



**Guidelines for Infill Development  
in Heritage Areas in Hobsons Bay  
2006**

**Developed for Hobsons Bay City Council  
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**Adopted by Hobsons Bay City Council 27 June 2006**

## INTRODUCTION



Figure 1. Established residential heritage precinct  
Williamstown

### Introduction

The City of Hobsons Bay has many areas of heritage significance that are included in the Heritage Overlay in the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme. These are highly valued by the community and the City of Hobsons Bay is committed to conserving their character.

Good quality and sensitive design of infill development in heritage areas is of paramount importance in retaining the historic character of Hobsons Bay.

An important aspect of good design is designing in context and having regard to the site and its surroundings. Consideration should be given to the nature of adjoining and surrounding heritage places and the overall significance and character of the heritage area where it is located.

### Objectives

To ensure that new development is of a high quality design that creatively interprets and responds positively to the historic context provided by the heritage place or precinct.

To ensure non-contributory buildings are replaced by development that responds positively to the historic context provided by surrounding heritage places.

To ensure new development becomes a valued addition, which complements the aesthetic qualities of a heritage place or precinct.

To ensure new development does not distort historic evidence of heritage places by copying or reproducing historic styles or detailing.

To ensure new development does not visually dominate a heritage place or area.

To ensure new development responds positively to special features such as views, vistas, significant vegetation and landmarks.

### Where to they apply?

These guidelines apply to the construction of infill development within a Heritage Overlay under the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme.

Infill development includes the construction of a new building on a property within a heritage area. It does not include alterations and additions to existing buildings, which are the subject of separate guidelines.

### What do they do?

The guidelines provide assistance by explaining what Council will take into consideration in assessing a planning application for infill development from a heritage perspective. They will be considered in conjunction with other relevant State and local planning policies and controls such as Rescode.

The Guidelines are divided into three sections.

#### Site Analysis Residential infill Commercial infill

The site analysis guidelines are relevant for both residential and commercial infill. Separate guidelines are provided for residential and commercial infill development. While the general approach to design of residential and commercial infill is similar, there are additional considerations specifically required for infill in commercial heritage areas.

### Further information

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Figure 2. Established commercial heritage precinct  
Nelson Place, Williamstown

## SITE ANALYSIS

### Introduction

Analysis of the adjacent heritage buildings and surrounding area is of prime importance when designing for Infill in both residential and commercial areas. The design of the infill should be a response to this analysis.

The site analysis must demonstrate an understanding of the significance, character and setting of the surrounding area.

Refer to the *Hobsons Bay Heritage Study 2006* to learn more about the immediate heritage area and individual heritage places that contribute to it. This will develop an understanding of why it is important and what is important to retain.

Copies of the *Hobsons Bay Heritage Study 2006* can be obtained by contacting the **Strategic Development Unit on 9932 1000**.

The most important context to analyse in detail is the immediate one. Look at the buildings in the same street, across the road, and on the next couple of allotments adjacent to your site. Relating your design to an unusual building several streets away is not relevant.

The analysis should include photographs and drawings of at least two neighbouring heritage buildings on each side of the site as viewed from the street.

Using the drawings and photographs, look at the height and patterning of the other buildings and draw key building lines as demonstrated in Figure 3. The patterning of door and window openings should also be explored.

New buildings should not visually dominate or obscure views or sight lines to nearby historic buildings. The new building should be recessive.

Project homes/package or kit homes are generally unsuitable, as they are not designed with specific localities in mind. Modifications to their design may be necessary prior to their construction in a heritage area as design of infill buildings should be a response to the particular site and surrounds.

### Analysis of brief

An important part of the site analysis is to determine whether the site is appropriate to achieve what the owner or designer wants. This should be undertaken at the very early stages, and hopefully prior to purchasing the site.

The owner or designer should consider objectively what they are hoping to achieve with the development and whether it can be successfully obtained on the site.

- Will it be over development of the site?
- Is a recessive design possible with the floor area requirements?
- Is the aim to construct a mock Victorian villa, which replicates buildings in the street and would be inappropriate in a heritage area?

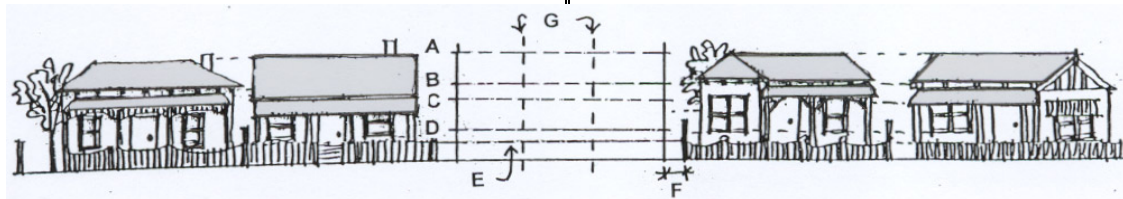


Figure 3. Site Analysis looking at the street patterning of adjacent heritage buildings.

Common approximate levels of the following should be considered when designing residential infill:

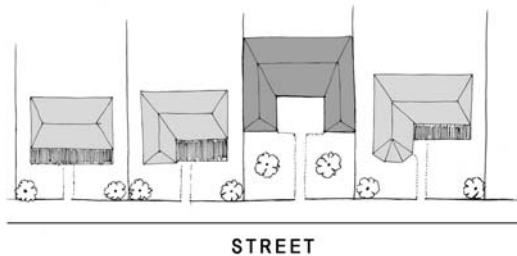
- A. Ridge line;
- B. Roof springing line;
- C. Verandah level;
- D. Window sill levels;
- E. Fence height;
- F. Side setbacks; and
- G. Patterning of openings.

## RESIDENTIAL INFILL

**Setback**

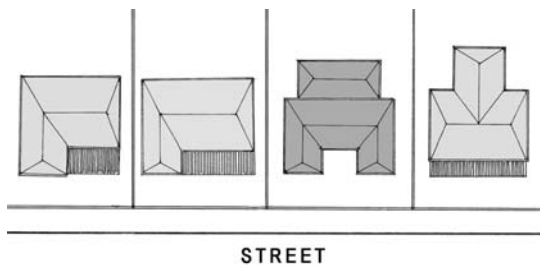
To conserve the character of the area, the setbacks and orientation of existing streetscapes should be retained. This is especially important for buildings facing the street.

Setting the new building too far forward means that it will dominate the character of the existing streetscape. Setting it too far back has the effect of creating a hole, or negative space in the existing viewlines (Figure 4).



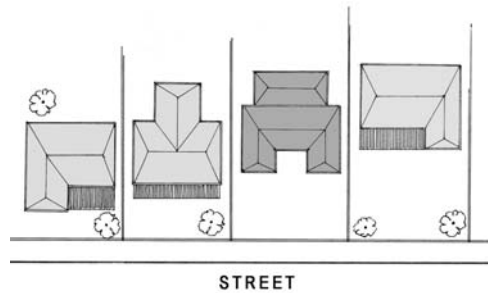
**Figure 4.** Bad infill too far back from existing front setbacks and not matching side setbacks.

If there are uniform front setbacks for adjacent buildings and/or the street, this setback should be retained as shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5.** Good infill retaining existing setbacks

Where the existing setbacks are staggered or vary, there is more flexibility in siting the infill building. It should generally be placed within the range of existing setbacks as shown on Figure 6.



**Figure 6.** Good infill Placed within the range of existing setbacks.

The setback of the infill building from the side boundaries also strongly influences how it fits with the existing streetscape character.

Figure 4 demonstrates an infill building that has not respected the consistent patterning of the street with regard to side setbacks. This has a negative impact on the streetscape.

**Orientation**

The orientation of the new building should also match that of the existing streetscape. In the City of Hobsons Bay existing buildings are generally positioned perpendicular with the street. New buildings should not be oriented across sites contrary to the established pattern.



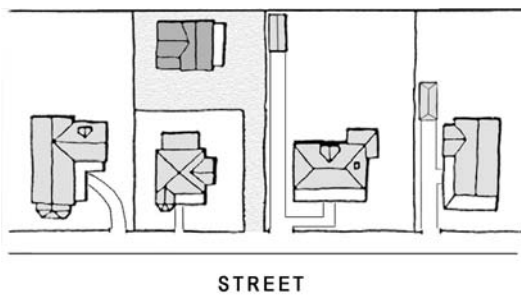
**Figure 7.** Streetscape of Victorian weatherboard houses in Williamstown showing consistent front setbacks and orientation perpendicular to street.

**RESIDENTIAL INFILL**

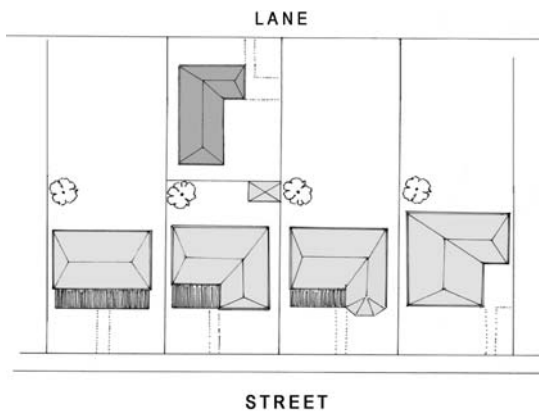
**Subdivision**

The subdivision of a site should conserve the setting of the place providing sufficient space to retain garden areas, buildings and other features essential to the character, importance and integrity of the significant property. Figures 8 & 9 demonstrate methods of subdividing a block while retaining the setting of the existing heritage building.

The example in Figure 7 demonstrates the use of the existing driveway to obtain access to the new building at the rear. The example in Figure 6 demonstrates the retention of a significant outbuilding, which is associated with the heritage building, and the construction of infill to the rear of this. It also demonstrates the use of a rear lane for vehicle access to the new building avoiding the construction of a new street crossover.



**Figure 8.** Good example of subdivision & infill retaining setting of existing building.



**Figure 9.** Good example of subdivision & infill retaining setting of existing building, including associated building.

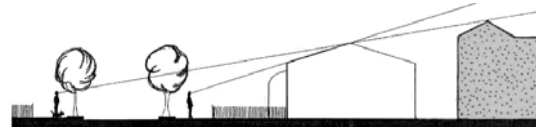
**Infill development at rear of an existing building**

It is often the impact of the infill building rather than the subdivision itself, which may impact on the significance of the heritage place or area.

The size and shape of the new building on the site should relate to the surrounding buildings. New buildings should not dominate heritage places.

The design of the building at the rear of a property should address similar design considerations as if undertaking a rear extension. The main consideration is to minimise the visibility of the new building to the street as well as not losing any heritage qualities in the lane.

It is not always possible to add to a building to the rear in a way that it will not be seen from the street. In these cases the design of the infill must be subservient to the significant elements of the heritage place. Refer to Figure 10.



**Figure 10.** Sight lines drawn to determine visibility of rear infill from the street taken 1.7 m above middle of footpath.

**Infill building fronting the street**

**Form, massing, height and bulk**

The form, massing, height and bulk of the infill building should reflect the neighbouring heritage buildings.

The height and proportions of the new building should reflect the predominant height and proportions of adjacent buildings in the street.

The infill building should not be substantially smaller (Figure 11) or substantially larger (Figure 12) than the general height and proportion of buildings in the street.



**Figure 11** Bad example of infill, substantially smaller than adjacent heritage buildings.

## RESIDENTIAL INFILL

Many of the heritage areas in the City of Hobsons Bay have houses with roof pitches of about 30 degrees and floor to ceiling heights of over 3.0 metres. They are often constructed on timber stumps and entry to the houses may be up some stairs. The overall effect of this is that the building lines may be higher than modern homes.

Many modern houses are built on a concrete slab, with a floor to ceiling height of 2.7 metres and a roof pitch lower than 30 degrees. If a house like this is placed in a traditional streetscape, it will appear small and inappropriate compared with existing dwellings as in Figure 11.



**Figure 12.** Bad example of infill, substantially larger than adjacent heritage buildings.

The bulk of the building is strongly influenced by the shape of the roof and silhouette against the sky. Figure 13 provides an example of infill that is not reflective of the existing roof forms in the street and as a result the infill building stands out.



**Figure 13.** Bad example of infill, with inappropriate roof form and placement of openings.

The heritage areas in the City of Hobsons Bay contain predominantly single storey detached dwellings as shown in Figure 7. Infill development should therefore appear as single storey from the front. Use of an attic storey appearance or a taller section to the rear can still give the infill building a single storey appearance while allowing a higher development yield on the site.

### Openings and windows

The proportion and size of openings in facades, often in association with verandahs create a distinctive street pattern, which are characteristic of a period of architecture.

For infill, the rhythm and placement of windows, along with their general shape should relate to characteristics of surrounding heritage buildings.

Figure 13 demonstrates a bad example of infill design in relation to placement and size of windows and openings.

Large areas of glass such as sliding glass doors or floor to ceiling windows are generally not appropriate for the street frontages in heritage areas.

### Materials and Finishes

New building design should relate to and use as reference points, the materials, colour and details of adjacent buildings and the surrounding heritage places.

### Walls

Many houses in heritage areas within Hobsons Bay have painted weatherboard walls. In these areas infill development should also have painted timber walls. The use of face brick walls for infill would not be in character with these precincts and would stand out. If brick is the preferred method of construction due to durability and maintenance factors, the brick should have a render finish to make it fit more closely with the adjacent timber buildings.

If neighbouring buildings have face brickwork as is common in the former Housing Commission heritage precincts (Figure 14), then the use of face bricks for the infill is appropriate. These bricks should not be tumbled or textured. Coloured pressed bricks will blend better with heritage brick buildings.

Other contemporary materials may be acceptable where they do not dominate the streetscape.



**Figure 14.** Heritage precinct of 1940s dwellings, Newport.

## RESIDENTIAL INFILL

### Roofs

In Hobsons Bay, the traditional roofs within heritage precincts are predominantly corrugated galvanised iron. The closest modern equivalent to this is corrugated galvanised steel. A zincalume finish is not suitable for heritage precincts because of its high degree of reflectivity.

However, some heritage areas have predominantly tiled roofs as shown in Figure 14 and infill in these precincts should also have tiled roofs. The colour of the tiles on the historic buildings should be adhered to as close as possible.

### Fences

Fences generate strong visual lines in the streetscape. The fence design for infill sites should not replicate traditional styles. This is an opportunity for a successful contemporary design solution.

New fences should however reflect the height, choice of materials and percentage of open area of existing fences in the streetscape.

### Garages, Carports and Crossovers

Well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was common for dwellings to be developed without any on-site parking for vehicles. Provision for cars should reflect the nature of adjoining historic buildings and the area.

The provision of cars should reflect the nature of adjoining historic buildings and the area. Existing access points should be utilised where possible including from lane ways. No new crossovers should be accepted.

In most of Hobson Bay's heritage areas, carports and garages are not traditional street elements. For this reason, carports or garages should not be dominant elements in infill development. They should be placed at least one metre behind the main front wall and have a separate roof form. Where possible they should be placed further back.

Location of garages in front of the dwelling or incorporated into the dwelling (Figure 15) should be avoided, as there is little opportunity to articulate a garage to respect the street patterning.

Existing access points should be utilized, including from lane ways. No new crossovers should be created. Vehicle crossings can impact on the traditional formation of the road reserve by introducing a non-traditional element into the heritage streetscape.



Figure 15. A bad example of infill design where garages are incorporated into the new dwellings.

### Details

A new building should be recognisable as a product of its time and not create a false impression of age or a style. Good contemporary design is strongly encouraged.

Reproduction of period detailing on new infill buildings such as cast iron lacework and timber decoration to gables is inappropriate. Contemporary detailing however, which is sympathetic to other buildings in the street, is encouraged.

## COMMERCIAL INFILL

### Introduction

The guidelines for infill in commercial areas are generally the same as those for residential infill. Therefore the previous sections should be referred to when designing in commercial heritage precincts. There are, however, some different elements to commercial buildings that also require consideration and these are outlined below.

### Commercial Heritage Precincts

The commercial heritage areas in the City of Hobsons Bay vary in their degree of intactness.

When a commercial streetscape is mostly intact as shown in Figure 16, an infill building should relate to the heritage buildings directly adjacent to it in form, scale, massing and street patterning.

If the commercial streetscape has been altered over time and the heritage buildings are widely spread in the streetscape as shown in Figure 17, the infill design should respond to the heritage buildings not only on adjacent sites, but also in the surrounding heritage area.

The whole streetscape as shown in Figure 18 should be analysed for common styles and street patterning. This may include relating the infill to heritage buildings on the opposite side of the street.



Figure 16. Nelson Place, Williamstown An intact commercial streetscape.



Figure 17. Ferguson Street, Williamstown



Figure 18. Ferguson Street, Williamstown Consider overall streetscape

### Guidelines

#### Site Analysis

Figure 19 shows the details that should be considered when preparing a site analysis. Consideration should be given to the key features of heritage places in the precinct including:

The existing proportion and rhythm of architectural elements such as verandahs, parapets, windows and doors.

Predominant building heights measured to the parapet.

The form, scale, massing and street patterning.

Detailing such as fenestration, signage and verandahs.



COMMERCIAL INFILL

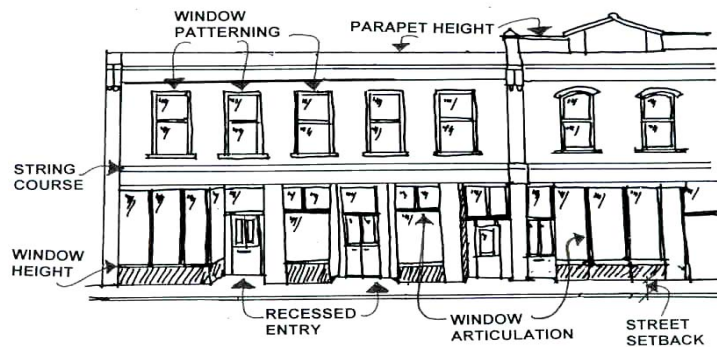


Figure 19. Elements of adjacent buildings to consider when designing commercial infill.

**Setback, Orientation and Entry**

Infill development should maintain the existing building line, and pay close attention to methods of entry.

As shown in Figure 19, most early commercial buildings are sited on the building line and perpendicular to the street. The entry to the building is often recessed. If this is the case, infill development should also provide recessed entry.

**Height**

Infill development should reflect the predominant parapet height and proportions of heritage buildings in the street. This should be based on an analysis of parapet lines and string courses from other heritage buildings as shown on Figure 19.

**Form, Scale and Massing**

Infill development in commercial heritage precincts should reflect the existing proportion and rhythm of architectural elements such as verandahs, parapets, windows and doors.

Infill development on sites that are larger than the surroundings can have their bulk reduced by breaking long walls into bays or by arranging the openings in the wall so that their size and shape reflect the structure and the openings of its neighbours.

Large areas of glass or unrelieved walls should be avoided as they are generally out of character with heritage streetscapes and as a result stand out and dominate the streetscape. Refer to Figure 21 and 22.

Roof forms should generally be concealed behind parapets.

**Verandahs**

Many commercial heritage places in the City of Hobsons Bay traditionally had street verandahs. This is demonstrated by a postcard from circa 1900 of Nelson Place shown in Figure 20.



Figure 20. Historic postcard of Nelson Place, showing verandahs on most buildings.

To retain the patterning of the street, infill development in commercial heritage precincts may also include verandahs.

New verandahs on infill buildings should respect the height and form of existing heritage verandahs. Details however should be contemporary and not replicate the historic verandahs.

The use of Victorian style posts and ironwork should be avoided.

Cantilevered verandahs are not appropriate in predominantly Victorian or Edwardian streetscapes as they are out of character. They tend to be bulky and are out of place without posts.

## COMMERCIAL INFILL

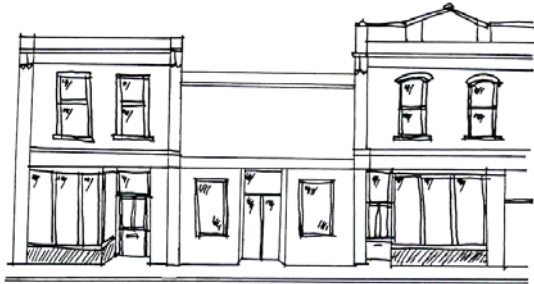


Figure 21. A bad example of infill where blank walls dominate the street facade. The streetscape patterning of the adjacent heritage buildings has not been appropriately considered.

### Glazing

Large areas of glazing at ground level are common for heritage commercial buildings. The glazing however was broken up and was not floor to ceiling. Glazing on the ground floor of infill commercial buildings should retain the window heights and reflect the articulation of the heritage examples.

Large areas of glazing do not usually fit well on upper levels of buildings, as this is not characteristic of heritage commercial buildings and large areas of glazing dominate the streetscape. Bands of windows as shown in Figure 22 are also inappropriate, as they will commonly not reflect the patterning of the heritage buildings.

Tinted or reflective glass is not appropriate for infill commercial buildings in heritage areas as they dominate the streetscape.

### Detailing

Standard corporate developments or units should not be used in commercial heritage precincts as they are not designed with specific localities in mind and their aim is often to dominate the streetscape.

Modifications to the standard design are essential in a heritage precinct as design of infill buildings should be a response to the particular site and surrounds.

Standard corporate colours are often inappropriate in a heritage area. Carefully placed corporate signage can be used to distinguish a particular corporation in a heritage area.

Replication of historic detail from adjacent heritage commercial buildings should not take place. Contemporary details that are sympathetic with the heritage buildings should be used.

Parapets can be shaped, but should be done so in a contemporary and simplified manner.

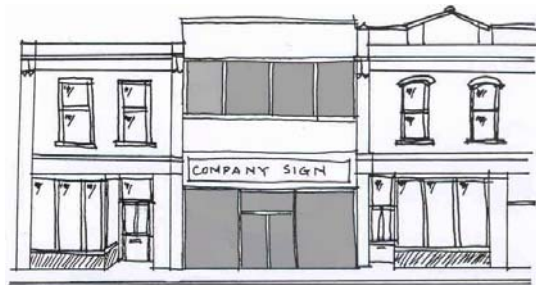


Figure 22. A bad example of infill where reflective glass on the infill building detracts from the adjacent heritage buildings. The window patterning of adjacent heritage buildings has not been considered, the entry is not recessed and the floor to ceiling glass on the ground floor is inappropriate.

### Signage

New signage should not detract from the historic character of the precinct by being visually dominant. Any signage within heritage precincts should:

- Not obstruct views of heritage places.
- Not obscure architectural features of heritage places.
- Be attached in such a way that does not damage significant fabric of the building.
- Not extend above the parapet line of a heritage place.



## INFILL APPLICATION CHECKLISTS

### Owners checklist for design of infill

- Visit Council, talk to a Town Planner.
- Determine whether the site is in a heritage precinct and whether it is a place or individual or contributory significance or is adjacent to places of individual significance.
- Is there a building on the site that can be recycled?
- Identify the cultural heritage significance of the heritage place or precinct and undertake a site analysis.
- Is the site appropriate to achieve what you want?
- Meet with Heritage Advisor to discuss ideas.
- Roughly sketch some alternatives.
- Is further advice needed from the advisor?
- Draw up plans for infill design and include your analysis of heritage issues.
- Submit Application to Council.

### Additional documents required if your planning application is heritage related

- Statement about heritage qualities of the heritage precinct and/or the site.
- Site analysis including streetscape photographs and drawings of at least two properties either side of the development site.

### Planners checklist for assessment of infill

- Does it dominate or overwhelm the heritage streetscape?
- Contemporary but sympathetic design?
- Side and front setbacks retained?
- Does not obstruct views to significant buildings?
- Sympathetic in form, scale and materials to adjacent buildings?
- No replication of historic details?
- Fence appropriate?
- Carport/garage placement and design appropriate?
- Not too high or too low in relation to adjacent heritage buildings?
- Has street façade patterning of windows and openings been considered?
- No reflective or tinted glazing?

