KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER STUDY
2018
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
September 2018

This document was compiled by the Hobsons Bay Strategy and Advocacy Department. For further information, contact Hobsons Bay City Council on 9932 1000 or visit www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au

Council acknowledges the peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of these municipal lands and waterways. We pay our respect to Elders past and present.

Council acknowledges the legal responsibilities to comply with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to 20 fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.
INTRODUCTION

Hobsons Bay City Council has prepared a new Neighbourhood Character Study to guide the way new residential development will be required to respond to the existing and preferred character across the suburbs.

The city is experiencing a number of changes to residential development that impact on neighbourhood character. Hobsons Bay, like the rest of metropolitan Melbourne, is under pressure to accommodate new, medium and higher density development.

Changes to the existing streetscapes can impact on existing neighbourhood character so it is important that Council has the right planning policy tools in place to appropriately protect and preserve neighbourhood character.

The key challenge is balancing the demand for new residential development with the impact on the character of the streetscapes.

WHAT IS NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER?

Neighbourhood character refers to the look and feel of a place. It is the combination of qualities that make an area unique.

The features taken into account within the Neighbourhood Character Study include:

- building height and form
- landscaping/vegetation (including street trees and private gardens)
- building siting (including front, side and rear setbacks)
- front fencing
- materials and colours

Neighbourhood character is not about amenity, for instance, things like overlooking, access to sunlight and noise etc.
HOW IS COUNCIL PROTECTING NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER?

Council has an existing Neighbourhood Character Study, which was prepared in 2002. However, due to a number of changes in planning policy and development trends, Council has updated the study to better reflect the city’s needs.

The new Neighbourhood Character Study identifies the existing and preferred neighbourhood character for the city. Furthermore, it identifies what Council wants to achieve in an area (the design objectives) and sets out how this can be achieved (the design responses).

New residential development needs to consider how it fits in with the preferred neighbourhood character for the area.

NEW RESIDENTIAL ZONES

Council’s Neighbourhood Character Study has an important role in the application of the New Residential Zones in Hobsons Bay.

In particular, the design objectives and design responses identified in the Neighbourhood Character Study will be set out in the planning controls (the New Residential Zone ‘schedules’) that new residential development will need to comply with.

The schedules allow variations to the following design considerations:

- heights
- setbacks
- provision of open space
- provision of landscaping
- front fence height
- site layout and subdivision

This means Council can protect the existing character of different parts of the municipality and guide new character in areas where growth will be allowed.

More information on the New Residential Zones is provided in the Know Your New Residential Zones summary booklet.

Inner Urban neighbourhood character type, Williamstown
HOW WAS THE STUDY PREPARED?

Preparation of the new Neighbourhood Character Study involved a review of existing neighbourhood character policy, including an assessment of its effectiveness since it was introduced in 2002.

It also considered community feedback, which helped to further shape the study.

The study has also been prepared in conjunction with Council’s new Housing Strategy (refer to the Know Your Housing Strategy summary booklet) and Activity Centre Strategy (refer to the Know Your Activity Centre Strategy summary booklet).

The Neighbourhood Character Study consists of two parts:

- **Volume One:** Issues and Opportunities Report
- **Volume Two:** Neighbourhood Character Study and Design Guidelines

The development of local planning policy needs to align with the overarching Victorian Government policy. For neighbourhood character, this includes Clauses 54 and 55 of the Victorian Planning Provisions (also known as ‘ResCode’).

The Neighbourhood Character Study is not only required to be a document that is accessible to the community but also, a document which is technically detailed enough to withstand the rigour and testing of the planning system.

In particular, the study will be required to be upheld and used to justify Council’s planning decisions at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) and Planning Panels Victoria (PPV).
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

The Neighbourhood Character Study will introduce changes to neighbourhood character planning policy across Hobsons Bay.

The changes are intended to strengthen the role of neighbourhood character considerations in new residential developments where a planning permit is required.

A planning permit is required to build more than one dwelling on a block. However, in some instances, it is also required to build or extend a single house (for example, on lots less than 300 square metres).

If you or your neighbours wish to extend an existing dwelling or build a new one, and a planning permit is required, then the new Neighbourhood Character Study will guide the type of development and design that can occur in your area.

An example of how to use the Neighbourhood Character Study and Design Guidelines is provided in the How to Use the Neighbourhood Character Study section.

Look up your neighbourhood character type:

We encourage you to visit participate.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/neighbourhoodcharacter to see which neighbourhood character precinct your property is in.

Alternatively, you can call Council on 9932 1089 for more details.
28.1% didn’t want any additional development

7.6% liked the landscaping in new developments

11.4% identified building siting as a key to improving new development

30.7% valued landscaping/green spaces in their neighbourhood

12.6% identified height and built form as an issue

6.8% advocated for better environmentally sustainable development

12.5% identified Strategic Redevelopment Areas (i.e. former industrial sites) as being suitable for accommodating housing growth
HOBSONS BAY’S NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER TYPES

The Neighbourhood Character Study identifies six neighbourhood character types for Hobsons Bay, one of which is a mix of two types (Inner Urban/Garden Suburban). Each character type is created by the different elements such as building form, landscaping, colours, materials and lot layout.

**Garden Court** (e.g. Seabrook)

Garden Court areas are generally spacious residential areas located in a garden setting and developed on a curvy street layout and include a lot of courts. Garden Court areas have been developed more recently and contain more generous building setbacks and car parking. Houses are usually double fronted and constructed of brick between the 1960s-90s.

**Garden Suburban** (e.g. Laverton)

Garden Suburban areas are similar to Garden Court as they are spacious residential areas located in a garden setting however, they are based on a grid layout. They were usually developed immediately after WWII and contain generous building setbacks and car parking. Houses are typically double or triple fronted and constructed of brick between the 1950s-70s. In some streets of Hobsons Bay many of the houses have been constructed using red, cream or orange brick.

**Inner Urban** (e.g. parts of Williamstown)

Inner Urban areas are generally compact, older residential areas that contain Victorian, Edwardian, Federation and Interwar homes. The house generally covers most of the site and has a smaller front and backyard and minimal side setbacks. In some instances houses are constructed to the boundary and landscaping is limited due to the smaller gardens.
### Urban Contemporary
(e.g. The Rifle Range, Williamstown)

Urban Contemporary areas were generally developed in the 1990s or later and are often related to large infill sites such as The Rifle Range, Williamstown Junction and the former Alfred Woollen Mills. Housing generally consists of attached townhouses and apartments.

### Waterfront Suburban
(e.g. Esplanade, Altona)

Waterfront Suburban areas are located along or near the coast and have been subject to a lot of redevelopment. New housing is generally larger and includes an upper level that takes advantage of water views.

### Inner Urban/Garden Suburban
(e.g. parts of Newport, Spotswood and Williamstown)

This character area is a mixture of both Inner Urban and Garden Suburban areas. While some streets have Inner Urban characteristics (such as Eliza Street, Newport), some are better described as Garden Suburban (such as Giffard Street, Williamstown). In some streets like Hope Street, Spotswood the characteristics can change from block to block.
HOW TO USE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER STUDY

The new Neighbourhood Character Study may affect your future plans to redevelop an existing dwelling or develop new dwellings in Hobsons Bay. The three steps outlined in this section help you find out how.

The **three steps** show how Housing Change Areas and neighbourhood character determine design requirements outlined in the neighbourhood character brochures.

You can also visit the online map to see which neighbourhood character brochure applies to your property.

The Housing Framework Plan identifies three Housing Change Areas. Your property will be within one of these areas:
- Limited Change
- Moderate Change
- Substantial Change

The Neighbourhood Character Precinct map shows 28 precincts and six different character types. Your property will be within one of these character types:
- Garden Court
- Garden Suburban
- Garden Suburban/Inner Urban
- Inner Urban
- Urban Contemporary
- Waterfront Suburban

There are detailed brochures that provide the design guidelines for each precinct and neighbourhood character type for the entire municipality. Note that precincts containing Substantial Change Areas have a separate brochure addressing these areas. Once you have identified which brochure applies to your area, you will see the existing and preferred neighbourhood character, as well as the design guidelines.
STEP 1.

Find what Housing Change Area you are in

Example: A resident who lives in Ulm Street in Laverton wants to find out what neighbourhood character type their property/street is in and how housing may change in their area.

Step 1: the Housing Framework Plan shows that they are in a Moderate Change Area.
**STEP 2**

Find your neighbourhood character type and precinct

Check the Precinct Map in the Neighbourhood Character Study to find out what neighbourhood character precinct you are in...

Example: The map shows the character type as Garden Suburban and Precinct W1
STEP 3
Find the relevant brochure for your precinct

Check the brochure for that precinct, noting your Housing Change Area, to find out the existing and preferred neighbourhood character, and the design guidelines that apply to your property...

LEGEND
- Neighbourhood Character Boundary
- Public Park and Recreation Zone
- Public Conservation and Resource Zone
- Reserves and Buffers
- Commercial Zone
- Mixed Use Zone
- Comprehensive Development Zone
- Other Zoned Land
- Special Character Area
- Rail Line and Train Station
- Waterways

Example: Relevant design guidelines brochure is Neighbourhood Character Precinct W1 (Laverton) Garden Suburban - Limited and Moderate Change Areas
**DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The Design Guidelines for Garden Suburban limited and moderate change areas provide further detail about how to achieve the Preferred Neighbourhood Character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Design Response</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siting</td>
<td>To maintain the sense of spaciousness in the streetscape through the provision of front, side and rear setbacks.</td>
<td>Setback buildings a minimum distance of 4 metres from the rear boundary - plus 1 metre for every metre of height over 6.9 metres. Buildings including garages and carports should be setback a minimum of 1 metre from one side boundary in moderate change areas and both side boundaries in limited change areas for a length of 15 metres from the building façade. Carports, garages and outbuildings should be setback a minimum of 3 metres behind the façade. This requirement is reduced to 1 metre for corner allotments. Provide functional private open space measuring 40sqm in moderate change areas and 60sqm in limited change areas with a minimum dimension of 4 metres.</td>
<td>Boundary-to-boundary development. High site coverage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To provide visual separation between buildings through development that reflects the existing side boundary setback pattern.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To minimise driveways and crossovers so that regularly spaced street tree avenues can be planted and retained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building form</td>
<td>To maintain the horizontality of buildings in the streetscape and the dominance of roof structures. To minimise visual bulk.</td>
<td>Respect the predominant building height in the street and nearby properties with building height generally restricted to 9 metres (2 storeys) in limited change areas and 11 metres (3 storeys) in moderate change areas. Recess part of the building over one storey by at least 1.5 metres from the ground floor façade. Provide eaves with a minimum width of 500 millimetres where appropriate.</td>
<td>(See B1 Brochure for all precincts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation</td>
<td>(See B1 Brochure for all precincts.)</td>
<td>Plant at least 2 canopy trees with a minimum mature height of 8 metres in the front setback. Plant at least 2 canopy trees with a minimum mature height of 8 metres to the rear or side of the development. Where the front boundary width exceeds 20 metres, an additional canopy tree should be planted.</td>
<td>(See B1 Brochure for all precincts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front boundary treatment</td>
<td>(See B1 Brochure for all precincts.)</td>
<td>(See B1 Brochure for all precincts.)</td>
<td>(See B1 Brochure for all precincts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colours &amp; materials</td>
<td>(See B1 Brochure for all precincts.)</td>
<td>Building and fence design should complement the red, orange and cream brick and light-coloured weatherboard and tiled roofs where this is evident in the streetscape.</td>
<td>(See B1 Brochure for all precincts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site layout &amp; subdivision</td>
<td>To ensure site layout and subdivision responds to existing features and allows for maximum contribution of landscaping to neighbourhood character.</td>
<td>Design site layout and subdivisions around existing vegetation that contributes to the area’s character. Encourage consolidation of lots where appropriate. Subdivision design should maintain the spacious qualities of the streetscape by ensuring adequate side setbacks can be accommodated for new dwellings.</td>
<td>(See B1 Brochure for all precincts.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW WILL THE STUDY BE IMPLEMENTED?

In order for the Neighbourhood Character Study to guide planning decisions, it needs to be included in the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme.

Once the study has been finalised and adopted by Council, a planning scheme amendment will be required to include it into the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme.

The design guidelines provided in the brochures will need to be included as schedules to the New Residential Zones.

WHEN WILL THE STRATEGY BE IMPLEMENTED?

Once the Neighbourhood Character Study is finalised and adopted by Council, the planning scheme amendment process will commence.

Planning scheme amendments can be a lengthy process, particularly for large complex policies. There will be a further opportunity for the community and stakeholders to make a formal submission on the planning scheme amendment during the public exhibition (expected 2019).

It is expected that the Neighbourhood Character Study will be implemented into the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme in mid/late 2019.