

Highett Gasworks Frequently Asked Questions - Webinars

In December 2020, Development Victoria hosted two webinars to provide information to the community about what was heard during the first phase of engagement held in August 2020. This document provides an update to the Frequently Asked Questions asked during the webinars, listed under key themes.

The Site

Where is the Highett Gasworks site?

The Highett Gasworks site is located at 1136-1138 Nepean Highway, Highett. Since the closure of the Highett Gasworks, the 6.3-hectare site has been safely decontaminated and is ready for reuse. The site is mostly vacant, with a brick chimney being the only remaining part of the old gasworks.

What is the status of the planning process?

On 18 April 2019, an amendment to the Kingston Planning Scheme (C159) came into effect updating the planning controls for the site. These changes included the application of a Residential Growth Zone (RGZ2) and a Development Plan Overlay (DP07). You can read about the planning scheme amendment process [here](#). The rezoning application was led by the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF).

The Development Plan Overlay requires the submission and approval of a Development Plan to Kingston City Council. A Development Plan provides the framework and conditions for future use and development before a permit can be granted to use or develop the land.

Development Victoria is now creating a Development Plan and has engaged with the community and key stakeholders in its preparation. Further phases of community engagement are planned for 2021. Development Victoria intends to submit the Development Plan to Kingston City Council for approval in late 2021.

Why are you building on this site?

The Highett Gasworks site was identified by Kingston City Council as appropriate for residential development to meet the needs of the growing municipality. The site is currently disused and therefore ideal for urban renewal.

When will construction commence?

Subject to a range of approvals, construction is expected to commence in 2023. From time to time the local community may see activity on site which will include investigative works to help prepare for construction. Any major activity on site will be listed on the project website development.vic.gov.au/highett-gasworks.

Transport and connectivity

Is a pedestrian bridge over the rail line being considered?

Yes. The Development Plan Overlay requires Development Victoria to investigate the future provision of a pedestrian link and future connection across the rail line to Lyle Anderson Park. Development Victoria is currently working with Kingston City Council to investigate this option.

Can the site road layout align with the chimney instead of being further north?

The Department of Transport (DOT) provides advice on the location of any accessways onto the Nepean Highway, a State controlled road. After reviewing several options, including one directly opposite Turner Road, it was determined that land to the north of the site is the safest and therefore most appropriate location for the site's main access point. This will include a signalised intersection for vehicles and a pedestrian crossing across the Nepean Highway.

How will parking be managed for residents, visitors and businesses?

All car parking will be contained within the site to ensure minimal parking impacts on surrounding residential streets. The development will seek to comply with the City of Kingston's planning requirements whilst balancing the need to minimise congestion to neighbouring streets.

Will car parking be above ground?

Due to the history of the Highett Gasworks and the remediation that has taken place, all parking will be accommodated above ground via podium parking.

The remediation of the site has been undertaken in accordance to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) standards and is safe for its intended residential use. However, the soil that remains makes the prospect of underground car parking unviable.

Will there be a signalised intersection to enter and exit the site along Nepean Highway?

Development Victoria has worked closely with the Department of Transport (DoT) to confirm a signalised intersection across the Nepean Highway to the north of the site. This also provides a safe pedestrian crossing point which the community told us was vital for the site.

Will southbound traffic on Nepean Highway be able to access the site?

Yes. A signalised intersection will allow southbound vehicles to safely turn right into the site.

What entry and exit points are being considered for vehicle access to and from the site?

Entry and exit points are detailed in the Development Plan Overlay, with the following options under investigation:

- Main vehicle entry and exit from Nepean Highway;
- Alternate vehicle entry and exit from Station Street and/or View Street and Remington Drive;
- Pedestrian and cycling path linkages to Nepean Highway, Sir William Fry Reserve, Station Street and/or View Street.

How does Development Victoria consider the traffic impacts of this development alongside other developments underway?

The Development Plan Overlay requires an Integrated Transport and Traffic Management Plan which will be submitted as part of the Development Plan for approval. This plan will detail how the development will integrate into the surrounding road network, any traffic impacts and how they will be mitigated. The Department of Transport (DoT) is responsible for any changes to the road network and will review the Integrated Transport and Traffic Management Plan, taking into consideration other developments underway to ensure traffic impacts are minimal.

Can you prevent access to Highett Road to avoid increased congestion?

A Detailed Transport and Traffic Management Plan will be prepared by specialist traffic engineers who consider the traffic impacts generated by the proposed development and will make recommendations on how to best manage the movement of vehicles through and around the site. This will include an assessment of traffic patterns resulting from the proposed signalised intersection at Nepean Highway and other access points shown within Development Plan Overlay – Schedule 7.

Will you build a pedestrian bridge over Bay Road as part of this development?

No. A pedestrian bridge over Bay Road is not being delivered as part of this project. Kingston City Council is the Responsible Authority for development of the broader precinct, and Development Victoria has provided the community feedback about the desire for a pedestrian bridge to Council for consideration.

Will bike paths be included in the design?

Yes. The Highett Gasworks site will provide a cycle path along the rail corridor and paths through the site, connecting with pedestrian and cycling linkages to key nearby destinations including Highett Shopping Centre, Sir William Fry Reserve and Nepean Highway.

Can bike paths be located through the site rather than along the rail corridor?

We are prioritising pedestrian and leisure cyclists within the site over commuter cyclists and vehicles. A cycle path along the railway corridor provides a better connection to a strategic cycling corridor, which allows for the commuter cyclist to travel at faster speed. In doing so we can create a safer experience for both cyclists and pedestrians by providing these options.

Will the Suburban Rail Loop project impact this project?

The Victorian Government's Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) project is currently in the planning and development phase for Stage One – a new underground rail connection between Cheltenham and Box Hill. Following the announcement in late 2020 by the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) including a potential station location at Sir William Fry Reserve, Development Victoria will work closely with SRL about any implications for the site. For more information about this Government project please visit suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au or call 1800 105 105.

Will the Highett train station be removed as part of the Level Crossing Removal Authority?

The Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) is overseeing the removal of 75 dangerous and congested level crossings across Melbourne by 2025. Development Victoria understands that the level crossing at Highett train station is not planned to be removed. For more information please visit levelcrossings.vic.gov.au or call 1800 105 105.

Public open space and landscaping

What could be included in the 11.6% public open space allocation?

Development Victoria is currently working with Kingston City Council on how a range of open spaces could be delivered within the development. This could include:

- A local playground;
- Neighbourhood open spaces accessible to people of all abilities and of high amenity; and
- Pedestrian and cycling paths within the development and along the railway corridor.

Will a portion of the site be allocated to sporting fields and open space?

Kingston City Council's Open Space strategy considers the distribution and allocation of sporting fields and types of open space across the municipality ([Link to Strategy](#)). In this strategy, the Highett Gasworks Site is within Area 1B, a location which has two regional reserves including three turf sports grounds, two playgrounds as well as a large area of family recreation space at Sir William Fry Reserve.

At the time of preparing the Development Plan Overlay, Kingston City Council and the independent committee considered the future open space needs for the site. The type of open space identified was the provision of a new playground and areas for contemplation and relaxation.

Can the majority of open space be located to the north of the site and away from taller buildings to allow for more sunshine?

Development Victoria is currently investigating where public open space will be delivered within the site and will include detailed studies on the location of sun and shade to ensure the usability of open spaces.

How will the community access the public open space within the site?

The community will be able to enjoy the public open space on the site via the walking and cycling paths that join the existing public open space at Sir William Fry Reserve and neighbouring residential areas.

What will happen to the current trees on the site?

Development Victoria will retain existing trees where possible. The development will also prioritise high-quality landscaping including main road boulevards, canopy trees and plants that screen for privacy where appropriate.

Urban design and land use

Why is the maximum building height set at eight storeys and can this be changed?

The building height was determined as part of the planning scheme amendment approved in 2019. You can read more about Kingston Amendment C159 [here](#). The zone sets a mandatory maximum building height of 26m for the site (up to eight storeys), which cannot be exceeded. The Development Plan Overlay also indicates heights must be no more than three storeys in the north, six storeys along the rail corridor and eight storeys towards the centre of site.

Why aren't the eight storey buildings closer to the railway line?

The Development Plan Overlay sets out the location of building heights across the site with eight storeys located towards the centre of the site.

What is meant by 'affordable housing', and how will it be delivered as part of this development?

Development Victoria offers a range of accessible and affordable high-quality options in all our developments to cater for different budgets, lifestyles and people. This provides more opportunities for Victorians to live in a location of their choice, at prices they can afford and in dwellings that are appropriate to their needs. The affordable dwellings will be integrated into the Development Plan.

The Victorian Government uses the definition set out in the Planning and Environment Act (1987) which defines affordable housing as 'housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low and moderate-income households'. The Development Plan Overlay for the site requires up to 10% of all dwellings to be provided as affordable housing.

How many people will live in the new development?

It is too early to estimate how many people will live in the new development. Development Victoria aims to deliver a diverse range of housing which includes the right mix of building heights, building types, apartments sizes and ground floor uses. The placement of the buildings and the mix of dwelling types will determine the final number of people expected to live within the development.

How will the safety of elderly people be considered?

The planning of the development is considering the safety and needs of the entire community and will ensure universal access to all public areas. Development Victoria recently undertook training with Dementia Australia to learn more about how design can play a role in minimising some of the effects of dementia and ultimately create safer spaces. These learnings will be applied to the site.

What commercial uses will be allowed in the new development?

The variety of uses allowed are set out within the Residential Growth Zone – Schedule 2 that applies to the site. Commercial uses will be limited given the site is close to both the Highett Activity Centre and Southland Shopping Centre. Under the Zone, some educational, recreational, religious, community, and a limited range of other non-residential uses that serve the local community may be considered. The following table provides a summary of uses permitted:

Table 1 Summary of permitted commercial uses

A permit is not required for the following uses	A permit is required for the following uses	Prohibited Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwellings • Medical centre less than 250m² GFA • Home based business • Informal outdoor recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation • Food and drink premises (including bar, café, restaurant) • Convenience shop • Convenience restaurant • Child care centre, education centre • Medical centre of more than 250m² GFA • Place of assembly (function centre, library, exhibition centre) • Display home centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nightclub • Office • Bottle shop

How is the demand for commercial uses determined to ensure shops aren’t left vacant?

Development Victoria will use a market-led approach to understand the demand for retail and commercial operations that are allowed within the zoning requirements (as specified in the table above). This will include research about what is available in the area to determine what might be successful in the new development. These factors will be carefully considered alongside community feedback to ensure businesses in the new development meet the needs of the community and have the best chance of success.

Can our existing community services support an increase in residents?

A detailed Social Infrastructure Needs Assessment is currently being prepared and will be submitted as part of the Development Plan submission. This assessment considers the existing community facilities and services such as health-related services, education and training as well as arts, culture and recreational facilities and their capacity to meet the needs of more people. Where demand can’t be met from existing community services, Development Victoria will explore how to accommodate these services within the development.

Is Kingston City Council involved in the decision-making process for community services within the site including the delivery of children and family services?

Yes. Development Victoria is working closely with Kingston City Council to understand what services could be accommodated within the site. Kingston City Council, in its role as Responsible Authority, will approve the Development Plan including the social infrastructure needs assessment report which will detail the potential community services that could be delivered within the site.

Sustainability

What sustainability features are being considered?

Development Victoria is exploring how it can deliver best practice sustainable design to improve the wellbeing of residents and visitors. Development Victoria is committed to delivering a Green Star Communities rating tool to best add value to the community. Ways to incorporate adaptability within the design will also be considered so spaces and the ways residents use them can change to meet the needs of future communities.

Will the site use gas services?

Development Victoria is committed to sustainable outcomes for Highbury Gasworks. We recognise the benefits of renewable energy sources and are exploring the costs and benefits of an all-electric site, along with a suite of other sustainability measures. You can read more about Development Victoria’s sustainability strategy [here](#).

Historical and cultural values

How are Traditional Owners being engaged?

The Highett Gasworks site is located on land where ownership is contested between local Traditional Owner groups. Development Victoria is committed to working with all Traditional Owner groups and exploring how their views can be included in the site design, development and ongoing management of the land. More information will be provided during the next phase of engagement.

Does the site have any heritage significance?

A Heritage Overlay protects the chimney recognising its historical value. The chimney will be restored and retained in place as a key feature.

Will the chimney be retained?

Yes. The Development Plan Overlay requires the chimney to be retained and restored as a key feature of the development. During the first phase of engagement, Development Victoria heard ideas from the community about how best to showcase the chimney as part of the site's redevelopment and is committed to ensuring it becomes a central feature of the site.

Who is Development Victoria?

Who is Development Victoria, and what similar projects has it managed?

Development Victoria is responsible for undertaking urban renewal, property development and major projects on behalf of the Victorian Government. We deliver property development, precinct renewal and civic infrastructure for the community. We are currently delivering projects which span across different portfolios including Fitzroy Gasworks, Docklands, the Melbourne Park redevelopment, Riverwalk and Aurora residential estates, Revitalising Central Dandenong, the Ballarat GovHub and more. Find out more about our projects at development.vic.gov.au

What controls will be in place to ensure the Development Plan is delivered to a high quality?

All works will require a planning permit unless specifically exempt under the Kingston Planning Scheme. Once a planning permit has been issued, it is Council's responsibility to ensure that the land use or development is consistent with the planning permit conditions.

Development Victoria will also control the quality of delivery via a Development Agreement or a form of legal contract that allows Development Victoria to retain oversight of the project. This will ensure the design outcomes are consistent with the project objectives and that completion of the project is achieved within a specified timeframe.

Development Victoria has used this method in Docklands and other sites to ensure the works delivered by its development partner(s) meet the Development Plan standards and create the best outcome for the future community and existing residents. Development Victoria is exploring how Highett Gasworks could be delivered using this Development Agreement model.

Community engagement

How will Development Victoria use the feedback from the community?

Development Victoria is currently reviewing feedback received during the first phases of engagement and using it to help formulate a draft Development Plan. In 2021, we will seek community feedback on the draft Development Plan.

A summary report of the engagement findings from the first phase of engagement as well as recordings of the

webinars held in December 2020 are publicly available via the project webpage. To learn more visit development.vic.gov.au/highett-gasworks.

How can I get involved?

To register for project updates including ways to get involved please email Highett.GW@development.vic.gov.au or call 03 9021 0601.

Where can I read more about this project?

You can find out more about the project and read helpful [materials here](#).