

PIA 2017 awards for planning excellence Nomination statement

Best Planning Ideas – Small Project:

Logis design guidelines and design review

Introduction

Logis Eco-Industrial Park at Dandenong is Development Victoria's first ever industrial estate. Development Victoria has succeeded in its aim to create a world-class mixed-use industrially based business park. The 154 hectare site contains 190 lots, ranging from 2000 m² to 10 hectares. Logis is now home to a wide variety of factories, offices and warehouses. Logis has attracted major companies that want a high-amenity location, such as Kraft Foods, Ego Pharmaceuticals and Spicers Paper. Apparent on even a cursory visit, Logis has a sense of space, legibility, visual interest, visual clarity and greenery. Now 85% complete, at build-out it will employ approximately 5,000 people.

Development Victoria and the team it has drawn together to plan Logis have given the estate careful planning attention for ten years. They have directed development on building allotments using two key tools:

- The *Logis design guidelines for building allotments* which provide detailed design controls and suggest design strategies; and
- Assessment of all development by the *Logis Design Review Panel*, followed by rigorous auditing of completed development and enforcement of development that does not comply with the design guidelines.

The process used at Logis first set a high bar for the design of industrial buildings, and then kept it high. They show the value planning can add to Australia's industrial estates.

The design guidelines

The twenty-one page Logis Design Guidelines are clearly expressed in plain language and very detailed. Based on residential estate design guidelines, the adaptation to be suitable for an industrial estate demanded extensive original thinking.

The guidelines demand development achieve high aesthetic, environment and amenity standards. For example, lots on Logis Boulevard, the main street, are required to provide a high level of visual interest, while those on the side streets require only a low to moderate level.

There are numerous other controls to ensure the envisaged quality. Examples include:

- Offices must face the street.
- Entry areas must be clearly visible from the street.
- Lots larger than 3500 m² must provide an outdoor amenity area for staff use.
- Front facades must be free of large unrelieved surfaces.
- External walls must be painted, and in tasteful colours.
- Rooftop plant must be screened.
- Premises are limited to one roller-shutter door per street façade.
- Size, placement and appearance of signs must be approved.

Most of the controls are straightforward, such as the requirement for any front fencing to be black-painted steel palisade style. Less straightforward is the requirement for high or moderate visual interest in the front façade. This calls for judgement on the part of the designers and the design assessors.

The Design Guidelines not only provide controls on development. They also explain the vision for Logis, detail the application process, and include suggestions to help designers create interesting buildings. Suggestions include strategies to shape the form of buildings and treat the exterior surfaces.

The design guidelines continue to apply to a lot for ten years from the date of sale. Although mostly concerned with the initial development of the lot and any subsequent additions, they also contain a requirement to maintain buildings and grounds in good condition. The guidelines are now in their tenth version. Initially prepared by Plus Architecture, the design guidelines have been modified by Alexander Urbanism in the light of their experience and comments from designer applicants.

Design review

Development Victoria uses a Design Review Panel (DRP) to assess whether a development application complies with the design guidelines. The DRP has been run by Alexander Urbanism since 2012, working in close association with Development Victoria's development manager. Alexander Urbanism has now assessed over 460 applications for development at Logis.

Typically, after a design proposal is submitted for review, the design review panel's assessment reveals one or more non-compliances, and comments are sent back to the applicant. The review process usually results in minor changes, but has required major revision of lot layouts, floorplans, exterior surface treatments and landscaping.

Applicants have enjoyed a quick turnaround, in 2016 an average of less than two days. Where the assessment task contains unusual or problematic issues, Alexander Urbanism refers them for a second opinion to Development Victoria. If requested by the applicant, the application will be externally assessed by an independent reviewer. Over the many years of the development of the estate, Development Victoria and Alexander Urbanism have continued to improve decision making, collaboration with the building designers, and the quality of response.

Auditing is undertaken monthly. When completed development is found to not comply with the endorsed development plans, the Design Review Panel requests the lot owner to correct the non-compliance. If needed, a corrective action notice is sent. If still no action, information on the breach is sent to the enforcement team as the City of Greater Dandenong. If corrective action is still not taken, the City has fined lot owners.

The result: quality streetscapes

Careful attention has been paid to the design of buildings to ensure they create harmonious and interesting streetscapes. Most buildings are set back from the street 9m or more, providing large areas of front gardens. Logis now sports a diverse range of architect-designed, visually exciting contemporary buildings. Prominent building entrances and well-positioned business identification signs mean visitors can easily find their destinations.

The result: sustainability

As an *eco*-industrial estate, Logis is both literally and figuratively green. The large front gardens contain a significant number of mostly endemic trees, shrubs and groundcovers, and extend the habitat of the adjacent Dandenong Creek. All premises are plumbed into on-site rainwater tanks, most to the reticulated Class A recycled water supply. At least 5% of every lot's area is permeable. Many premises include rain gardens. While motor vehicle access is very important for an industrial estate, Logis was planned to encourage active transport modes as well. All premises provide bike parking, lockers, and showers.

The result: a shared vision and collaboration

The design guidelines and design review process used at the Logis Eco-Industrial Park is the outcome of a long process of problem-solving, collaboration and negotiation by Development Victoria, the City of Greater Dandenong, Plus Architecture, Alexander Urbanism, numerous lot owners, developers, architects and building designers, and others.

The project team continue to work closely with the City of Greater Dandenong to assess new development proposals, to enforce the guidelines, and to amend the guidelines as necessary.

The lot owners and their designers are strongly supportive of the design guidelines and design review process, recognising the financial value created.

Conclusion

Most industrial estates are built to minimise costs. At Logis Eco-Industrial Park, Development Victoria instead opted to create an attractive high-amenity employment precinct. It succeeded. As well, the development has generated excellent financial value for the developer and lot owners. The development control process has been an essential part of this value creation.

Two of the key planning tools used have been detailed design controls and a design review process. The design guidelines, now finely honed after ten versions, demand functional, visually interesting and environmentally responsible designs. The design review process, including rigorous auditing and enforcement, has improved the overall standard of design while offering applicants very quick processing times.

All the parties involved – the estate developer, municipal authority, master planner, lot developers, architects and design reviewer – have worked closely together over many years to bring to reality a common vision of Logis as a high-amenity ‘eco-industrial park’.

The planning processes used at Logis can be applied to industrial estates and business parks throughout Australia.

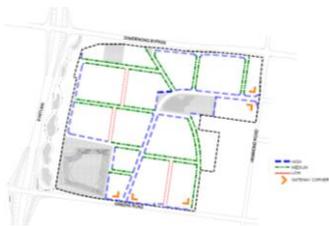
Images



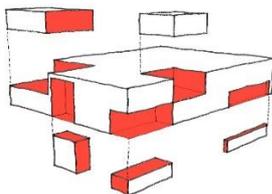
The former Dandenong Treatment Plant has been transformed into the Logis Eco-Industrial Park and the Meridian residential estate. [Source: Alexander Urbanism using a Nearmap aerial photo]



The Logis Design Guidelines are clearly expressed in plain language and very detailed. [Source: Plus Architecture]



The Logis Design Guidelines specify the level of visual interest required in buildings depending on their location within the estate. [Source: Plus Architecture]



The Logis Design Guidelines suggest design strategies to create interesting buildings. This one – ‘Subtraction’. [Source: Plus Architecture]



The Logis Design Guidelines are profusely illustrated to assist in communicating the built form controls to lot buyers, owners, designers and builders. [Source: Plus Architecture]



A typical street at Logis: wide, green and harmonious. [Source: Nathan Alexander]



The standard of architecture at Logis is exceptionally high for an industrial estate. [Source: Nathan Alexander]