



Wickham Master Plan

Discussion Report
April 2016

Urban Planning | Strategic Planning | Newcastle City Council

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Wickham Master Plan – Discussion Report | 1 |
| Foreword | 1 |
| Overview | 2 |
| Purpose | 2 |
| Process | 2 |
| Project area | 3 |
| Context | 4 |
| Historical influences | 4 |
| Policy framework | 8 |
| Existing urban structure | 10 |
| Influences and trends | 22 |
| Challenges | 24 |
| Issues and constraints | 24 |
| Opportunities | 34 |
| Redevelopment sites | 35 |
| Connectivity and accessibility | 38 |
| Character precincts | 44 |
| Implementation | 51 |
| Incentives and controls | 51 |
| Future actions | 52 |

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Wickham Master Plan – Discussion Report

Foreword

Wickham is changing.

This report identifies the challenges and opportunities for Wickham within its changing role within the Newcastle City Centre.

In 1996 the Building Better Cities Program introduced the concept of 'A Wickham Urban Village' within their concept strategy and study of the same name. The purpose of this document was to examine the opportunities to transform Wickham from a residential/industrial area to an urban village characterised by a mixed-use intensive development that has pedestrian based qualities, and is transit oriented.

The current development controls for Wickham are based on urban design guidelines adopted by Council in 2006. These guidelines sought to transition Wickham's predominantly industrial character to that of a medium density mixed use suburb.

These guidelines have not been realised to date. This is partly be due to external (global) economic factors over the last decade but also the ambitious attempt to alter the existing urban structure by introducing new laneways, without any real incentive to compensate for the loss of developable land (e.g bonus height and floor space or a reduction in s94 developer contributions).

The identified laneways were removed from Newcastle Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012 as part of the State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment (Newcastle City Centre) 2014.

While the proposed Wickham Master Plan project area is included within the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy (NURS) study area, the City Centre Development Control Plan (DCP) does not currently have specific character area controls for Wickham; hence the laneways still remain within Council's current DCP.

The NURS identified that further work is required to identify appropriate building envelopes, land use and public domain planning within special area controls for both the 'Wickham railway edge' and 'Wickham village'.

The Wickham Master Plan project will deliver a revision of the existing planning controls that reflect the opportunities and envisaged character of Wickham in light of its changing role within the Newcastle City Centre.

Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to stimulate discussion to support preparation of a Wickham Master Plan, through identification of potential challenges and opportunities due to the changing role of Wickham within the context of the Newcastle city centre.

Process

This discussion report builds on the comprehensive analysis and community engagement undertaken in developing the 2006 urban design guidelines for Wickham, which form the basis of Council's current planning controls.

Council has undertaken consultation with a range of stakeholders to identify matters that may have consequence on redevelopment opportunities within Wickham.

1. Issues with applying current development controls
2. Change in Council and State policy and strategies
3. New information on physical constraints
4. External influences and trends
5. Unresolved Issues

This discussion report identifies potential solutions as a starting point for further consideration and assessment.

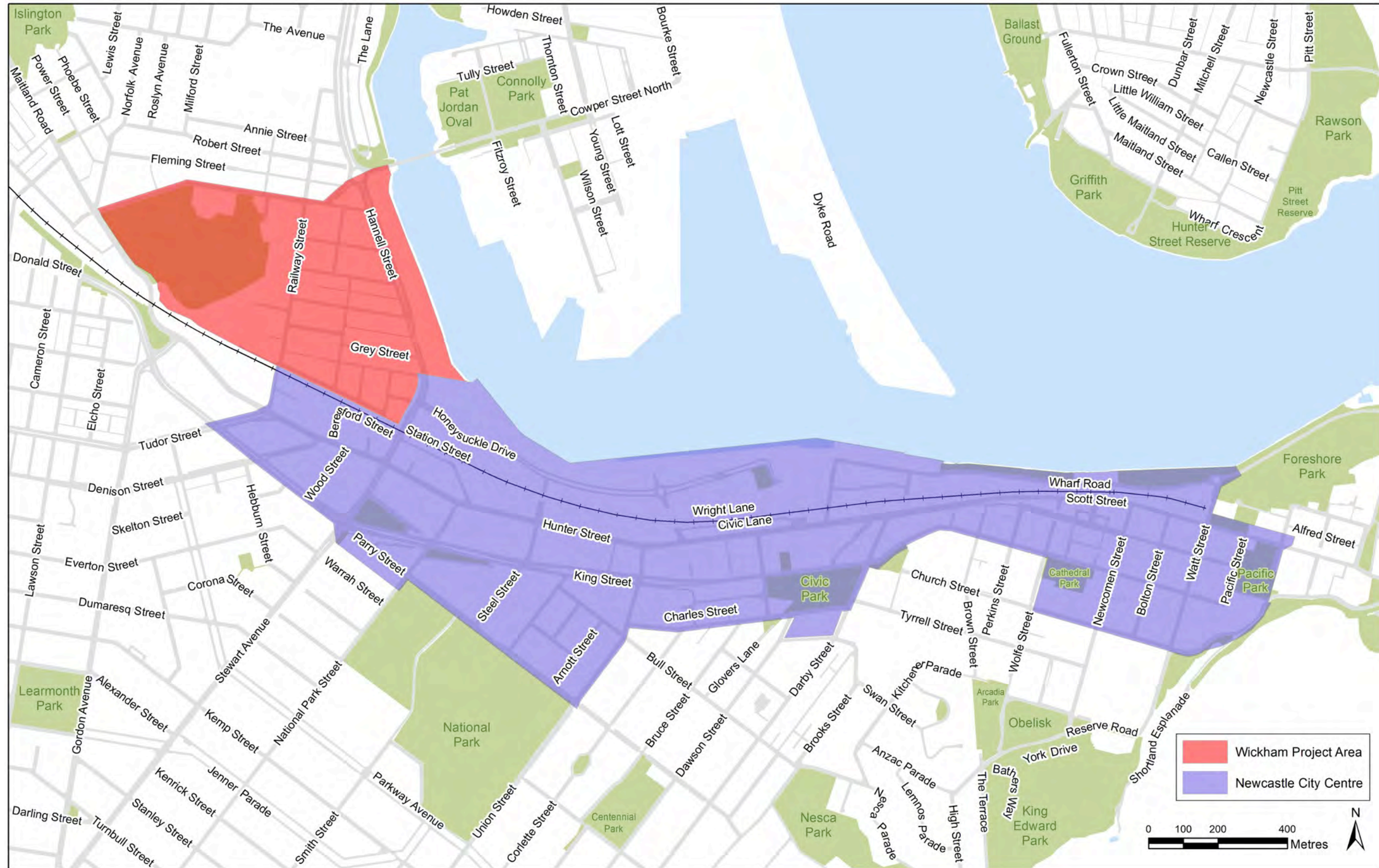
Feedback received on this discussion report will contribute to the preparation and refinement of the Wickham Master Plan and the resultant actions required to enable its implementation.

The milestones for delivering the Wickham Master Plan project are shown below:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 2015 | Nov | Project development and review of existing plans |
| | Dec | Technical stakeholders consultation |
| 2016 | Jan | Field data and information collection |
| | Feb | Data review and analysis |
| | Mar | Prepare report for discussion |
| | Apr | Landowner and expert input |
| | May | Develop draft master plan |
| | Jun | Testing and refinement |
| | Jul | Reporting to Council |
| | Aug | Public exhibition |
| | Sept | Adoption by Council |
| | Oct | Commence actions for implementation |

Project area

The Wickham Master Plan project area forms part of the Newcastle City Centre boundary as shown within Map 1 below.



Map 1 – Context of Wickham Master Plan project area within Newcastle City Centre.

Context

Historical influences

Derrigarba

Derrigarba was the name given to Wickham by the traditional custodians of the local area pre European settlement. This name translates to 'flower on the sand'; a potential reference to the natural flora of the area located on the former beaches along the estuaries of Throsbys Creek.

Research by the Coal River Working Party suggests that Wickham was probably the location of ancient Corroboree grounds as depicted in the oil painting 'Corroboree at Newcastle' by Joseph Lycett.

Consideration of potential place making opportunities that provides an interpretation of *Derrigarba* could be undertaken together with the descendants of local traditional custodians 'the Awabakal people' and located in the park adjoining the harbour on Hannell Street, which contains the 'Tree of Knowledge'.

Whilst not part of the areas pre-European history, the Tree of knowledge is a local landscape feature recognised anecdotally as an important place of storytelling for local Aboriginal peoples throughout the years.



Figure 1 Corroboree at Newcastle / oil painting by Joseph Lycett (Courtesy of State Library of NSW)

Mining

Much of Wickham was undermined with old tunnels from the Maryville Colliery (operated between 1884 -1888 by The Maryville Colliery Company Limited) still posing a risk of subsidence.

Furthermore the railway connection to the Wickham & Bullock Island Colliery in Carrington (operated between 1883 -1905 by Wickham & Bullock Island Coal Company) is still evident in the existing urban structure of the area.

The heritage and archaeological significance of the Bullock Island railway may need to be considered and interpreted as redevelopment occurs.

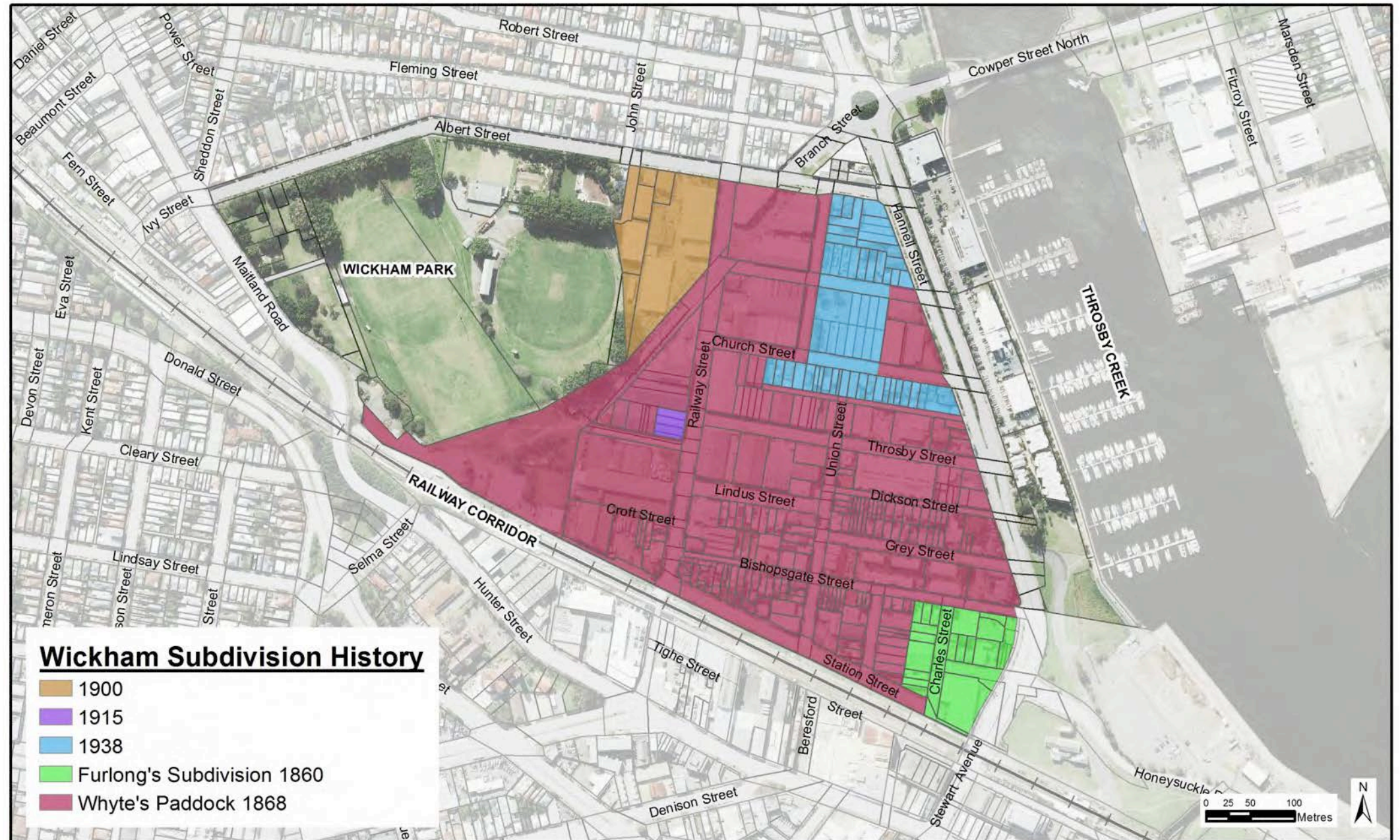


Map 2 – Railway alignments and mine workings

Whyte's Paddock

Wickham was the name given to a village built-up during the mid 1800s as a result of subdivision along Hannell Street within an area known as Whyte's Paddock. By 1900 Wickham was Newcastle's most popular suburb for workers to live in, with about 7000 residents, due to its proximity to the city, the port and the railway station. Much of the original subdivision pattern and narrow streets remain.

New development can use building articulation and vertical building elements to reflect the traditional pattern of subdivision and residential buildings.



Map 3 – Historical subdivision

Industrial

In the 1950s, as Newcastle's suburbs expanded further out Wickham was zoned to allow industrial development to serve the needs of nearby harbour uses and other heavier industry, including BHP steel works. This resulted in the amalgamation of land to allow for industrial uses, which created a visible contrast to the smaller traditional subdivisions.

This change also resulted in conflicts between incompatible land uses being located in close proximity to one another.

Due to this incompatibility and the demise of industry within greater Newcastle by the late 1990s, Council attempted to redress the situation through rezoning the land for mixed use and targeting Wickham for revitalisation through the Federal Government's 'Building Better Cities Program'.

Larger amalgamated parcels of industrial land offer development opportunities, although impacts from past uses (such as contamination) introduces other challenges and costs to development.



Figure 2 – Wickham Panorama Circa 1906 (source: coalriver.wordpress.com)

Policy framework

Strategic plans

The Newcastle 2030: Community Strategic Plan (CSP) was prepared following extensive community engagement and identifies overarching strategies that Council, other levels of government, community and private sectors will need to implement to achieve the vision of a *smart, liveable and sustainable city*.

The preparation of the Wickham Master Plan is guided by the strategic directions of the CSP, being:

1. A connected city
2. A protected and enhanced environment
3. Vibrant and activated public places
4. A caring and inclusive community
5. A liveable and distinctive built environment
6. A smart and innovative city
7. Open and collaborative leadership

Council has also prepared a range of strategies to guide its specific service areas. Wickham Master Plan will provide a means of implementing the following strategies at a local level:

- Local Planning Strategy (2015)
- Parkland and Recreation Strategy (2014)
- Citywide Transport Strategy (2014)
- Cultural Strategy (2015)
- Social Strategy (2015)
- Newcastle Economic Development Strategy (2015)
- Access and Inclusion Plan (2016)
- Newcastle Environmental Management Strategy (2013)
- Newcastle City-wide Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan (2012)

Wickham Urban Village

The Wickham Urban Village concept was introduced two decades ago in 1996, through a document produced as part of the Building Better Cities Program titled 'Wickham Urban Village, A Concept Strategy & Study'.

The report outlined numerous strategies, many of which have been achieved including:

- Introducing a mixed use zoning
- Community housing opportunities in Wickham School and other government sites
- Listing of heritage items
- Development of pocket parks (partly implemented but not maintained)
- Children's playground (located in Wickham park but not accessible to village area)
- Community gardens
- Clear design guidelines for redevelopment (prepared in 2006 but needing revision)

Other strategies not yet implemented may still be relevant and worth considering further:

- Reducing parking requirements within residential developments
- Connecting cycleways through Wickham
- Light rail to replace heavy rail and extend from Wickham to other parts of the city
- Intensive tree planting along the railway line
- Landscaping and traffic calming
- Community events in Wickham Park

The Wickham Urban Village urban design guidelines were adopted by Council in 2006 and implemented through a locality specific DCP for Wickham.

In 2006 the NSW State Government released a city centre plan called 'Revitalising Newcastle'. This plan resulted in a new LEP for the Newcastle City Centre in 2008. Part of the LEP included specific maps for the redevelopment of Wickham. These maps introduced a range of measures for achieving new laneways and a future transport corridor along the Bullock Island Railway route, as well as new building heights that were substantially higher than previously identified.

Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy (NURS) introduced by the NSW state government in 2012 and updated in 2014 advocates a strategic shift of the commercial core of the city centre to Newcastle West. This together with the development of a new heavy rail terminus and potential interchange with light rail and buses along the southern edge of the project area provides increased opportunities for a transport orientated development precinct.

The NURS identified that further work is required to identify appropriate building envelopes, land use and public domain planning to develop special area controls for both the 'Wickham railway edge' and 'Wickham village'.

The outcomes of the Wickham Master Plan project will result in amendments to both the Newcastle LEP 2012; and Newcastle DCP 2012, as well as possible inclusions for Council's Section 94 developer contribution plan and proposed capital works program.

Existing urban structure

Streets

The urban structure of the Wickham project area is characterised by a network of interconnecting streets and laneways, which is however isolated from surrounding areas due to a number of physical barriers and poor quality environments for pedestrians. Physical barriers include absence of public access through lands formerly part of the Bullock Island railway corridor to the west, the heavy railway corridor to the south (particularly since the removal of the Railway Street level crossing). For pedestrians, Hannell Street is also a barrier due the high volume of traffic it carries.

Whilst most streets within the project area have footpaths on at least one side of the street, many are too narrow to adequately cater for traffic, on-street car parking, footpaths, street trees and power poles. These competing elements reduce pedestrian accessibility which is further impaired by driveway crossovers. The provision of adequate pedestrian environments and universal accessibility should be given priority, with traffic and parking being allocated according to street width and capacity.

Streets in non-residential areas are characterised by large expanses of walls, fencing, loading areas and garage doors. This results in a lack of natural surveillance and a poor pedestrian environment.



Map 4 – Streets



Photo 1: Hannell Street is a major arterial road



Photo 2: Throsby Street is lacking in landscaping street trees or pedestrian amenity



Photo 3: Bishopsgate Street one way traffic increases parking capacity of narrow street



Photo 4: Charles Street will experience increased traffic when transport interchange is operating



Photo 5: Dickson Street is very narrow and acts as a shareway for vehicles and pedestrians



Photo 6: Lindus Street is wide providing opportunities for public domain improvements



Photo 7: Station Street will be narrowed to allow for the transport interchange



Photo 8: Holland Street future extension would provide a link to Wickham Park



Photo 9: Railway Lane requires widening to function as a street when land redevelops



Photo 10: Street trees improve streetscape amenity in part of Union Street



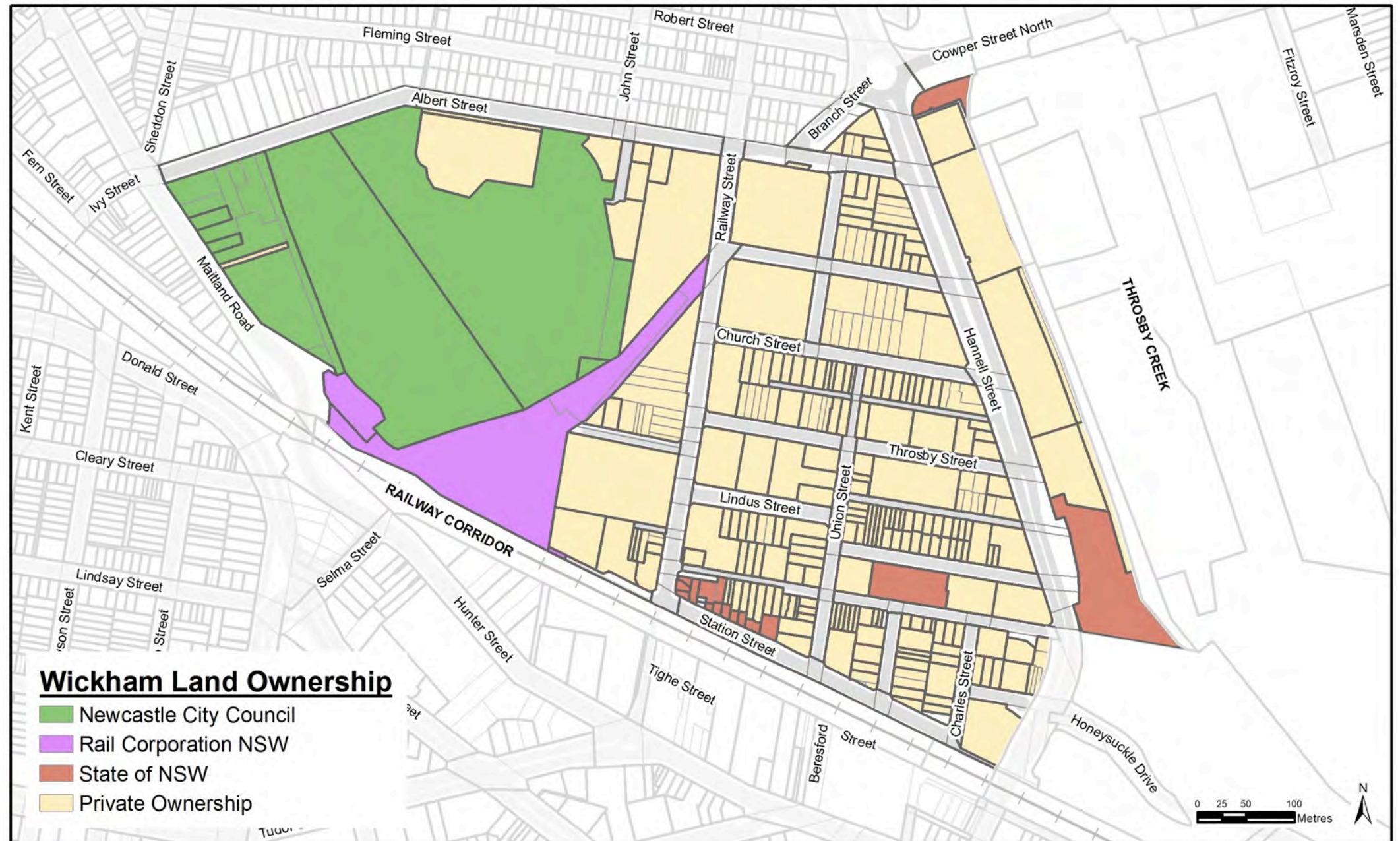
Photo 11: Part of Union Street is narrow and lacks natural surveillance



Photo 12: Rear laneway access between Throsby and Church Street provide opportunities

Subdivision patterns

The division of land within Wickham and pattern of ownership is reflected in the historical pattern of development and redevelopment. This resulted in contrasting groupings of larger land parcels and others of small narrow lots. In some parts, groups of smaller allotments are under common ownership due to historical redevelopment from workers cottages or terraces into industrial uses.



Map 5 – land ownership

Building typology

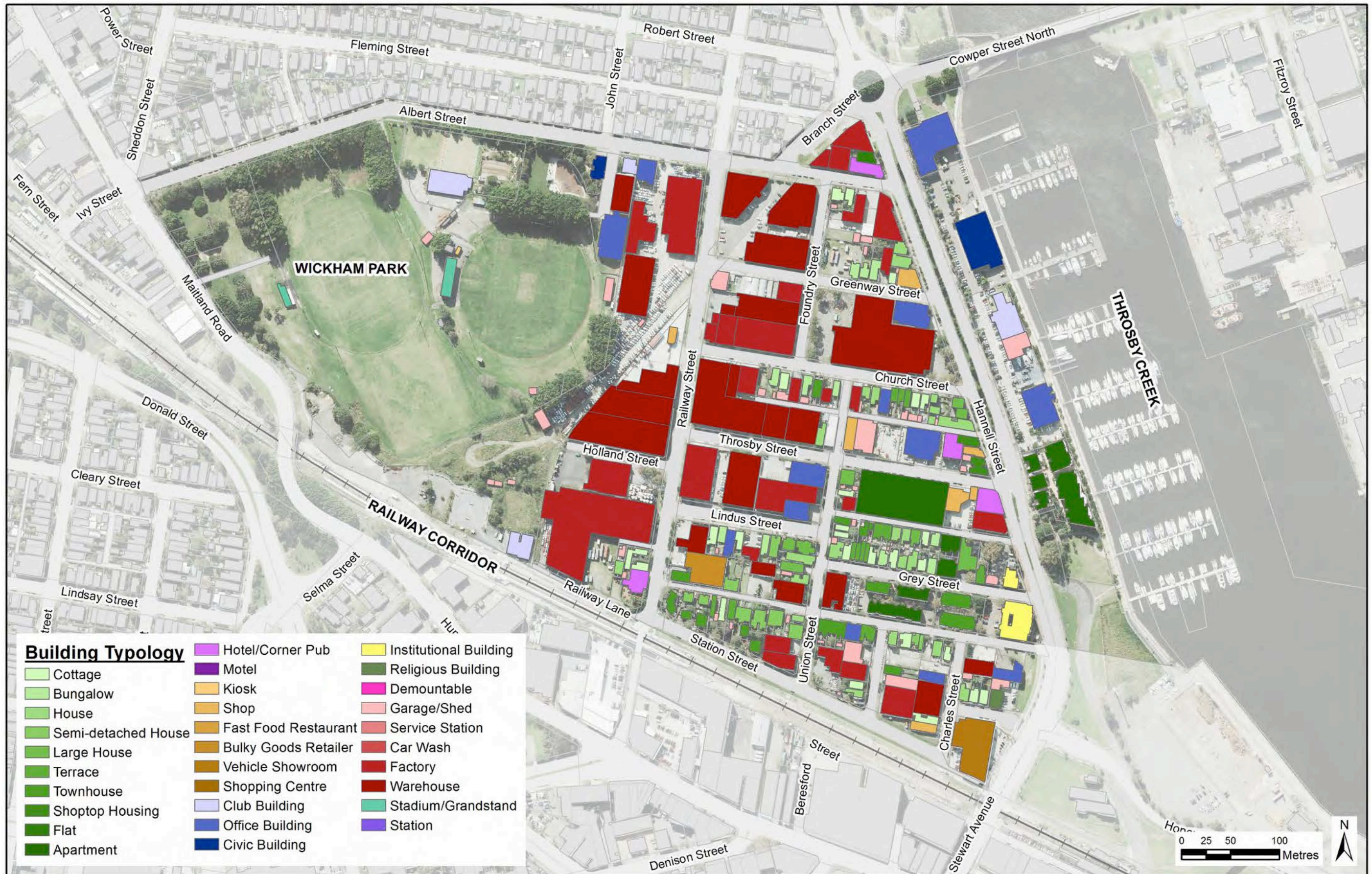
The project area consists of an eclectic mix of building typologies, mostly reflective of their historic origins. The predominant building types are workers cottages and larger industrial sheds. These are interspersed with terrace housing, warehouses, workshops, and corner pubs. Other building types introduced in the area since the mid 1990's include town houses, residential apartment buildings, motor vehicle showrooms and other commercial buildings.



Photo 1: Part of Throsby Street characterised by gabled industrial buildings



Photo 2 - Emerging industries quarter could evolve from existing industrial character



Map 6 – building typology



Photo 1: Terrace housing



Photo 2: Saw tooth roofed sheds and warehousing



Photo 3: Wickham School of Arts is a fine example of an institutional building



Photo 4: Albion Hotel is example of corner pub



Photo 5: Apartment buildings along Throsby Creek



Photo 6: Mixed use with apartments on top



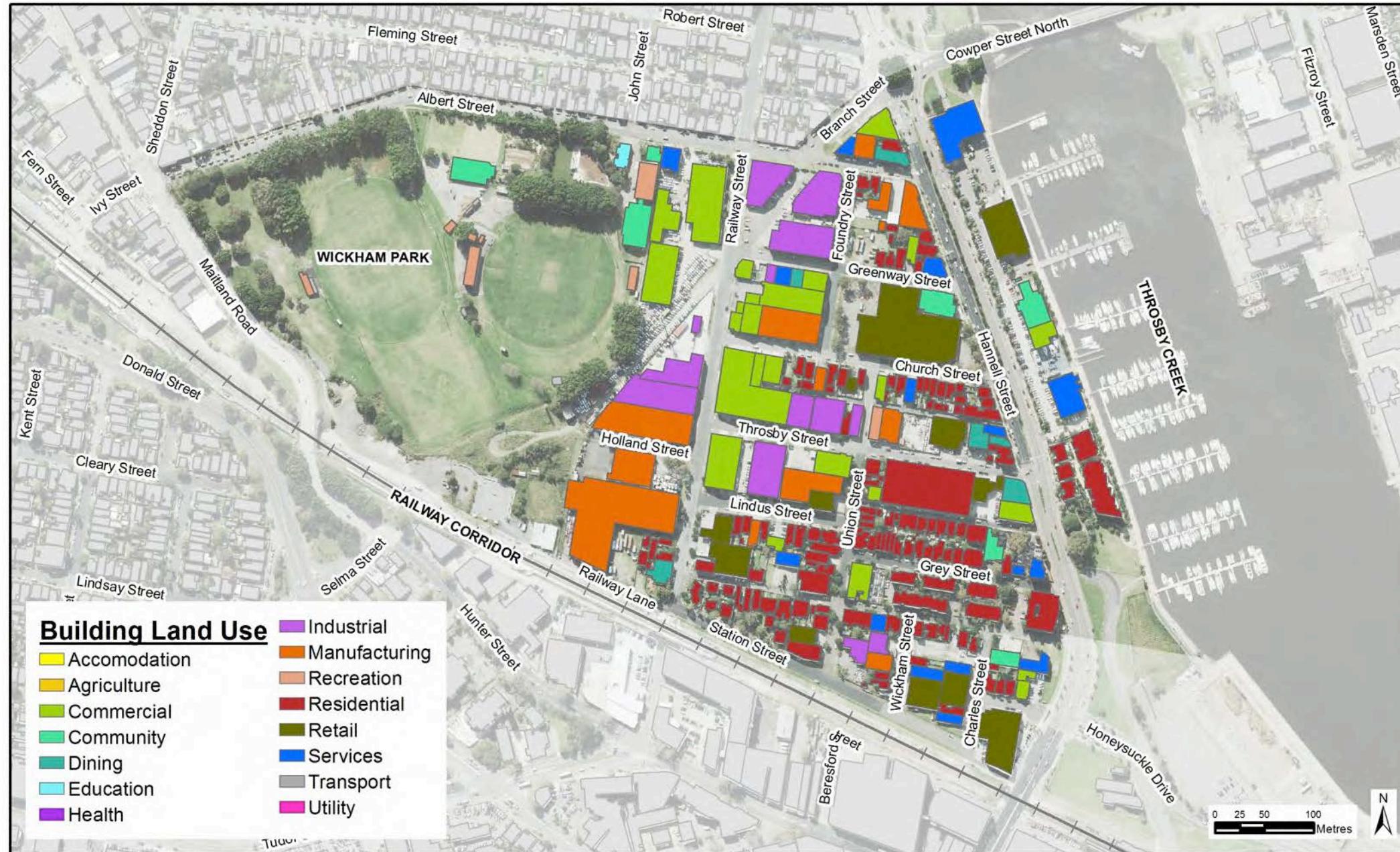
Photo 7: Former Wickham Council chambers



Photo 8: Town housing

Land uses

The eclectic character is also evident in the mix of land uses dispersed throughout the project area. In broad terms, the northern and western parts of area are predominantly employment generating uses. This includes manufacturing, vehicle repair and storage, as well as other emerging industries and studios. The southern and eastern parts of the area are more residential in character and also include commercial uses.



Map 7 – Land use

Residential density

Residential density is a way of measuring the number of dwellings on an area of land. This is usually conveyed as, the number of dwellings per hectare (note: 1ha = 10,000sqm).

Different categories of residential density are used for measuring density at different scales.

Site density only measures the residential component on land parcels. Net residential density is a measure of the street block and includes land and local roads. Gross residential density measures density on a neighbourhood level and includes land, local roads plus local non-residential land uses such as parks and schools.

Site density is the most relevant measure for comparing the intensity of uses for different development types. It is calculated by dividing the number of dwellings on a land parcel by the area (in hectares) of the land.

For example, one dwelling house located on a parcel of land that is 450 square metres has a site density as follows:

Site density = (1 dwelling/450sqm) X 10,000sqm = 22.2 dwellings per hectare.

Site densities within Wickham are shown on Map 8. Whilst residential densities are often attributed to buildings height, this is not always the case, as demonstrated by the examples below:

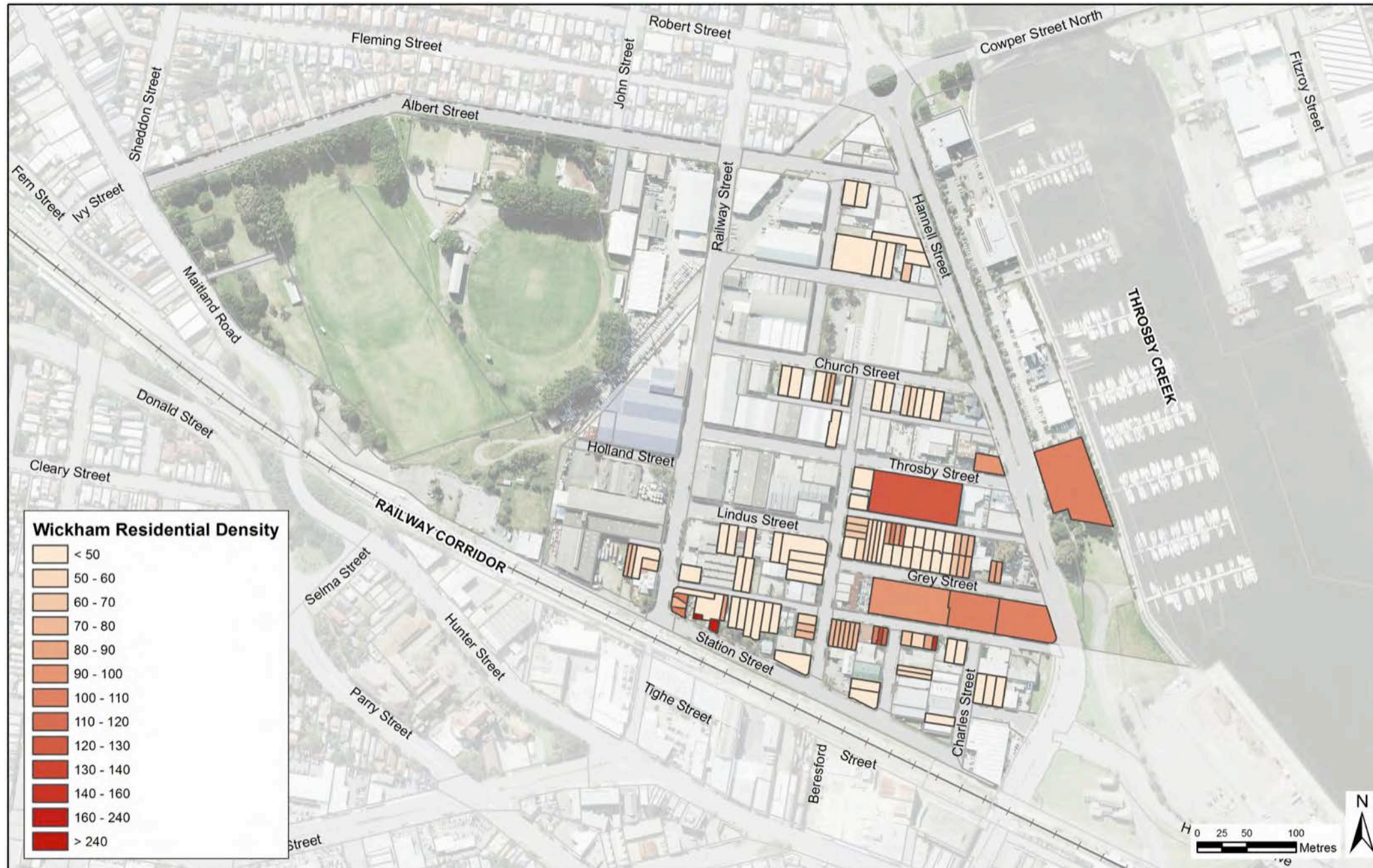
1. Small lots with cottages and terrace housing in Dickson and Grey streets have a site density of up to 70 dwellings per hectare (or a net density of 43 dwellings per hectare, if taking the correlated streets into account).
2. The new 3 storey mixed use development on 18 Throsby Street has a site density of approximately 99 dwellings per hectare.
3. The 3 storey residential apartment buildings between Grey and Bishopsgate Streets have a site density of approximately 97 dwellings per hectare.
4. The 3 and 4 storey apartment buildings on the eastern side of Hannell Street have a site density of approximately 100 dwellings per hectare.
5. The Terrace housing on the corner of Bishopsgate and Union streets have a site density of approximately 77 dwellings per hectare.
6. The Terrace housing on the corner of Bishopsgate and Wickham streets have a site density of approximately 116 dwellings per hectare, these are located on lots of 85sqm (5m X 17m), which are possibly some of the smallest in the city.

Density is impacted by many factors including:

1. Portion of development used for residential dwellings
2. Size of the dwelling
3. Car parking requirements
4. Landscaping, open space and building setbacks
5. Number of floors containing dwellings

The key in achieving vibrant urban neighbourhoods is to achieve the right balance between high residential density and amenity.

Note: Density is often controlled through Floor Space Ratio (FSR) which is also a means of controlling building form.



Map 8 – Residential Density

Influences and trends

Urban renewal

The NSW government and Council's continued commitment to urban renewal of the Newcastle City Centre provides new opportunities and challenges for Wickham, including:

1. The strategic shift of the commercial core of the city centre to Newcastle West, as identified within the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy (NURS).
2. The development of a new heavy rail terminus and potential interchange with light rail and buses, within Wickham, provides opportunities for transport orientated development, but also has potential to increase traffic and demand for daytime parking on the local street network.



Figure 3 - Artist's impression of the new Wickham Transport Interchange

Source:

http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/b2b/projects/TFN_WICKHAM_%20NEWSLETTER_JULY15_V004_web_0.pdf

Changing demographics

Demand for inner city residential apartments is predicted to continue, given the following universal trends:

1. Decreasing household size and a large proportion of people living alone or in shared household arrangements, rather than traditional families.
2. Aging population with the 'baby boomer' generation retiring but living longer, resulting in increased proportion of population choosing lower maintenance dwellings with less land.
3. Rising land values resulting in the need for increased densities to maintain housing costs at tolerable levels for market acceptance.
4. The increasing cost of fuel and travel expenses resulting in a change of focus to 'affordable living' where homes are within walking distance of public transport, employment, and/or local retail and services.

Availability of land

Past changes in land use and a lack of redevelopment in previous decades, has provided Wickham with the following advantages:

1. Availability of larger and amalgamated industrial land holdings, with buildings that have reached the end of their lifecycle.
2. Surplus railway land adjoining Wickham Park has the potential for enabling redevelopment that will improve access to the park from residential areas, increase activity and natural surveillance.
3. Considerable proportion of land not within a mine subsidence district which provides a lower development risk due to reduced site preparation and holding costs.

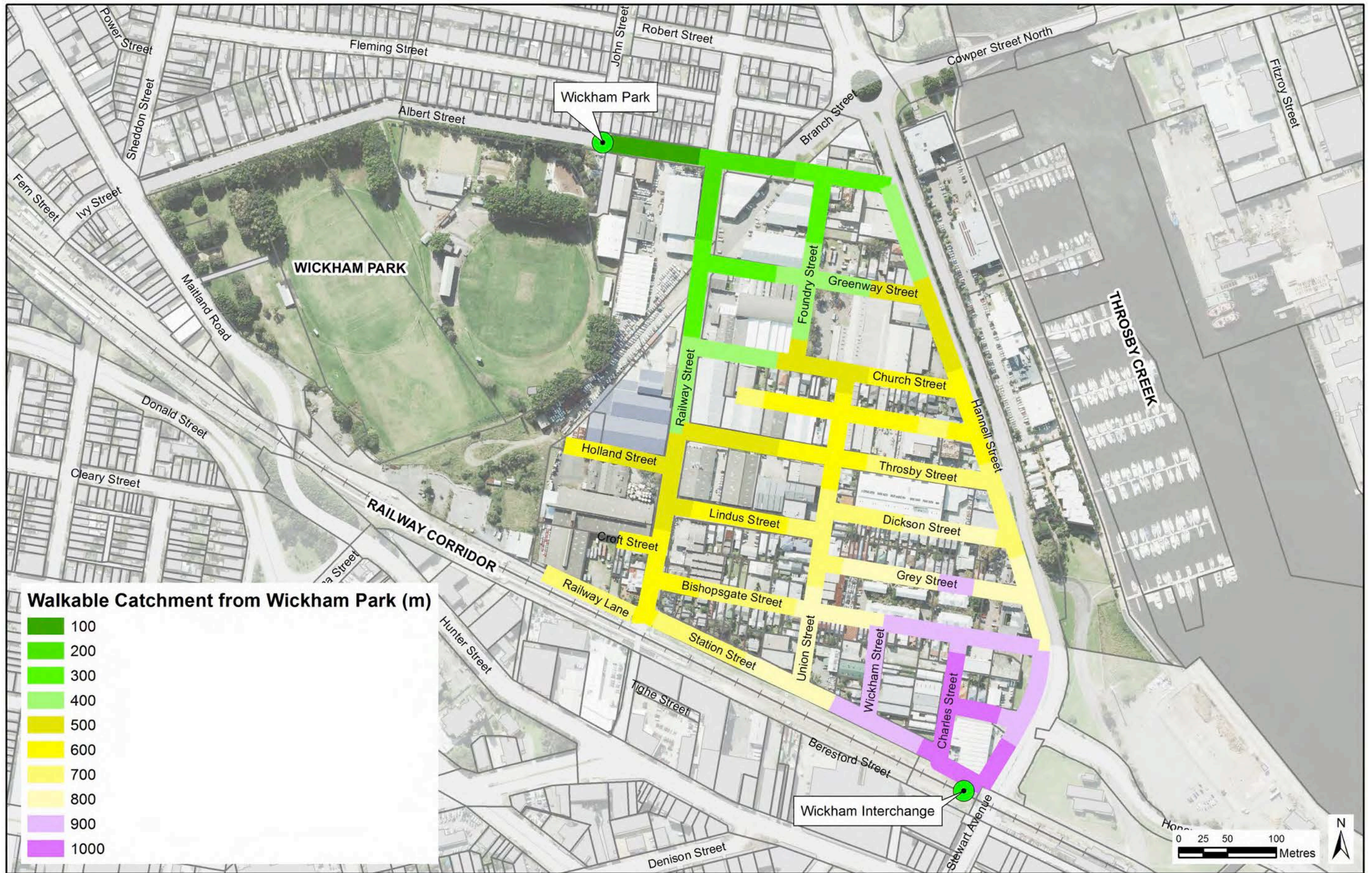
Challenges

Issues and constraints

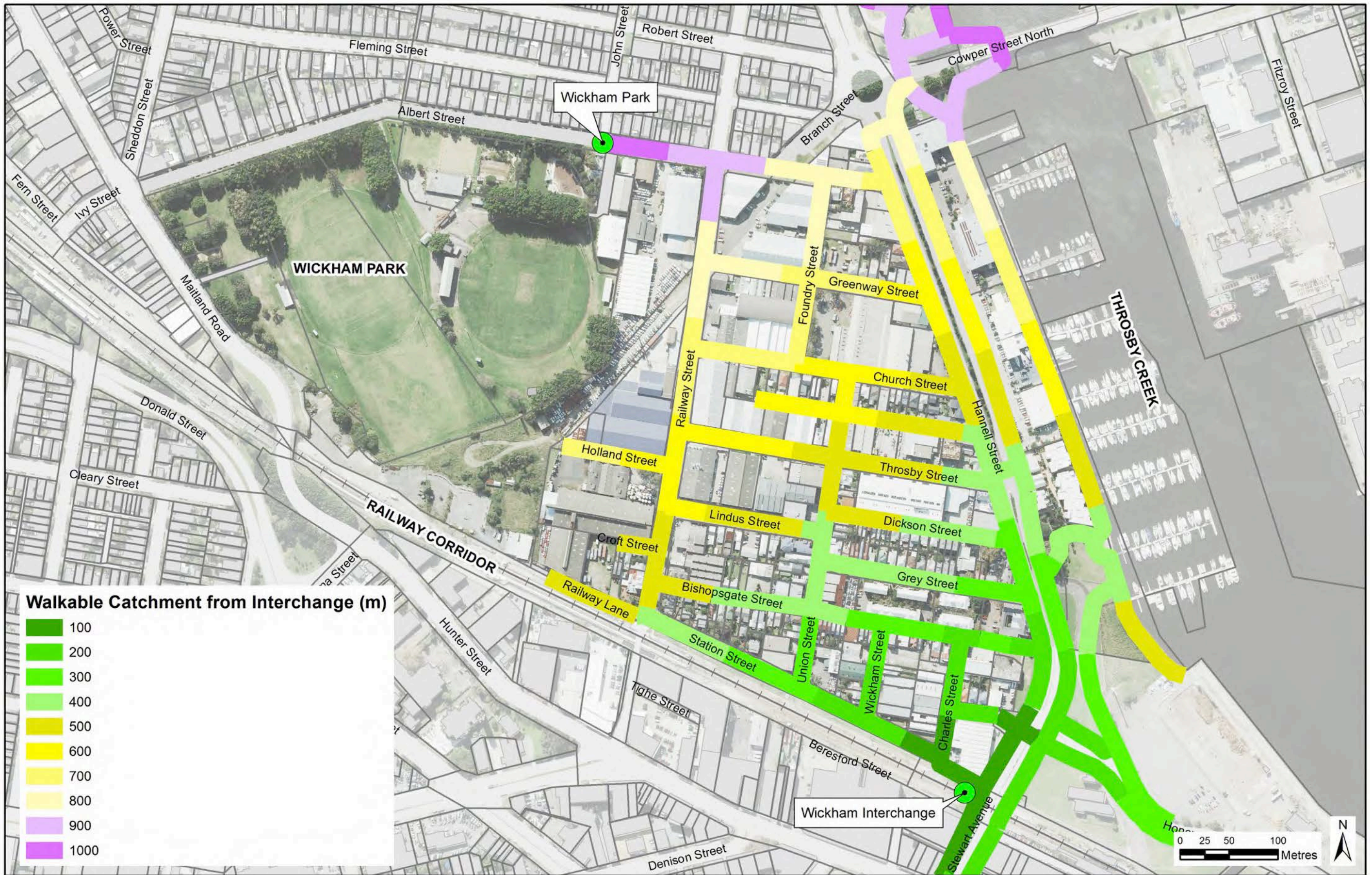
Connections and access

The following are the key issues identified:

1. The State Government owned railway lands that are part of former Bullock Island railway corridor form a physical barrier between Wickham Park and residential areas of Wickham.
2. Removal of the level crossing at the southern end of Railway Street has isolated Wickham from Newcastle West. Although opportunities for reinstating vehicle access are not possible, it is vital that pedestrian accessibility is restored as part of the construction of the new interchange.
3. Hannell Street is a major barrier to connectivity to Throsby Creek (harbour), due to the high levels of traffic, split lanes and limited signalised pedestrian crossing. Hannell Street also has poor amenity for cycling, due to the lack of crossings and off-street routes through Wickham.
4. Inadequate footpaths throughout Wickham due to narrow road reserves that attempt to accommodate two lanes of traffic, two car parking lanes, street trees, power lines and footpaths.
5. Potential conflict between traffic generated by the rail interchange and local users.



Map 9 – Walkable catchment to future rail interchange



Map 10 – Walkable catchment to Wickham Park

Safety and amenity

The following are the key issues identified:

1. Excessive vehicular speeds along local streets
2. Poor amenity of the public domain for pedestrians
3. Lack of natural surveillance of laneways
4. Lack of natural surveillance of Wickham Park



Map 11 – Safety and Amenity



Photo 1: Evidence of homelessness at edge of Wickham Park



Photo 2: Parts of Wickham Park are isolated and lack natural surveillance



Photo 3: Safety and Amenity - improved where buildings overlook public areas

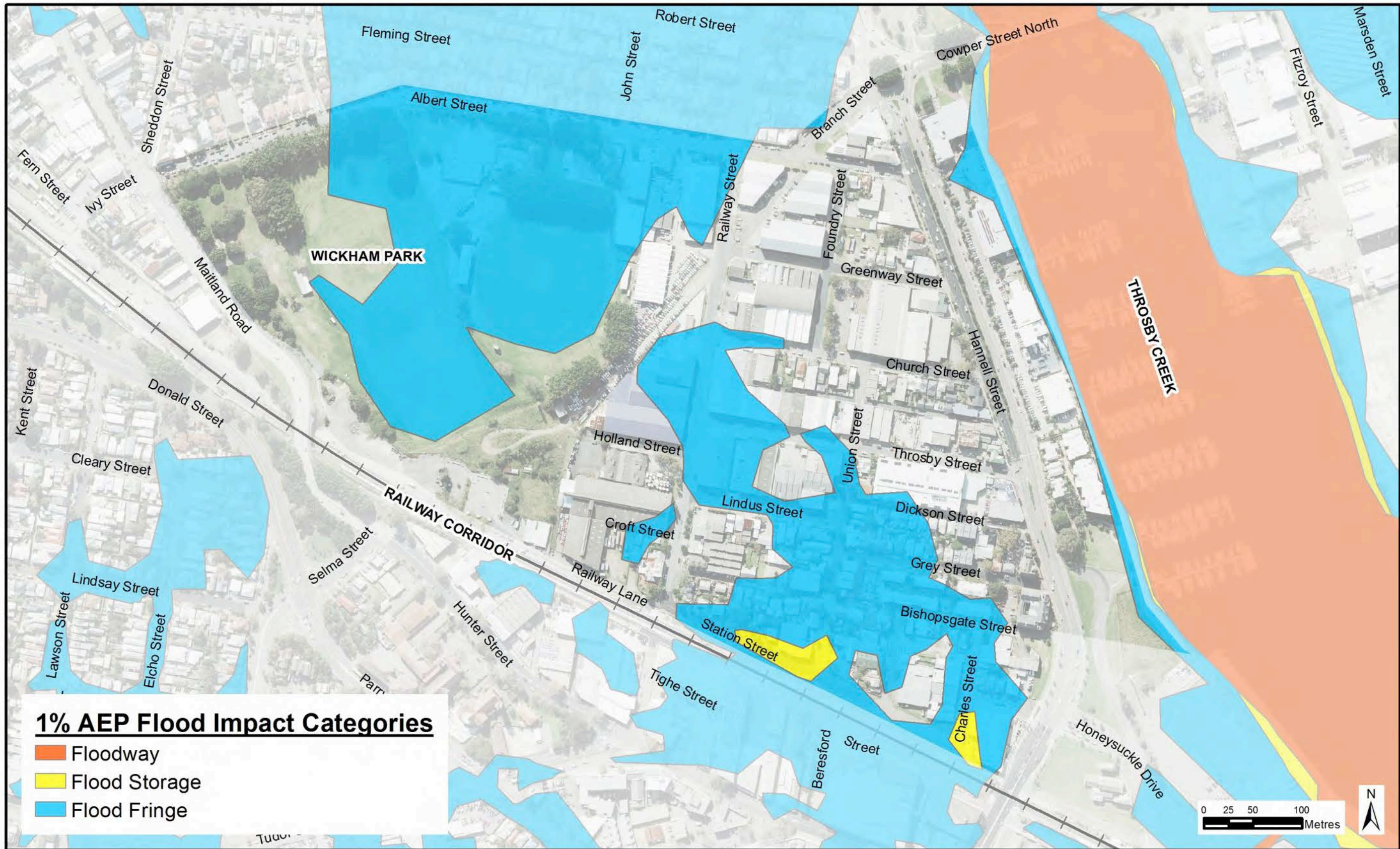


Photo 4: Rear laneway lacks through access and natural surveillance

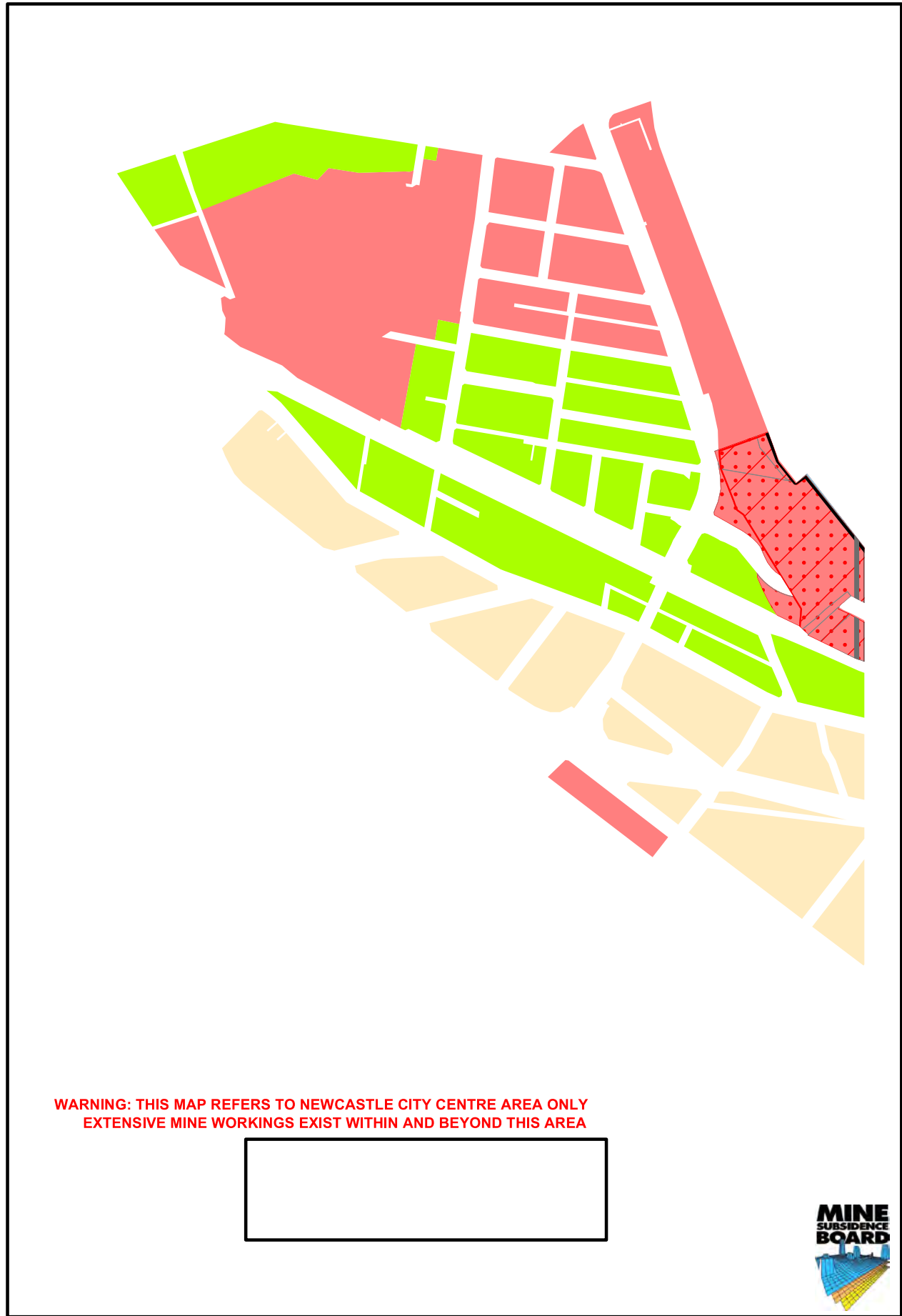
Physical attributes

The following are the key issues identified:

1. Wickham is located on Throsby Creek and is mostly within 3m AHD (i.e. 3m above sea level). The Newcastle Flood Plain plan identifies Wickham being located within a flood fringe area within a 1% flood event within the Hunter River. While this does not exclude the land from redevelopment, it does pose requirements for minimum floor heights of habitable areas and for underground parking entries.
Parts of Wickham are also identified as being low lying land with respect to tidal and groundwater influences. While the floor heights in buildings may be raised to address this issue, further studies are being carried out to determine the best approach for managing the impacts of this issue on infrastructure and services within the road reserve, especially with predicted sea level rise in the medium to long term future. The outcomes of these studies will need to be incorporated into the planning controls for the area.
2. The Mine Subsidence Board has prepared maps showing the category of risk and requirements for development. While much of the project area is not impacted by mine subsidence, other areas require assessment and potential remediation prior to redevelopment. The previous approach addressing mine subsidence risk was to restrict the number of storeys and/or building materials permitted for new development to avoid the need for remediation. Where this approach is not taken, development yields need to be high enough to offset the additional cost of remediation (grouting). Feasibility analysis is required to determine the level of development needed to warrant an increase from current levels.
3. Previous and current industrial uses may have resulted in land contamination which will require remediation prior to redevelopment. The level of remediation will generally depend upon the type of contaminants and the intended future use of the land. Generally petrochemicals or contaminants that impact on the groundwater quality have the highest cost involved. Whilst contamination can be remediated in most cases, the cost involved is likely to determine if (and for what purposes) redevelopment is likely to be feasible.



Map 12 – Flooding



Map 13 – Mine subsidence

Equity and sustainability

The following are the key issues identified:

1. Wickham lends itself to catering for the housing and lifestyle choices of a broad spectrum of the community, regardless of their economic, physical and social situation. Lifestyle choice is supported by the adaptability of the physical environment, including housing, to accommodate change over time; accessibility to a range of recreation, employment, and services without the need for car ownership.
2. Redevelopment can provide opportunity for the community to benefit from an improved public domain and accommodation of a proportion of affordable housing by partial capture of the uplift in land value.
3. While current market demands remain focused on the provision of residential development, it is imperative to maintain opportunities for economic and employment generating uses to meet future needs of the local area. Areas on the fringe of city centre, like Wickham, can provide opportunities for emerging 'smart technologies', start-up businesses, and shared work spaces. However, this hinges on the availability of affordable space and access to high-tech infrastructure.

Existing development controls

The following are the key issues identified:

1. Council's existing controls include a structure plan which attempts to impose new mid-block rear laneways. These were included in the 2006 guidelines as a means of accommodating rear access for car parking to improve street amenity and permeability across the area. Implementation of the laneways has not been realised due to the following reasons:
 - a) Unnecessary for improving access in most cases, except where connecting areas currently isolated, such as Wickham Park.
 - b) No mechanism to implement the plan other than an ad-hoc approach of negotiation at the DA stage, potentially resulting in only partial implementation.
 - c) Severance of otherwise amalgamated parcels of developable land, which restricts redevelopment opportunities. Where lanes are necessary for improving links and connectivity through development parcels, adequate compensation or incentives (such as bonuses) should be made available to achieve this.
2. The structure plan with the DCP shows an indicative future transport corridor along the former Bullock Island railway route. However this was not included in the 2006 guidelines, is not consistent with the intent of creating links to Wickham Park and would result in the abrupt severance of the urban structure.

This corridor was added to the structure plan in the later stages of implementing the Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008, in reaction to the congestion of the Stewart Avenue railway level crossing. With the termination of the heavy rail on the western side of Stewart Avenue, this is no longer relevant and this costly option is unlikely to be required or implemented.
3. For the most part, the development controls seek to minimise front building setbacks to reinforce the character of narrow enclosed urban streets and laneways. While such a character may already exist in small pockets of Wickham, it is not necessarily desirable for all new development. For example this approach appears to work for smaller scale developments of only two storeys, but results in a less than desirable amenity in larger scale developments due to overshadowing along the east-west orientated streets. Any potential for landscape elements or a comfortable pedestrian environment is also limited due to the narrow widths of the streets.

Are there any other issues or constraints that also need to be considered?

What is often described as a human scale, or a pedestrian scale of buildings actually has more to do with the ratio of the street width to the building street-wall height, hence the amount of sky that is visible and what a community may be accustomed to and their cultural backgrounds.



Map 14 – Existing Structure Plan for Wickham within Newcastle DCP

Opportunities

There are some key opportunities that could be supported through considered redevelopment within Wickham. The master plan should consider:

- Determining the envisaged future character for Wickham by acknowledging and supporting specialised precincts.
- Improved connectivity and accessibility both internally and externally, including to Wickham Park, can likely be achieved through redevelopment.
- Future development should also complement and leverage off public transport and infrastructure investment within the area.
- More tailored development provisions based upon urban structure and redevelopment opportunities.



Photo 1: Public art in Wickham Urban Village



Photo 2: Public art in Wickham Urban Village



Photo 3: Public art in Wickham Urban Village



Photo 4: Public art in Wickham Urban Village



Photo 6: Public art in Wickham Urban Village

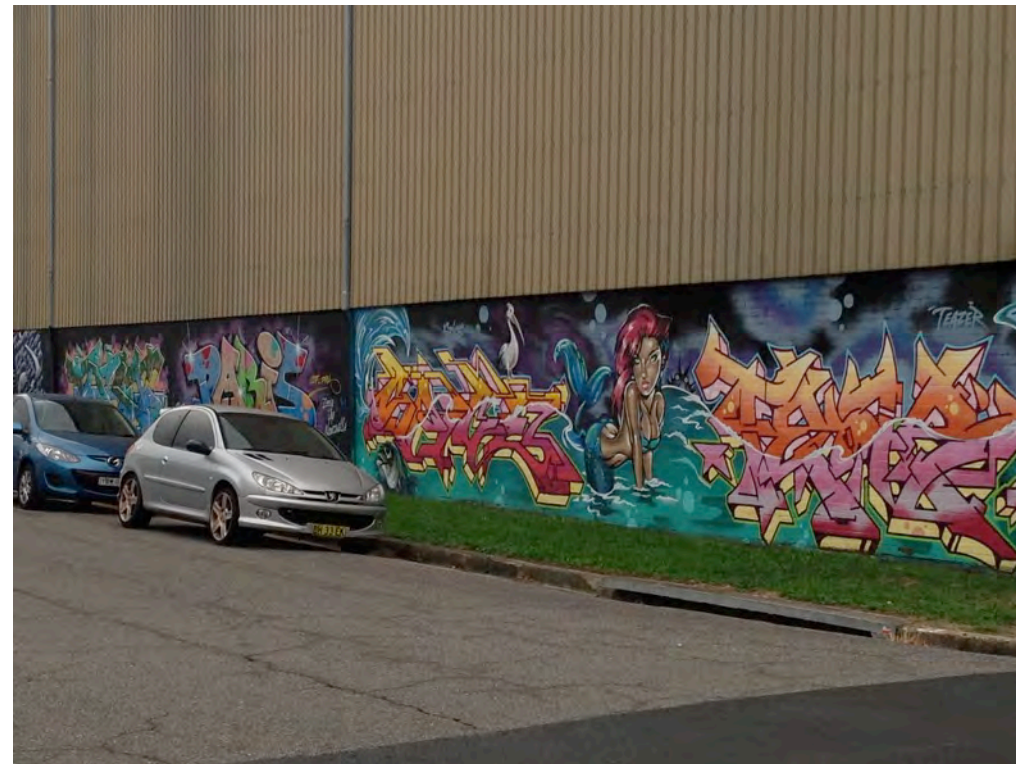


Photo 6: Public art in Wickham Urban Village

Redevelopment sites

In order to prepare a master plan for the project area, it is necessary to gain a better understanding of what elements of the urban environment are likely to remain and what is likely to change during the life of the plan (e.g. 20 years).

The redevelopment potential of land within the project area may be determined using the following criteria.

1. Elements 'unlikely to change' include:
 - a) Buildings recently built or currently being built. The lifecycle of the building is beyond the life of the plan and/or that the feasibility of redevelopment is less than the value of retention. An exception to this would be a new shed or buildings of relatively low scale and cost. These may be worth replacing with a substantial development of high enough yields to make such a proposition viable.
 - b) Buildings that are Strata titled. The likelihood of gaining support from numerous joint land owners is much more difficult to achieve than negotiating with an individual landowner. Given this impediment it is unlikely for redevelopment until demands for land exceed supply, which is beyond the life of the plan.
 - c) Heritage items, are identified as having either local (Council) or state importance for being protected. Whilst adaptive reuse that supports conservation of the building is possible, substantial redevelopment of land containing a heritage item is unlikely to be supported.
2. Land 'likely to change' includes:
 - a) Property with an area greater than 1000 square metres (made up of several lots/or single lot). Larger parcels of land in common ownership offer good opportunities for redevelopment to occur.
 - b) Vacant properties. These are the most likely parcels to be redeveloped, especially where their size is large enough to maximise the potential redevelopment outcomes.
 - c) Land with an active development consent. Whilst the future redevelopment of land is determined and may seem 'unlikely to change' from what is approved, it is not uncommon for development approvals within the city centre to lapse or be superseded for a range of reasons (most commonly financial). Regardless of the final outcome, an active consent is a clear indication of the intent to change the land from its current form.
 - d) Land with current but undetermined development application (DA). As identified above, there is a known intention for the land to be redeveloped but until works commence it is not 100% possible to determine the outcome.
3. Land that 'may change' includes:
 - a) All other land. For the most part this includes smaller parcels of land with existing buildings. Such land is usually not feasible to redevelop on its own and would require amalgamation with adjoining land, but it is not otherwise restricted from being redeveloped. Individual small parcels of land that are located next to 'unlikely to change' parcels will have very limited potential for redevelopment but may still be possible for some level of change. Increases in land value may change the development potential of these areas over time.



Map 15 – Redevelopment Potential

Connectivity and accessibility

Public transport

Wickham is serviced by various modes of public transport.

The project area is well connected by bus routes along Hannell and Albert Streets and Maitland Road. A new transport interchange is being planned by Transport for NSW (TfN) at the south eastern part of the project area. This will include a rail terminus for both the Sydney and Maitland lines, as well as connection to the proposed Newcastle light rail system that will connect to the eastern end of the city centre. The transport interchange will also have provision for a taxi-cab rank.

Whilst not currently planned, the area to the south east of the park on Hannell Street would be an ideal location for a potential ferry terminal in the long term. This would provide a direct connection between the transport interchange and new commercial centre of the city with other parts of the harbour including Stockton, Dykes Point (cruise ship terminal), Queens Wharf and other areas further up Throsby Creek.

What is the best way to take advantage of current investment in public transport (interchange)?

Are there other opportunities to improve accessibility and connectivity?

Are there other opportunities to leverage off public transport infrastructure investment?



Map 16 – Public Transport

Traffic

The development of a new transport interchange at the south eastern edge of the area, which will result in an increase of traffic and demand for car parking. TfN commissioned a traffic study to assess the likely impacts and to identify measures that could be implemented to mitigate these impacts.

Further opportunities should be explored to ensure impacts on traffic, pedestrian safety and residential amenity of the local street network is minimised both in the immediate and longer terms.

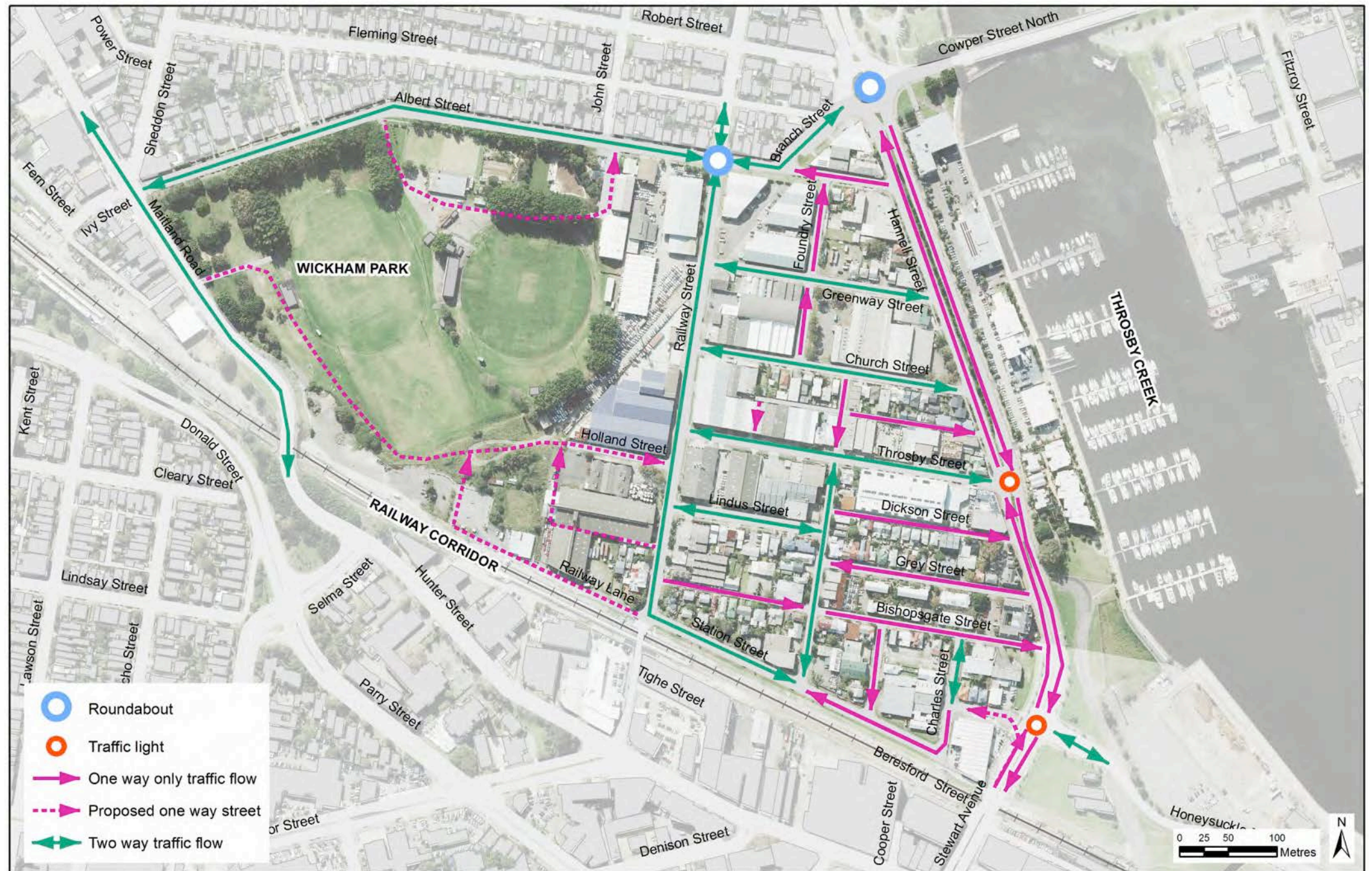
Measures to consider include:

1. Providing a street network that keeps through traffic and traffic generated by the rail terminus to the periphery of the area and limits internal streets to local traffic (i.e. generated by local residents and businesses). This may be achieved by:
 - a) Limiting access into the area through Albert, Railway, Throsby, and Bishopsgate Streets (but preferably Dunbar Street).
 - b) Focusing most traffic from Station Street (transport interchange) onto and Railway Streets and further onto Albert Street for northbound traffic; and onto Throsby Street for southbound traffic.
 - c) Limit the direction of most internal local streets to one-way to achieve traffic flows that eliminate shortcuts, and reduces the number of traffic lanes on narrow streets, to enable wider footpaths, on-street parking and dedicated cycle lanes.
2. Ensure local streets are slow, safe and accessible for pedestrians and cyclists and provide time-limited on-street car parking for local users.
3. Generally differentiate streets by their width as follows:

| Street width | 20m or greater | Between 10m and 20m | | Less than 10m | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Option A | Option B | Option A | Option B |
| Footpaths | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 @ 1m | 1 @ 1m |
| Cycle lanes | 2 | NIL | 1 | NIL | NIL |
| Parking lanes | 2 | 1 or 2 (if possible) | 1 | NIL | 1 (if possible) |
| Traffic lanes | 2 (i.e. two-way traffic) | 2 (i.e. two-way traffic) | 1 (i.e. one-way traffic) | 1 (i.e. one-way traffic) | 1 (i.e. one-way traffic) |
| Speed limit (km/hr) | 50 | 40 | 40 | 40 or less | 40 or less |

4. Provide a new one-way vehicle access from Maitland Road to link in with Holland Street via the southern edge of Wickham park. This direction would stop vehicles using it as a shortcut from Hannell Street to Maitland Road (to avoid Albert Street).
5. Extend Railway Lane to link in with the new street, but in a one-way westerly direction to enable local flow in a loop. Part of Railway Lane would need to be widened to align with the eastern end of the lane (i.e. the side boundary of the Lass O’Gowrie Hotel) with a further setback to provide pedestrian accessibility. This would enable new development parcels within disused railway lands and place a hard edge to the southern side of Wickham Park and result in improves access and security as well as possible opportunities for developing car parks.
6. Extend and widen Croft Street, which may be utilised for delivery vehicles and as an access laneway.

How to cater for increased traffic while improving pedestrian safety and residential amenity?



Map 17 – Traffic management

Car parking

The provision of on-site car parking may impact on achieving good development outcomes within the parts of Wickham containing narrow streets and laneways due to:

1. Increased locally generated traffic, which reduces pedestrian amenity.
2. Dominance of garaging along the streetscape.
3. Driveway crossovers reducing on-street car parking spaces.
4. Ground floor car parking increases building footprints due to circulation requirements, hence reducing building setbacks and landscape options.

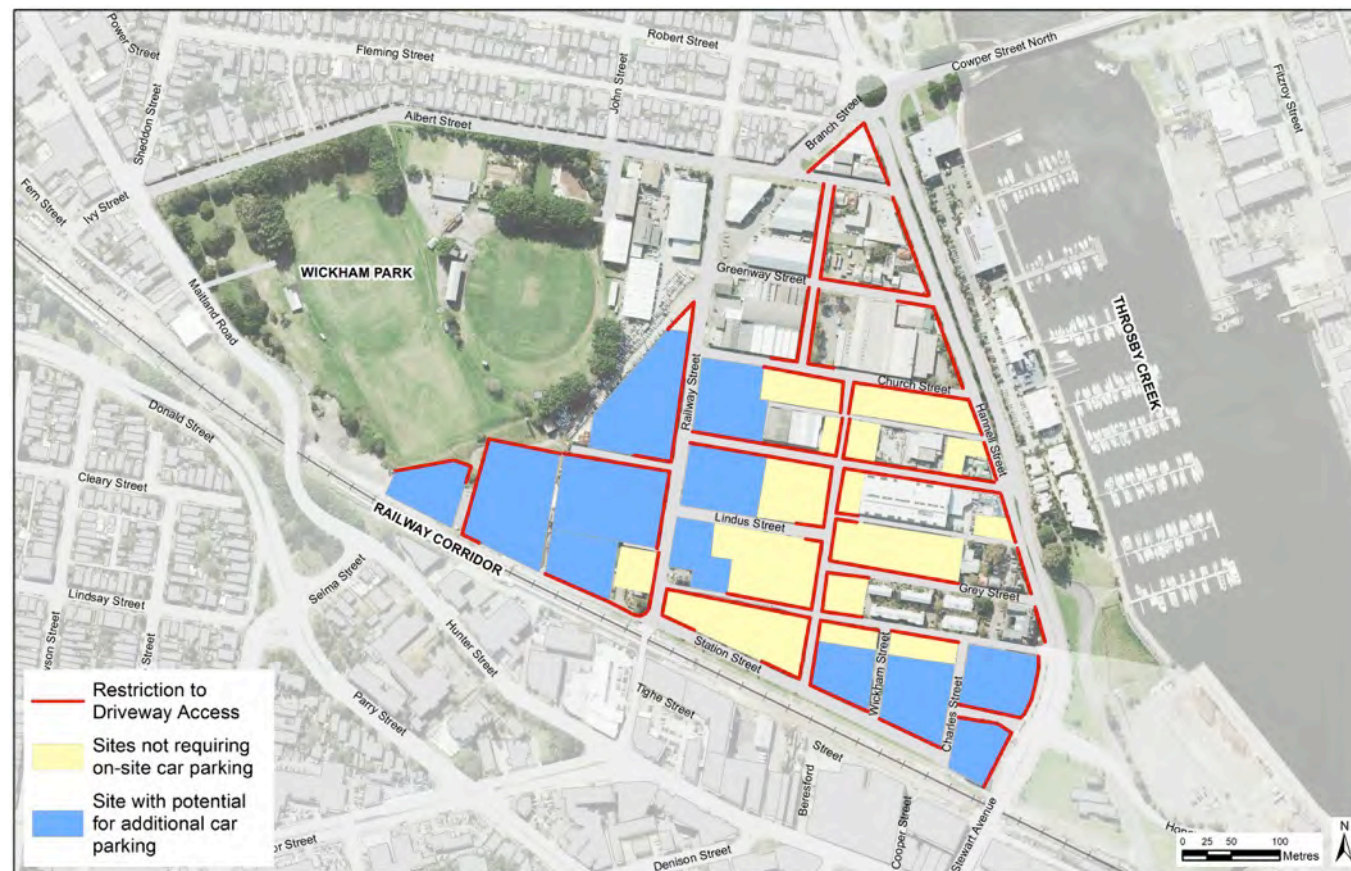
5. Car parking being excluded from FSR calculation means building bulk is proportionally higher on smaller development sites.

One option to address this may be to include allowances for no on-site car parking in certain areas. This would enable purchasers of housing within such areas to choose to purchase car parking in nearby centralised parking stations, within other developments, or not to own a private vehicle. This may be a viable and affordable option for many potential home purchasers, given the proximity to public transport and the walkability/cycleability of Newcastle.

To complement the above opportunity, incentives may be provided in other suitable areas for developments to include additional car parking surplus to the car parking required for the development. Incentives may include additional floor space or exclusion of the surplus car parking from floor space calculations.

In addition, surplus car parking could be sold, leased or managed as short term paid parking to commuters, local workforce, visitors and other users of the local area.

What options are there to balance demand for parking against other desired design outcomes?



Map 18 – Car parking options

What are the best ways to improve pedestrian and cycling safety and amenity?

Cycling

The topography of Wickham is ideal for cycling, although the existing traffic conditions detract from this. Opportunities for delivering a new off street cycleway linking Maitland Road and the foreshore, via Wickham Park will require a link along the Bullock Island railway corridor. Dedicated cycleway lanes would also be needed through the local street network. These may include Church Street and Station Street (via Railway Lane) to the Hannell Street intersections at both Throsby and Dunbar Streets respectively.



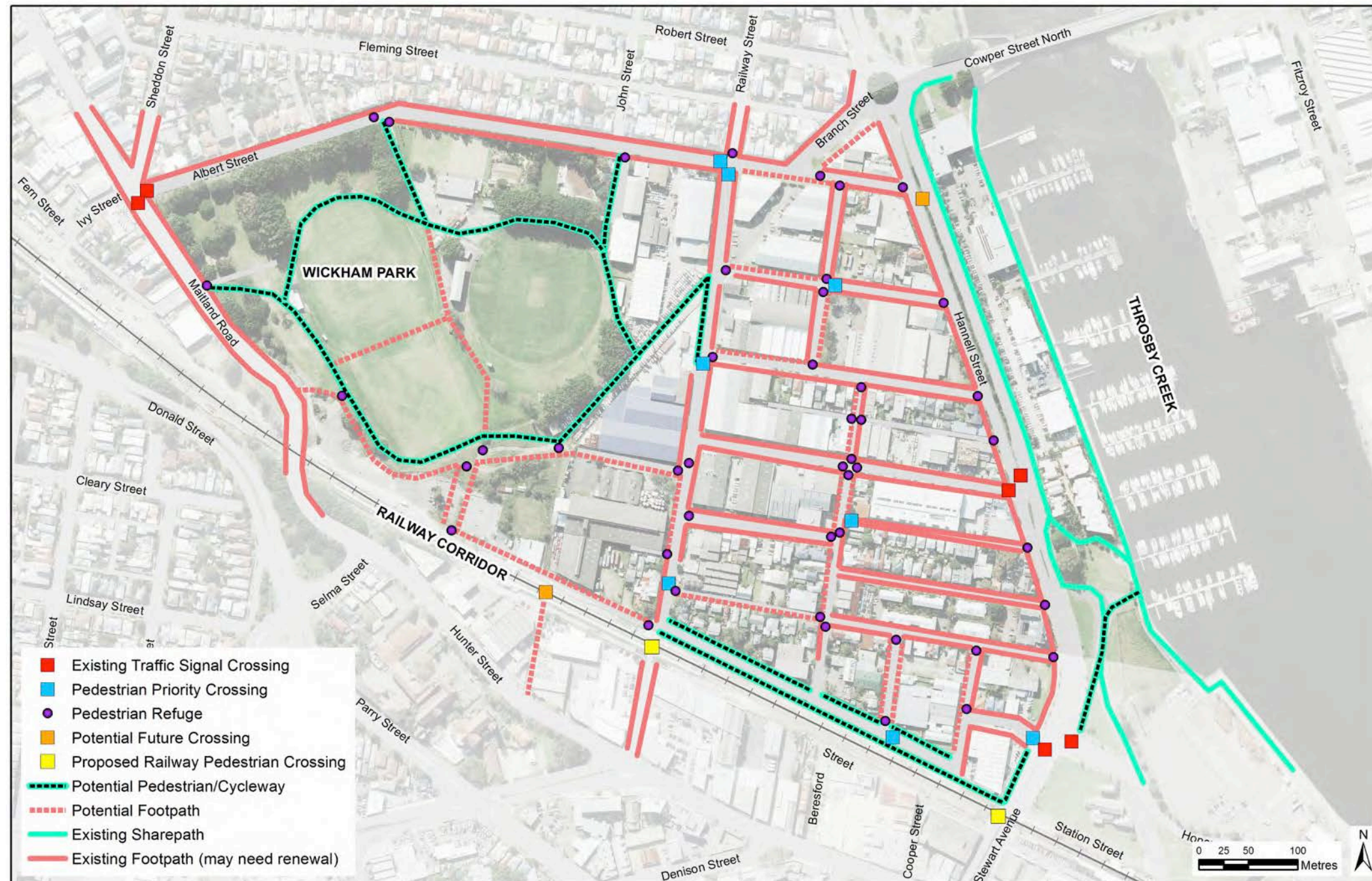
Map 19 – Cycleway connections

Pedestrian environment

Improved connectivity to Wickham Park and Newcastle West are vital to the success of implementing a new master plan.

Public domain improvements, including provision of footpaths and pedestrian crossings, street trees and places to sit within Wickham are needed to ensure comfortable and equitable access for all users. Wide pedestrian areas, not interrupted by driveways that interact with adjoining development through use and treatment of the public private interface may be necessary.

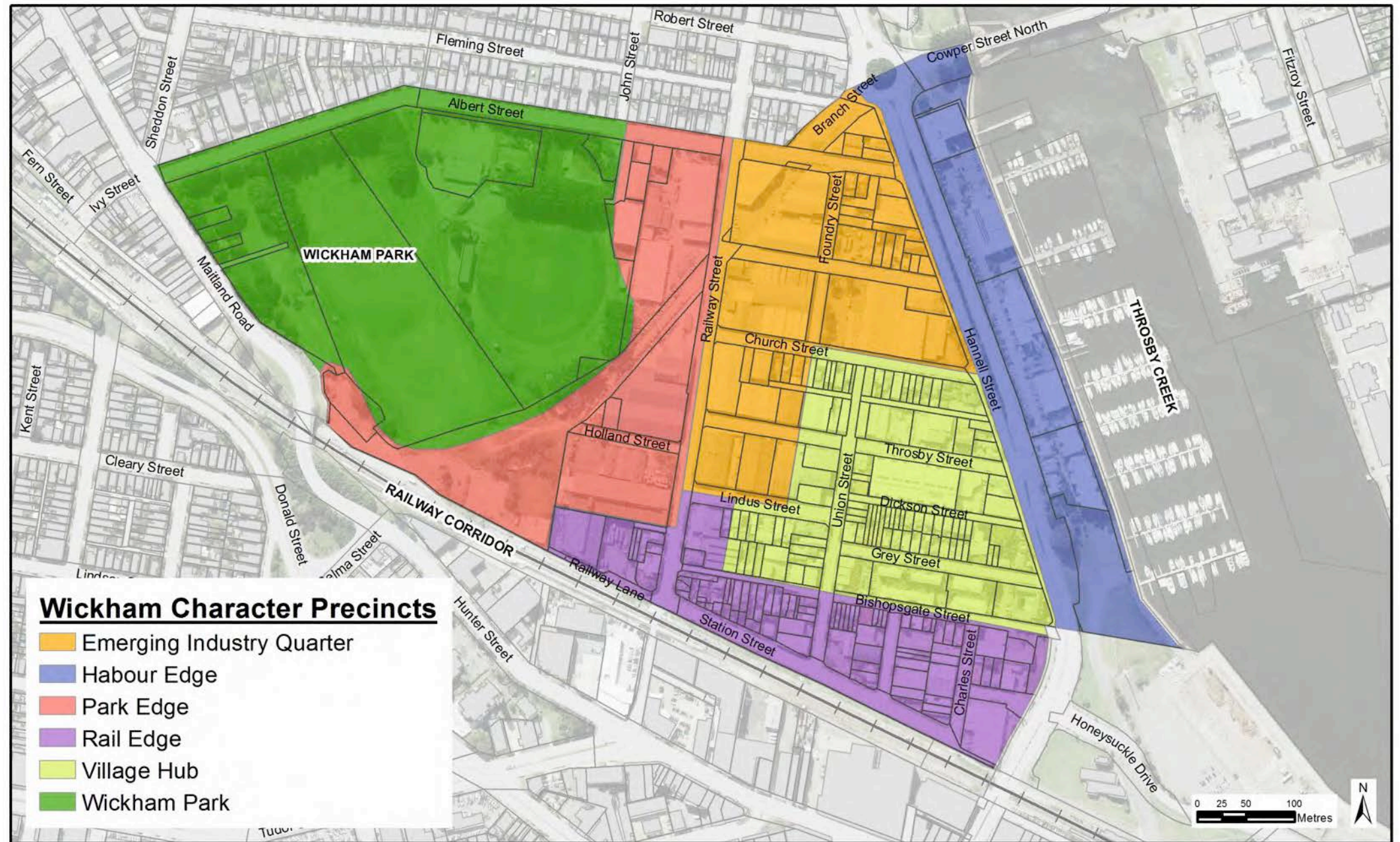
Implementation of footpath improvements should be prioritised according to connection to the most direct links to and between key destinations. This may be funded by contributions from Transport for NSW, works associated with new development, additional s94 or S94A developer contributions, and Council's ongoing works program.



Map 20 – Pedestrian accessibility

Character precincts

For the purposes of determining the redevelopment potential across Wickham, the master plan will reflect the envisaged vision for each of the distinct character precincts identified below.



Map 21 – Character precincts

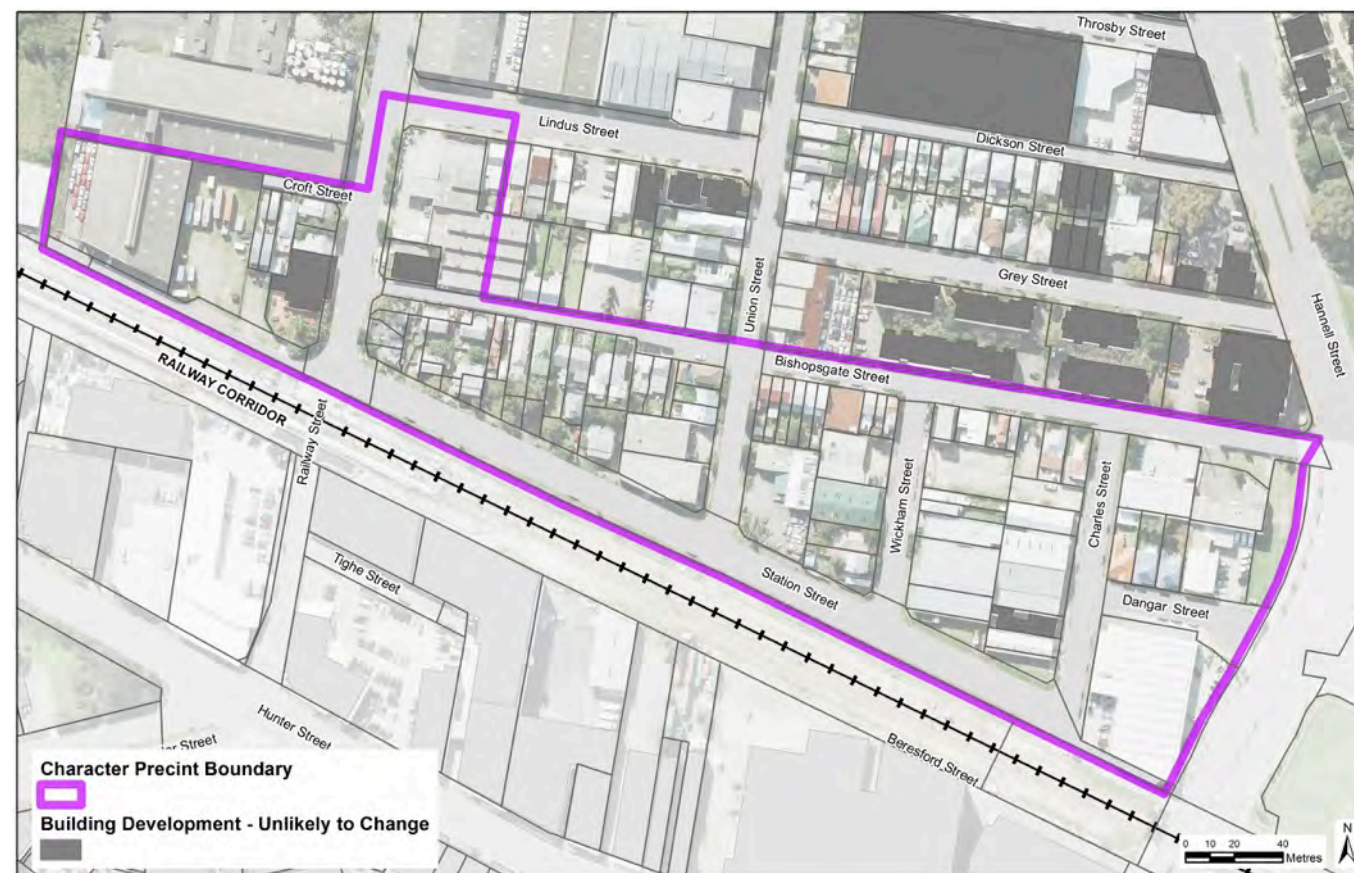
Rail edge character area

This area is characterised by a mix of low density residential development and smaller scale industrial buildings. Much of the building stock is of an age and condition that makes redevelopment a feasible option. This area has experienced a recent increase in development applications and enquiries. The area adjoins the new rail interchange and has the potential to form a transition from the emerging commercial centre in Newcastle West and the areas to the north.

The rail edge character area has potential to accommodate larger scale mixed use development incorporating commercial uses at lower levels and residential apartments above. Commercial uses could be focused towards Station Street, with neighbourhood level retail located on street corners benefiting from passing pedestrian trade generated by the links through to the transport interchange. Bishopsgate Street could have a more residential focus, with buildings setback to provide landscape opportunities and maximising solar access from the north.

Given the rail corridor is located to the south of the area, and adjoining building heights in Newcastle West are 90m, there is potential for increased heights. Additional height and floor space may be provided as an incentive for development and to provide additional car parking surplus to the requirements of the uses within the development. Any additional car parking may provide supply for commuters, city employees, and the adjoining residential area to the north.

A proportion of the area is currently managed as low density social housing. Redevelopment of this land could provide a mix of affordable housing in exchange for an increase in overall yields.



Map 22 – Rail edge character area

Village hub – commercial and residential

This area predominantly consists of residential uses along narrow streets. Throsby Street contains some mixed use developments with minor retail uses at the street level and residential above. These developments are mostly new or currently under construction.

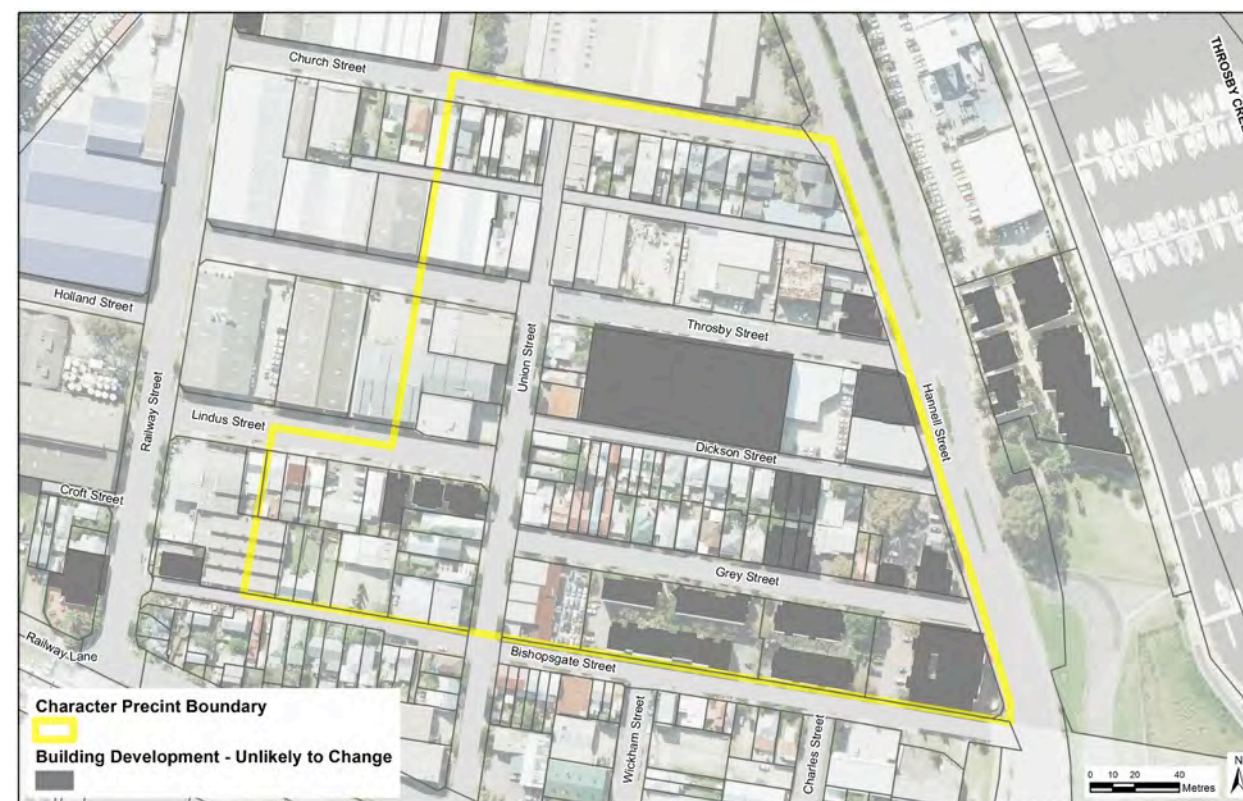
For the most part the opportunities to develop Throsby Street into a quasi-main street, as envisaged in Council's previous guidelines, have not been realised with the built outcomes along Throsby (between Union and Hannell Streets) featuring a dominance of driveways and garaging, blank walls and limited pedestrian areas, absence of landscaping or streetscape amenity.

Given the shift in focus for Wickham toward the new transport interchange and beyond to Newcastle West, it may be opportunistic to provide greater focus on improving the public domain and future redevelopment opportunities along Union Street, which could become the spine for local pedestrian access feeding into the predominantly residential streets of Wickham. Union Street has a north-south orientation, which is preferable for more vibrant commercial activity as it does not result in one side of the street being in constant shade during winter.

Areas to the east of Union Street have limited opportunity for any substantial redevelopment, however, development on Union Street could provide an active pedestrian interface within a mix of predominantly residential building types.

Retail and commercial activity may be focused in concentrated clusters but with buildings setback to allow for landscaping, and nodes for community activity and gathering.

Provision of on-site car parking may be kept to a minimum with driveway access restricted. Car parking could be provided in either centralised locations on the periphery of this area or purchased (or leased) from other developments as a separate tradable commodity to residential dwellings.



Map 23 – Village hub character area

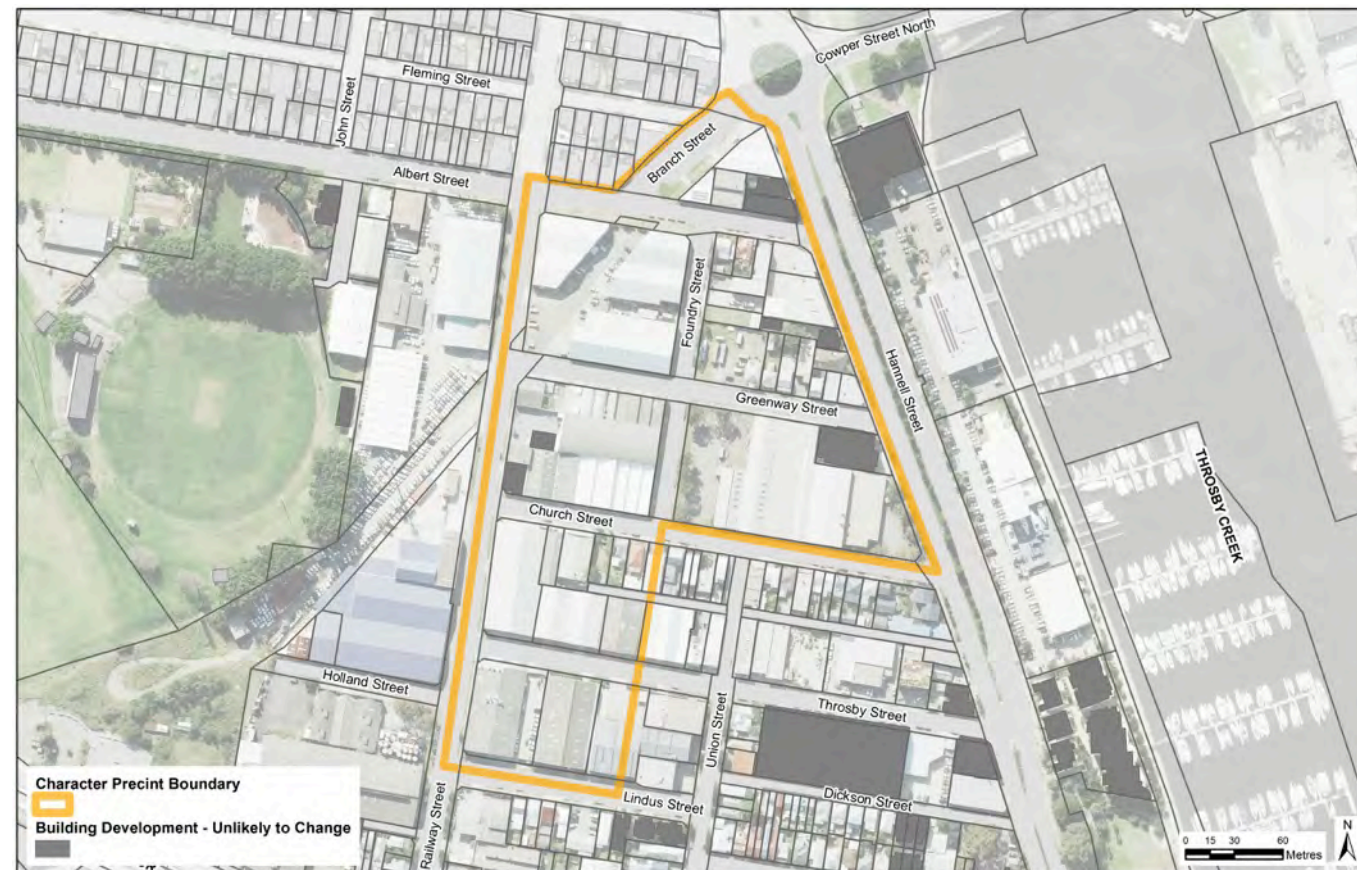
Emerging industries quarter – mixed use commercial and residential

This area is currently characterised by predominantly larger land parcels containing industrial or warehouse type uses. This area provides for a range of employment and business opportunities including start-up business that benefit from their proximity to the city, availability of non-premium and hence affordable work space.

Redevelopment within this area allows for larger scale development than the ‘village hub’ area due to the availability of larger development sites, and wider streets. However it is important for new development to provide for a mix of non-residential uses that enable business and employment opportunities to thrive. Economic opportunities are likely to continue in service industries, distribution centres, and small scale niche manufacturing, including growth in smart technologies, research and development.

Provision of technological infrastructure and piloting of ‘smart city’ initiatives within proximity to public transport, residential and lifestyle options could make Wickham an ideal location for emerging technological and creative industries, characterised by flexible work places that enable collaboration and resource sharing.

To ensure the feasibility of redevelopment within this area, additional scale is likely to be required to offset the additional costs of remediating mine subsidence, potential contamination, and to address flooding. This would further resolve potential land use conflict by enabling adequate vertical separation of uses, resulting in a more vibrant mixed use area.



Map 24 – Emerging industries quarter character area

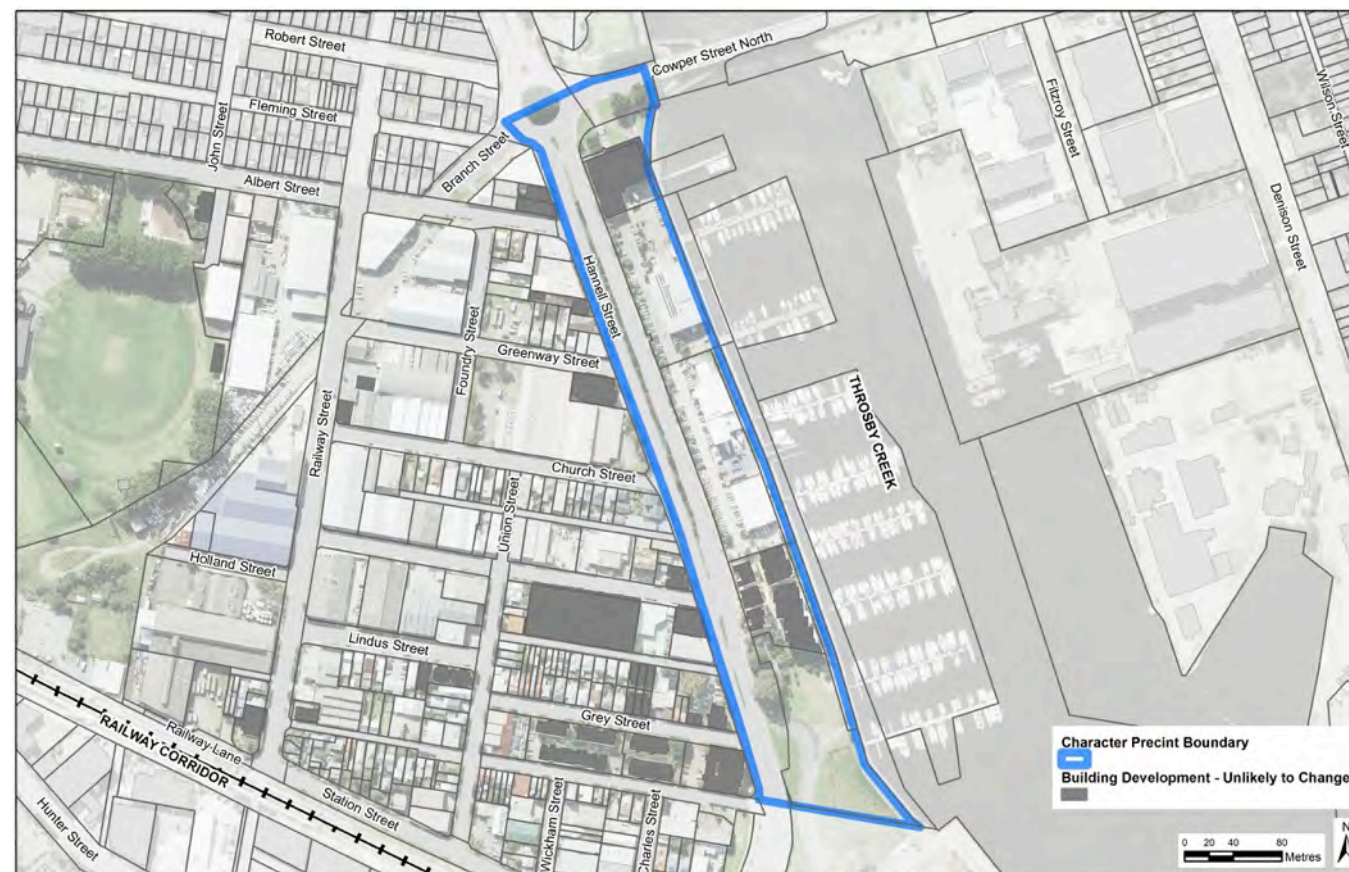
Harbour edge – tourism and recreation uses, social services, commercial, and residential

This area is the least likely to experience redevelopment in the short (5 to 10 year) to medium (10 to 15 year) terms given both the current intensity and condition of the built environment are relatively high in comparison to surrounding areas. However given its prime waterfront location with views of the harbour, this area may eventually intensify further. Apart from the current strata titled residential apartment development, the majority of buildings are not of substantial construction and may have redevelopment potential.

In the longer term this area is may redevelop with similar uses but of higher intensity and scale with a possible mix of additional uses such as residential apartments at upper levels, as well as hotel, serviced apartments and tourist accommodation.

With the nearby transport interchange and other opportunities arising in Honeysuckle this area is likely to become highly contested piece of real estate.

Opportunities for improvement of pedestrian accessibility to the area as well as public domain and open space embellishments particularly at the waterfront park containing the ‘Wickham tree of knowledge’. This could result in an opportunity to engage the community in how best to transform this park to reflect on Wickham’s past and to celebrate its cultural icons.



Map 25 – Harbour edge character area

List of figure/s

Park edge – commercial, residential, and parking

This area is crucial in achieving the key desired outcomes for Wickham’s urban structure. Redevelopment of this area is needed to provide connections between the urban areas of Wickham and Wickham Park and to ensure natural surveillance and activation to the south-western part of Wickham Park.

The area has opportunity for high density residential development, with components of commercial and/or retail uses and incentives for provision of car parking to cater for the shortfall in the adjoining residential area, for commuters, and larger events within Wickham Park.



Map 26 – Park edge character area

Wickham Park – sporting and community uses

Are character precincts useful for establishing a vision and guiding future outcomes for Wickham.

What other opportunities are there for strengthening the character precincts?

For example consider:

Land use mix

- Density

Built form and scale

- Building typologies
- Number of storeys
- Actual existing height
- Building footprints
- Street setbacks

Streetscape attributes

- Active commercial frontages
- Residential frontages
- Vehicle site accessibility
- Landscape setbacks/relief
- Public art

Wickham Park currently serves the needs of various codes of field sports on weekends, as well as markets and a relatively new playground off Albert Street. However the size and layout of the park is disjointed and lacks any formalised connections of the various components. Whilst a small component of car parking is provided at the back of the Croatia Club, parking during sporting events is informal and random at best.

Redevelopment provides opportunities to cater for the recreational and social needs of a range of users at a neighbourhood, local, and district level. The park would benefit from the development of a 'hard edge' along the east and south to define the area, provide natural surveillance, and decrease opportunities for undesirable activities. This could be achieved by the addition of a new access roadway and cycleway that connects from Maitland Road through to Holland Street. Such a link would provide a series of opportunities for formalised parking areas as well as pedestrian and cycle links back in and across the park.

The realignment of playing fields could result in an additional field or improved training grounds, as well as opportunities for new hard-court facilities adjoining Albert Street to the north of the park. The opening of the south-eastern corner of the park to the Bullock Island rail corridor could provide opportunities for informal recreational uses, possible location of weekend markets and park entry linking back to Wickham and the new transport interchange.

Council's draft Events Plan supports investigating the role of Wickham Park as a future event space given its potential connections to public transport infrastructure. Provision of amenities and other infrastructure to cater for events need to be included into future plans of management and/or landscape plans for this area.



Map 27 – Wickham park character area

Implementation

Incentives and controls

The Wickham Master Plan will identify the building envelopes that reflect the envisaged future character of each precinct. Whilst the design controls of residential apartments are subject to the requirements of State Environmental Planning Policy 65 (Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development), Council's controls will be prepared to guide matters such as

- Height of buildings (HOB) and Floor Space Ratio (FSR)
- Any requirements regarding land use mix, and/or residential densities
- Street edge heights and building setbacks
- Landscaping requirements, as well as treatment of the public and private domain interface
- Activation of street frontages, and restrictions to site access

The planning controls will also determine developer incentives (for additional HOB and/or FSR) in exchange for predetermined community benefits, including:

- Provision of land and/or construction of new roadway where connections are identified by the master plan. These may include:
 - Extension of Railway Lane
 - Extension of Croft Street
 - Extension of Holland Street
 - Extension of laneway between Throsby and Church Streets
 - Part of new roadway through Wickham Park
- Provision of car parking for:
 - Public car parking
 - Tradeable surplus car parking (sold or leased to nearby residents that lack onsite car parking)
 - Provision of affordable and/or social housing

What are the best incentives to realise positive outcomes for Wickham?

Future actions

Consultation and discussion

This discussion report provides the basis for engaging with stakeholders in preparation of a draft master plan. Stakeholder engagement will be undertaken by a series of workshops and online interactive maps. The following engagement activities have been planned:

- Launch of Wickham Master Plan webpage within Council's website www.ncc.nsw.gov.au in mid April 2016 to provide an overview of the project, present this discussion report and provide opportunities for community feedback through interactive maps.
- Landowner workshop in late April 2016, to confirm identification of the opportunities and challenges to Wickham, gauge feedback on potential options for improvement of the urban structure, connectivity, and public domain through redevelopment.
- Technical experts and State Government agency workshop in early May 2016, to review and legitimise the findings and options outlined within this discussion report and from landowner and community feedback. This workshop will enable refinement of options and identify areas or issues requiring further investigation or action.
- The final draft Master Plan will be placed on formal public exhibition prior endorsement by Council.

Studies and investigation

This will be identified through the stakeholder engagement process but may include matters such as:

- Testing density outcomes of potential building envelopes
- Feasibility analysis of potential constraints, and potential incentives
- Pedestrian access audit
- Traffic assessment of proposed street hierarchy

Future deliverables

This project will result in the preparation of a Master Plan for the Wickham project area. Once this plan is publicly exhibited and endorsed by Council it is envisaged that the plan will be implemented through the following mechanisms:

- Potential LEP amendments to height and floor space ratio, as well as possible local clauses or additional uses
- New place based section within Council's DCP
- Additional uses within Council's Section 94A Developer contribution plan, or provision of a new plan specific to Wickham
- Local area traffic plan
- Public domain plan
- POM for Wickham Park

Are there any other mechanisms or opportunities for improving outcomes in Wickham?