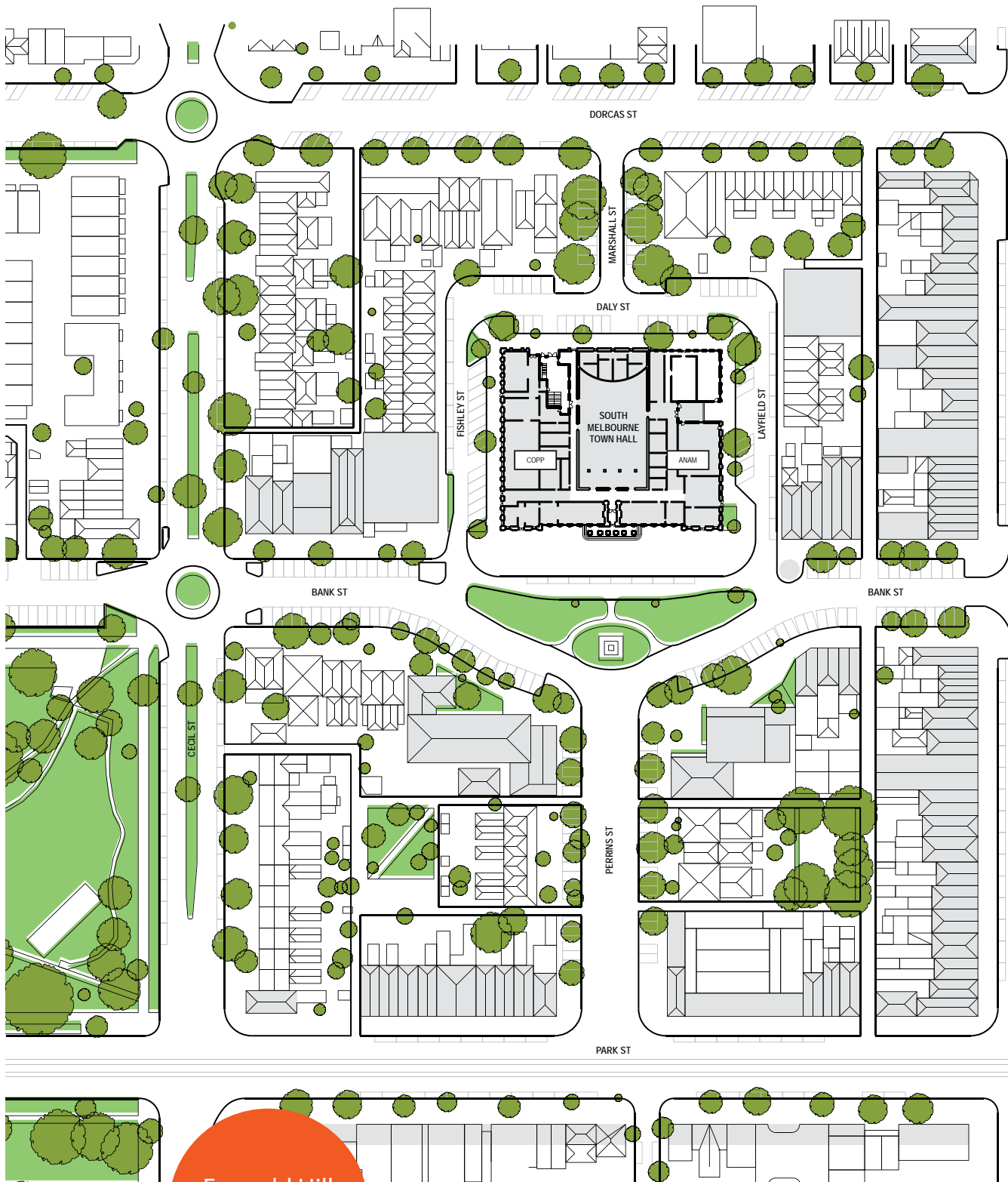




# Emerald Hill Vision

City of Port Phillip





Emerald Hill  
Precinct Map



## Introduction

Emerald Hill is the cultural, civic and physical heart of South Melbourne. From its pre-European settlement, local indigenous people inhabited and used the area for many thousands of years and today, it provides a near intact Victorian setting and streetscape.

Over recent years, the transfer of administrative functions from the former South Melbourne Town Hall and adjacent properties to St Kilda and the long gestation of plans to revamp the library has left key buildings under utilised with the effect of constraining activity in the precinct.

The Emerald Hill Vision is a road map to reinvigorating this key heritage and cultural precinct by pulling together previous Council planning and once again making Town Hall the centre of a vibrant community life through targeted improvements in and around its buildings and by reimagining their uses through exciting programming.

## Precinct Description

The precinct for the Emerald Hill vision contains a number of civic and institutional buildings from the late 19th Century period of the municipality, the most important of which is the imposing Town Hall building.

Physically the area is bounded by Park, Clarendon, Cecil and Dorcas Streets.

## The Context

Council is respectful of the current and historical importance of the Emerald Hill precinct for the people of the Port Phillip Municipality. Recognising the civic and governance, indigenous and social heritage it seeks to identify and sponsor connections between existing services, businesses and the community to reactivate this vital civic heart of South Melbourne.

Recently parts of the Council owned property at 222 Banks Street have been let to energetic arts organisations which complement the operations of existing organisations in the area such as the Australian Tapestry Workshop, the Australian National Academy of Music and The Butterfly Club. These initiatives are already helping to draw patrons to the area and increase use of the public realm around the Town Hall bringing much needed vitality.

These recent changes and the desire for increased patronage have highlighted the need for improvements to various services, infrastructure and public spaces to ensure safe and equitable access to Council provided services and public amenities for the whole community.

## The Vision

Council's vision is to create a vibrant arts and community hub to reinvigorate the precinct around South Melbourne Town Hall and to re-establish it as the cultural and civic heart of South Melbourne.

The vision for Emerald Hill re-affirms the principles developed with extensive community consultation in the South Melbourne Central Structure Plan, South Melbourne Shopping Precinct Streetscape Masterplan in 2007 and reinforced by recent targeted stakeholder consultation in November 2010.

That is to:

- Develop the role of Emerald Hill precinct as a community hub and as a place for service delivery to the local community and beyond.
- Foster the role of the Emerald Hill precinct as a cultural and creative focus for South Melbourne.
- Create a vibrant, engaging environment which supports the local community, cultural and civic activities of Emerald Hill.

The vision reinforces these through the following deliverables:

- Creating a vibrant and accessible South Melbourne Town Hall
- A dynamic and engaging Town Hall forecourt
- Refurbishing and expanding the Emerald Hill Library & Heritage Centre
- 222 Banks St forming the core of a new arts focus and activity
- Public realm improvements







## What does the Vision look like?

### A vibrant and accessible South Melbourne Town Hall

The South Melbourne Town Hall will become the focus for bringing the precinct to life through better access to the building and a program of concerts, markets, temporary installations and arts/community based events.

Council is committed to drawing on the enormous capital of the precinct's heritage and to make Town Hall more open and welcoming to the community. From 2011, Council meetings will once again be held in the Council Chambers fulfilling the Town Hall's traditional role. And by working in partnership with the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), CoPP will optimise community access to the Auditorium through a program that builds on the success of events such as the recent Cabaret Festival.

CoPP is investigating options for the re-use of space on the Fishley Street side of the Town Hall building that may include improving the visibility of the entrance to the CoPP ASSIST centre and meeting rooms and the reuse of the First Floor.

### A dynamic and engaging Town Hall forecourt

The area in front of Town Hall that extends as far as the Jubilee Fountain represents a space that is currently underutilised. By reimagining this as a forecourt to the Town Hall that can be programmed to hold temporary events, activity will be generated in the core of the precinct and enliven Town Hall.

These might include markets which could draw on the craft and design industries in the larger South Melbourne area or temporal events such as the installation of artworks or temporary pavilions that again foster the local design, film & TV or advertising community. Other events could include performances by ANAM students, the Cabaret Festival, The Butterfly Club or other organisations in the precinct, open air cinema and cultural festivals.

### Refurbishing and expanding the Emerald Hill Library & Heritage Centre

The library is a key community use and central to CoPP's ongoing service in the precinct. An expanded library that incorporates the previously planned heritage centre revitalises another important heritage building opposite Town Hall, the old Post Office and importantly allows CoPP to provide a more responsive and innovative service. While a Town Hall location is another long term possibility for the library, the Post Office building would continue to offer opportunities for the library over the medium term.



## 222 Banks St forming the core of a new arts focus and activity

Council's former building adjacent to the Town Hall is central to establishing a new arts focus for the precinct. Recently tenanted to Arts Access Victoria, the peak Victorian arts body providing access, participation, engagement and professional development in the arts for people with a disability, the building will also house the incubator, Auspicious Arts as well as providing opportunities for other small arts groups to establish themselves in Port Phillip and draw upon the professional expertise of Arts Access. This is already attracting considerable State support and is an exciting opportunity for the future of Emerald Hill that ties it to the broader arts precinct at Sturt Street, Southbank. They will also assist in the programming of the forecourt and other arts activities in the precinct.

## Public realm improvements

The distinctive and highly regarded heritage character of the precinct largely determines the built form; however CoPP does control a significant amount of road reserve, footpath and open space that could perform an important supporting role in the activation of the precinct. In particular, the forecourt of Town Hall will be improved in stages, firstly with the provision of 3 phase power to allow markets and the like to happen, installing provisions to allow the driveway space to be used for these events and the installation of better public furniture. If successful, future works will progressively upgrade this space.

Also CoPP has begun replacing the orange sodium lights around Town Hall to improve the night time appearance and safety in the precinct. Additional plans to light up the Town Hall will help create a visual focus to South Melbourne at night.

Additional road reserve and carparks adjacent to the side entries could be similarly rethought to provide better amenity and provide a more recognisable address to these entrances.

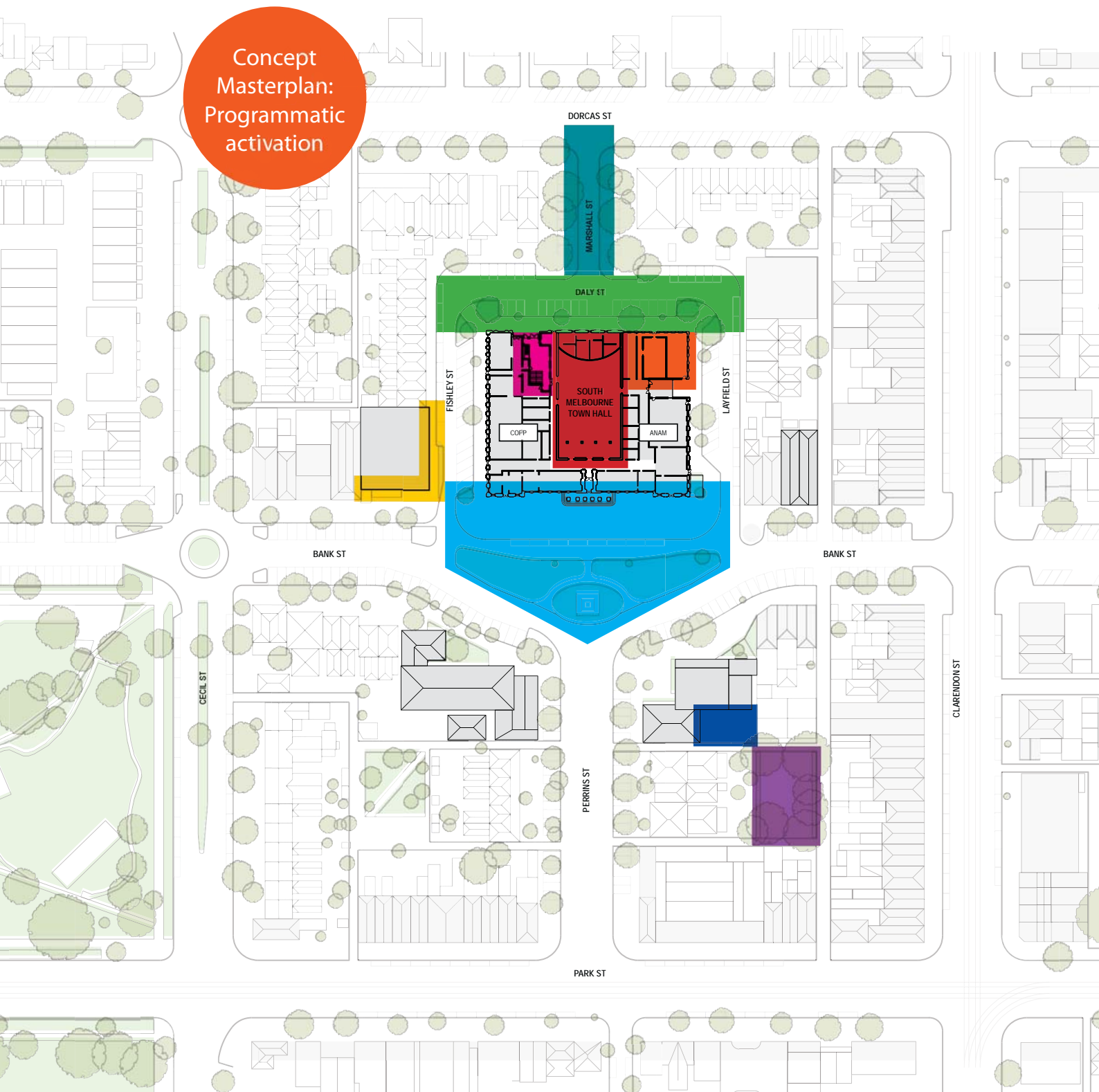
Lastly, Marshall and Daly Street behind the Town Hall offer opportunities for CoPP to investigate road closures to create new public space that could be for temporary events for to create innovative play and landscapes to fill a perceived need in the local community.











## The future at Emerald Hill

The Emerald Hill Vision will re-energise a precinct that is ripe with potential. By forming partnerships with arts organisations and local businesses CoPP has a unique opportunity to create an arts hub that will benefit all of South Melbourne. CoPP aims to provide broad access to this burgeoning community heart through a range of avenues and technologies promoting inclusiveness in line with Council objectives. At the same time it will help bring life to the Town Hall by re-establishing community ties and improving access to the building. This will put it back at the centre of community and civic life in South Melbourne.



Concept  
Masterplan:  
Programmatic  
activation



- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
|  Existing active programme   |  Town Hall Auditorium<br>(Optimise community access,<br>cabaret festival, school events,<br>functions)   |  New building programme<br>(restaurant, weddings, functions,<br>street activation)      |  Reinstatement of "pocket<br>park" |
|  Activation of street frontage<br>(reveal functions of Arts Access<br>& Auspicious Arts Incubator) |  Possible Marshall St closure<br>(Public/pedestrian use;<br>spontaneous events)                          |  Town Hall south forecourt<br>(organised events, improved<br>seating, shade & lighting) |   |
|  Possible performance space<br>(Art installations, connection to<br>auditorium, new entry to TH)   |  Town Hall north forecourt<br>(solar access, more seating,<br>reduced carparking,<br>spontaneous events) |  Potential to activate rear<br>of library (connection to<br>"pocket park")              |   |

Deliverables	Actions/Opportunities	In progress
A vibrant and accessible South Melbourne Town Hall	Prepare a draft strategy for consultation	✓
	Community space increased in precinct	✓
	Engage ANAM	✓
	Building lighting	
	Hold Council led events in auditorium	in 2011
	Level 1 is let following EOI	✓
A dynamic and engaging town hall forecourt	Promote the precinct	
	Infrastructure improvements to the forecourt	
	Explore development of a program of events to activate the forecourt from July 2011	
A refurbished and expanded South Melbourne Library & Heritage Centre	Council decides location and scope of library	✓
	Consider options for co-located activities	
	Commission a design for a refurbished Library & Heritage Centre	
Use of 222 Bank Street that forms the core of a new arts focus for the precinct	Council determines type of lease and length	✓
	Council undertakes process to lease 222 Bank Street to reflect the Emerald Hill Vision	✓
Targeted improvements activating the public realm	Review traffic arrangements to maximise public activity	
	Improve pedestrian lighting	
	Improve landscaping to library courtyard	
	Evaluate closure of Marshall Street	
	Investigate further amenity improvements through other road closures	
	Internet WiFi	✓
	Street furniture	
	Signage	
	Tree Planting	
	3 Phase Power	✓





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