

# VICTORIA UNIVERSITY DESIGN GUIDE – TABLE OF CONTENTS

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# 1.0 Introduction

## The Place of the University

Victoria University occupies a prominent place in both the social and physical fabric of Wellington city. Not only is it the region's premier institution of tertiary education and the centre of activity for over 12,000 students and staff, but it is also a striking physical presence on its site overlooking the central city and harbour.

Since its incorporation nearly one hundred years ago as a college of the University of New Zealand, Victoria has grown with vigour and now almost fully occupies the original site. This growth is placing great demands on the resources of the university today as it responds to an increasing public demand for tertiary education.

## The Future of the University

The university plans to develop its important public role of research and educational service, and its future success depends on being able to expand its services and facilities to meet the public and political demand for an increase in the number of students and for educational excellence.

Much of this increased demand will be accommodated by intensifying facilities on the main campus site. Because of extreme pressure on space, however, steps have already been taken to extend the university into other parts of the city and allow some students to be taught part of their course at other tertiary institutions.

The university has acquired a presence in the Aro Valley through the purchase of the Mitchelltown School site and a number of residential properties along upper Aro Street. The residential properties are used for student accommodation. The Mitchelltown School site, now used for storage, will be adapted to also provide small-scale propagation facilities for the University Grounds Section and the School of Biological Sciences.

Intensification of the development within the main campus will continue to take into account not only its position at the edge of the central city, but also its location within existing residential areas. The character of those residential areas that are already being used for student accommodation will be maintained.

## The Campus

The Kelburn campus area can be logically divided into two areas, each of a different character and serving different uses. These are:

- the main teaching areas to the east of Kelburn Parade, to the west of Kelburn Parade adjoining Glasgow Street, and to the west of Fairlie Terrace (areas 1, 2 and 3)
- the residential areas to the north of Kelburn Park and the Cable Car, comprising Weir House and Trinity Newman Hall of Residence, and to the south of the old School of Architecture site, accessed from Fairlie Terrace and Landcross Street (areas 4 and 5).



## 2.0 Intention of the Design Guide

As specified in the District Plan rules, all new building development within the precinct is a Controlled Activity in terms of the design and appearance, siting and height of buildings. This Design Guide provides the standards or criteria against which controlled elements will be assessed.

The general intention of this Design Guide is to allow the essential development of the university to occur in a planned and controlled manner, recognising and respecting the environmental qualities that give this area its unique character.

This Design Guide starts from the premise that both design guidelines and good design are site specific. No single rule or ideal provides a solution for every situation. For this reason suggestions and guidelines have been developed for each part of the site in order to respond to the unique conditions of each area and achieve site-specific development objectives.

The guidelines establish a three-dimensional framework within which development can take place, with the intention of imposing the minimum amount of control necessary to achieve the set objectives and promote a development responsive to the needs of both the university and the wider community.

The intention is to set out the general principles for development of the campus, not to arbitrarily restrict the development potential of the university. The guidelines are intended to give both a degree of certainty as to the form of appropriate development and the freedom of interpretation to allow an alternative design response if it can be shown to meet the area-specific objectives of this guide. Variations from certain guidelines will be considered if it can be demonstrated that the variation offers an alternative means of satisfactorily achieving the Guide's urban design objectives.

The illustrations in the Guide are intended to support the text by explaining principles. They are not intended to represent actual design solutions.

## 3.0 Analysis: Main Campus

### Area 1: Kelburn Parade East

The heart of the university, this comprises the main bulk of teaching, administration, library, recreation and student facilities.

The view from the central city of Kelburn and the university is dominated by the horizontal mass of the Cotton and Rankine Brown buildings. These important skyline elements, arguably built to the limit of appropriate scale, signal the existence of the university to the city below.

Characterised by high and medium-rise development, the campus comprises buildings significantly larger in scale than those in adjacent residential areas, which are primarily one or two storey dwellings.

Although of greater height and larger scale than most nearby buildings, the university development (like adjacent residential development) tends to follow the contours, with most facilities built along the slope. The resulting spine is more or less parallel to the underlying ridge of the Central Terrace area above and behind the university.

The view of the university from the north is focused on the Hunter building, which plays an important role in establishing the identity of the university. This is visually the most intricate and historically the most significant of all the large buildings on campus. Not only is the Hunter building an important local landmark with senior status within the university, it is furthermore significant because of its relationship to the only substantial sunny open lawn in a campus generally lacking such spaces. The green carpet of the lawn acts as a foil to the red brick of the Hunter building and, together with the adjoining massed trees above Salamanca Road, visually links the campus with Kelburn Park.

Although cross-site pedestrian accessways connect the university with the city via Mount Street, the campus is not well served by convenient pedestrian connections to the Te Aro flat area. The need for connection may become increasingly important with the potential for further expansion of the University into central city premises.

Current (and any future) development at the south end of the campus is highly visible from the residential areas of Brooklyn and the Aro Valley. Unless steps are taken to mitigate such effects, future development in this area could visually dominate the view to the north from these areas.

The building edge along Kelburn Parade gives strong definition to an important arterial road through the university. This space, defined by long, often blank walls, acts primarily as a channel for traffic and, due to noise, wind effects, scale of building

elements and lack of activity at edges, has a character that does not generally encourage use by pedestrians.

## **Area 2: Kelburn Parade West**

Linked by a pedestrian overbridge to the existing heart of the campus, this area includes high-rise faculty offices, lecture theatres, and a line of old dwellings converted to university use, one of which has associated open space and houses the university marae.

This area is characterised by a mix of types and scales of building. These range from the tower/podium design of Von Zedlitz and Bernard Murphy buildings, to the two-storey formerly residential villas that occupy most of the Kelburn Parade frontage. Larger-scale buildings immediately to the north of the university include a six-storey slab block apartment building, and the four-storey apartment block "Chevening" on the intersection with Salamanca Road.

While the existing dwellings that have been converted to university use in this area are not individually of architectural distinction or historical interest, collectively they relate to the scale and character of the adjoining residential area.

The road frontage to Kelburn Parade is generally undeveloped, characterised by service areas, asphalt paving and parked cars.

The north end of the site has the potential for infill development without impeding the light and views of adjoining properties, as most residences are located considerably above the level of Kelburn Parade.

## **Area 3: Kelburn Parade South**

This area is physically remote from the existing centre of the campus, with only a tenuous visual link to the elevated site at the corner of Fairlie Terrace and Kelburn Parade.

University facilities are generally located in buildings converted from existing large dwellings. None of the buildings are of any individual notable character, with the possible exception of the existing villa at number 89 Fairlie Terrace.

The area is considerably below the neighbouring residential development to the north, and generally slopes steeply to the south, with an open space at the centre formerly used as the School of Architecture car park. Some of the area at the southern boundary of this zone is below the level of the ridgetop in the university residential area immediately to the south. A considerable volume of development could be inserted there without impinging on nearby residential views or protruding above an extension of the Central Terrace ridgeline. The former Architectural Sciences Laboratory building, for example, although contrasting in scale and character with most of its

neighbours, is generally unobtrusive, sited as it is in the bottom of a depression on the south boundary of this area.

The area is characterised by substantial open space between and behind buildings. As a result of generally steep contours, this space is generally undefined, unformed and undeveloped other than with informal landscaping.

## 4.0 Objectives: Main Campus

Future development should satisfy a number of broad urban design intentions drawing directly from the preceding site-specific analysis, and with reference to the District Plan's general objectives for institutional precincts. These intentions represent the "spirit" of the Design Guide.

### Massing

- 01** To minimise the visual impact of any development as viewed from the city, and mitigate adverse visual effects on surrounding residential areas.
- 02** To avoid visually dominating nearby residential areas.
- 03** To allow adjoining residential properties to receive reasonable sun and light.
- 04** To maintain a visual connection from the residential area of Kelburn to the city below, notwithstanding any extension south of the horizontal mass of the existing University "wall" development.
- 05** To allow the visual expression of the university's "centre of gravity" with a vertical mass that may contrast with the horizontality of the existing development.

### Scale

- 01** To achieve a transition in scale between large institutional and smaller residential buildings at the interface with neighbouring residential areas.
- 02** To maintain the existing characteristic scale of street walls and degree of street enclosure.

### Skyline

- 01** To ensure that any extension to the presence of the university on the skyline when viewed from the city is articulated to reduce its visual mass and to contrast with the unbroken parapet line of the existing University "wall".

## **Views**

- 01** To substantially maintain important views of the city and harbour from residential areas.
- 02** To maintain views of the Hunter building from the cable car, Rawhiti Terrace, Kelburn Park and the city in general.
- 03** To avoid the total enclosure and restriction of views from nearby houses.
- 04** To minimise any detrimental visual impact of large numbers of parked cars.

## **Circulation**

- 01** To improve public access to and within the university.
- 02** To connect to the existing circulation structure of the city.
- 03** To make the circulation routes for pedestrians (the main group of users of campus facilities) as safe, convenient and pleasant as possible.

## **Elevational Modelling**

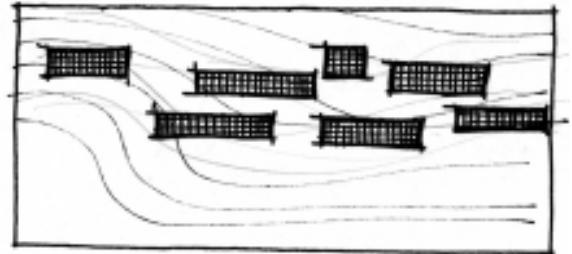
- 01** To achieve development which is consistent with the visual character of the existing campus, and which relates to the level of intricacy of nearby residential buildings when it directly borders a residential area.

## 5.0 Guidelines: Main Campus

### Massing

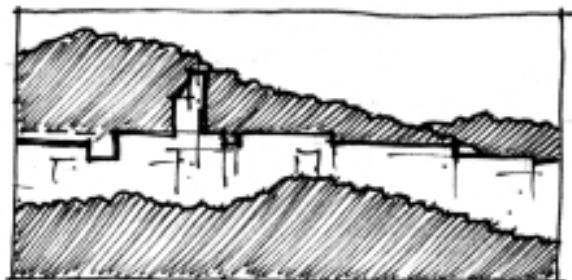
**G1** The established precedent of developing with the major axis of slab-type building elements aligned with the overall contours of the site (parallel with the Kelburn ridge top) should be followed.

**G2** The maximum extent of building mass is defined by the building envelope described on the Location and Height Control Plans. New building development will be expected to comply generally with the height and building envelope provisions. In assessing applications, Council seeks to ensure that the stated objectives of the Design Guide are satisfactorily achieved. This intends to avoid the simplistic and often crude massing of buildings that can result from absolute adherence to such controls, to facilitate a wide range of design options and to encourage the high quality of architecture expected of an important public institution.



**G3** Apart from in the central area of the campus where a tower or point block may be located to express the potential "centre of gravity" of an extended campus and provide a slender vertical contrast to the horizontality of the adjacent building mass, development should be no higher than the existing University "wall" formed by the Laby, Cotton and Rankine Brown buildings.

**G4** In the nominated zone at the centre of Area 1, a tower with floor areas generally not exceeding 800m<sup>2</sup> at any level above RL 130m may rise above the standard building envelope to an approximate height of RL 160m, subject to its siting, sculptural qualities and plan configuration being such that it makes a positive contribution to the overall form of the campus and ensures reasonable maintenance of views across the campus.



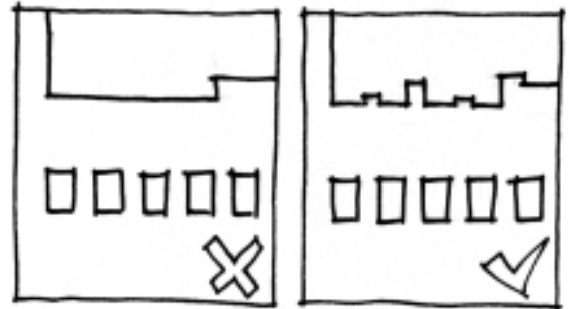
**G5** Development to the south end of the existing University "wall" should generally be no higher than the existing University "wall" edge when viewed from the city, and should be articulated to reduce its apparent visual mass.

**G6** Rooftop architectural features and service or plant rooms which protrude above the identified building envelope should be designed as an integral part of any building and should not compromise the objectives of this Design Guide.

- G7** The maximum height above street level of the edge of buildings at street frontages, subject to the qualification of the next paragraph, should generally be:
- Kelburn Parade (both sides from Salamanca Rd to Glasgow St intersection): three storeys
  - Kelburn Parade (from Glasgow St southwards): two storeys
  - Fairlie Terrace: four storeys.
- G8** The nominal height of a "storey" in any area relates to the type of building in the proposed development and the precedent set by existing buildings on immediately adjacent properties.
- G9** The maximum height of development immediately fronting Kelburn Parade to the southwest of the Fairlie Terrace intersection is two storeys and to Fairlie Terrace is four storeys. Development may be considered to a height above adjacent street level of four and six storeys respectively by building elements with a width of between 7.5m and 10m over not more than 25 percent of the street frontage.

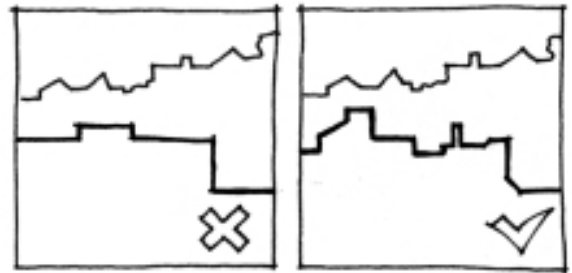
## Scale

- G1** The "module", or scale, of the articulation of building elevations should relate to both the scale of existing immediately adjacent development and the distance from which the new building will mainly be viewed.
- G2** An interval of between 7.5m and 10m measured horizontally should be expressed in the elevational treatment of new development immediately adjacent to or fronting onto residential areas.
- G3** The scale modulation of horizontal runs of facade will be achieved with significant articulation of form which may or may not be emphasised with surface treatment and minor elevational detail.



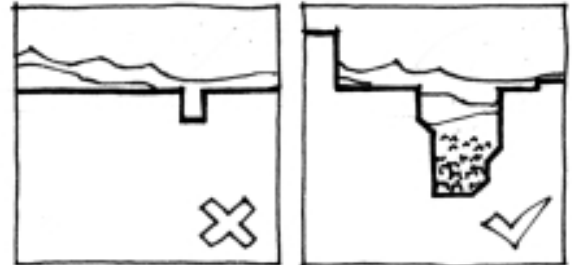
## Skyline

- G1** The skyline of development at the interface with residential areas should be articulated so as to reduce its visual mass and relate it to the reduced scale, forms and character of these residences.



## Views

- G1** Most development on a site such as this will reduce some views from residential properties to a greater or lesser degree. The loss of panoramic long-distance view may be compensated for by the partial maintenance of important views over or between buildings, augmented by visual interest and high levels of architectural quality in new development.



- G2** The view of the north west window of the Hunter building from the base of the flight of steps on the pedestrian accessway leading down from Rawhiti Terrace to Kelburn Parade (opposite the Hunter building) should be maintained.

- G3** Any detrimental visual impact of large numbers of parked cars should be either reduced by partial screening or eliminated by careful planning.

## Circulation

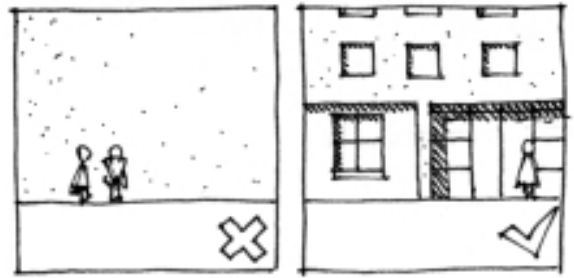
- G1** Existing through-routes should be enhanced. Future development of the campus circulation structure should allow for cross-site pedestrian links with connection to city streets and pedestrian pathways.

- G2** The impact of vehicle circulation on pedestrian use should be minimised by using detailed design measures to reduce vehicle speeds, improve pedestrian amenity and allow pedestrians to take precedence at vehicle entrances and on internal circulation routes.

## Elevational Modelling

**G1** Large, unbroken flat expanses of wall that are out of scale with adjacent buildings or which form the edge of spaces inhabited by pedestrians should generally be avoided. Such walls are acceptable only where they make a positive contribution to the quality of user experience of the campus.

**G2** The degree of elevational modelling should respond to the viewing distance (or range of potential viewing distances) of the observer. Areas primarily and consistently viewed from close range should exhibit a fine grain of detail, while the modelling of building elements in a facade viewed from a distance should be of a larger scale which recognises that viewing distance.



## 6.0 Analysis: Peripheral Sites

### Area 4: Landcross Street

This area occupies the ridgetop to the south of the campus and served by Fairlie Terrace and Landcross Street. Most of the area is occupied by Trinity Newman Hall of Residence.

The area is characterised by a fine grain of residential development and the near-total retention of the original dwellings constructed on the site. Those dwellings fronting onto Fairlie Terrace were mostly built before 1910. Most of the buildings fronting Adams Terrace date from the 1920s or earlier, and the development of Landcross Street itself was completed before 1930. There is an almost even mix of single-unit and multi-unit dwellings.

The pattern of development is along the ridge and along the steep contours of the area, while the major axis of almost all residential buildings is at right angles to the contours and the adjoining access roads. Consequently, a notable characteristic of all dwellings on steeply sloping sites in this area is a low facade towards the top of the site, and a high facade towards the bottom.

The area drops slightly at its north boundary, and would allow for the visually unobtrusive insertion of a substantial volume of infill building.

Reflecting the difficult topography, building coverage is relatively low at 27 percent, with only minimal off-street car parking provided (averaging only 0.25 spaces per residential unit). Most of the relatively flat open space occurs on the ridge top behind properties at the north end of the area, giving an uncharacteristically open appearance (in contrast to the lines of buildings either side) when this area is viewed from Kelburn to the north.

Only a third of the buildings are single storey. The vast majority of the others are two storey, with the balance three storeyed.

The average building footprint is only 10m<sup>2</sup>, and the average plan proportion of buildings is 8.5m wide x 12.5m deep.

The buildings have the form and detail of modest dwellings of their time, and are characterised by additive forms - shallow-pitched lean-to roofs over additions, bay windows, porches and verandahs. Wall cladding is almost exclusively painted weatherboarding. Most buildings (60 percent) have hip roofs, whereas the remainder are gabled. Eighty percent of all roofs are clad in corrugated iron.

The existing buildings in this area, viewed as a group, display a considerable visual unity because of their similar scale, age and construction. Nevertheless, there is no obvious repetition, and

within the unity a consistent visual variety is evident, due to minor variations of form, detail and siting, and the accretion of changes and additions over time.

The area is surrounded by buildings of residential scale, except at its north west corner at the top of Adams Terrace where it faces onto buildings of significantly larger scale.

## **Area 5: Weir House/Trinity Newman/Clermont Terrace**

This is an established residential area on the plateau to the north of Kelburn Parade at the edge of the central city.

The dwellings in this primarily residential area are of substantial size, with an average footprint of 150m<sup>2</sup>. They are on average 11m wide x 14m deep. Half of them are two storeys high, 35 percent single storey and the remainder three storeys.

Half of the buildings date from the period 1890 - 1910 and retain the character of that period. The site is bounded by houses of similar age, interspersed with more recent dwellings of contrasting type, including two flat-roofed houses fronting onto Salamanca Road, and four contemporary row houses on Clermont Terrace.

The roofscape, highly visible from the lookout and paths at the top of the Botanical Gardens as a foreground to spectacular views over the city and harbour to the mountains beyond, is characterised by the hip roof form which is used on 75 percent of all buildings. Sixty-five percent of roofs are clad in iron, and the clay tile roof is also prominent, appearing on Weir House and 15 percent of dwellings, thereby establishing a visual link with the Bolton Street/Aurora Terrace area. This roofscape is fine-grained and unified by the consistency in roof type, pitch and scale. The potentially massive bulk of the main Weir House's main roof is subdivided and relates to the scale of the surroundings, when viewed from above.

Most of the area is relatively flat and accessible. Not only is there an existing carparking provision of around 1.5 spaces per unit, but many houses have flat, sunny gardens.

A relatively low average site coverage of 24 percent, a significant number of mature trees, and extensive planting on banks and around dwellings gives the area an "arcadian" character.

This is particularly evident in Salmont Place and adjoining spaces.

A pedestrian accessway bisecting the area and connecting to Salmont Place provides an established and convenient link between the University, Weir House and the city to the north.

Its narrow, enclosed nature makes a pleasing contrast with the openness of Gladstone Terrace to the south, and Salmont Place to the north. However, the screening effect of the fences defining the path may discourage its use after dark.

The distinctive landmark of Weir House sits as a sentinel on the skyline when viewed from the city, and it is also a dominant mass in the foreground when viewing the city itself from the area near the top of the cable car. Its articulated form and image of institutional solidity contrasts with the plain linear bulk of the new building next to it.

The existing buildings in this area viewed as a group display a considerable visual unity because of their similar scale, age and construction. Nevertheless, there is no obvious repetition, and considerable variety even within the unity, due to minor variations of form, detail and siting and the accretion of changes and additions over time.

High-density residential accommodation could be inserted unobtrusively into the west of the Weir House site and at 16-18 Clermont Terrace. These sites are low relative to adjacent areas.

## **7.0 Objectives: Peripheral Sites**

### **Massing**

- 01* To maintain the general visual grain, pattern of development and character of the area.
- 02* To avoid visually dominating or shading nearby properties.

### **Scale**

- 01* To maintain the existing scale of development.

### **Views**

- 01* To maintain both the quality of the views over these areas to the city and the characteristic scale, form and visual grain of the roofscape.

### **Circulation**

- 01* To retain and enhance through-site access.
- 02* To avoid any detrimental visual impacts of large numbers of parked cars.

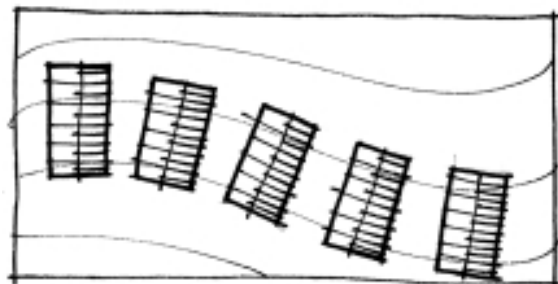
### **Elevational Modelling**

- 01* To maintain and enhance the "sense of place" that derives from the detailed character of buildings and landscaping.

## 8.0 Guidelines: Peripheral Sites

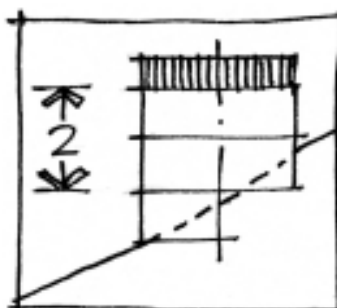
### Massing

**G1** Existing residential buildings should be maintained or infill should follow the existing patterns of development. Relevant patterns include characteristic alignment and spacing between buildings, setbacks from roads, scale and orientation of buildings. The size and proportion of any development should relate to that which exists already, and should be articulated in both plan and elevation.



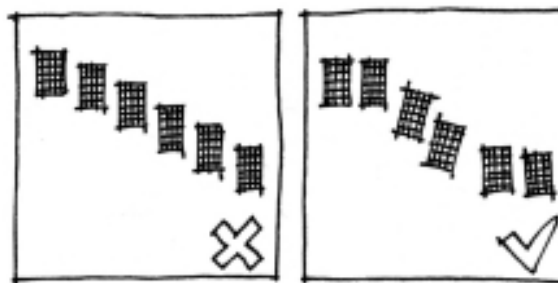
**G2** Additive forms should be used, reflecting the character of existing buildings.

**G3** The major axis of each building element in Area 4 will be at right angles to the topographical contour line. Infill building in this area should follow the pattern of existing development which comprises building modules along the contours.



**G4** The maximum height in Area 4 should be generally two storeys, measured at the centre of any building. This recognises that on steep sites, one end of any building may be three-storeyed. Four-storey development can occur at the north boundary of the area providing that a two-storey frontage to Fairlie Terrace is maintained.

**G5** The maximum height in Area 5 should be three storeys, except the western carpark portion of the Weir House site, where development of five storeys can occur.

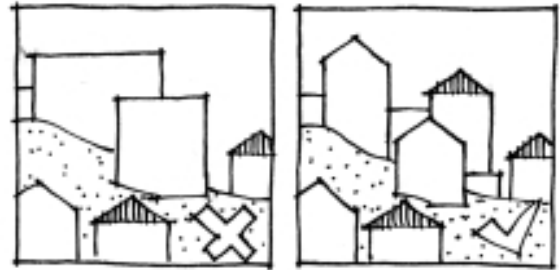


**G6** The nominal height of a "storey" in any area will relate to the precedent set by existing buildings on immediately adjacent properties in that area.

**G7** The strict geometrical alignment and multiple repetition of identical building forms should be avoided, because it is out of character with existing development.

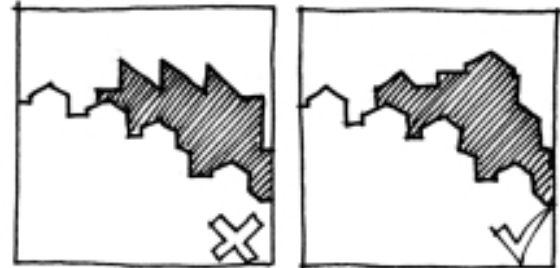
## Scale

- G1** The general scale and massing of development should echo the existing building. Large infill building should be articulated to relate to the scale and proportions of existing building.



## Views

- G1** The form, scale, orientation and visual density of roofscape elements should follow the existing pattern of development. Infill buildings should incorporate roofs of similar type, scale, pitch and proportion to those existing, and avoid contracting forms.

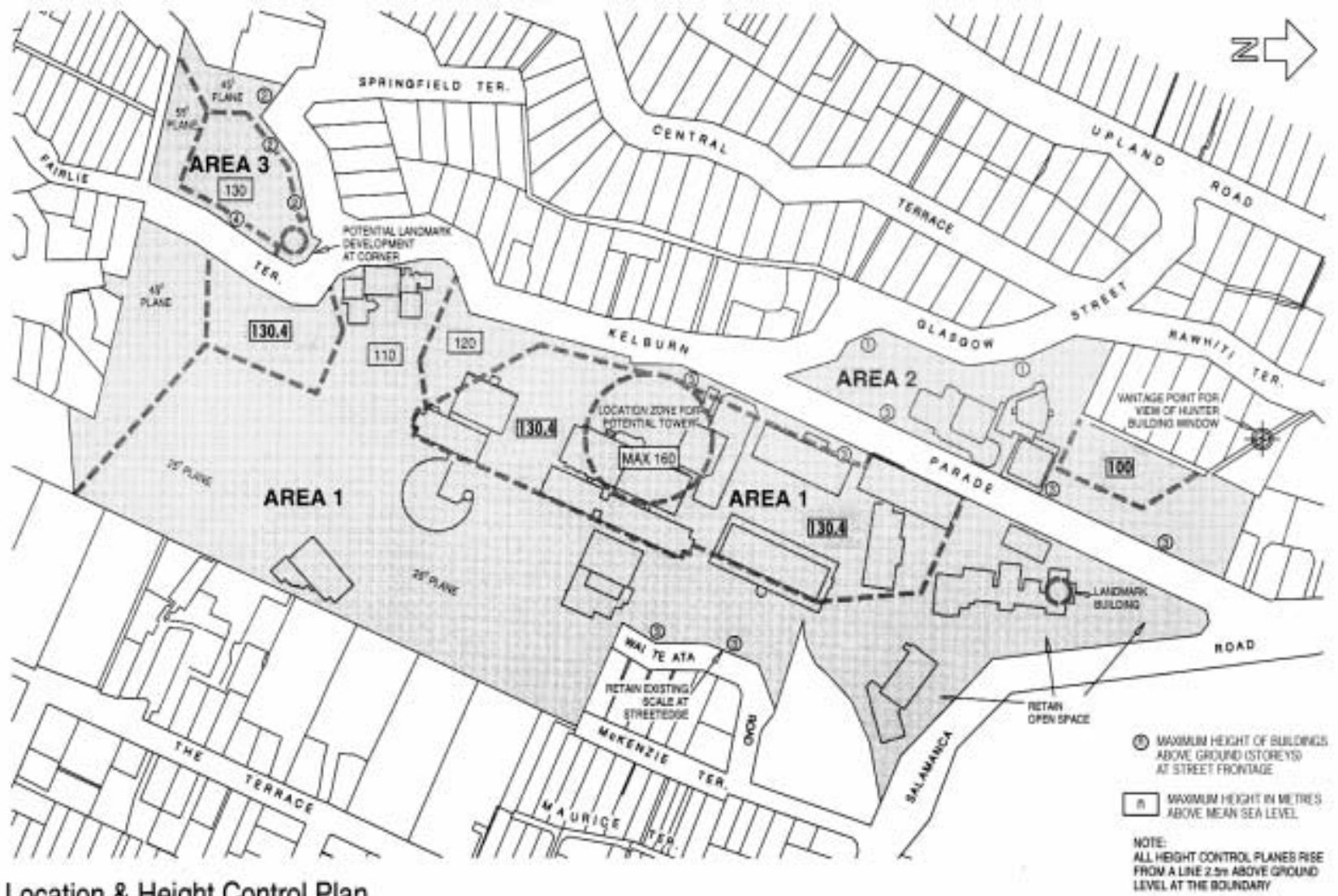


## Circulation

- G1** Existing pedestrian connections should be developed in such a way as to enhance their character and amenity.
- G2** Parking, garaging and vehicle accessways should be unobtrusive and integrated into the surroundings with appropriate landscaping.
- G3** Open-air parking areas should accommodate no more than five cars and be separated from each other by buildings, planting, walls or other landscaping features.
- G4** Parking areas accommodating more than five cars will be acceptable only where they are part of a landscaping plan which reduces their visual impact and improves the general amenity of the area.

## Elevational Modelling

- G1** The nature and scale of building materials and the visual complexity of detailed form should be derived from and relate to the local residential context.
- G2** The similarities of existing form should be recognised, and new building should relate to these. New development should reinforce the existing visual quality, including the area's typical variety and diversity of detail and use of a characteristic and limited range of materials.
- G3** Extensions to existing buildings should enhance the character of those buildings, utilising the additive forms characteristic of the area.



**Location & Height Control Plan**

**VICTORIA UNIVERSITY MAIN CAMPUS: AREAS 1,2&3**



AREA 4: LANDCROSS STREET



AREA 5: WEIR HOUSE/ TRINITY NEWMAN/ CLERMONT TER.

### Location & Height Control Plan

### VICTORIA UNIVERSITY PERIPHERAL SITES: AREAS 4 & 5