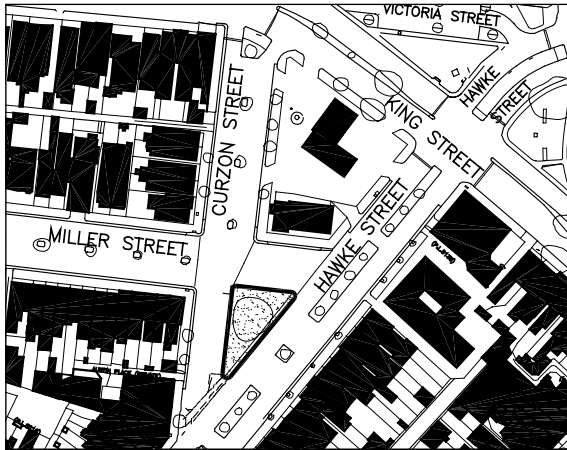


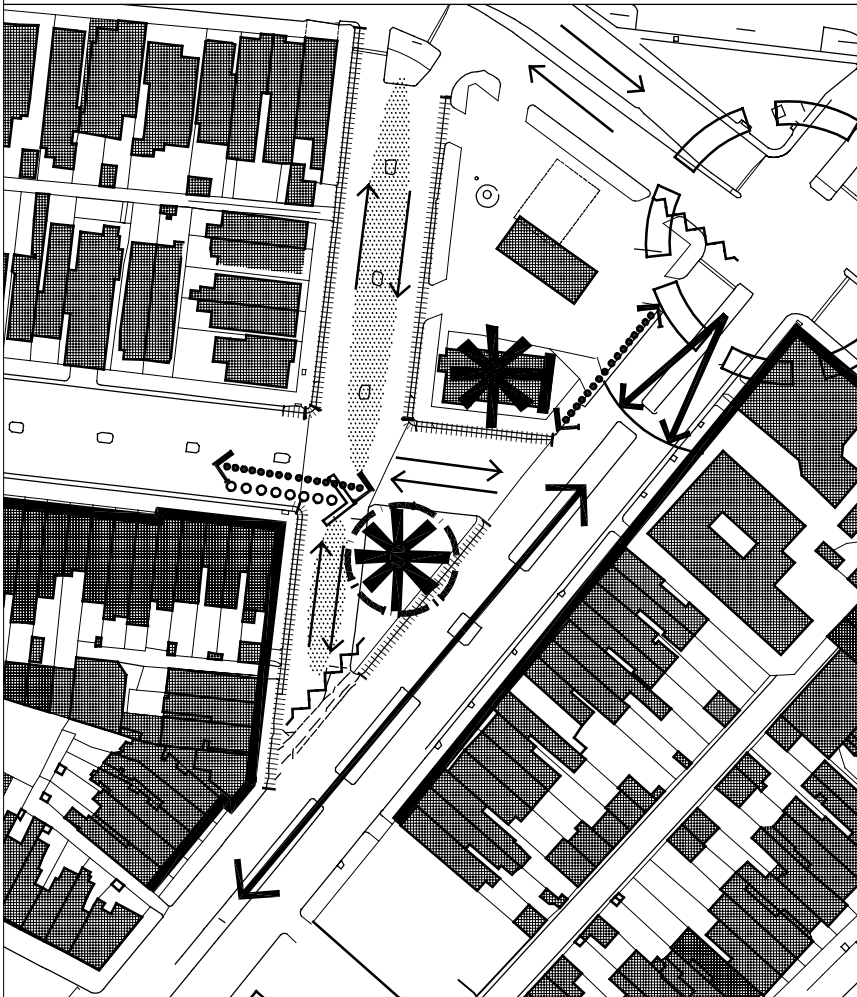
Site 6: Curzon Street Reserve













Existing Conditions



This tiny reserve is located at the intersection of Curzon Street and Hawke Street, close to the heart of North Melbourne. The small triangle of grass accommodates a magnificent elm tree, but very little else. The reserve is part of a much larger open space that extends beyond Miller Street to King Street. Some of this land is privately owned. But a sizeable area is asphalted and occupied by roadways. It may be possible to increase public use and enjoyment of this space by closing or narrowing some of these thoroughfares. If such improvements occur, a sizeable new park could become a gateway to the Errol Street shopping precinct.

Site Analysis



- LEGEND:
-  Major road intersection
 -  Area of open space
 -  Minor arterial road
 -  Direction of traffic
 -  Landmark structure
 -  Underground assets & service
 -  Connection/linkage
 -  Pedestrian movement
 -  Viewline
 -  Heritage streetscape
 -  Bluestone kerbline
 -  Physical/visual barrier

Detailed Site Analysis

Spatial character

- Sites 6 and 7 are part of a much larger open space with ill-defined edges. The two small public reserves are visually contiguous with surrounding streets and intersections. In the centre of this expanse is a service station. The diminutive building on this site fails to partition or focus the surrounding area. As a result, it is unclear whether the two reserves are discrete places or a single spatial entity.
- Strong built edges are confined to Victoria Street and Errol Street. These are remote from Site 6, though they provide effective containment along two sides of Site 7.
- The ground falls appreciably towards the south-west. This slope and the absence of a substantial built edge along Curzon and Miller mean there is no obvious edge to the open space, especially in views from the direction of Errol and Victoria.
- In this context, the bungalow housing the Baptist Church and the large elm tree south of Miller Street appear as prominent free-standing objects.

Views and linkages

- Errol Street is the principal focus for community activity and identity within North and West Melbourne.
- This site could form part of a “green link” between the North Melbourne Railway Station and Errol Street. Miller Street provides the greater part of this route. It is already planted with street trees and has a landscaped median. The Curzon Street reserve could complete the connection with a safe convenient pedestrian pathway.
- Hawke Street provides good views towards Docklands and Moonee Ponds Creek.
- Victoria Street provides views east towards the city.

Landscape

- There is a very large elm tree in the small triangle of open space below Miller. This provides a local landmark, visible from as far away as the Errol Street shops.
- South of Roden, King Street contains rows of regularly spaced trees along its edges and its median. These are seen to advantage because of the street's curvature. However, the pattern breaks down at the northern end of King Street where it approaches Curzon and Victoria.

Heritage

- Curzon, Hawke and Miller are classified as Level 2 streetscapes.
- Curzon Street has bluestone kerbs and channels. These should be retained or reinstated.
- The front portion of the bungalow on the Baptist Church property is listed as a heritage feature.
- The Baptist Church has occupied this site for 140 years. A bluestone church stood on the site of the service station. This was constructed in 1862 and demolished in the 1960's to make way for roading improvements.

Traffic management

- King Street is an arterial road as well as a declared Main Road. It carries four lanes of fast through traffic. Although there are pedestrian crossings at its intersections with Curzon and Hawke, King Street inhibits pedestrian access between Sites 6 and 7.
- South of its intersection with Victoria and King, Curzon Street is very quiet, and is used mainly for local access and parking. However, this section of Curzon Street should continue to carry two-way traffic, as one-way flow would force local residents to make extensive detours.
- Heavy non-local traffic usage could develop if southbound vehicles on Curzon Street are permitted to cross King and continue directly towards Miller.
- The Baptist Church needs good vehicle access for elderly and disabled members of the congregation.

Parking

- Parking is in heavy demand at this site. This is a particular concern for the local resident and business community. Errol Street traders and shoppers park vehicles in Miller Street because it provides the closest area of four-hour parking.
- Open space improvements could lead to the loss of 22 car parks on Curzon Street. However, alternative spaces could be provided within the Hawke Street median.
- If building development occurs on the Baptist Church property, it may be possible to incorporate some public parking.
- Parking requirements on this site need to be assessed in relation to the existing Council-owned car park located further north on Curzon Street. If the Curzon Street lot is developed as a multi-level facility, on-street parking could possibly be reduced in the Miller Street area (see also Site 7).
- The Baptist Church needs some easily accessible on-street parking for elderly and disabled members of the congregation.

Services

- Designers should identify the exact locations of gas pipelines and electricity cables. These services are concentrated along both sides of Curzon Street between Hawke and Victoria.

Community and stakeholder response

- Proposals for Curzon Street prompted the largest community response in the survey. Feedback demonstrates overwhelming support for extensions to the present reserve.
- The community would also like to see reductions in vehicle numbers and speeds. They did not identify parking as an important issue.
- There is strong support from the public for a children's playground in this location.
- The North Melbourne Association supports the closure of Miller Street between Curzon and Hawke. However, the association does not support further restrictions to traffic along Curzon Street. They are concerned that valuable parking spaces will be lost here. They also believe that the character of the street will be compromised if kerbs are realigned and if indented parking bays are introduced.
- The association recommends deferring a decision about Curzon Street until the future of the service station site is known.
- Errol Street traders support open space extensions at Sites 6 and 7. However, they want the current number of car parks to be maintained.
- The local Baptist Church controls all the land within the Curzon/Miller/Hawke/King block. The Church occupies the brick bungalow at the corner of Hawke and Miller, and leases the remainder of the site to the service station operator.
- The Church favours its current site, not because of sentimental associations or prominence but because it is strategically located at a distance from other churches.
- The Church has recently built a meeting room at the rear of the bungalow. Their minister normally occupies the house itself. However, church deacons would not rule out moving to a different site if suitable accommodation could be found or built elsewhere. A second small meeting room would be beneficial.
- The service station lease expires in September 2002. The operator has expressed interest in purchasing the site.

- The Baptist Church is not willing to have a public discussion about the merits of including their land in a future open space. They feel that widespread knowledge of this proposal could generate pressure on them to sell. This makes it difficult to canvas public opinion about the merits of acquiring church land to extend the reserve.
- In private discussions, the church left open the possibility of entering into some kind of deal with the Council. A lease is more likely than outright sale, as the church wishes to keep its long-term options open.
- As an alternative to land acquisition, the Council could negotiate with the Baptist Church to ensure that building development produces a favourable relationship to adjacent public open space.
- Parks and Recreation regard this as an attractive site for a park because of its size and proximity to Errol Street, and because it offers "blank slate" for a new landscape design. Nevertheless, they assign a low priority to improvements here because of the difficulty and cost associated with acquiring the Baptist Church site.

Costs and funding

- The cost estimate for improvements at this site is \$210 000. Most of the expense is associated with realigning kerbs and introducing new paving.
- The market value of the Baptist Church property has not been assessed.

Design Principles and Objectives

Street layout

- Narrow the intersection of Curzon and King to provide a single lane in each direction. Restrict entry into Curzon Street to a left turn off King. Avoid increasing non-local traffic usage by preventing southbound vehicles on Curzon Street from crossing King and continuing towards Miller.
- Provide bike lanes on both sides of Curzon Street between King and Miller. If angle parking is introduced to this section of the street, provide a generous separation between the rear of the parked vehicles and the cycleway. Alternatively, include a bike path within the reserve.
- Introduce additional two-hour car parks to the Hawke Street median. Consider converting some Miller Street parking spaces to short-term use.

Built form

- The site is exposed to traffic on two frontages. An open space along King Street would not be an inviting environment for pedestrians, though it would provide a visual amenity for passing motorists. Under these circumstances, introducing a built edge to King and Hawke may be an appropriate treatment for the Baptist Church site. A building frontage would provide better spatial definition at the broad King/Hawke/Victoria intersection. Landscape might be limited to a more sheltered zone at the centre of the block and the along the Curzon Street frontage.
- These objectives need to be assessed in relation to sunlight access. A built edge along King could insulate the open space from traffic noise, but it could also overshadow the reserve and present a south-facing elevation to public or semi-public areas. Building along Hawke Street provides less effective protection from traffic. But it preserves a northern aspect for the centre of the block.
- Site planning also needs to take account of the visual relationship between Sites 6 and 7. Building along King Street will separate the reserves into two distinct places. Building along Hawke Street could enable the two spaces to appear as a single entity.
- If the church site is acquired, the minister's house and meeting room could be retained and would be useful for community services accommodation.

Streetscape

- Continue "boulevard" style planting north along King Street to the intersection with Curzon and Victoria. Keep street trees at least 18 metres from street corners, or set trees back from the street edge in order to maintain sightlines to traffic lights.
- If the Baptist Church property is acquired and Sites 6 and 7 are developed as a single open space, vary the streetscape to indicate that King Street passes through a reserve. For example, use the street tree pattern as the basis for formal planting layouts on either side of the roadway. Alternatively, treat King Street as a "cut" through parkland. In this case, omit some street trees to allow views into informal landscapes on either side of the roadway. Use either treatment to unify Sites 6 and 7.

Park landscape

- Record the existence of the old Baptist Church. Consider using the demolished church as part of the landscape theme.

Development Option



Example 6A - Estimated cost \$210 000

- Expand the reserve by closing Miller Street between Curzon and Hawke.
- Expand the reserve by closing Curzon Street at Miller rather than Hawke. Provide access to Curzon Street properties via a new cul-de-sac off Hawke Street.
- Expand the reserve by narrowing Curzon Street between King and Miller. Incorporate the median and the eastern side of this street in the open space. Retain on-street parking and two-way traffic along the narrowed section of Curzon Street.

Advantages

- significant extension to public open space
- no overall loss of parking
- potentially phase one of staged development

Disadvantages

- fails to make a strong connection with Site 7
- circuitous local access

Summary of Findings

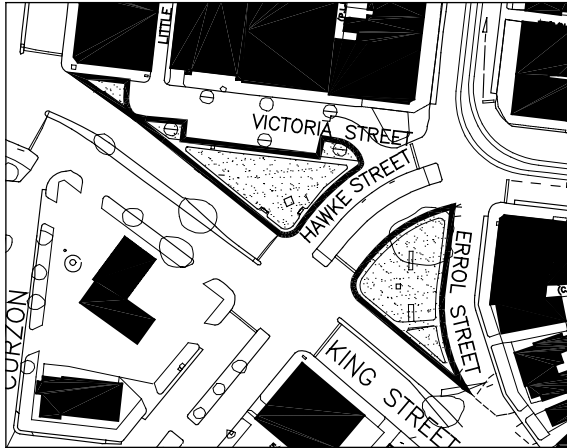
Site 6 is the most popular location for open space improvements. These could enhance the appearance of several prominent intersections and create a substantial recreational amenity close to North and West Melbourne's "village centre". A new park at Curzon Street would also serve a wide residential area where open space reserves are scarce.

The full potential of this site can only be realised if the Baptist Church property is acquired. The church does not wish to sell. But they have not ruled out further negotiations with Council about the future of their land. Even if the property is offered to the City, its cost would be substantial (the market value of the land was not assessed in this feasibility study). Funds may be available from the open space contribution levied on local building developments. However, cost presents a serious obstacle to this proposal.

Beneficial extensions to the reserve are possible without the church land. If redundant sections of Curzon Street and Miller Street are closed, the area of open space can be quadrupled. These improvements should receive the highest priority. However, they should be treated as the first phase of a possible two-stage project. The work can be completed once the future of the Baptist Church property has been decided.

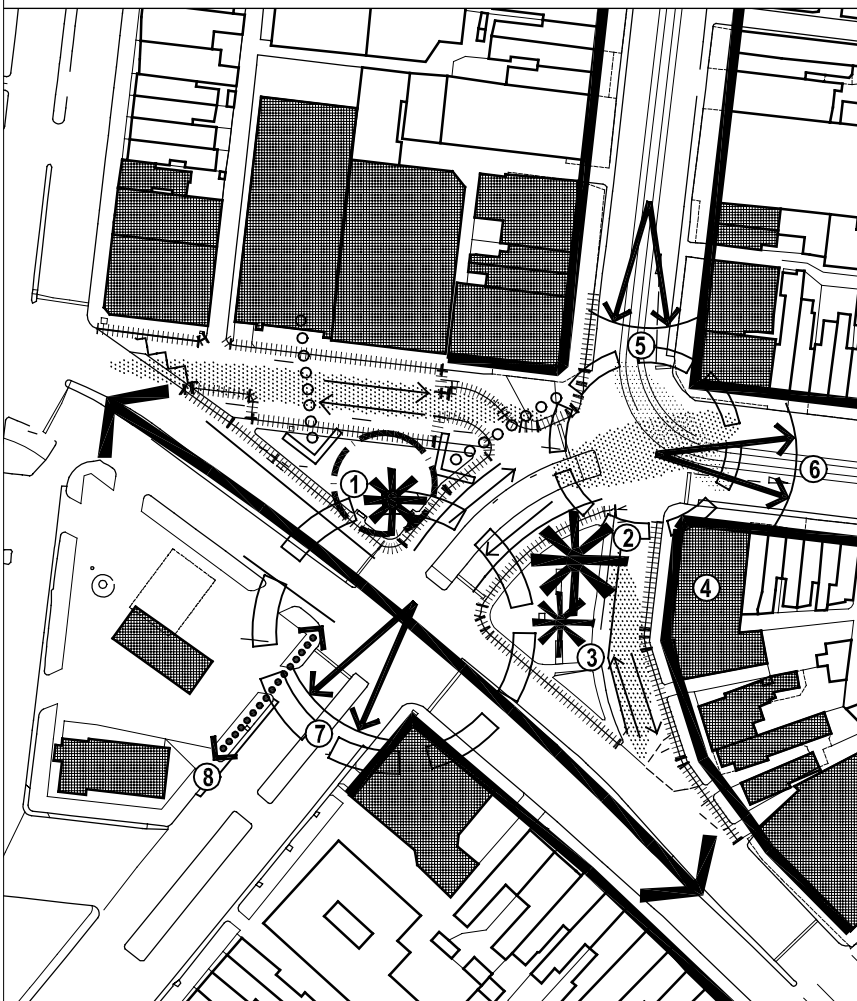
Site 7: Errol Street Reserve













Existing Conditions



Despite their diminutive size and fragmented shape, these two pockets of green provide a gateway to the Errol Street shopping precinct. The eastern side of the reserve contains a large elm tree. In summer, this terminates Errol Street with a canopy of foliage. The western side of the reserve is more open, and accommodates North Melbourne's war memorial. Fast through traffic is limited to Hawke Street, a four-lane thoroughfare that bisects the whole open space. Sections of Victoria Street and Errol Street have been closed to provide valuable short-term parking, and to limit the number of vehicles entering King Street. In spite of these changes, the two green triangles fail to appear accessible or inviting. On its own, neither area is large enough to attract or retain much activity. To make matters worse, the parking separates each landscaped zone from building frontages that could help to generate use. So, although the Errol Street reserve is centrally located, it often seems peripheral to the life of the shopping centre.

Site Analysis



- LEGEND :**
-  Major road intersection
 -  Area of open space
 -  Main road
 -  Direction of traffic
 -  Landmark structure
 -  Underground assets & services cluster
 -  Connection/linkage
 -  Pedestrian movement
 -  Viewline
 -  Heritage streetscape
 -  Bluestone kerbline
 -  Physical/visual barrier
- ① War memorial
 - ② Large Elm tree
 - ③ Disused underground public toilet
 - ④ The Three Crowns Hotel
 - ⑤ View to Elm tree
 - ⑥ View to CBD
 - ⑦ View to Docklands and Moonee Ponds Creek
 - ⑧ Link to Miller Street Reserve

Detailed Site Analysis

Spatial character

- Sites 6 and 7 are part of a much larger open space with ill-defined edges. The two small public reserves are visually contiguous with surrounding streets and intersections. In the centre of this expanse is a service station. The diminutive building on this site fails to partition or focus the area. As a result, it is unclear whether the reserves are two discrete places or a single spatial entity.
- Strong built edges are confined to Victoria Street and Errol Street. These are remote from Site 6, though they provide effective containment along two sides of Site 7.
- The ground falls appreciably towards the south-west. This slope and the absence of a substantial built edge along Curzon and Miller mean there is no clear edge to the open space when this is viewed from the corner of Errol and Victoria.
- The Errol Street reserve itself is subdivided into two small triangular open spaces. The northern triangle is larger than the southern one.
- Victoria Street is one of Melbourne's most important thoroughfares. In the east of the city, as Victoria Parade, the route has the status of a major boulevard. In the west, it provides the most recognisable link between North Melbourne and the CBD.
- However, beyond Errol, Victoria Street has much less significance. Emphasis shifts to Errol Street as a retail strip and a public transport route. King Street and Curzon Street have more importance as major arterials.
- Historically, the discontinuity was reinforced by the presence of the North Melbourne Asylum. This institution terminated the Victoria Street "axis" at Curzon Street. When the building was demolished in the early twentieth century, Victoria Street was continued west to meet Abbotsford and Dryburgh. However, the new section has a residential character. It resembles a local street rather than an extension of a major boulevard.
- Victoria Street is closed between Errol and Curzon. This section of the thoroughfare does not belong to either of the two characters described above. Instead, its parking bays and service lane appear to be appendages to King Street and parts of the large irregular space that encompasses the King/Hawke intersection.
- The "redundant" block of Victoria Street could develop its own identity as a shopping frontage, if local retail activity develops further.

Existing landscape

- The two triangles of open space are landscaped differently. As a result, visual connections between the areas are weak.
- The larger northern space is fragmented by service access and parking. Its layout discourages pedestrian access from the direction of Errol Street.
- Both spaces possess important civic artefacts. The northern triangle contains a war memorial. This monument is uncomfortably close to the edge of King Street. It is inaccessible and is poorly integrated with surrounding landscape.
- The southern triangle houses a disused underground public toilet. Its visible elements include wrought iron railings and an ornamented brick ventilation shaft. These have architectural and heritage value.
- A local community group has planted part of the southern triangle with shrubs. These have grown to the extent that they block sightlines across the space. As a landscape treatment, the shrubs are too dense and too complex for such a small area. They are also at odds with the more formal beds in the northern triangle.

Views and linkages

- Errol Street is the principal focus for community activity and identity within North and West Melbourne.
- This site could form part of a "green link" between the North Melbourne Railway Station and Errol Street. Miller Street provides the greater part of this route. It is already planted with street trees and has a landscaped median. Along with open space improvements at Curzon Street, the Errol Street reserve could complete the connection with a safe convenient pedestrian pathway.
- Hawke Street provides good views towards Docklands.
- Victoria Street provides views east towards the city.
- The Errol Street view shaft terminates at a large elm tree in the southern triangle of open space.

Heritage

- The Three Crowns Hotel at the corner of Errol and Victoria has a Level 1 heritage classification.
- A Level 2 heritage classification applies to streetscape along the northern side of Victoria Street and along both sides of Errol Street.
- Bluestone kerbs and channels occur along Errol Street, including the block between King and Victoria.
- The war memorial is a heritage feature. It is the focus of ceremonies on Anzac Day and other commemorative occasions.

Traffic

- Hawke Street must retain four traffic lanes. Narrowing its carriageway is unrealistic, even within the short section of roadway that connects Victoria and King. This being the case, it is desirable to keep the wide median in the centre of the street as a pedestrian refuge.
- The closed section of Victoria Street provides parking and service access to adjacent retail stores and the Errol Street shopping precinct. Vehicles enter and leave the area from Hawke Street where a median prevents right-hand turns. This arrangement is not ideal. Motorists' access is restricted, and pedestrians on Errol Street are isolated from the main area of open space.
- Victoria Street frontages need direct vehicle access. Some of these properties are not served by rear laneways. Little Curzon Street provides rear access to premises on the western side of the block, and this lane connects with Curzon Street. However, it contains a ninety-degree turn, and cannot be used by large vehicles.
- Victoria Street properties could be accessed via a shared vehicle/pedestrian zone. However, this kind of space is rare in Melbourne and there are concerns for pedestrian safety in such an environment. A detailed investigation is required to test its feasibility.
- The southernmost block of Errol Street can be closed to through traffic. However, access to adjoining properties must be maintained.

Parking

- Parking is heavily used by visitors to the Errol Street shopping precinct. The parking precinct in Victoria Street is particularly valuable because of its proximity to the shops. Although used by traders and patrons of the 3 Crowns Hotel, the smaller parking area at the southern end of Errol Street is generally less conveniently located. These spaces could be removed, but only if replacement parking is provided elsewhere.
- Parking requirements for the site as a whole need to be assessed in relation to the existing Council-owned car park located on Curzon Street. If the Curzon Street lot is developed as a multi-level facility, on-street parking could possibly be reduced in the vicinity of Errol and Victoria.
- However, this development would require a more direct pedestrian link between the car park and Errol Street, and the connection is difficult to achieve. It would need to cross the site of the present Commonwealth Bank building. Alternatively, it would result in the demolition of heritage buildings.
- Regardless of the total amount of parking available near Errol Street, Victoria Street businesses wish to have some spaces directly outside their premises. The warehouse-style buildings here are occupied by large-scale retailers selling bulky items. Short-term car parks are essential for this trade.

Services

- Designers should identify the exact locations of gas lines, stormwater pipes and electricity cables. These services are concentrated along Victoria Street, between Curzon and Errol. Services are also clustered at the intersection of Errol/Hawke/Victoria and at the southern end of Errol Street near its junction with King.

Community and stakeholder response

- Proposals for the Errol Street reserve prompted comparatively little response from the community. The public has not expressed a clear preference for any of the three development proposals.
- The North Melbourne Association supports expansion of the reserve. However, they do not regard improvements at this site to be a high priority. The association is opposed to any change in access to Errol Street between Victoria and King. They note that vehicle movements in this area have already been examined by Council. They regard the present circulation pattern as the safest option.
- The association supports construction of a mixed-use development on the Curzon Street car park site. In their view, this building could contain public parking, if pedestrian access to Errol Street can be provided.
- The local business community objects to any reduction in parking at this location. However, this interest group accepts that it is necessary to look at parking as a totality. Retailers would support the development of a multi-storey car park on Curzon Street. However, the management of this facility is a critical issue. Traders would like shoppers to be given free one-hour parking voucher with their purchases. Otherwise, the cost of parking is added to the cost of shopping in Errol Street.
- Parking aside, the business community supports efforts to provide a better park near Errol Street. They regard open space improvements as asset that will help to attract customers to the area.
- The war memorial is a very sensitive issue for some sectors of the community. Proposals to relocate this monument should be the subject of further consultation with RSL and other interested parties.
- Streetscape improvements were carried in this area in the early nineties. For this reason, it could be difficult to justify further changes.

Costs and funding

- Cost estimates for improvements at this site vary between \$200 000 and \$220 000. Example A is the cheapest development option, even though it delivers the largest area of open space. The other proposals are more expensive because they require longer runs of new kerbs and channels.

Design Principles and Objectives

Street layout

- Introduce a shared pedestrian/vehicle zone to the closed section of Victoria Street. Use this to accommodate service vehicles and a small amount of parking. Structure the space so that it is accessible to pedestrians and easily used for street activities.
- Provide vehicle access to this zone directly from King Street. Locate this entrance as close as possible to the Curzon Street intersection.

Built form

- Consider locating a new public toilet in the reserve.

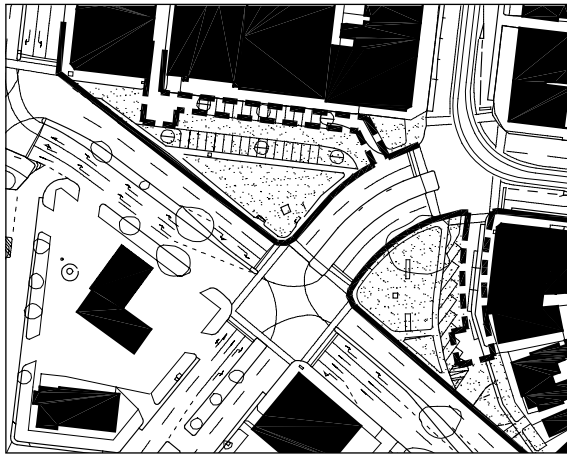
Streetscape

- Continue “boulevard” style planting north along King Street to the intersection with Curzon and Victoria. Keep street trees at least 18 metres from street corners, or set trees back from the street edge in order to maintain sightlines to traffic lights.
- If the Baptist Church property is acquired and Sites 6 and 7 are developed as a single open space, vary the streetscape to indicate that King Street passes through a reserve. For example, use the street tree pattern as the basis for formal planting layouts on either side of the roadway. Alternatively, treat King Street as a “cut” through parkland. In this case, omit some street trees to allow views into informal landscapes on either side of the roadway. Use either treatment to unify Sites 6 and 7.

Park landscape

- Devise a single comprehensive landscape treatment for both triangles. Include the Curzon Street reserve in this concept, and allow for the possible purchase of the Baptist Church site (see also Site 6).
- Consider planting a second elm tree in the reserve, to match the existing specimen in the southern open space triangle. Use the two trees to create a stronger “gateway” to the southern end of Errol Street.
- Consider emphasising the slope on the larger triangle of open space. Use the falls on the site to help to distance King Street traffic from the retail frontage along Victoria Street.
- Investigate moving the war memorial away from the edge of King Street. Keep the monument within the northern triangle of open space. But, aim to give it a more prominent and accessible location near the corner of Errol and Victoria. Fully integrate the memorial with the surrounding landscape, and provide a hard-paved area suitable for ceremonial gatherings.
- Consider including a fountain that produces “white noise” and helps to mask the sound of passing traffic.

Development Options



Example 7A - Estimated cost: \$200 000

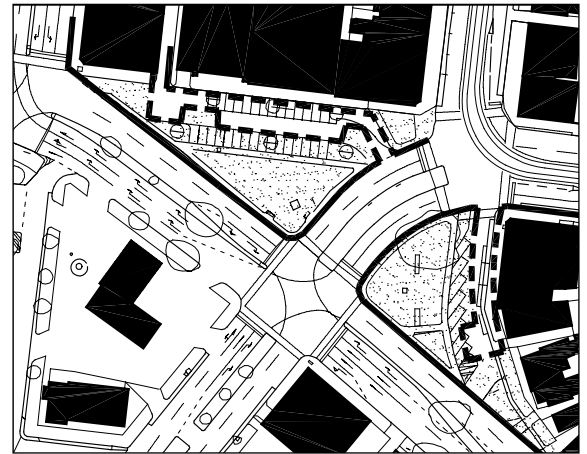
- Extend the eastern half of the reserve into the closed section of Errol Street. Remove on-street parking, and replace the existing access road with a shared zone for pedestrians and service vehicles. Retain vehicle access from Victoria Street.
- Extend the western half of the reserve into the closed section of Victoria Street. Remove on-street parking, and replace the existing access road with a shared zone for pedestrians and service vehicles. Retain vehicle access from Hawke Street.
- Ensure that removal of on-street parking is dependant upon the construction of a multi-level parking building at the site of the existing Curzon Street car park. Include pedestrian access to Errol Street as part of this development.

Advantages

- maximum area of open space
- built edge directly adjacent to open space
- improved pedestrian access

Disadvantages

- greatest loss of parking (43 spaces)
- restricted access to Victoria St properties
- potential vehicle/pedestrian conflict
- safety concerns for entry/exit of service trucks for the 3 Crowns Hotel



Example 7B - Estimated cost: \$215 000

- Extend the western half of the reserve into the closed section of Victoria Street. Replace the existing car park and access road with a shared zone for pedestrians, service vehicles and a small number of short-term shopper car parks. Retain vehicle access from Hawke Street.
- Otherwise as for Example 7A.

Advantages

- extended open space
- improved pedestrian access

Disadvantages

- significant loss of parking (30 spaces)
- restricted access to Victoria St properties
- safety concerns for entry/exit of service trucks for the 3 Crowns Hotel

Summary of Findings

The potential of this reserve depends on the future of Site 6 and the Curzon Street car park. For this reason, it is impossible to recommend a single development option.

Car parking is the major obstacle to open space improvement. The pedestrian area can only be consolidated if parking is removed from Victoria Street. Yet such a move would be strongly opposed by the local business community. Under these circumstances, significant enhancements are unlikely unless the Council's Curzon Street car park is developed as a multi-level parking facility.

A completely new landscape will also be warranted if the Baptist Church property is acquired. In this case, Council's Curzon Street reserve will expand to become a substantial neighbourhood park with a frontage on King Street. Site 7 should be part of the landscape concept.

If neither of these initiatives proceeds, modest improvements to the local streetscape are still possible. These include extending street trees along King Street, relocating access to the Victoria Street car park and introducing a simpler, more open landscape to the southern triangle of open space. In addition, options for moving the war memorial could be investigated.



Example 7C - Estimated cost: \$220 000

- Extend the western half of the reserve into the closed section of Victoria Street. Replace the existing car park and access road with a shared zone for pedestrians, service vehicles and a small number of short-term shopper car parks. Retain a dedicated service area at the southern end of Little Curzon Street. Provide vehicle access directly from King Street.
- Otherwise as for Example 7A.

Advantages

- better access to Victoria St properties
- better access to Errol St properties
- uninterrupted pedestrian access from Errol

Disadvantages

- significant loss of parking (30 spaces)
- safety concerns for entry/exit of vehicles from car-park area
- allows use of Lt. Curzon as through route by non-local traffic