us an ambit claim, so grossly excessive in proposed height of residential towers and number of dwellings that very few in the community, despite the VPA's claims, accept this as a feasible proposal. The height, size, scale, siting, sheer walls and massing and layout are inappropriate in this setting regardless of all the labels that have been attached to the precinct that will inevitably impact on the long-term successful operation of the Preston Market.

- With the excessive number of proposed dwellings, we say there is little attempt to address diversity of population with a variety of dwelling typology that could be so much more appealing and interesting, thus creating a monoculture that in time, will become a negative social impact, should this proposal be approved in its current form.
- Before the VPA proposal progresses any further, it would be useful for us to know what the proposed collective ratio of 1BDR, 2BDR, 3 BDR is on the site, and whether there is a demographically and socially desirable mix and how those numbers compare with other developments of this scale.
- We note that the Preston Market Precinct is labelled a strategic site, is identified for substantial change and is part of an Activity Centre.
- We wonder how much the VPA has taken into account the changing and irreversible trends produced by the Covid pandemic, those of being able to work at home thus the need for more space including work space. We question the future use and reliability of lifts in high rise apartment blocks.
- And when most of the land has had nothing on it, but a carpark for 50 years, what should substantial change look like in this context?
- We wonder who exactly will live in less-than-ideal amenity and conditions with overshadowing and close confines of overlooking? (show us the data).
- What impact, if implemented, will the owner's concept of "Build to Rent" have on attracting a certain socio-economic group with no or low disposable income, then why would they be travelling to the city and why would they necessarily want to live near the train station? Indeed, why would they shop at the market for fresh produce? Predictably, residents of 1 or 2 BDR flats would eat out rather than cook.
- For the VPA to make the assumption that multitudes of new residents will benefit the market and benefit from the market is a flawed argument and cannot be supported. It's simply another motherhood statement from the VPA.

- Lucinda Hartley of Neighbourlytics in her article -" Develop with Data" states:

"We know the building height, the traffic density or parking (square metres), but we don't know if people like it, whether they use it or what they will value. This is critical information for placemaking".

Building Design

15.01-25 - A key Objective:

To achieve building design outcomes that contribute positively to the local context and enhance the public realm.

And under Strategies of note:

Ensure the form scale and appearance of development enhances the function and amenity of the public realm.

Ensure development is designed to protect valued landmarks

Encourage development to retain existing vegetation

Urban Design Guidelines Doc

- *Urban Design Guidelines at - 1.3.3 refers to maintaining amenity to adjacent uses with graduated transitions.*
- *Guidelines and Objectives in Clause 22.12-1 and 22.12-2, as well as C58 clearly state that in the Urban Context and Design Response in an Activity Centre, that Low to Medium Density is appropriate and that Siting and Building Arrangement and Appropriate Orientation. Shading to glazed surfaces, optimise glazing to exposed surfaces, need to be considered for better outcomes.*
- *Presumably meaning for longer term liveability and wellbeing of residents. It is our concern that when all buildings are oriented to a grid pattern on such a large site that those buildings to the south will be impacted by overshadowing of taller buildings to the north of them, with poor to limited access to direct sunlight.*

At Clause 58.02-1 Urban Context Objectives

To ensure that development responds to the features of the site and the surrounding area

Standard D1, the proposed design must respect the existing or preferred urban context and respond to the features of the site.

and D3 in particular, developments of ten or more dwellings should provide a range of dwelling sizes and types, including dwellings with a different number of bedrooms.

And D3 Objectives – to ensure does not unreasonably overload the capacity of utility services and infrastructure

At Clause 58.03-3 also refers to solar access between residential towers and to communal open space to ensure they are usable and desirable and support a sense of community.

58.03 SITE LAYOUT

Energy Efficiency objectives

To achieve and protect energy efficient dwellings and buildings

To ensure the orientation and layout of development reduces fossil fuel use and makes appropriate use of daylight and solar energy.

To ensure dwellings achieve adequate thermal efficiency.

Standard D6 - Buildings should be:

Oriented to make appropriate use of solar energy.

Sited and designed to ensure that the energy efficiency of existing dwellings on adjoining lots is not unreasonably reduced.

- For Site Layout on the Preston Market Precinct, our preferred option is for low density at street edges, stepped or graduated toward the train station making the highest buildings on both sides of the railway station. The existing intact market buildings should be surrounded by a curtilage of open space.
- Of note, is the chronology of this proposal from the first Incorporated Plan in 2007 where most of the proposed buildings covering the site were to be 10 storeys. Then at VCAT in 2017, the owner got approval for 3 residential towers- one 14 storey and 2 X 10 storey and now in 2021 the VPA has proposed numerous towers – one (to date) at 20 storeys, at least 2 X 16 storeys at least 2 X 12 storeys and others at 10 storeys. In addition, there are the two sites on the western side of the railway line proposed at 10 storeys and 13 storeys.
- The point we make here, is that the height of proposed buildings on the subject site, from the community viewpoint, it seems has become quite arbitrary and in 14 years, with increasing heights on the northern perimeter, will be causing increasingly poor outcomes in terms of amenity, for future residents and for the precinct in general.
- The orientation and siting of said buildings do not make the best use of solar access and are not conducive to any notion of liveability and wellbeing.
- In fact, the same issues were raised at the VCAT hearing, that at street level and lower levels and sides facing south in buildings, there would be virtually no direct sunlight. Clearly, there are more creative options to solve this problem, rather the same grid/bloc layout has been retained since 2013.

Urban Design

Urban Design Guidelines

Objective 1.3.3 *-to maintain amenity of adjacent uses with graduated transitions*

Objective 3 – *Environmentally Sustainable Design to promote and facilitate development that incorporates best practice environmentally sustainable design and promotes sustainable living and business practices.*

Strategies that encourage the adaptive reuse of buildings to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Encourage the design of new and retrofitted buildings and public spaces to incorporate high standards of energy efficient design, water sensitive urban design, sustainable transportation, waste reduction and protection of biodiversity.

At Clause 58.04-3 Noise Impacts Objectives

To contain noise sources in developments that may affect existing dwellings.

To protect residents from external and internal noise sources.

Standard D 16

Includes:

The layout of new dwellings and buildings should minimise noise transmission within the site

New dwellings should be designed and constructed to include acoustic attenuation measures to reduce noise levels from off-site noise levels.

In addition,

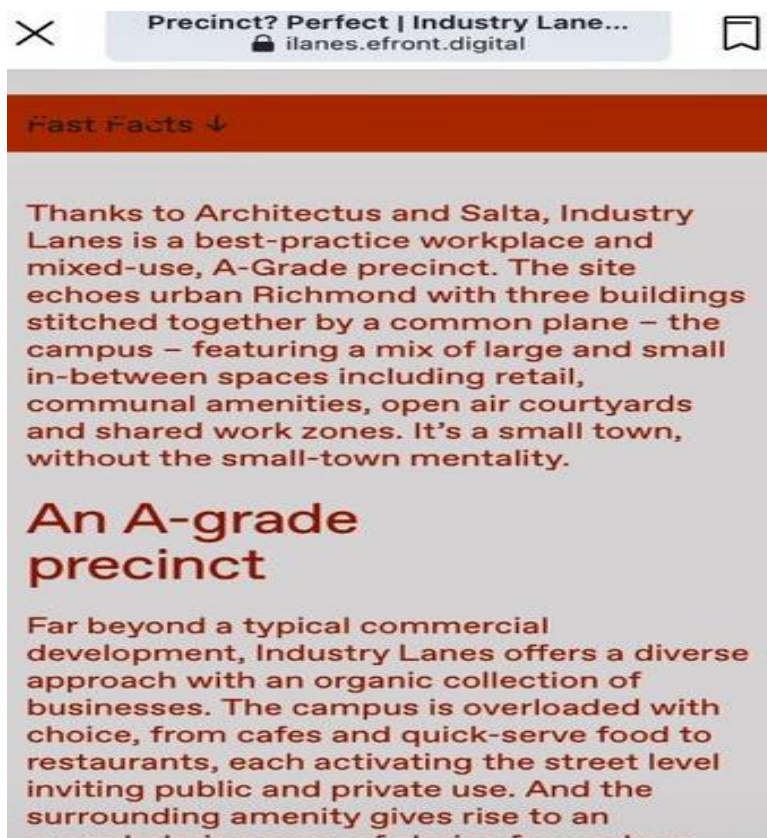
Table D3 Noise influence area - demonstrates that where the noise source is a railway, that the noise influence area impacts within 80 metres from the centre of the nearest track.

- Here, we question the close proximity of each proposed building to each other, and whether the standard can be satisfactorily reached, and would be potentially further compromised by noise emanating from the new overhead railway and proximity to the market and its daily activity and operations, further degrading amenity for future residents.

The Lack of Transparency at the Community Reference Group Meetings

- As a participant in the first series of four meetings in the Community Reference Group, and as a representative of some 3500 members of Save Our Preston Market, I attended, but my vote was equal to some others in the sample group who had little interest or investment in the issues raised or the process.
- My impression was that the outcomes on the most salient points in those mock meetings were rushed through and each meeting was tightly choreographed to limit any decent discussion, it felt like speed dating on steroids.
- The mix of the random sample of participants was not made public, but it was known that many were ring-ins, students and others that did not reside locally made me think the process was a futile sham. As an educator and administrator, it is my experience that having a large group of forty participants in a meeting of minds would normally be regarded as unwieldy for the purposes of consensus.
- Without knowing the brief given to Capire or who they were employed by and now knowing that there has been a business relationship between Salta and Architectus does not instil confidence in any of the processes to date.
- An Architectus representative present at those Community Reference Group Meetings who introduced the idea of relocation of the market facing onto Cramer Street
- No participants at those meetings raised this issue at the time, but we were asked to have an opinion on the matter in written form that was collected as we walked out, so no one knew what the deciding outcome was except for Capire representatives.
- As well, community members were concerned with the chronology or lack of inclusion of significant matters such as Heritage which was excluded or “not on the table” for discussion at those meetings. Had any discussion been raised in regard to Heritage of the market, participants would have felt vehemently to its retention as is. As a result of this deception that Capire carried out in this process, the community feel cheated as our voices have not been properly heard.
- Yet contrary to all the subterfuge at the mock consultation, the VPA continues to refer to the ‘extensive’ consultative work that they have carried out to support their position. This is simply appalling, contemptuous treatment of the public!

From Salta's Facebook page, Industry Lane, June 2021



- Is it fair and reasonable that Architectus was engaged to take part in the Community Reference Group meetings?
- Who was Architectus getting paid by?
- How objective would Architectus have been in those meetings?
- What was the brief given to Architectus?
- Participants were asked to be open minded and at the same time Architectus was employed to sway decision making and was/is associated with Salta?
- The description, above on Salta's Industry Lane project and the VPA's description in their Draft proposal for the Preston Market Precinct seems curiously similar, which demonstrates to our community just how the VPA/Salta are treating the whole development process. That is, with indifference and dismissive of the importance of the market and the community.

- The community is concerned since we do not want the Preston Market precinct to look like a cookie cutter version of a development that has no distinguishing features and the market is potentially dwarfed by massive and crowded development.
- Salta has previously made claims of their development being of World Class design and standard that will be a standout feature of the precinct, development that will enhance yet be appropriate and sensitive, not a downgrade?
- As participants, we know that at the VCAT application in 2017 - 18, the appearance of buildings was a factor as was the lack of communal open space overshadowing, flooding and storm water. Clearly, the VPA is indifferent of these issues or improvements would have been addressed in the Draft Strategy Plan.
- Our preferred appearance is for new buildings to have curved wrap-around balconies that have some truly exciting international style, instead of dated and antiquated soulless looking buildings.

Heritage

- We are strongly of the view that the starting point for any development on the site must be that all of the existing sheds that make up the Preston Market must remain as is.

Clause 43.01-8 Decision Guidelines

Before deciding on an application, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

The significance of the heritage place and whether the proposal will adversely affect the natural or cultural significance of the place.

Whether the location, bulk, form and appearance of the proposed buildings will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.

Whether the demolition, removal or external alteration will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.

Whether the proposed subdivision may result in development which will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place

- What is important is the historical, aesthetic and technical innovation and cultural aspects being the intangibles such as human attachment to the place, memories, stories, ethnic and family connections. All of the human emotions that heighten our senses- sight, sounds, smells and tastes that are triggered, connecting and engaging en- masse with the community with the focus being fresh food.
- While the site is privately owned, we know that many in the community think that it is a public asset. When it was designed and built, the Preston Market was purpose built, designed to be open and airy, welcoming and easily accessible place and is still regarded by many as a public open space.
- Yet, the VPA are prepared to see the majority of the market buildings dismantled, then apply a Heritage Overlay to be able to say that they are protecting the market, is ingenuous to say the least.
- Its local significance must be recognised and celebrated for its rarity and uniqueness and intactness of the architectural design.
- The structure/fabric that is the Preston Market must be recognised for its heritage significance within a Heritage Overlay as well as within the Planning Scheme. It is the technical and aesthetic attributes of the space frame roof and as explained in Heritage Victoria recommendations, detailing the extent and expanse of the self-supporting space frame roof structure is part of what is significant.
- To remove any sheds that comprise the purpose-built structure is to profoundly diminish its significance.
- Its importance to the local community and their attachment to it has been demonstrated, and clearly evident through their ongoing support of thousands of impassioned comments on social media, recent and current petitions and through sustained community action for the previous eight years, that there is vehement community support to have the space frame roof and walls protected by a Heritage Overlay and in the Planning Scheme to retain the existing footprint of the market buildings.

- It is comparable to a public square for people to meet and connect. Our preferred vision is to create a buffer of open space around the market that would act as the curtilage in the surrounding space.
- We think of the value of the Preston Market to the community, the City of Darebin and indeed the whole of the north of Melbourne, when compared to the value to a private developer and it's the value to the community that is paramount and greater in this context and we call on the Minister Wynne to make the decision to compulsorily acquire the Preston Market Precinct to revisit the Draft Plan proposal.

How should the current traders be protected in the future?

- The VPA makes it clear that their remit relies on a commercial contractual agreement on tenure or leasing arrangements. However, we have no confidence that a 173 Agreement is sufficiently binding currently or into the future. This matter could be resolved by setting up a committee of management that also includes Council and community representatives.
- The mix of stalls at the market and a vision for the future of the market needs to be established and actioned with these other parties ASAP to reduce any further erosion of conditions for traders.

Issues that the VPA has no control over, but we know are affecting the market vibe are:

- Favouritism, some stall holders are given increased floor space and prime locations
- Tenure, a lack of certainty and job security, holding tenants to ransom.
- Future rent hikes that will force out the small traders, what happened at PAM Lane.
- The mix of stalls; how can the VPA stop an increasing number of prepared food stalls that take focus away from the market primary focus on supplying fresh, unprepared food?
- The owners attempt to introduce seven-day trading is an ongoing issue that has divided the stall holders unnecessarily; those that do not comply with management are punished or less favoured than others.

Should they be allowed to build on top of the market? Or should that be prohibited?

- It is noted that in the VPA's proposal that part of the northern shed is located under or adjoining a 10-storey tower. We take it that this is intentionally made unclear.
- This is simply outrageous and is not genuinely protecting the ambience and vibe of the open-air market. If this is correct, it will impact negatively by-
 - 1) reducing direct solar access
 - 2) will negatively impact the feel, available space and daily operation of the market. There should not be any towers that will overshadow the market buildings!
 - 3) further impacting traders by masking the whole place unwelcoming

New Buildings

What height buildings are ok near the market itself? And how many storeys are acceptable elsewhere on the site, like along Murray Road or near the train line?

- The UD Guidelines state that low to medium rise buildings are acceptable in activity centres. In our opinion, there must be a wide, open space buffer around the existing market to the northern, western and southern sides.
- Solar access being to the north and west sides of market buildings for communal gatherings; some raised/undulating mounds with canopy trees and quality bollards as an informal barrier separating market and residential areas.
- The closest new buildings to the market should be town houses that do not detract from the main game- the market, then buildings stepped up to 9 storey maximum height limit including on Murray and Cramer but with street setbacks of 4 metres for deep rooted canopy trees and smaller blocs and more thoroughfares to break up into smaller lots and blocks and increase access through the site, as described in the Urban Design Guidelines.
- A proportionate amount of affordable housing, and for demographic diversity there must be at least 15% of permanent 3 BDR apartments in all high-rise buildings. “Build and they shall come” seems only to apply to 1 and 2BDR apartments, but not for 3BDR apartments.

Open Space

- The VPA Draft Proposal does not make the distinction between Public Open Space, Private Open Space and Communal Open Space, and possibly lumps it all together. So, the community wants clear demarcations on scaled planes to show specifically which is which. The reason for this is that when there is uncertainty, people are less comfortable about knowing where they are allowed to go, creating an unsettling feeling and an unwelcoming environment.
- Mesh in their report, make the distinction between active and passive Open Space. So, if active space is provided by the Preston Oval, we want to see Public Open Space provided on site that is solely passive use open space with canopy trees, permanent seating, quality surfaces and natural features and lighting.
- Contrary to the VPA’s hinting that Open Space might make provision for food trucks or temporary market stalls, we think they would simply clutter the already limited Open Space on site, in our view and should be only for human use to relax and retreat. Covid has shown that local neighbourhoods are relying more on parks and open space and under served in these asset areas are more vulnerable.
- The under-supply of passive Open Space (as documented in the Mesh publication) in the immediate vicinity must be provided on site where it is most needed, not elsewhere in the City of Darebin as suggested by Mesh.

- Predictions regarding the number of children and teenagers in the vicinity, suggests the need for more family accommodation amenity to cater for their needs.

5.2 Provision of open space pp34 - There are areas in Darebin which currently have limited access to open space, and many of these areas are projected to accommodate high levels of growth. If no additional open space is acquired, the overall provision rate of open space will decline. Table 4 provides an overview of the current provision rate of open space across Darebin. Preston West 9.9 8.0 5.7 Undersupplied Preston Central 6.4 6.7 4.6 City of Darebin 790.4 19.4 16.0 Undersupplied

The precinct has a limited number of Council owned open space assets. These are limited to a handful of small reserves and the areas surrounding the civic buildings including the Municipal Offices, Darebin Civic Forecourt and Preston Court House surrounds. The largest open space is the Preston City Oval, a VFL stadium which also has a grandstand with a capacity of 5,000.

Biodiversity *The Preston City Oval is of local natural heritage significance. Existing open spaces Name Size (ha) Hierarchy Recommended category A.G. Davis Park 1.22 District Type B Adams Reserve 0.85 Local Type A Darebin Civic Forecourt 0.13 Local Type A Preston City Oval 3.68 District Type B Preston Library Forecourt 0.31 Local Type A Walter Reserve 0.19 Local Type A Access to open space 7 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres. 4.6 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.*

*Significant population growth and substantial **higher density development indicates the future rate of open space will be undersupplied.***

Acquisition and/or repurposing of land within this precinct is vital to ensure an adequate amount of public open space is provided within 500m for the fast-growing population.

*In some cases, there is scope to acquire properties adjacent to existing reserves (for example Adams Reserve). A high proportion of the existing public open space is very small and/or urban in character so **the focus should be on acquiring properties that broaden the offering. Improvements are needed in both north-south and east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.***

PlaySpace will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the PlaySpace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase in 58% of children under 4 and a 49% increase in children aged 5–17 in the area. Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Community Vision

- The Preston Market is a valuable but currently unprotected public space that is privately owned and now under threat of 2/3 demolition. Under the VPA's Draft Plan, to retain 1/3 of the market buildings along with some photos in memory of its past grandeur is deemed enough to satisfy the broader community.
- This is an inaccurate reading of us and community activism is stepping up to defend the market's physical fabric and the social and cultural values that are part of our collective identity.
- The Preston Market Precinct is obviously bigger than simply a planning matter and we are calling for further intervention on this project in order that a more balanced and sensitive approach is taken

Lucinda Hartley- Neighbourlytics, Interviewed by Urbanity, 23-24 Oct 2019

LH *"Developers can't create human centred places without data about people"*.

Q. What is place making? How has it evolved and how does it work?

LH: *"Placemaking in my view, is about creating places that people love and feel connected to. Because it involves human experience, it's as much a social process as it is a physical one"*.

"You can plan building heights, footpath widths, the floor area of retail. Human experience and connection is messier, it's hard to understand and predict, but if we don't get the human side right, places will fail".

"For great placemaking to work it needs to involve the right mix of planning and design, as well as community engagement and local leadership to ensure that it's fit for purpose and can be maintained in the long term. Its top down and bottom up at the same time!" she said.

It is clear that the VPA's Draft Proposal for the Preston Market Precinct is in conflict with other relevant government publications and has failed to acknowledge and protect the market as they claim to have done. We now realise that the future survival of the market is beyond the scope of the VPA.

The owners have known from the outset just how integral the thriving market has been on the site and they must recognise their social responsibility. If not, they should relinquish that responsibility.

The "Save The Preston Market" community group are now generally in accord with Darebin Council and many of the market trader's concerns for the future of the market precinct.

We want to see the Minister for Planning Mr. Richard Wynne apply a Compulsory Acquisition Overlay to the whole PMP site as a civic centre. We look forward to presenting our case at a public forum in the near future.