

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee**Agenda item 6.7****North Melbourne Town Hall public open space****16 May 2023****Presenter:** David Callow, Director Parks and City Greening**Purpose and background**

1. On 14 June 2022, the Future Melbourne Committee requested management undertake the below actions and report back to the Committee with any appropriate recommendations:
 - 1.1. investigate the creation of additional open space on Queensberry Street between Errol Street and Leveson Street
 - 1.2. consider opportunities to seek funding from the Transport Amenity Program (TAP) to enable the project
 - 1.3. provide advice on the naming of a section of new park or other location within North Melbourne, for Ruth and Maurie Crow.
2. There is strategic justification for creating additional open space in the area of the North Melbourne Town Hall, with Council's Open Space Strategy (2012) identifying a need for additional open space in this sub-precinct.
3. Investigations have highlighted a redesign of Queensberry Street in this location would need to incorporate a number of key elements. These include:
 - 3.1. safe and easy access for people walking to and through the site
 - 3.2. the provision of protected bike lanes along Queensberry Street as set out in the Melbourne Transport Strategy 2030
 - 3.3. maintaining existing bus and tram routes
 - 3.4. providing access for loading, including provision for Arts House, North Melbourne Town Hall
 - 3.5. understanding the impact of any changes to car parking
 - 3.6. consideration of the heritage-listed toilet located in the centre median of Queensberry Street
 - 3.7. ensuring traffic flow is safe and legible, with access maintained to adjacent laneways.

Key issues

4. Management has considered the key design elements outlined in Point 3 above and engaged with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to develop preliminary open space layouts for the site (refer Attachment 2). The layouts offer a range of open space outcomes including some which maximise the open space gain by linking to the generous central median in Errol Street.
5. All preliminary layouts require completion of traffic impact assessments and car parking studies to be able to fully assess the viability of each option. It is proposed that this work be undertaken after which the preliminary layouts will progress to a functional design stage including a further process of refinement and feedback from key stakeholders such as DTP.
6. Once confirmation of viable layouts has been determined, community engagement to determine the level of community interest and support for the viable layouts can progress.
7. This project is not on the priority list for TAP funding. Current Council priority projects in the TAP are Spencer Street Master Plan, Hawke Street Linear Park and Franklin Street Streetscape Improvements, with all likely funding allocated to these projects.
8. Ruth and Maurie Crow were central to urban movements on social justice and environmental planning from the 1930s to 1990s. Long time residents of North Melbourne, their work has had a profound impact on the neighbourhood as it is today. It is proposed that the naming of any new open space at North Melbourne Town Hall be considered when the feasibility of the project has been completed. It is noted that future naming of any park in North Melbourne must be consistent with the Geographic Names Victoria requirements. A 'Crow Place' in North Melbourne already exists which means a second location within a 5 km distance cannot also formally have the same name. However, another name or term associated with Ruth and Maurie Crow and their time or contributions in North Melbourne, or a specific location or element within a new park area which refers to the Crows, could be considered.

Recommendation from management

9. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 9.1. Notes the investigations and preliminary layout options developed to create additional public open space on Queensberry Street, North Melbourne.
 - 9.2. Directs management to engage with key parking and traffic stakeholders and progress development of the preliminary layouts to design options.
 - 9.3. Authorises community engagement on viable design options.
 - 9.4. Requests a further report on either a draft concept or any other outcome be presented to a meeting of the Future Melbourne Committee by March 2024.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 4)
2. Summary of Open Space Preliminary Layouts (Page 4 of 4)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. The report accurately identifies the legal issues in respect to the naming of roads.
2. The creation of additional public open space on Queensberry Street or Errol Street will likely require the discontinuance of affected roads under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989*. Assuming the discontinuance is approved, the former roads would then be reserved for public purposes in accordance with the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

Finance

3. All options considered will have financial implications. The viability assessment of design options, including traffic impact assessments and car parking studies, are proposed to be funded and managed under the existing Climate Adaptation Streetscapes Program (New) for Financial Year 2022–23 within the existing program budget. Following these preliminary investigations, a Council budget decision would be required to commit any further funds for any implementation.

Conflict of interest

4. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

5. In developing this proposal, no Occupational Health and Safety issues or opportunities have been identified.

Stakeholder consultation

6. Consultation has occurred with DTP on the preliminary layouts with initial feedback expressing some concerns with some of the options on implications for traffic flow and safety. Some layouts may require formal approval from DTP to proceed. No public external consultation has been undertaken to date. It is proposed consultation will occur once options have been fully investigated.

Relation to Council policy

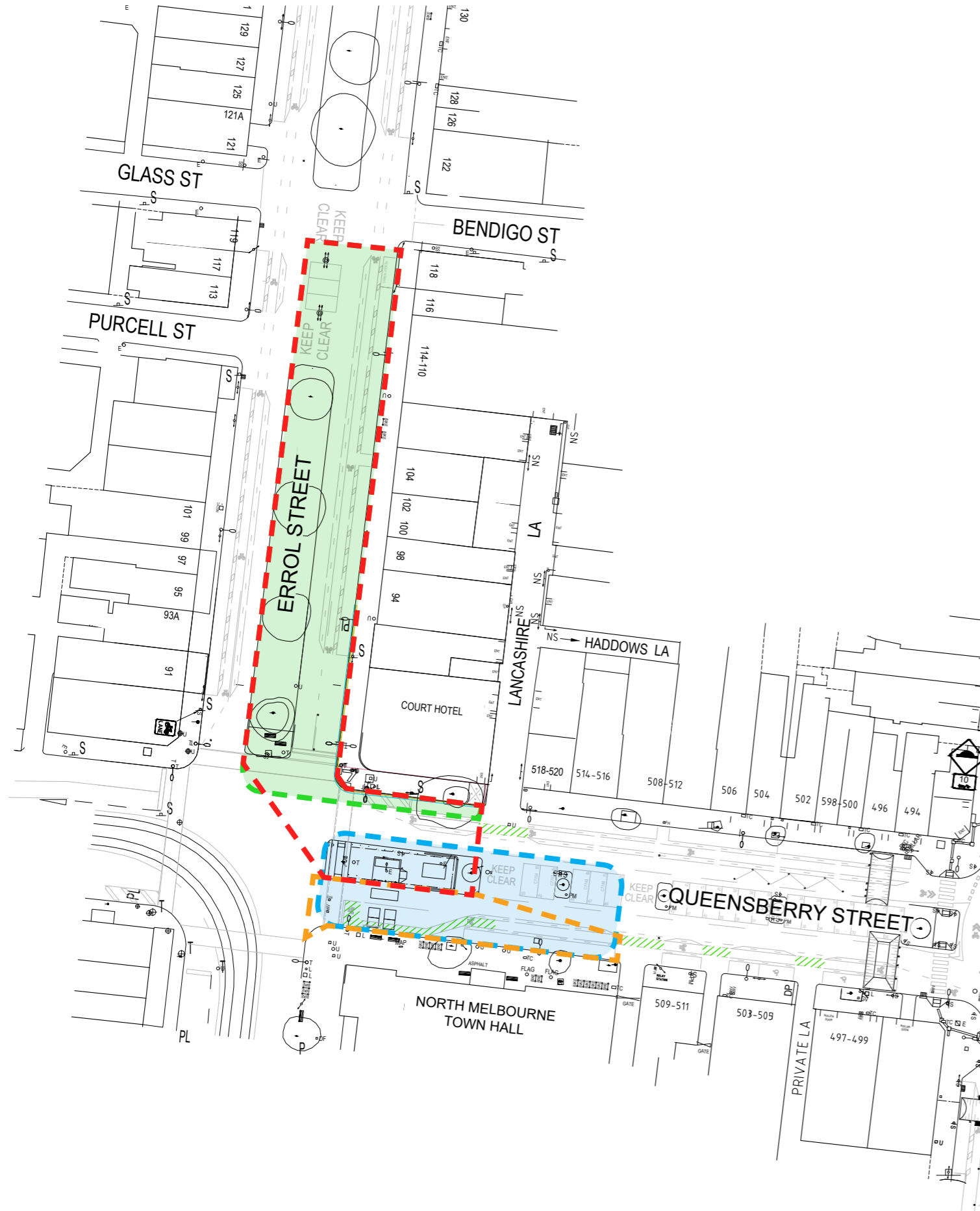
7. The Open Space Strategy (2012) recognises the need for additional open space in this sub-precinct of North Melbourne.

Environmental sustainability

8. The options under investigation will allow for the creation of permeable open space with additional tree planting opportunities.

SUMMARY OF OPEN SPACE PRELIMINARY LAYOUTS

QUEENSBERRY AND ERROL STREET, NORTH MELBOURNE



OPEN SPACE LAYOUT

- Layout 1 (Orange dashed line)
- Layout 2 (Blue dashed line)
- Layout 3 (Green dashed line)
- Layout 4 (Red dashed line)

NOTE: Preliminary layout is indicative. Further traffic modelling, investigations and functional design will need to be undertaken to ensure feasibility, prior to discussions with external stakeholders. Modifications to the preliminary layout may be identified through further investigations.