



PLANNING &
PROPERTY | **PARTNERS**

CONSULTATION REPORT

119 Albert Street, Ballarat Central

August 2024

Prepared for Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Ltd

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1. Executive Summary

Uniting (Uniting Housing Victoria and Uniting Vic Tas Ltd) are seeking to redevelop 119 Albert Street, Ballarat Central ('the Site') for supported community housing.

The proposal is for a four-storey apartment, containing 24 apartments with associated communal facilities. Approval is sought pursuant to Clause 52.20 - Victorias Big Housing Build, of the Ballarat Planning Scheme ('the Planning Scheme').

This report documents the consultation which has been undertaken in accordance with the *Homes Victoria Consultation Guidelines* (May 2024) to address the follow requirements of Clause 52.20-4:

- *Public consultation, and consultation with the relevant municipal council, on the plans, documents and information proposed to be submitted under Clause 52.20-5; and*
- *A report that summarises the consultation undertaken, feedback received, and explains how the feedback has been considered and responded to, must be completed.*

The consultation process comprised of early engagement with authorities and notice to the surrounding community as follows:

- Meetings with Officers from the City of Ballarat, Office of the Victorian Government Architect, Homes Victoria and Department of Transport and Planning with the receipt of written comments in November and December 2023;
- Ninety-one letters sent to owner and occupiers within a 60-metre radius of the Site on 24 June 2024. This exceeds the 50 metre radius required by *Homes Victoria Consultation Guidelines* (May 2024);
- A sign display on the Site between 25 June and 18 July 2024;
- An online website (<https://www.unithousing.org.au/our-developments/albert-st-ballarat>) that hosted the proposed development plans and supporting reports and invited written feedback from the community;
- A further suite of plans and consultant reports provided to Ballarat City Council and the Department of Transport and Planning with additional comments receipted in July 2024;
- A briefing with Federation University, who owns multiple properties within the 60-metre radius of the Site; and
- Consultation with services providers including Central Highlands Water and City of Ballarat.

There are no referral authorities that would require notice of the proposed development under section 55 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* if not for the exemption at Clause 52.20-2 of the Planning Scheme.

This stakeholder engagement has informed ongoing refinements and positive improvements to the development including, but not limited to:

- A reorganisation of the Site layout to improve resident access to services, an enhanced entrance experience from Albert Street and better-defined paths of travel through the building while avoiding the interface with vehicular traffic;
- Increased setbacks to Site boundaries in response to neighbouring interfaces;
- Relocation of bike rack to the underside of the building, providing additional landscaping and opportunities for the growth / establishment of canopy trees
- Resolution of overlooking through various design solutions;

- A reconsideration of onsite carparking provisions with resulting layout changes to improve the resident experience including a multipurpose outdoor area;
- Increase in onsite bicycle parking and associated facilities; and
- Revised palette of materials that better addresses how the building is read in the round.

Uniting Housing is the proponent of the development and a registered housing agency that currently manages over 900 homes in Victoria and Tasmania. It is committed to actively managing the premises to ensure the residents are provided with the support and services they require.

Uniting Community Services have had a long history in Ballarat providing support for vulnerable Victorians. Their regional community service hub is opposite the site.

The consultation undertaken has been carried out in accordance with the *Homes Victoria Consultation Guidelines* (May 2024), aligning with the *Projects on Behalf of Homes Victoria Guidance Note* (May 2024) and Clause 52.20 requirements.

2. Site and Surrounds

The Site is located on the east side of Albert Street, approximately 80 metres south of the intersection with Dana Street within the Ballarat Central Business District.

It is a generally rectangular shaped area of land with an east-west orientation. It has a frontage to Albert Street of 26.66 metres and a depth to the south boundary of 16.57 metres. The overall Site area is approximately 1,388 square metres.

The Site has is generally flat with insignificant vegetation to the north boundary and within a small front garden area. It is improved with a single storey brick building with tiled hipped roof and outbuildings to the rear. The former dwelling has been converted and is used as an office by *Uniting*.



Figure 1: Aerial view of the Site and surrounds

Source: www.nearmap.com

The Site forms part of 'Mixed Use (Residential & Commercial)' Precinct on the southern periphery of the Ballarat Central Business District pursuant to Clause 21.09-1 (CBD) of the Planning Scheme. This forms the pre-eminent Activity Centre within the municipality and the wider region, providing higher order retail, commercial, entertainment, service, community, cultural and related activities. The Activity Centre (and Site) is zoned Commercial 1 Zone.

The area surrounding the Site is characterised by a variety of land uses and building forms which includes single storey brick and weatherboard dwellings on the east side of Albert Street. Federation University is located on the west side of Albert Street which has buildings of up to three storeys constructed to the street edge. Commercial office buildings and the 3-storey Ballarat Police Station are north of the Site at the intersection of Albert Street and Dana Street and Anderson Street W to the rear of the Site includes a detached dwelling adjacent to a three storey office building at 12 Anderson Street W.

3. Proposal

The proposal will involve the construction of a four-level apartment building containing 24 apartments.

The Site layout locates carparking on the south side of the building accessed via a single crossover to Albert Street. Four ground level apartments will be arranged around a front garden area within the Albert Street setback of the building and communal open space areas that will wrap around the remainder of the building footprint.

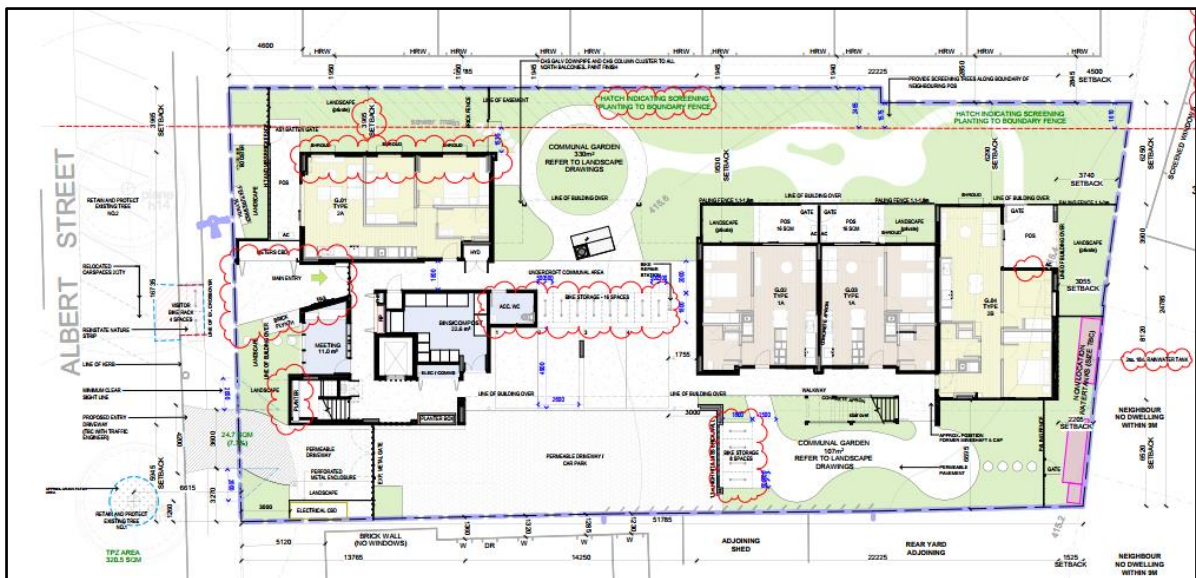


Figure 2: Ground Floor Plan

Source: MGS Architects

A centralised communal entrance from Albert Street will provide access to each apartment with conveniently located bicycle parking and a concealed waste storage area on the south side of this area. Similar floorplans will feature on Level 1 to Level 3 of the building with a communal breezeway on the south side of each level providing access to the apartment entrances.

One less apartment will be located to the rear of Level 3 as the built form steps down to three-storeys at the rear interface to reduce overshadowing impacts to the properties to the south

A floorplan summary of the proposed development is provided below:

	Car Parking	Bike Parking	Communal Areas	1.5 Bedroom Apartment	2 Bedroom Apartment
Ground	4 spaces	24 spaces	Meeting Room (11.0m ²) Waste storage (22.6m ²) Communal open space (335m ²)	2 apartments	2 apartments
Level 1				5 apartments	2 apartments
Level 2				5 apartments	2 apartments
Level 3				5 apartments	1 apartment
Total	4 spaces	24 spaces		17 apartments	7 apartments

4. Consultation Process

The consultation strategy related to the proposed development involved engagement with public authorities and the surrounding community as detailed below.

4.1. Public Authorities

Early engagement with authorities was undertaken in November - December 2023 in advance of public consultation comprising

- Separate meetings on 6 December and 13 December 2023 attended by proponents of the development together with Officers from the City of Ballarat, Office of the Victorian Government Architect, Homes Victoria and Department of Transport and Planning;
- Written responses and feedback on the proposed development were provided following these meetings comprising (refer Appendix A):
 - City of Ballarat – dated 13 December 2023;
 - Department of Transport and Planning – dated 15 December 2023;
 - Office of the Victorian Government Architect – dated 20 December 2023; and
 - Homes Victoria – dated 22 December 2023.

The above stakeholder engagement resulted in refinements to the proposed development in advance of community consultation as further detailed at Section 5.1 below.

There are no referral authorities that would require notice of the proposed development under section 55 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* if not for the exemption at Clause 52.20-2 of the Planning Scheme.

Ballarat City Council and the Department of Transport and Planning were further consulted about the amended proposal at the commencement of public notification in July 2024 (see below). The additional feedback from Ballarat City Council (dated 3 July 2024) and the Department of Transport and Planning (dated 22 July 2024) is provided at Appendix B and has been considered in further refinements to the proposed development.

Servicing authorities which have been consulted comprise:

- Central Highlands Water which is responsible for reticulated sewer and water. Its response identified the opportunity to utilise sewer asset aligned to the north boundary of the Site and main water pipe within Albert Street; and
- City of Ballarat which provides drainage, identifying that the Site's legal point of discharge is the bluestone channel along Albert Street in front of the Site.

These requirements can be readily accommodated and do not represent impediments to the proposed development. Connections to these and other services will be further addressed through the normal course of the development cycle.

4.2. Surrounding Community

Notice of the proposed development was provided to the surrounding community comprising of:

- Ninety one letters sent to owners and occupiers within 60 metres of the Site via registered posted on 24 June 2024. A copy of the correspondence and list of those who received notice is provided at Appendix C;

- A sign displayed on the Site between 25 June and 18 July 2024 (refer Figure 3);
- The correspondence and sign directed interested parties to a website (<https://www.unithousing.org.au/our-developments/albert-st-ballarat>) hosted by Uniting which enable visitors to download and view the various plans and consultation material with a link enable written feedback; and
- The written correspondence and website above invited feedback before 17 July 2024.

Eight responses were received from residents. A copy of the submissions and response to the matters raised are provided at Section 6 below and Appendix D.



Figure 3: Sign maintained onsite between 25 June and 18 July 2024

5. Authority Feedback and Consideration

5.1. November 2023 – June 2024

The early authority engagement involving the City of Ballarat, Department of Transport and Planning, Office of the Victorian Government Architect and Homes Victoria in late 2023 resulted in a consolidated list of comments that considered a draft development proposition for the Site.

The comments and the resulting response to each are provided at Appendix D. The key responses and various improvements to the proposed development which were made, including, but not limited to:

- Relocation of bicycle parking to provide a more integrated, and accessibility, component of the development;
- Increased setbacks to side and rear boundaries of the Site shown in Figure 4);
- The deletion of an outbuilding (waste and bicycle parking) together with an increase of approximately 147 square metres of Ground Level communal open space areas with landscaping and winded pedestrian paths;
- Implementation of design solutions such as screens and higher balconies to address overlooking whilst enabling outlook from apartments within the development;
- Revised palette of materials that better addresses how the building is read in the round;
- Providing a more defined and inviting entrance to the building from Albert Street. This change also facilitated clearer and safer access to the ground floor apartments via the courtyard garden or separate pedestrian path to the south; and
- Onsite carparking reduced from six to four spaces to improve circulation through the site with better integrated services and additional communal areas.
- Increased provision of bicycle parking on site.

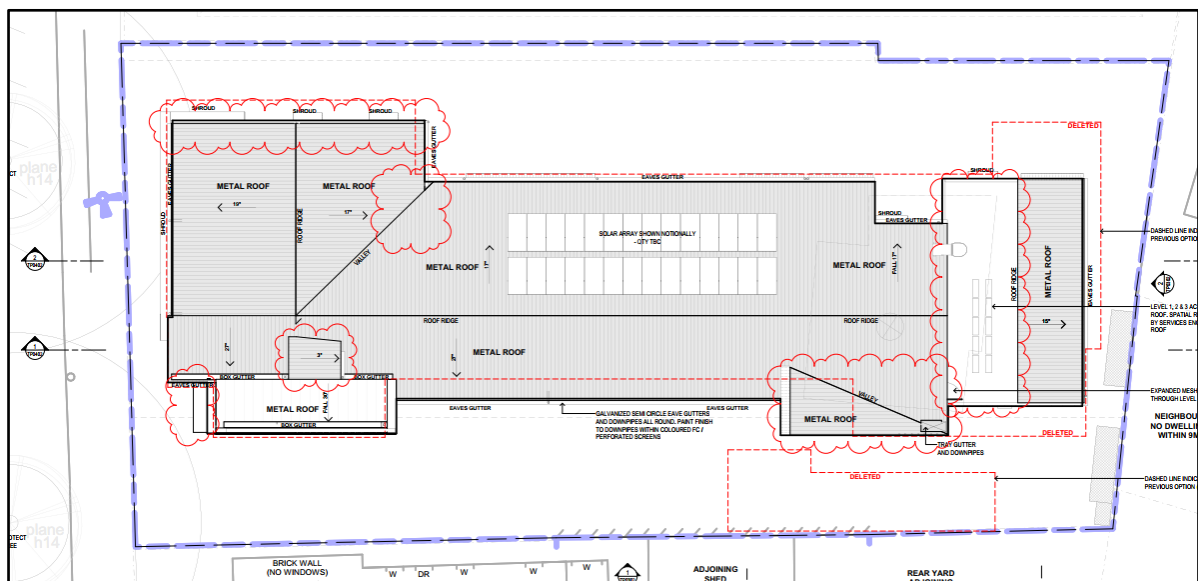


Figure 4: Roof Plan showing increased setbacks from earlier proposal (in red)

Source: MGS Architects

It is notable that each of the authorities expressed comfort around the general form and scale of development.

A completed suite of consultant reports and plans were finalised following the early authority engagement comprising:

- Plans prepared by *MGS Architects*;
- Landscape plan prepared by *Memla* ;
- Arboricultural report prepared by *Tree Care Consulting*;
- Transport Impact Assessment prepared by *One Mile Grid*;
- Waste Management Plan prepared by *One Mile Grid*; and
- Sustainability Management Plan prepared by *Floth*.

These technical reports and plans informed the design refinements and information included on material that was subject to public consultation in June – July 2024.

5.2. July 2024

Ballarat City Council and the Department of Transport and Planning (along with Homes Victoria) were advised of the commencement of public notification in July 2024 and provided with a complete suite of plans and reports detailed at Section 5.1 above together with an Urban Context report prepared *MGS Architects*. The further comments and responses are provided at Appendix B, including:

- Measures to address overlooking from north facing habitable room windows and balconies into the neighbouring property at 115 Albert Street. This has been resolved via the addition of lattice screens to the perimeter fencing and landscaping to the northern boundary together with additional screening to the north facing lounge room windows of Apartment 1.07 and Apartment 2.07;
- The preparation of a Tree Protection Management Plan to ensure the protection of street trees in front of the Site which has now been prepared; and
- Clarification of how waste collection will occur in a manner that does not impede traffic flows along Albert Street. Further details are provided within the memorandum from *One Mile Grid* which prepared the Waste Management Plan for the project.

The further plan details requested in this correspondence has also been addressed via the updated architectural plans and urban context report prepared by *MGS Architects*. Officers from Homes Victoria at a meeting of 26 July 2024 further encouraged additional onsite bicycle parking which has been resolved with the number of spaces increased from 14 to 24 equating to a ratio of one space per dwelling.

6. Community Feedback and Consideration

The community consultation undertaken in June and July 2024 resulted in the receipt of eight written submissions from surrounding residents. The submissions and responses to each are provided at Appendix D to this report.

A number of submissions made comment with respect to the density and scale of development and servicing requirements. These have been considered and addressed via the design changes detailed above, together with the response to the development standards of 52.20-6 and 52.20-7 and preparation of the various technical reports. This included a Transport Impact Assessment and Waste Management Plan prepared by *One Mile Grid*.

Residential amenity considerations that were raised are limited to overlooking which will be addressed via the further design solutions detailed in responses to comment from the City of Ballarat (refer Section 5.2 above).

Matters of flooding will be resolved via detailed drainage design in consultation with the City of Ballarat, also noting that the development includes rainwater harvesting and reuse which will reduce runoff from the Site.

Many of the submissions raised operational concerns about the ongoing management of the building and tenants.

Uniting Housing Victoria is the proponent of the development and a registered housing agency that currently manages over 900 homes in Victoria and Tasmania. Its approach to tenancy management for long term housing is based on a core mission to increase the availability of appropriate, secure, and sustainable affordable housing, to strengthen communities and to assist those most in need.

Uniting Vic Tas is committed to delivering services which support renters, sustain tenancies, provide access to other social and economic opportunities and work in partnership with local services and communities. Its support teams are:

- Housing services team;
- Community services team; and
- Asset management team.

These teams provide services including, resident and tenancy needs, security, and maintenance, 24-hour property, residential and maintenance contact, drug and alcohol, mental health, employment, aged care, and disability support. Residents of the development will have immediate access to services which are provided across the road at Dana Street.

These arrangements are complimented by a Community and Engagement strategy and action plan for the tenants that includes regular bi-monthly newsletters, increased website information, a new tenancy and asset management system with renter portal access to their accounts and the logging of maintenance requests, regular surveys measuring our services, opportunities for employment and training in our SHASP and volunteer programs, connection to services and supports, renter participation groups and Uniting financial grants for community building.

Renters can report maintenance to their Community Housing Officer during business hours and have access to emergency after hours maintenance, 7 days a week. Additionally, Uniting's new tenancy and asset system (Civica) will allow renters to report maintenance issues through an online portal at any time. The site will have additional safety features such as CCTV, restricted access, lighting, and other security features.

Uniting is also required to abide by a site-specific management plan to the satisfaction of Homes Victoria under its partnership agreement.

7. Conclusion

As detailed above, the proposed development has undergone extensive consultation in accordance with Clause 52.20-4 requirements of the Planning Scheme and the *Homes Victoria Consultation Guidelines* (May 2024). The consultation process has been carried out under the guidance of officers from Homes Victoria, with the duration meeting requirements of Homes Victoria and aligning with the *Projects on Behalf of Homes Victoria Guidance Note* (May 2024) and Clause 52.20 requirements.

The feedback received from various stakeholders across the formal consultation period and in the lead up to this has been carefully considered and responded to via changes to the design response which have enhanced the development. Where changes have not been implemented, these have been addressed and/or clarified in the supporting reports and materials.

It is acknowledged that not all feedback received has resulted in design changes to the proposal as addressed above, however all has been considered against the relevant requirements of the Planning Scheme to inform the final design response and application. It is considered the final proposal successfully balances the various stakeholder feedback, planning controls and policy requirements in achieving an exceptional development outcome on this strategy site and which will result in a significant community benefit to Ballarat Central.