

REFORMED  
RESIDENTIAL ZONES

# NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER STUDY

JULY 2019



**HOBSONS**  
BAY CITY  
COUNCIL



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

July 2019 This policy was compiled by the Hobsons Bay Strategy and Advocacy Department. For further information contact Hobsons Bay City Council 9932 1000 or [www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](http://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.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Neighbourhood Character Study has been prepared to guide how new residential development will be required to respond to the existing and preferred character across Hobsons Bay.

The municipality is experiencing changes in 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.

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

Neighbourhood character is not about amenity, for instance, things like overlooking, access to sunlight and noise.

### Why have a Neighbourhood Character Study?

Council has an existing Neighbourhood Character Study, which was prepared in 2002. Due to 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 character for the municipality. 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.

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 set out 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 contained in a planning scheme's residential zone provisions and ResCode provisions at Clauses 54 and 55 for dwellings and Clause 56 for subdivision:

- heights
- setbacks
- provision of private 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.

### How was the Study prepared?






Preparation of the new Neighbourhood Character Study has been informed by a **comprehensive community stakeholder process** and an **Issues and Opportunities paper** which involved a review of existing neighbourhood character policy, including an assessment of its effectiveness since it was introduced in 2005 under Amendment C31 Part 1. The assessment included:


- desktop and on-site review and analysis of the neighbourhood character types and precincts identified in the 2002 study
- independent design review workshop
- analysis of key VCAT decisions to identify housing character and design issues
- examination of building and planning permit data to provide information about areas where significant changes have occurred since 2002
- review of the planning scheme to assess how the study was implemented

- preparation of initial character type revisions and identify potential special areas
- public input into the desired future for each residential area sought

### Character types in Hobsons Bay

Hobsons Bay has a diverse range of neighbourhoods and comprises six main character types, one of which is a mixture of two types. Each character type is created by the different elements including the architectural style or any heritage values of existing buildings, siting, building form, vegetation, front boundary treatment, colours and materials, site layout and subdivision that contribute to the character of the area.

Neighbourhood Character Type	Neighbourhood Character Description	Example
Garden Court	Garden Court areas are generally spacious residential areas located in a garden setting and developed through a curvilinear subdivision. Garden Court areas have developed more recently, generally between the 1960s–90s. Dwellings are typically double fronted and constructed of brick.	
Garden Suburban	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 in the immediate post-war decades, between 1950s-70s. Dwellings are typically double or triple fronted and constructed of brick.	
Inner Urban	Inner Urban areas are built form-dominated or compact older residential areas and dwellings are generally constructed boundary to boundary with minimal front setbacks.	
Urban Contemporary	Urban Contemporary areas are residential areas with minimal garden space often related to large infill sites with development providing a positive interface to public open space. Development generally consists of attached townhouses and apartments.	
Waterfront Suburban	Waterfront Suburban areas consists of large, contemporary-styled dwellings which take advantage of waterfront views through upper level balconies and large areas of windows at upper levels. Buildings in these areas use a mix of materials and colours and often have unusual dwelling forms. The key feature of Waterfront Suburban areas is that building design is influenced by proximity to the sea (e.g. maximise water views). .	

Inner Urban/ Garden Suburban	Inner Urban/ Garden Suburban areas display characteristics of both types and character elements can switch between streets.	
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The new Study identifies 28 character precincts across Hobsons Bay. The proposed reduction from the current 42 precincts to 28 precincts is based on a combination of desktop analysis, inspections and local knowledge. Detailed brochures have been prepared for each precinct. The brochures will feature development guidelines including, siting, building form, vegetation, front boundary treatment, and colours and materials for each precinct. Additional design guidelines will apply to several precincts that encourage respecting surrounding architectural styles and heritage values, and site layout and subdivision. The brochures will inform the content of the New Residential Zone Schedules.

The new Study also identifies special character areas that display strong and consistent character elements. For these areas, investigation of a Neighbourhood Character Overlay is recommended, especially as this would allow control over demolition that other neighbourhood character tools cannot prevent. A Neighbourhood Character Overlay would form part of a Planning Scheme Amendment to introduce the new Study into the Planning Scheme.





# 1 INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

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

The encouragement of urban consolidation and higher land-use densities near public transport, combined with the need to improve housing choice and better utilise existing infrastructure are key State planning policy objectives. Hobsons Bay, like the rest of metropolitan Melbourne, is under pressure to accommodate new medium and higher density development. Balancing the demand for new residential development with the impact on the character of local streetscapes, is a key challenge for Council. Changes to the existing streetscapes can impact on existing neighbourhood character so it is important that Council balances State and local strategic objectives. The right planning policy tools need to be in place to direct growth to areas suited to accommodate change and increased densities and appropriately protect and preserve local neighbourhood character.

The Neighbourhood Character Study has been prepared in conjunction with Council's Housing Strategy 2018-36 and will help guide the application of the New Residential Zones in Hobsons Bay.

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Practice Note 43, page 6

## WHAT IS NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER?

**Character** has been defined as the interplay of conditions that make one place different from another, including social and cultural conditions. In terms of the planning scheme, the focus is on built form and landscape, and includes both the public and private realm. It is the combination of qualities that make an area unique. The siting, scale, form, landscaping and detailing of a development can be assessed either as contributing to, or detracting from neighbourhood character.

Neighbourhood character is not about amenity, for instance, things like overlooking, access to sunlight and noise etc.

**Respecting character** means that a development should try to 'fit in' and generally involves two broad approaches:

- respecting the scale and form of surrounding development; and/or
- respecting the architectural style of surrounding development <sup>1</sup>

**Preferred Neighbourhood Character** statements and associated development guidelines for different residential areas within a municipality can be inserted into the local provisions of the municipality's planning scheme to help ensure that new development does 'fit in'. This is provided there is sufficient strategic justification, e.g. an adopted Neighbourhood Character

Study and other strategic support, such as an adopted Housing Strategy.<sup>2</sup>

*Preferred Neighbourhood Character has become the focus of planning scheme neighbourhood character policy*

## BACKGROUND

### NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER STUDY

#### 2002

The *Hobsons Bay Neighbourhood Character Study, December 2002* ('the 2002 study') was prepared in response to the State Government's introduction of ResCode, a suite of development standards that provided greater opportunity to protect neighbourhood character. Primarily these comprised the standards in Clauses 54 and 55 of every Victorian planning scheme. The 2002 Study contained residential development guidelines, which were included in separate brochures that were prepared for each of the 42 precincts. These were designed to supplement the ResCode provisions. At the same time, the Neighbourhood Character Overlay, a more effective tool designed to protect small areas of special character was introduced into the Victoria Planning Provisions.

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<sup>2</sup> Planning Practice Note 28, page 7 and 8.

<sup>3</sup>

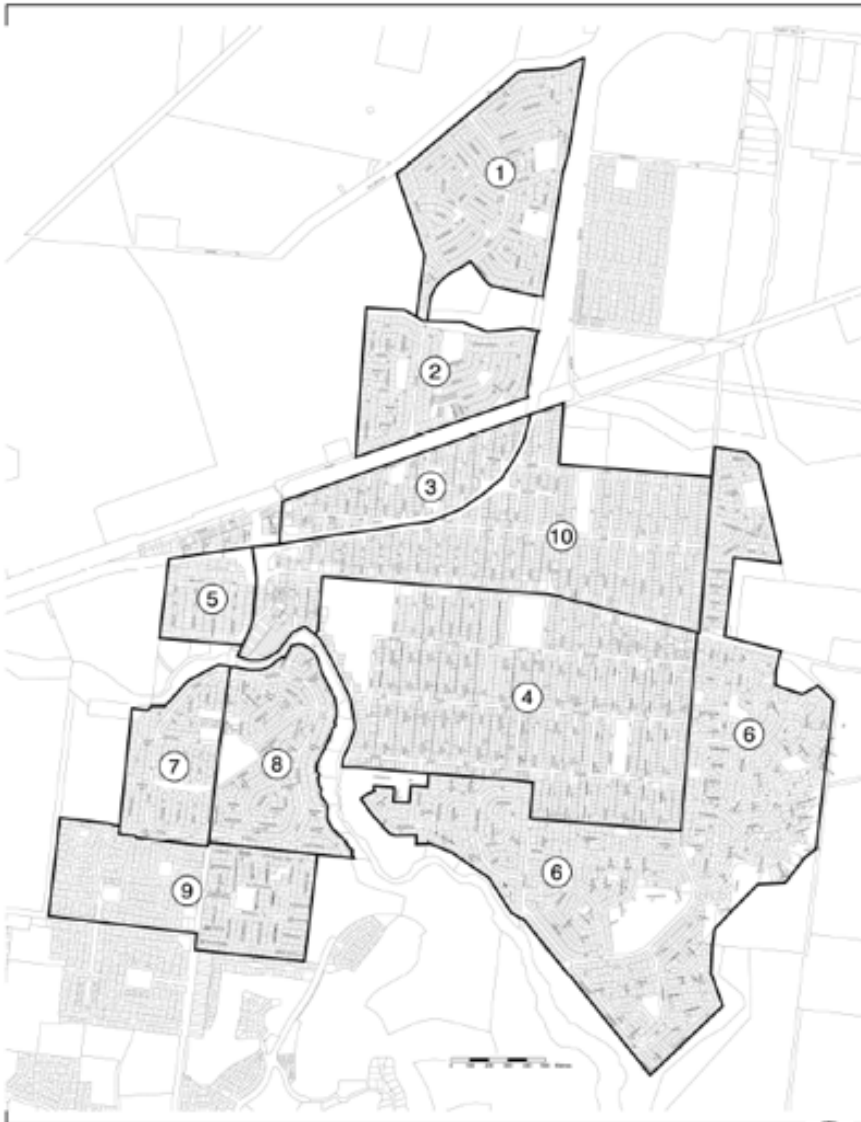
(The numbering system for individual precincts was replicated across the four local policies and maps. This study proposes that precincts currently having

The implementation of the 2002 study was confined to a summary of the development guidelines being introduced into the planning scheme's Local Policy. Four neighbourhood

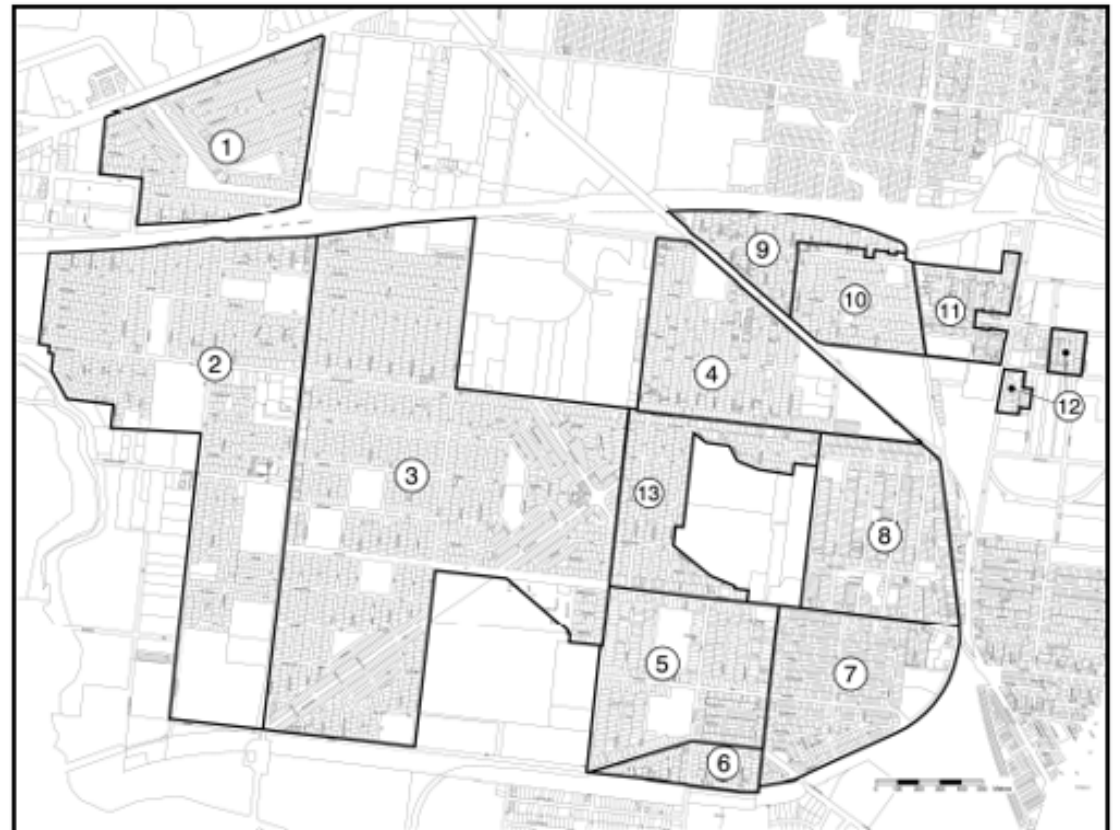
character local policies were introduced at Clauses 22.07 to 22.10 of the *Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme*. The Study was also referenced in the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), alongside reference to the precinct brochures (mainly in Clause 21.06).

The four separate local policies relate to four broad residential areas in Hobsons Bay, which are summarised as West (22.07), North (22.08), South (22.09) and East (22.10). These four policies, together, contain design guidelines for 42 individual precincts and define their geographic extent through their inclusion of the following four maps (Maps 1 to 4)<sup>3</sup>:

identification numbers in common will be further distinguished with a letter prefix, e.g. Precinct 1 in West precincts will be identified as W1.)



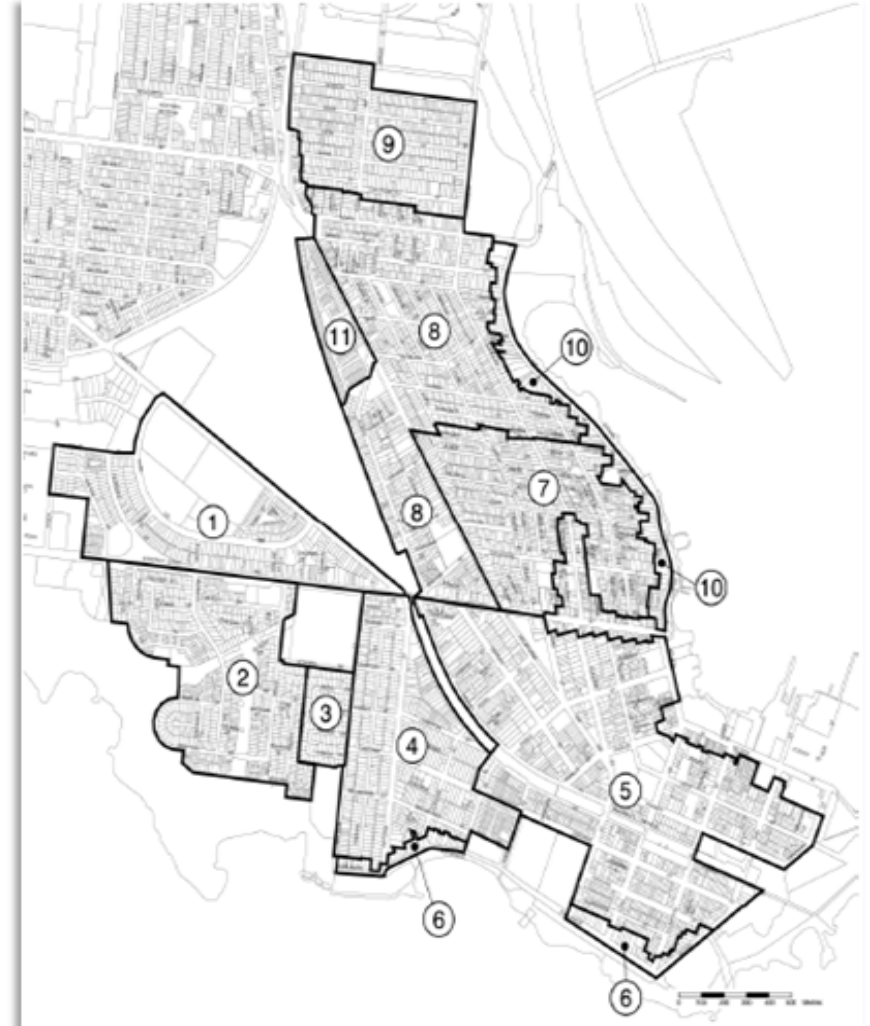
**MAP 1: The Hobsons Bay West  
Neighbourhood Character Precincts (Clause 22.07)**



**MAP 2: The Hobsons Bay North  
Neighbourhood Character Precincts (Clause 22.08)**



**MAP 3: The Hobsons Bay South  
Neighbourhood Character Precincts (Clause 22.09)**



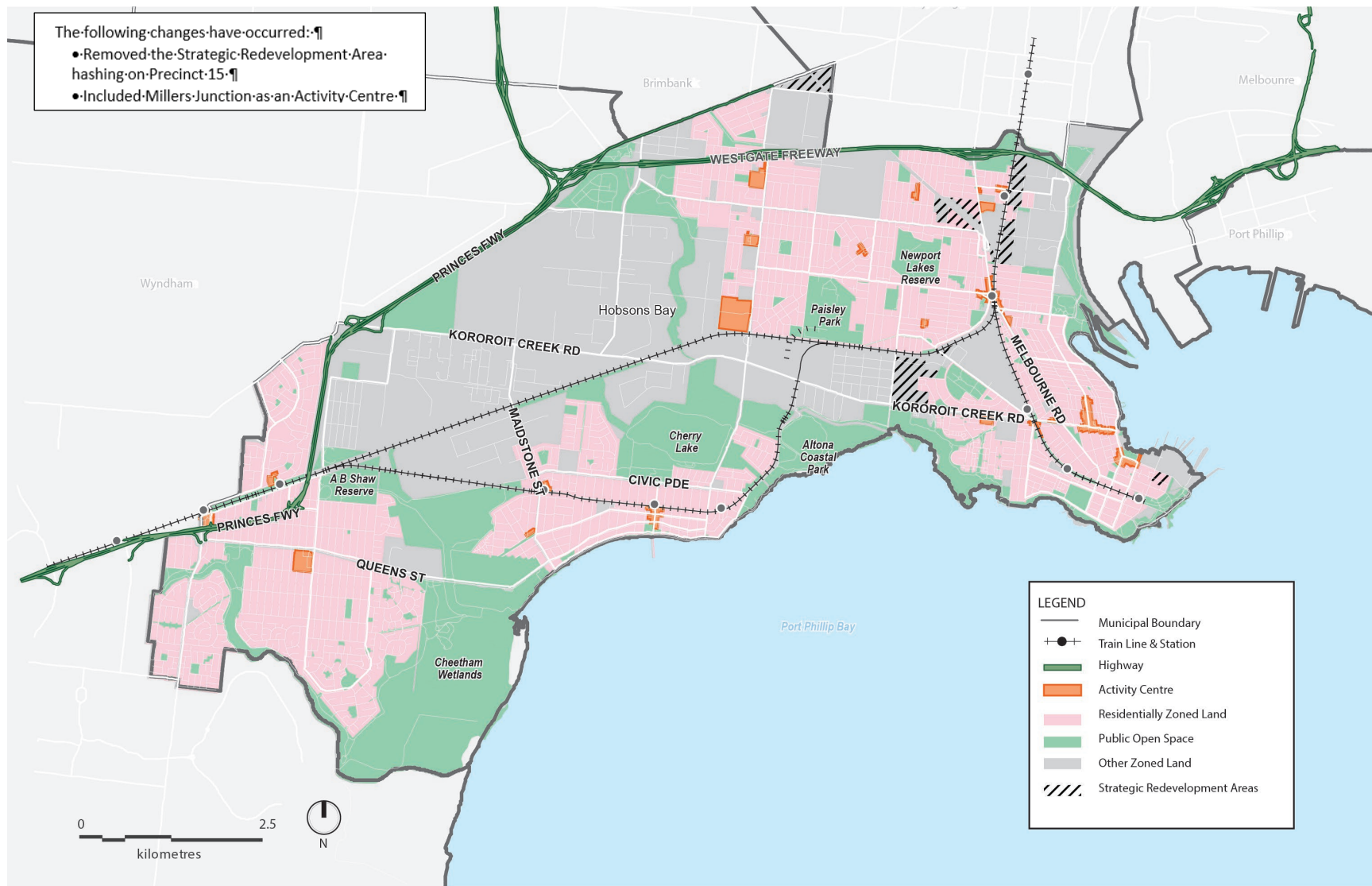
**MAP 4: The Hobsons Bay East  
Neighbourhood Character Precincts (Clause 22.10)**

## WHY IS THE CURRENT STUDY BEING UNDERTAKEN?

The current study is being undertaken to update the 2002 *Hobsons Bay Neighbourhood Character Study* and the current neighbourhood character local policies and precinct brochures. It will also provide an important input into Council's application of the new residential zones, along with other strategic support, particularly the Housing Strategy 2018-36. However, the main imperative to review the 2002 Study stems from the strategic direction to undertake such a review at Clause 21.06-1 (Built Environment) of the MSS.

Council has an obligation under Section 12(1)(c) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* ('the Act') to keep the planning scheme up-to-date. This falls alongside other Section 12(1) obligations, which include that Council's planning must implement the objectives of Planning in Victoria (listed in Section 4 of the Act) and provide sound, strategic and coordinated planning of the use and development of land in its area. A planning scheme that is not regularly updated exposes a Council to the risk of failing to meet its obligations under the Act. Additionally, if it does not provide clear direction for the community and developers it can result in poor development outcomes, inconsistency in decisions and confusion for all parties.

This review provides an opportunity to embed more precision into the planning scheme provisions, using the experience of implementation over the last 13 years. This experience can be used to evaluate the success or otherwise of the provisions introduced as a result of the 2002 study. The review also provides an opportunity to assess the continuing relevance of the intent behind these provisions, and understand the nature of the threats to character that have manifested themselves in this period.



MAP 5: STUDY AREA

## THIS PROJECT

### STUDY AREA

The study area, as shown on Map 5 at page 14, includes all residentially-zoned land within Hobsons Bay (land zoned General Residential Zone Schedules 1 to 3, Residential Growth Zone Schedule 1 and Mixed Use Zone). Some Strategic Redevelopment Areas identified in the Industrial Land Management Strategy (2008) have also been reviewed to determine if they should be included or excluded in proposed revised precinct boundaries.

### METHOD

This study will inform future housing character and design of Hobsons Bay's residential areas. It seeks to revise the 2002 study to take into account changes that have occurred on the ground in Hobsons Bay as well as review the effectiveness of the 2002 study and its implementation. Since the 2002 study, numerous neighbourhood character studies have been undertaken outside Hobsons Bay. This study aims to improve on previous methods by:

- including an independent design review
- identifying special character areas that require greater protection
- placing greater focus on better design of medium density housing
- providing greater emphasis on better accommodating change

- providing illustration-based communication where possible
- simplifying the Neighbourhood Character Study as much as practicable
- ensuring that the Neighbourhood Character Study is supported by other Council strategies

### General Principals for Additions and Exclusions to Overall Neighbourhood Character Precinct Boundaries

There are anomalies with the current neighbourhood character precinct boundaries that need correcting. The correction of anomalies, combined with changes that have occurred on the ground over the past decade, have highlighted a number of additions and exclusions that should be made to the overall geographic extent of neighbourhood character precincts. Proposed revised precinct boundaries take into account the following:

#### Reducing Complexity:

- reducing the number of character types and number of precincts where possible to reduce complexity. This has resulted in the proposed reduction of character types from seven to six, including a hybrid that combines two of the other five character types. This is proposed to be accompanied by a reduction in the number of precincts from 42 to 28, which would result in altered precinct boundaries, a general increase in the geographic coverage of individual precincts and a reduction in the number of separate design guidelines required for different residential areas



- the complexity of the Neighbourhood Character Study is proposed to be further reduced by highlighting design guidelines that apply across the Study area regardless of the character type of individual precincts. This is intended to be made more transparent by the development of a separate brochure containing generic design guidelines that would be applicable to all revised precincts

#### **Alignment with other Council Strategies:**

- the proposed precinct boundaries and design guidelines for different residential neighbourhoods that are identified in the Neighbourhood Character Study support, and are supported by other Council strategies. This is largely reflected by the alignment of individual precinct brochure maps with the change areas that are shown in the framework maps contained in Council's Housing Strategy 2018-36

#### **Re-zonings since Implementation of 2002 Study:**

- changes to different areas, including re-zonings that have occurred since 2005, which is when the four current neighbourhood character policies were introduced into the planning scheme. Re-zoning of former industrial land to residential would, in principle, add to the amount of land covered by the Neighbourhood Character Study. However, the planning controls that accompanied such re-zonings also need to be considered, e.g. the adequacy of any

design guidelines contained as requirements for masterplans

#### **Exclusion of Mixed Use and Commercial Areas and Non-residential Uses (mainly in Williamstown) included in 2002 Study:**

- areas of the Mixed Use Zone (MUZ) that were only partially included in the 2002 Study are proposed to be excluded, especially where existing Design and Development Overlays (DDO's) are considered to be adequate. The main examples are two segments of a wider MUZ area in the eastern corner of current 'East' Precinct 5, which are covered by DDO11 (Former Port Phillip Woollen Mills and Surrounds). The DDO11 control contains a Design and Development Plan and Design Objectives that are adequate to guide a new or emerging character within the wider MUZ area
- areas of commercial zones that were only partially included in the 2002 Study are proposed to be excluded, especially in relation to larger activity centres. The main examples are commercial areas forming part of Williamstown Major Activity Centre and the commercial areas adjacent to Ferguson Street and the railway in Williamstown. Future development in these areas, including apartments and 'shop-top' housing, would be guided by commercial zoning and the Activity Centres Strategy 2018-36
- non-residential uses or land with site-specific non-residential zoning that were included in the 2002 Study are

proposed to be excluded in instances where these occur at the boundaries between two adjoining precincts. The main example is Williamstown Hospital, which currently spans across the boundary between two adjacent precincts and there is no case to be made for including the hospital entirely within either precinct. The exclusion of such land would have a neutral effect on proposed development guidelines for adjacent residential areas

#### **Retention of Micro Centres included in 2002 Study:**

- micro centres that were included in the 2002 Study are proposed to be retained. The small scale of these centres generally service local neighbourhoods and contribute to their character. The retention of these centres would have a neutral effect on proposed development guidelines for adjacent residential areas

#### **Strategic Redevelopment Areas:**

- the adequacy of current planning controls for specific Strategic Redevelopment Areas that have been identified in the Industrial Land Management Strategy (2008) with regard to their ability to adequately influence future or an emerging character in the different areas
- whether a Strategic Redevelopment Area is compatible with the character type of an adjacent neighbourhood character precinct. These areas generally imply future contemporary development that would only be suitable for

inclusion in an adjoining 'Urban Contemporary' character type precinct

#### **General Principals Applied to Strategic Redevelopment Areas**

The application of one or more of the above principles to Strategic Redevelopment Areas that have been identified in the *Industrial Land Management Strategy* (2008) have resulted in the following additions and exclusions:

- land at 38-48 Blackshaws Road, South Kingsville in Precinct 16 of the Industrial Land Management Strategy 2008 is proposed to be excluded. This land was included in the 2002 Study as part of 'North' Precinct 4 when it still had industrial zoning. Although this land has subsequently been rezoned to residential, it is also covered by DDO10, which has a requirement for a masterplan with design guidelines that will guide the future character of the area. Additionally, the Housing Strategy 2018-36 identifies this land as a substantial change area that implies contemporary-style medium to high density residential development. Therefore, this land is not suitable for inclusion with the incremental and moderate change areas in surrounding 'Garden Suburban' character type precincts
- land to the west of 38-48 Blackshaws Road, at 5-59 Sutton Street, also occurs in Precinct 16 of the Industrial Land Management Strategy 2008 and current 'North' Neighbourhood Character Precinct 4 under the 2002 Study.

This land is proposed to be excluded because it is zoned Industrial 3 Zone, which currently prohibits residential development

- land at 222-238 and 240-258 Kororoit Creek Road, Williamstown North in Precinct 13 of the Industrial Land Management Strategy 2008 is proposed to be added. This land was rezoned from industrial to General Residential Zone 3 subsequent to the 2002 Study and is covered by DDO14, which contains Design Guidelines that are considered too general to adequately address different design elements. The Housing Strategy 2018-36 identifies this land as a moderate change area and implies contemporary-style future development that is suitable for inclusion with the moderate change areas shown in an adjacent 'Urban Contemporary' character type precinct

This project is being undertaken in three stages with three rounds of community engagement proposed. This report is the final Study of the project (refer Table 1 on the next page).



STAGE	1. BACKGROUND REVIEW	2. DRAFT STUDY	3. FINAL STUDY
CONSULTATION	Consultation Round 1	Consultation Round 2	
PRODUCT	Issues & Opportunities Report	Draft Final Neighbourhood Character Study	Final Neighbourhood Character Study

**Each stage of the project has involved the following tasks:**

### Stage One

- desktop and on-site review and analysis of the neighbourhood character types and precincts identified in the 2002 Study
- independent design review workshop
- analysis of key VCAT decisions to identify housing character and design issues
- examination of building and planning permit data to provide information about areas where significant changes have occurred since 2002
- review of the planning scheme to assess how the study was implemented
- preparation of initial character type revisions and identify potential special areas
- public input into the desired future for each residential area sought
- preparation of the Issues and Opportunities report released in August 2014

### Stage Two

- updated character types including identification of elements for retention and potential to change, revision of preferred character statements and design guidelines
- identification of proposed special areas for further protection

- investigation of implementation options and recommended preferred approach
- preparation of the Neighbourhood Character Study

This final Study forms the basis of consultation in Stage Two

### Stage Three

This stage involved:

- revision of the report in response to council and community feedback to produce the final Neighbourhood Character Study for adoption by Council
- Reformatting of Neighbourhood Character Precinct Design Guidelines Brochures

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 community will have a further opportunity to comment during the exhibition period of the amendment.

## INDEPENDENT DESIGN REVIEW WORKSHOP

Design professions were critical about the quality of residential design, including some of the design solutions promoted in past Victorian neighbourhood character studies, such as the way recessed or 'pop-up' upper storeys are expressed. At the same time, Council planning staff were critical of poorly designed applications and lack of application by good architects.

To address this, Stage One of the project included a design peer review workshop involving a qualified architect with appropriate residential design experience. This workshop was held with Council staff to generate options for design controls and guidelines that responded to:

- neighbourhood character issues identified in the current study
- actual application drawings
- the guidelines and provisions currently used by Council
- the intent of the 2002 Neighbourhood Character Study

This workshop helped inform the analysis process, the design guidelines and the format of the final project outputs.

### Workshop Findings

The Key findings of the workshop have been summarized below.

### Different residential interfaces

- guidelines are needed to consider different interfaces which can be grouped into types such as laneways, railway, creek and parkland interfaces to improve the amenity of public spaces through responsive design and increased surveillance
- railway, highway and commercial land interfaces can handle more robust, urban forms and could include green walls and acoustic buffers
- main roads in Hobsons Bay could be greatly enhanced as gateways to the municipality through street trees, undergrounding car parking and allowing greater height.

### Importance of vegetation

- Hobsons Bay is not highly vegetated and when redevelopment occurs, existing vegetation is rarely retained, which contributes to the urban heat island effect and lack of biodiversity. Council's planning needs to address both of these issues as part of the directions to achieve Outcome 6 of *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* for Melbourne to become a sustainable and resilient city. This includes greening urban areas within every metropolitan municipality to create an urban forest that will help to cool and green the city
- Options for enhancing development through landscaping include:
  - providing vegetation (including canopy trees) at the rear third of a property

- more permeable surfaces for landscaping
  - landscaping to soften gun barrel driveways (600mm for landscaping along fence is all that is needed)
  - involving landscape architects internally in application decisions
  - discouraging more than one crossover
  - carefully siting basements to allow trees to grow in the natural ground
- if an existing local law (e.g. Local Law 47) could be used or improved to better protect existing trees
  - the concept of a vegetated 'backyard zone' could be a vision for the future
  - fence heights should be restricted to provide a visual connection between pedestrians and front gardens
  - driveways that extend beyond half the length of property should be avoided and if provided, should be softened by additional landscaping
  - landscape design guidelines are required to tie in with this Study

### **Respecting character while allowing for change**

- the high water table in some areas means that full basements are not practical. Half basements may be possible and any height restrictions should be considerate of this. An additional half story to accommodate a basement is appropriate in areas where change is envisaged

### **Other built form considerations**

- any guidelines for areas should highlight the importance of site responsive design
- habitable rooms should be avoided along and near property boundaries to avoid overlooking (existing and future); however passive surveillance of streets and public spaces should be encouraged
- front setbacks could be reduced, particularly near activity centres, however this is provided that landscaping opportunities are not significantly reduced

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Community engagement has been, and continues to be an important part of this project. It has allowed the community who live, work and spend time in Hobsons Bay to be involved in shaping its future.

### **Round One Consultations**

The aims of the initial stage of engagement were to:

- inform the public that the neighbourhood character review had begun and is integral to the application of the new residential zones
- obtain feedback regarding preferred residential design and criteria for residential intensification in the future

- obtain feedback regarding the proposed next stage of the project

Consultation was held between 25 August and 3 October 2014 as part of the *From your street to the shops* (new residential zones) consultation. Members of the community had opportunities to voice their opinions:

- at drop-in sessions
- online via the interactive 'Participate' website
- by contacting the strategic planning team
- in person

Drop-in sessions were held over a number of weeks in key locations around Hobsons Bay including the Spotswood Community House, Williamstown Town Hall, Altona North Library, Altona Meadows Library, Hobsons Bay Civic Centre and South Kingsville Community Centre and Laverton Community Hub.

Council staff engaged with the community in person at the Altona Beach Market, Central Square shopping centre, Altona Gate shopping centre, Aviation Road in Laverton and Douglas Parade in Williamstown.

Newsletters were disseminated to households throughout the municipality regarding the new residential zones projects (including the Neighbourhood Character Study). Postcards were handed out in a number of activity centres publicising the projects. Advertisements were also placed in the local paper.

The *Issues and Opportunities report* was available for comment on Council's website and at the drop-in sessions.

During consultation with the community, the following questions were asked:

- What characteristics do you value in your neighbourhood?
- What kind of areas are most suited to accommodate more housing?
- What aspects of new residential development do you like?
- How could new residential development be improved?

The main issues raised in the almost 300 submissions in response to Round One consultation are summarised in Figure One. Vegetation was most commonly identified as a valued neighbourhood characteristic (one third of responses).

This was also identified most frequently for improvement in new residential development. The low scale of development and heritage buildings were also frequently valued (mentioned in one eighth of responses). Issues raised regarding new development included lack of side setbacks, overshadowing, overlooking and the water table preventing basement car parking.

Almost 300 submissions were received regarding the neighbourhood character study.

Of these:

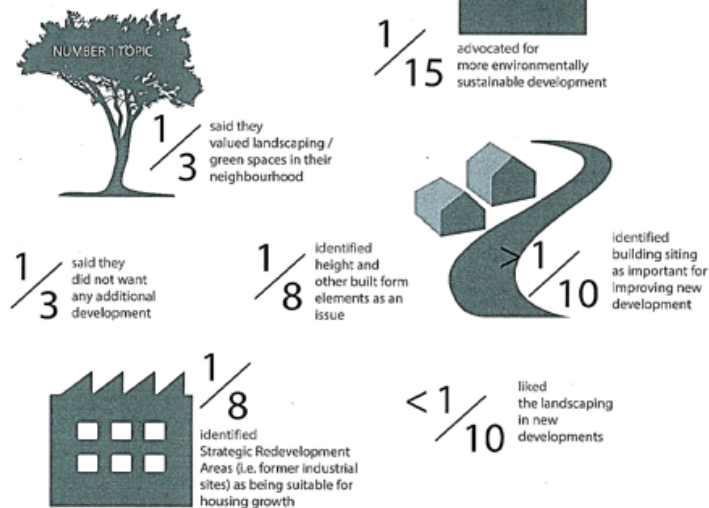


Figure 1: Summary of responses to Round 1 Consultation

### Round Two Consultation

Community consultation on the Neighbourhood Character Study 2018 sought feedback from the local community and other stakeholders on proposed change areas and preferred neighbourhood character statements for different areas.

An eight week consultation period was held in September to November 2018 and included online and digital engagement,

printed material and opportunities for face to face discussion. A summary booklet was prepared that presented a simplified overview of the Study including precinct character brochures and its impact on the Hobsons Bay community.

The consultation was part of engagement on the New Residential Zones and the suite of supporting strategies including this NCS, the Housing Framework Plan, Housing Strategy and Activity Centres Strategy.

Fifty-seven submissions were received to the package of policy rather than specifically to the Neighbourhood Character Study. Following consultation the Precinct Brochures were reformatted to make user friendly and to ensure consistency with the Housing Framework Plan.

### Round Three Consultation

A third round of consultation will occur as part of a future planning scheme amendment.



## APPROACH TO THE STUDY

In the Issues and Opportunities report released in August 2014, two questions were posed under the heading *Using the Best Available Tools*:

*Q1: How has the 2002 Neighbourhood Character Study been implemented?*

*Q2: What Planning Scheme Tools are now available?*

The expectation of the 2002 study was that its development guidelines would be included in the Local Policy section of the *Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme*.

While the precincts and their descriptions are included in the Planning Scheme as defined in the Neighbourhood Character Study (NCS), a lot of the detail from the preferred character and design guidelines for each precinct was not included in the neighbourhood character policies introduced as part of Amendment C31 to the *Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme* in 2005 (C31 Part 1).

Experience since the introduction of Amendment C31 has been that Local Policy provisions tend not to carry sufficient weight at VCAT. The result is that the provisions have been of minimal value because they lack detail and have minimal statutory force.

**The approach adopted in this Study is to proceed on the assumption that a substantial amendment to the current planning**

**scheme provisions will be needed to give sufficient weight to neighbourhood character objectives. This will most likely involve:**

- **including more comprehensive design guidelines in a Local Policy or new municipal planning strategy**
- **applying additional planning scheme tools that are available under the Victoria Planning Provisions**

### Planning Scheme Tools

The *Issues and Opportunities* report stated:

*“The limited scope of the 2002 review confined implementation to summarising the development guidelines into Local Policy.”*

However, similarly to the 2002 Study’s response to the advent of new neighbourhood character provisions at Clauses 54 and 55 (for dwellings) and Clause 56 (for subdivision), a range of additional tools are now available in the Victoria Planning Provisions that relate to residential design and character, particularly since the introduction of the reforms to the new residential zones in March 2017.

These tools are shown in Table 2. The table also shows when these policy and controls (zones and overlays) apply.

	PLANNING SCHEME TOOL	SINGLE DWELLING	2+ DWELLINGS ON A LOT	DEMOLITION	VEGETATION PROTECTION
	Local policy	x**	✓	x	x
ZONES	Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)	✓*	✓	x	x
	General Residential Zone (GRZ)	✓*	✓	x	x
	Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)	✓*	✓	x	x
OVERLAYS	Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO)	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Design and Development Overlay (DDO)	✓	✓	x	x
	Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)	✓	✓	x	✓
	Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO)	✓	✓	x	✓

\*Assessed through building system rather than the planning system

\*\*Unless a permit is triggered by a zone or an overlay

Table 2: Range of Neighbourhood Character tools and how they apply

Along with a revised local policy, the reformed residential zones and Neighbourhood Character and Design and Development Overlays can be used to provide better residential outcomes. Tables showing how these tools are likely to be used in Hobsons Bay are included in Chapter 4 and Appendix B, which includes the key planning controls that currently apply.

The approach adopted in this study is to consider all relevant planning scheme tools capable of implementing the recommended options of this study.

## COUNCIL'S HOUSING STRATEGY 2018-36

In the *Issues and Opportunities* report released in August 2014, two questions were posed under the heading *Delivering a more Sustainable City*:

*Q3: How can the present study contribute to a more sustainable city?*

*Q4: What kinds of area are most suited to accommodating more dwellings?*

These two questions are central to the preparation of Council's Housing Strategy, which was prepared concurrently with the Neighbourhood Character Study.

A Housing Framework Plan developed as part of the Housing Strategy sets out the areas for minimal, incremental, moderate and substantial housing growth.

The approach adopted in this report is consistent with the implications anticipated in the *Issues and Opportunities* report, and is elaborated below. That report stated:

*An expectation of the 2002 NCS was that its findings would be integrated with housing policy, leading to planning scheme changes providing stronger protection of character in some areas, and changes to character to accommodate housing intensification in others. This would ultimately deliver a more sustainable, compact city and reduce pressure to develop greenfield land.*

The review has provided an opportunity to fulfil this expectation in ways that respect local character. State policy, in particular the application of the reformed residential zones, requires this study to incorporate changes to character to accommodate housing intensification in some areas. This is reiterated in Planning Practice Note 28 (PPN28), which states that an amendment to a planning scheme that proposes to introduce neighbourhood character provisions must not inadvertently undermine the achievement of State and local residential policy objectives or diminish the potential for diversity in housing choice across a municipality. Planning Practice Notes are discussed in more detail in Policy and Statutory Section on page 30.

Practice Note 28 outlines the following five housing tests that must be met to support additional neighbourhood character provisions:

1. What is council's projected population for the next

30 years?

2. How many new households will be required?
3. Given the existing number of dwellings, how many additional dwellings are required to meet population and household projections over an initial 15-year period?
4. How will these additional dwellings be provided within the municipality?
5. What impact will the implementation of the neighbourhood character amendment have on achieving the number of dwellings that need to be provided to meet other housing objectives over the initial 15-year period?

Council's Housing Strategy 2018-36 conservatively estimates that the application of the minimal, incremental, moderate and substantial change areas under the Housing Framework Plan will create almost 16,300 new dwelling opportunities. This equates to around 45 years of supply based on the construction rate of around 361 new dwellings per annum within the municipality over the period 2011-14. This would potentially accommodate an additional 19,252 people (8,849 new homes at a rate of 443 per annum) over the next 20 years, which is more than sufficient to accommodate the projected increase in population from 96,470 residents in 2018 to around 112,642 residents by 2036.

Under the Housing Framework Plan, the largest opportunities for new medium to high density dwellings would be in areas with access to key activity centres (around 32%) and within Strategic Redevelopment Areas (around 28%).

The alignment of the individual precinct maps under the Neighbourhood Character Study and the Housing Framework maps, combined with the above estimates of the Housing Strategy 2018-36, will help to demonstrate that a planning scheme amendment proposing to implement the Neighbourhood Character Study would meet the housing tests outlined in PPN28.

The approach adopted in this study is to assist Council, in conjunction with the Housing Strategy 2018-36 and other strategies (e.g. Activity Centres Strategy 2018-36) to decide:

- > how to better protect valued aspects of existing neighbourhood character
- > how to define the preferred character in these areas
- > where more dwellings can be accommodated
- > seek to encourage (and avoid compromising) sustainable design

## APPLYING THE REFORMED RESIDENTIAL ZONES

The Issues and Opportunities report further stated:

*It is expected that this study will resolve in concert with strategic housing work undertaken by the Council, the locations favoured for residential intensification.*

Council’s Housing Strategy 2018-36, in combination with this Study, distinguish between locations where development change should be concentrated, locations where special characteristics should be protected, and locations where change can continue within accepted character parameters.

In the *Issues and Opportunities report*, the approach was to:

- establish a framework that identifies areas suitable for residential intensification, including:
  - residential areas adjoining activity centres
  - residential areas along principal public transport corridors (e.g. train stations and Smart Bus routes)
  - other key main roads e.g. Central Avenue/Queen Street, Altona Meadows
  - key redevelopment sites. Council has identified Strategic Redevelopment Areas (SRA), some of which have been designated potentially suitable for residential intensification. These areas are

identified in Council’s Industrial Land Management Strategy (2008)

This approach has been confirmed in Council’s Housing Strategy, which estimates that:

- over a quarter of the potential supply is from known large strategic redevelopment areas and other key sites
- fifteen of Hobsons Bay’s activity centres are expected to provide around one third of the total new housing supply
- other infill development (from areas outside of SRA and activity centres) will occur
- there are further opportunities to increase dwelling supply within activity centres in the Commercial 1 Zone in the form of shop top housing. (This would need to be investigated as part of a more detailed study e.g. a Structure Plan)

The assumption made in this Study is that residential areas will be allocated one of four categorisations by the Housing Strategy, corresponding to the Reformed Residential Zones as shown below.

ZONE	CHANGE AREAS
Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)	Minimal and Incremental change areas
General Residential Zone (GRZ)	Moderate change areas
Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)	Substantial change areas

**Table 3: Potential application of Reformed Residential Zones according to change areas in Housing Strategy.**

The Housing Strategy 2018-36 determines the boundaries of these areas, and the residential zone that should be applied. This Study provides the character framework that will inform the way the new zones are applied. This includes variations to ResCode standards, expressed in schedules to the new zones, and guidelines that supplement the scheduled variations.

Therefore consideration is given, at various points in this Study, to differences in neighbourhood character policy that should apply in minimal, incremental, moderate and substantial change areas.

## POLICY AND STATUTORY CONTEXT

The following sections of the *Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme* provide direction regarding neighbourhood character and residential design:

- Clause 15.01 'Built Environment' of the Planning Policy Framework
- Clause 21.06 'Built Environment and Heritage' and Clause 21.07 'Housing' of the Municipal Strategic Statement
- Heritage, Urban Design and Neighbourhood Character Local Policies (Clauses 22.01, 22.04 and 22.07-10 respectively)
- Residential Zones (Clause 32)
- Heritage and Design and Development Overlays (Clauses 43.01 and 43.02 respectively)
- ResCode Particular Provisions (Clause 54, 55 and 56)

Other important reference documents are as follows:

- Hobsons Bay Housing Strategy 2018-36
- Hobsons Bay Activity Centres Strategy 2018-36
- Hobsons Bay 2030 – Community Vision
- Council Plan 2017-22
- Industrial Land Management Strategy (2008)
- Guidelines for Alterations and Additions to Dwellings in Heritage Areas in Hobsons Bay 2006
- Guidelines for Infill Development in Heritage Areas in Hobsons Bay 2006

There are also two Planning Practice Notes that deal exclusively with neighbourhood character and have been considered in the preparation of this Study:

### Planning Practice Notes

The Victorian Government has developed a series of Planning Practice Notes to advise council planners and other regular users of planning schemes on the appropriate interpretation and application of the Victoria Planning Provisions. The two that deal with neighbourhood character are as follows:

- Planning Practice Note 28 (PPN28) – Using The Neighbourhood Character Provisions in Planning Schemes (July 2004); and
- Planning Practice Note 43 (PPN43) – Understanding Neighbourhood Character (January 2018).

Both of the practice notes provide the following explanation of neighbourhood character:

*“Neighbourhood character is essentially the combination of the public and private realms. Every property, public place or piece of infrastructure makes a contribution, whether great or small. It is the cumulative impact of all these contributions that establishes neighbourhood character.”*

Practice Note 28 explains how responsible authorities should plan for neighbourhood character, including the

proper development and implementation of neighbourhood character studies, which should “identify and then support actions to achieve good development outcomes” (PPN28, pg 3).

Neighbourhood character studies outline the characteristics of different areas and guidelines for the residential development of those areas. These studies also examine the planning scheme tools that are available to address neighbourhood character under the Victorian Planning Provisions. Additionally, they make recommendations as to which of those tools should be applied in a municipality’s planning scheme to achieve the preferred character outcomes for the various residential areas within the municipality. The different character areas are usually described as individual precincts that reflect a more general character type and are mapped to define their geographic extent.

Practice Note 43 explains the role of neighbourhood character in preparing or assessing a proposed residential development. A description of neighbourhood character and a proposed development site is a mandatory requirement in addressing the ResCode provisions of clauses 54 and 55 in every Victorian planning scheme. A planning application must also demonstrate how the

proposal responds to the neighbourhood and site description. Therefore, an understanding of the surrounding neighbourhood character of a proposed residential development site and any development guidelines that are aimed towards maintaining or improving the identified neighbourhood character of that area are also the starting points in the design process.

### Planning Policy Framework

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF, which recently replaced the State Planning Policy Framework - SPPF) provides a context for planning and decision making. It seeks to ensure that the objectives of planning are fostered through appropriate land use and development policies and practices which integrate relevant environmental, social and economic factors in the interests of net community benefit and sustainable development. The PPF recognises the importance of neighbourhood character and contextual design and states that neighbourhood character should be recognised and protected whilst also requiring appropriate intensification of existing urban areas.



## MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) outlines a number of objectives and strategies relating to various land use and development themes including settlement, open space, built environment and heritage and housing. It recognises the key issues relating to each theme and provides policy directions and objectives. Of particular relevance are the following clauses.

- Clause 21.06 'Built Environment and Heritage' has a number of objectives which seek to respect neighbourhood character, enhance the amenity of residential areas, encourage landscaping to reflect the streetscape character and protect and enhance heritage places
- Clause 21.07 'Housing' aims to provide a diversity of housing types by encouraging medium density housing in appropriate locations

## LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

The Local Planning Policies in Hobsons Bay provide policy guidance on a number of built form issues including heritage and neighbourhood character.

- Clause 22.01 'Heritage Policy' outlines important objectives and policy directions for the protection of key heritage sites and precincts within Hobsons Bay
- Clause 22.04 'Altona Meadows Urban Design Policy' recognises the potential for poor residential

design and seeks to provide design objectives to assist in maintaining a high quality residential built form

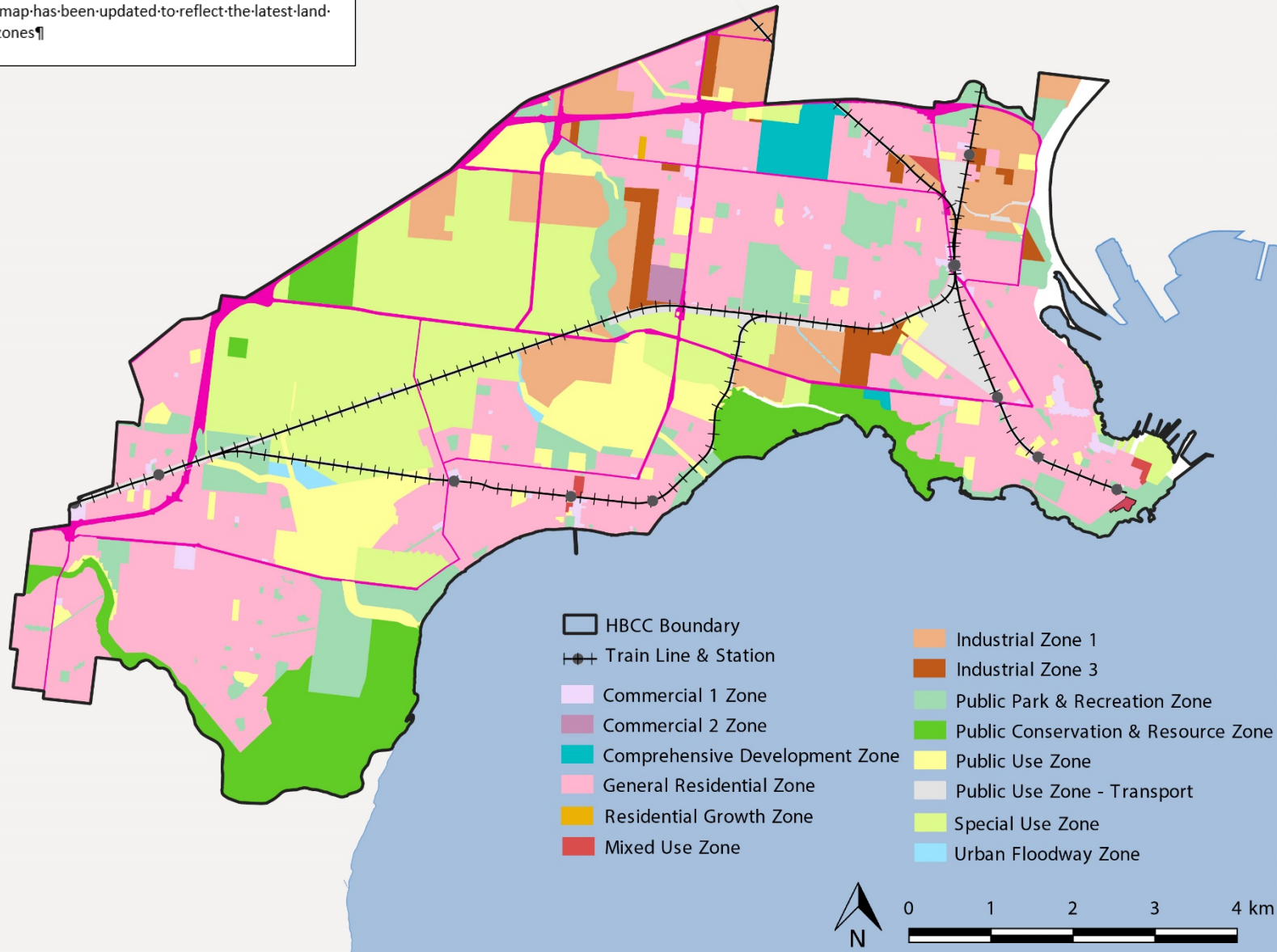
- Clause 22.07 to 22.10 outline the existing neighbourhood character policy objectives for the Hobsons Bay, north, south, east and west character areas. Each clause includes a character description, statement of preferred neighbourhood character and objectives and design responses for each precinct within the broader character area

## ZONES

The majority of residential land in Hobsons Bay is zoned General Residential (GRZ) as shown on Map 6, page 33. The purpose of this zone is *'to encourage development that respects the neighbourhood character of the area' and 'to provide a diversity of housing types and moderate housing growth in locations offering good access to services and transport'*.

The Mixed Use Zone (MUZ) applies to three small areas in Hobsons Bay in Williamstown, Spotswood and Altona. Most of these areas are also Strategic Redevelopment Areas as defined in the *Industrial Land Management Strategy*.

This map has been updated to reflect the latest land-use zones



MAP 6: ZONES

## OVERLAYS

Ten Design and Development Overlays (DDO) apply in Hobsons Bay which relate to specific areas or sites within the municipality: DDO1-5, 8-11 and 13- 14 as shown in Map 7, on page 35.

The purpose of the DDO includes:

*to identify areas which are affected by specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development.*

The DDO sets the basic permit triggers and outlines decision guidelines which must be taken into consideration before Council decides on an application.

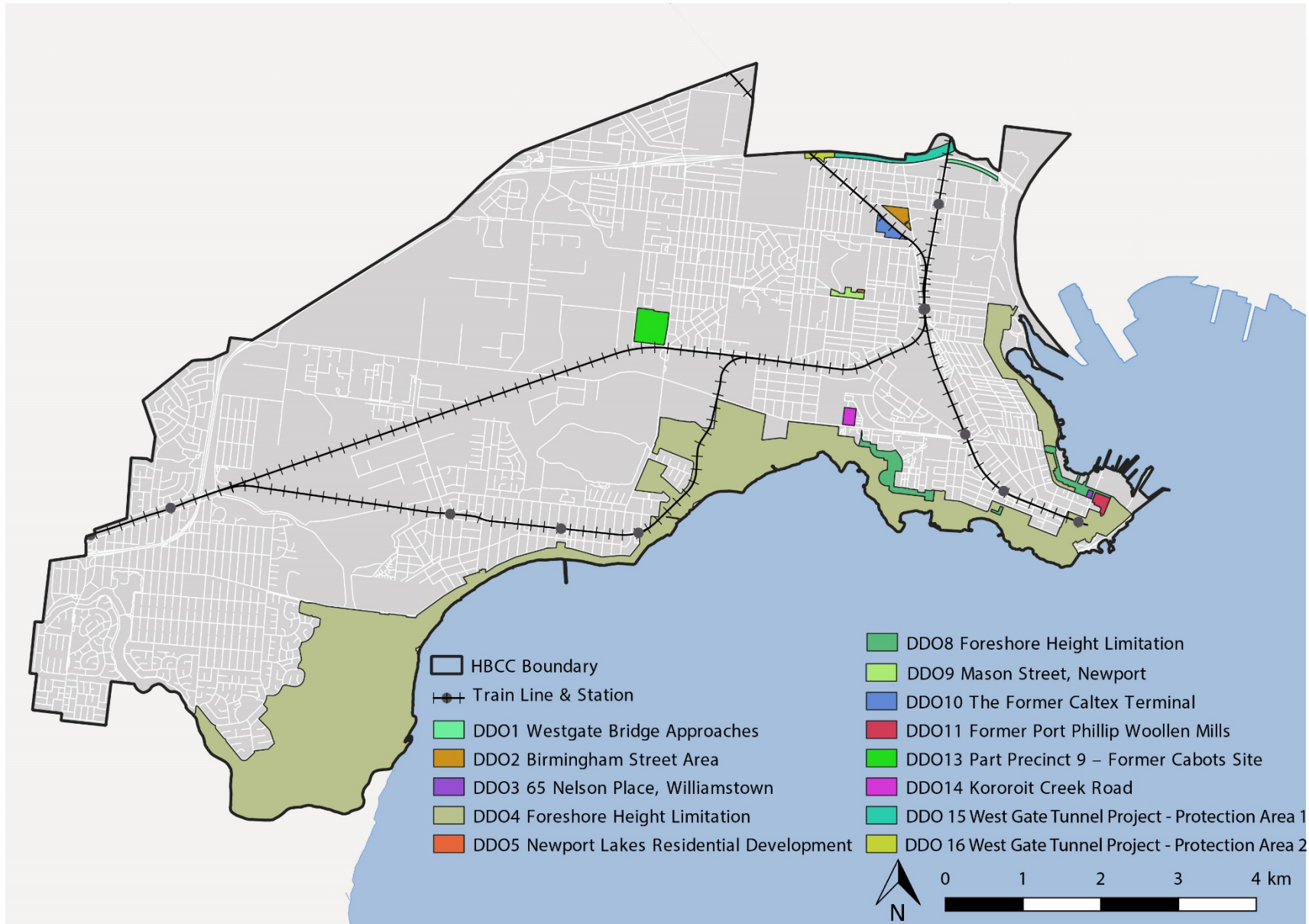
The DDO schedules that apply in Hobsons Bay modify permit triggers, set other built form parameters in addition to those outlined in the head provision of the overlay and include further decision guidelines.

The Heritage Overlay (HO) in Hobsons Bay applies to large residential areas in Williamstown, Newport, and Spotswood and smaller residential areas and sites throughout the rest of the municipality as shown on Map 8, on page 36.

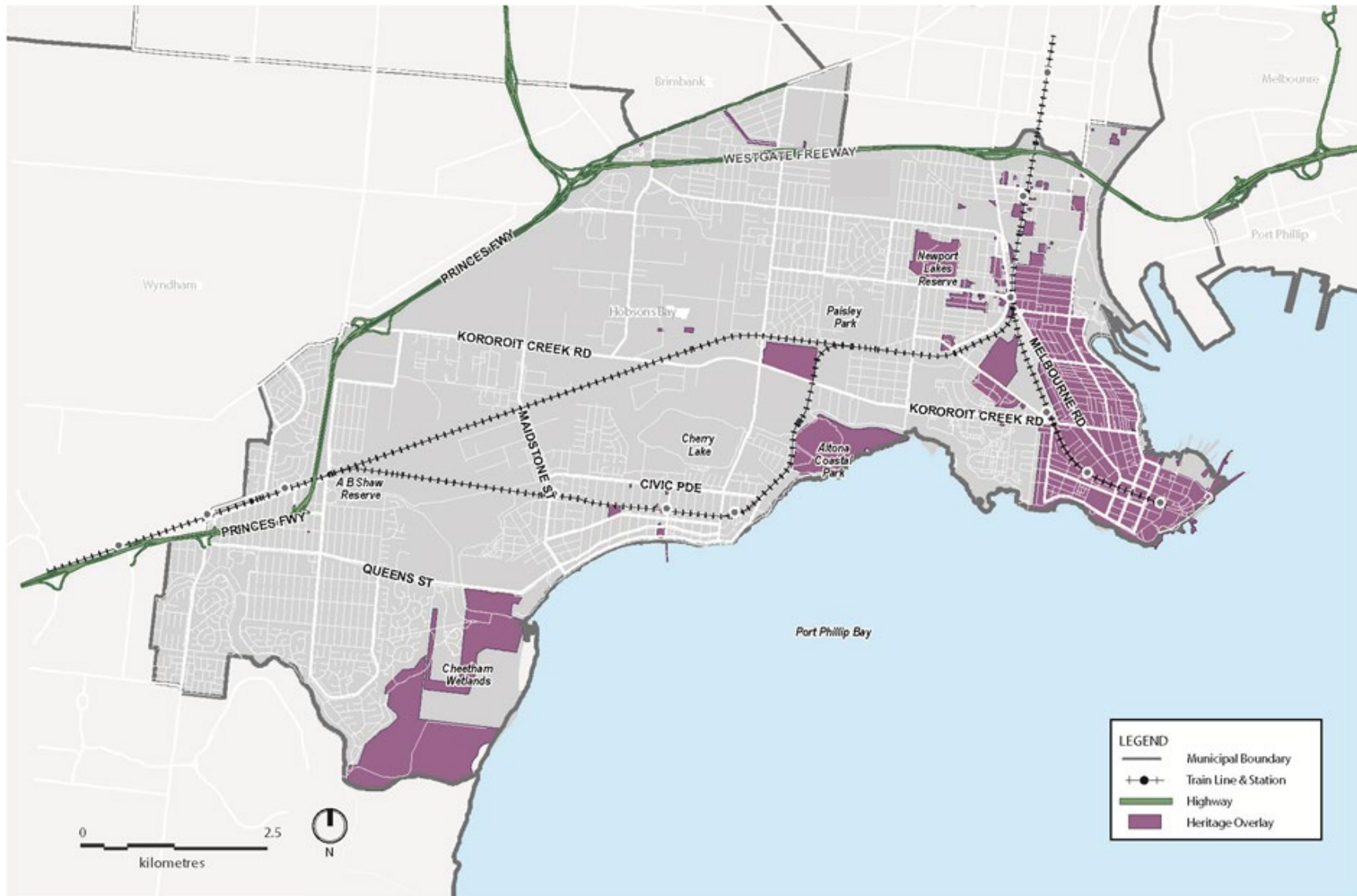
The purpose of the HO includes:

*to conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance and to ensure development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.*

The HO requires a planning permit for many types of development, however some buildings and works are exempt from notice and review. An extensive list of decision guidelines must be considered by the responsible authority before granting a permit. The schedule to the HO lists individually significant sites / precincts which may have further controls or protection.



MAP 7: EXISTING DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY



MAP 8: EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY

## RESCODE

ResCode applies to single dwellings (Clause 54) and dwellings on lots less than 300m<sup>2</sup> in General Residential Zone (GRZ) Schedule 1, lots less than 500m<sup>2</sup> in GRZ2 or multi-dwelling development (Clause 55) for residential development up to five storeys in residential zones. Development of five storeys or more is assessed using Clause 58. Clause 56 applies to subdivision. Clauses 54 to 56 require a site analysis and design response statement to accompany a planning or building permit application, and consideration of any relevant neighbourhood character policy.

Through ResCode, neighbourhood character is a mandatory starting point for the assessment of planning applications. It encourages residential development and subdivision to respect the existing neighbourhood character of an area or contribute to a preferred neighbourhood character.

ResCode standards that relate specifically to neighbourhood character issues include:

- the design response must be appropriate to the neighbourhood and the site
- the proposed design must respect the existing or preferred neighbourhood character and respond to the features of the site

- development should provide for the retention or planting of trees, where these are part of the neighbourhood character
- the design of buildings [...] should respect the existing or preferred neighbourhood character

## REFORMED RESIDENTIAL ZONES (MARCH 2017)

This project, along with the Housing Strategy 2018-36 and Activity Centres Strategy 2018-36 will assist to inform the implementation of the reformed residential zones in Hobsons Bay. Reforms to the new residential zones were introduced by the Victorian Government in 2017. The new zones are:

- Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)
- General Residential Zone (GRZ)
- Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)

On 27 March 2017 the Victorian Government made further reforms to the new residential zone which had been introduced in June 2014. Council has undertaken further work to decide how the new residential zones can be applied to better guide the future of Hobsons Bay's residential areas. The reformed residential zones provide greater clarity about what is expected in an area and can be used to ensure the following:

- the right housing is built in the right locations
- valued neighbourhood character is maintained
- more housing choices
- planning controls provide for better quality design

- housing density encourages the provision and upgrade of community infrastructure

## HOUSING STRATEGY 2018-36

The Hobsons Bay Housing Strategy 2018-36 (the Housing Strategy) sets out the strategic planning framework for housing growth over the next twenty years. The Housing Strategy identifies four key policy objectives for housing growth as follows:

- population growth and change
- housing location, diversity and density
- housing affordability and affordable housing
- housing design, functionality and sustainability

Of relevance to this Study are the second and fourth key policy areas: ‘housing location and density’ and ‘housing design, functionality and sustainability’. The Housing Strategy considers housing design with regard to heritage, neighbourhood character, functionality and environmentally sustainable design. The intended outcomes for housing location and density under the Housing Strategy need to be taken into account by this Study in order to meet State and local objectives for housing.

The Housing Strategy recognises that there are a number

of key challenges in ensuring high quality housing design such as protection of residential amenity, waste and resource management, public realm interfaces, accessibility and adaptability. It also identifies a number of tools which can be used to promote design excellence, preserve heritage and protect neighbourhood character as follows:

- Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria (2017) and Apartment Design Guidelines for Victoria (2017)
- Schedules in the reformed residential zones
- Neighbourhood Character Precinct Design Guidelines
- Neighbourhood Character Overlay

The Housing Strategy was prepared in conjunction with the Activity Centres Strategy 2018-36.

A Housing Framework Plan developed for the Housing Strategy outlines the areas for minimal, incremental, moderate and substantial housing change and growth. The relationship between this Study and the Housing Framework Plan is integral to ensuring that neighbourhood character can be enhanced and protected whilst also ensuring that there is enough land available for future residential growth.

## ACTIVITY CENTRES STRATEGY 2018-36

The Activity Centres Strategy 2018-36 has been prepared to guide the strategic planning and development of activity centres throughout Hobsons Bay. The Activity Centre Strategy will assist Council in finalising the implementation of the reformed residential zones around activity centres.

It will also guide Council in making planning decisions for retail and commercial development, and is based on a detailed economic analysis of the issues and opportunities associated with retail and other opportunities in Hobsons Bay. Particularly, the Activity Centres Strategy provides direction and guidance on:

- locations where private sector investment and new business activity is encouraged
- implementation of a policy framework that supports economic development and efficient use of land
- the level and quality of facilities and services provided to the surrounding community where opportunities can be identified
- enhancing accessibility and mobility to all members of the community

The Strategy recognises the need to carefully integrate activity centres with the existing and surrounding built form, including sensitive residential interfaces.

The Neighbourhood Character Study will further assist

Council in determining the most suitable locations for commercial growth while also protecting residential character and amenity around activity centres.

## INDUSTRIAL LAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (2008)

This strategy provides a review of Hobsons Bay's industrial areas. It identifies a number of Strategic Redevelopment Areas. They include areas that are unsuitable for traditional industrial land uses and can potentially be transformed into smaller commercial and industrial purposes or into residential developments.

Several Strategic Redevelopment Areas that were inadvertently included in the 2002 Neighbourhood Character Study have been omitted from this Study on the basis that either, existing Design and Development Overlay (DDO) controls are adequate to guide a future contemporary high density character, or where industrial zoning currently restricts residential development. In another instance, a part of a Strategic Redevelopment Area is considered suitable for adding to the new Study area and where the existing DDO control is considered too general to adequately influence the design of specific character elements.





# 2

## CHARACTER REVIEW





## WHAT IS NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER?

Character in town planning is a term usually associated with words such as Urban ('urban character'), Neighbourhood ('neighbourhood character'), or Landscape ('landscape character'). The qualifier 'neighbourhood' generally means any residential area. The character of places is usually considered in terms of a specific area, locality or neighbourhood.

The Victorian planning system has led the way in Australia in recognising and documenting the need to respect the character of residential areas in new development. The definition of character forms a basis for neighbourhood character study methodologies and processes. Neighbourhood character studies identify any distinctive characteristics that make one area different from another and highlight these differences in written character statements.

The character of an area is a synthesis of public and private domain characteristics which can be summarised as built development, vegetation and topography. It is the interplay between these characteristics that make a place, town or neighbourhood distinctive. Some of these characteristics are more important than others in creating a distinctive character which must be highlighted in written character statements.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

To a large extent, Urban Character and Landscape Character have continued to be accepted as areas in which the professional judgment of designers, planners and others plays an important role.

Residents at public meetings often talk about non-physical characteristics when invited to say what they like and dislike about their neighbourhood – for example, the proximity of shops, the noise of traffic, the friendliness of the local bus driver.

It has been demonstrated that neighbourhood character is something that can have a range of meanings for different people or situations and is difficult to define. For many, character is about the people who live in the area; for others it is broad attributes of the area, such as closeness to shops or transport, or how much open space or traffic there is.

## CHARACTER IN PLANNING

While character can be defined in very broad terms, in practice planning systems confine their provisions to the physical form of development. In other words, character in planning confines itself to what can be seen: built form and landscape, in simple terms. Because planning generally only has a limited scope on its ability to control a neighbourhood's character, policies and provisions need to be focussed on the physical planning outcomes that are capable of being influenced by planning scheme tools. Fundamentally the question to be answered is: How do buildings and landscape interact? Built form, vegetation and topographical characteristics are the physical manifestation of neighbourhood character that can usually be addressed in planning systems.

While people's view about neighbourhood character are by their nature subjective, for the purposes of planning

neighbourhoods, the identification of character can and should be as value-neutral as possible. An objective description of a neighbourhood's existing character can be established through analysis of various physical attributes of a place.

Often, the local community are not aware about what makes their area different and distinct from other areas, at least in terms of the kind of physical characteristics that are subject to planning control.

## PLANNING PRACTICE NOTE 28

As indicated in the 'Policy and Statutory Context' section, the Victorian Government's Planning Practice Note 28 (PPN28) - Using The Neighbourhood Character Provisions in Planning Schemes (July 2004) provides the following definition of neighbourhood character:

*"Neighbourhood character is shaped by the combination of the public and private realms. Every property, public place or piece of infrastructure makes a contribution, whether great or small. It is the cumulative impact of all these contributions that establishes neighbourhood character."*

Practice Note 28 provides guidance to planners on how to

plan for neighbourhood character, including:

- explanation of what ‘respecting’ neighbourhood character means in planning terms (e.g. respecting the bulk and form or architectural style of surrounding development)
- explanation of the purpose of neighbourhood character studies and steps involved in their preparation (including public consultation)
- what preferred neighbourhood character means (can be existing character or a preferred future character)
- the importance of written preferred character statements and objectives for different residential areas
- selecting the right planning scheme tools to achieve the preferred character and objectives
- the level of strategic justification required to support introducing neighbourhood character provisions into a planning scheme (e.g. support by other strategies, especially for housing and, although consultation is important, not simply relying on a community’s strong desire to protect neighbourhood character)

## WHAT IS NOT CHARACTER?

### *Amenity*

In Victoria, there is a statutory distinction between the concept of amenity and the concept of neighbourhood character. Amenity refers to things like overlooking, access to sunlight, private open space, noise and so on. Character, on the other hand, is about the characteristics of the area that make one place different from another. This distinction is not readily understood by the community – most people use the terms interchangeably.

### *Heritage*

It is important to distinguish between heritage and character, and ensure that they are not mixed up. One reason why character is confused with heritage is that its genesis in some places was, in part, as a way of introducing tighter control of non-heritage built form in areas adjoining heritage areas.

Another commonly drawn distinction between heritage and character is that heritage is a designation applying only to special places, whereas character is everywhere. However this overlooks the fact that special character areas can be designated, and that, in some senses, every area can be said to have history.

The protection of heritage and cultural significance is

largely concerned with retaining the fabric and setting of a valued building and place. Heritage significance cannot be improved, though the fabric of a place can be improved, restored or reinterpreted. Where heritage concerns itself with the conservation of culturally significant places, character concerns itself with the enhancement of an area's distinct identity. Rather than being based on an area's history, it is based on the visual relationship between built form and landscape.

Character has been a concept developed by some State and Local governments in Australia as a way of producing better contextual siting and design. While in some instances the focus on character has been on buildings, character is not only related to building stock. General controls for character are not intended to keep particular built form or landscape elements from change, but to encourage the differentiation of areas. In this way, character controls are more about managing the new, to develop an area's desired character, than conservation of the old.

In Victoria, special character areas can be designated. Special areas have a strong and distinct character that the community particularly values. Special character areas may have tighter planning controls than other areas, but the controls are not intended to prevent change to those places. Rather they are intended to improve the management of change so that development responds to, and strengthens, sense of place.

Character studies principally evaluate the interplay of built form, vegetation and topographical elements in the public and private domain, with reference to the style and age of buildings where relevant. They place a much greater emphasis on visual evidence – the look of an area - than heritage studies. They may also place a greater emphasis on community values about what is valued about a local area. An area's character can be improved by new works and development. A character policy may propose a completely new character for an area. Character controls generally do not allow sustained refusal of permission to demolish a building.

# CHARACTER TYPES IN HOBSONS BAY

## CHARACTER TYPES OF VICTORIA

Broadly speaking, the following neighbourhood character types are found across Victoria:

Character types provide a basis for understanding different types of residential development and for developing appropriate design responses. Each of the broad types are described in further detail on the following pages.

## HOBSONS BAY PRECINCT BOUNDARIES

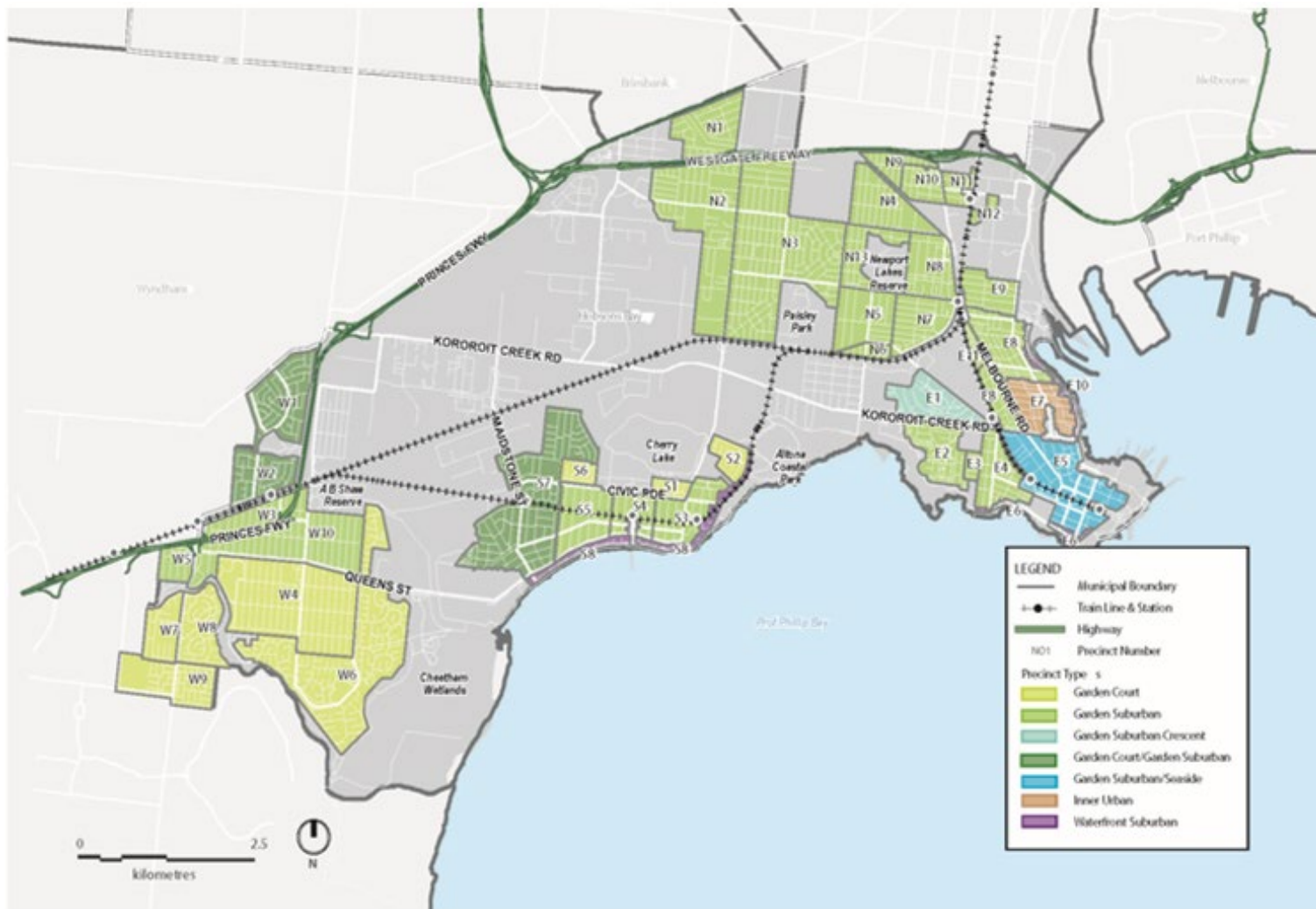
The *Issues and Opportunities* report released in August 2014 posed the question:

*Q6: Are the precinct Boundaries still relevant?*

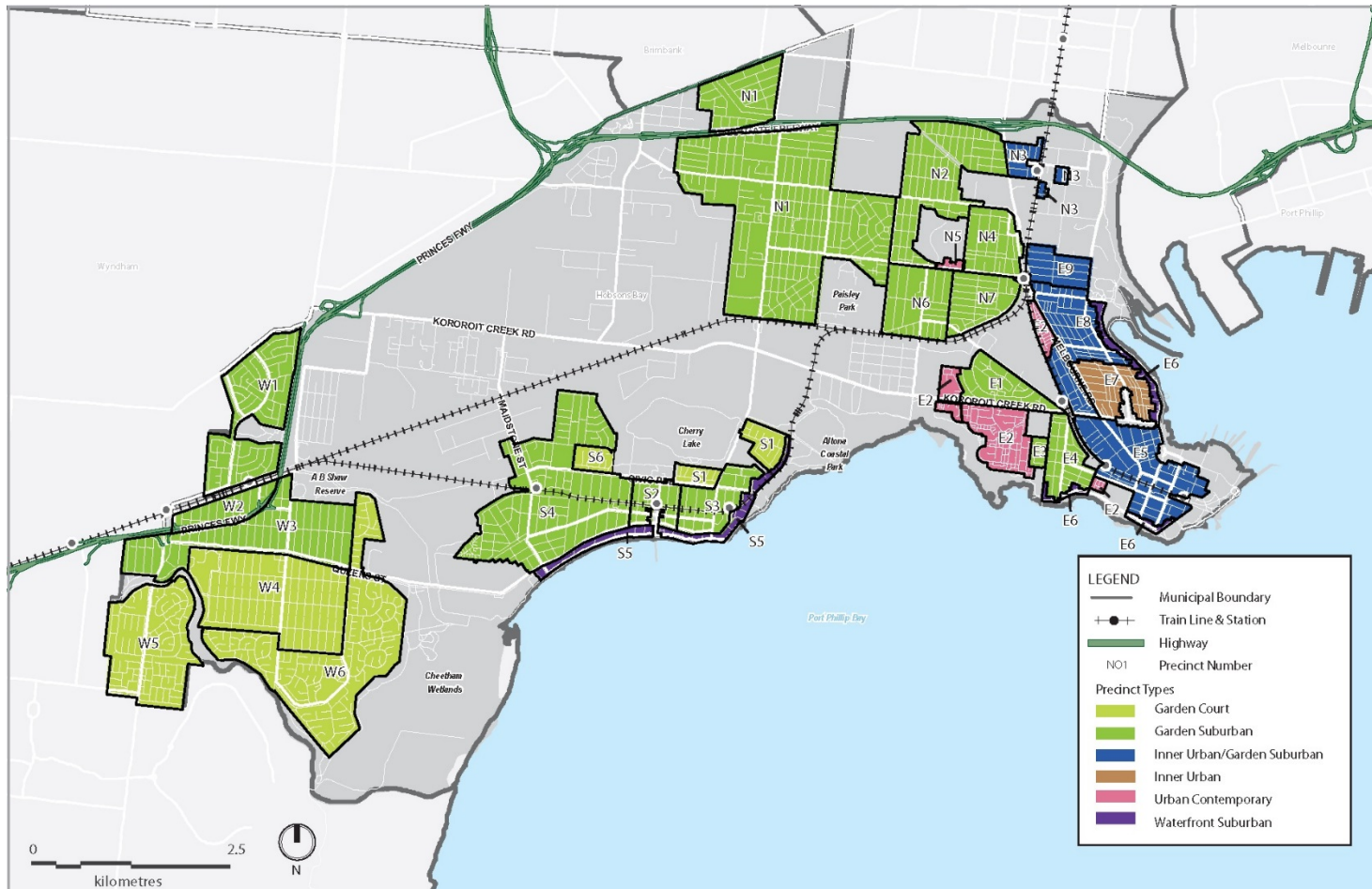
The report identified that the precincts on which the 1997 and 2002 studies are based need to be checked for relevance and reviewed. The 2002 study focused on defining different character precincts, grouped into seven Character Types, as shown on the 2002 Neighbourhood Character Types and Precincts Map 9 on page 44. The revised boundaries are shown on the Proposed Neighbourhood Character Precincts Map 10, on page 45. As part of this Study, the Character Types and Precincts have been revised, as shown in Table 5 below and on the updated (i.e. proposed) Neighbourhood Character Precincts Map.

CHARACTER TYPE	SUMMARY DESCRIPTION
Inner Urban	Built form-dominated older residential areas
Urban Contemporary	Built form-dominated residential areas with minimal garden space (generally narrower streets)
Garden Suburban	Spacious residential areas in a garden setting (formal street pattern, generally modified grid)
Garden Court	Spacious residential areas in a garden setting (informal, generally curving street pattern with courts/ cul-de-sacs)
Bush Suburban	Landscape dominated residential areas

Table 5: Common Victorian Neighbourhood Character Types







MAP 9: EXISTING NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER BOUNDARIES



MAP 10: PROPOSED NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER PRECINCTS

This reduction from seven to five character types is achieved by rationalising character type variations to simplify the planning scheme interpretation of the study. Local variations in character can still be expressed at precinct level.



Neighbourhood Character Type	Neighbourhood Character Description	Example
Garden Court	Garden Court areas are generally spacious residential areas located in a garden setting and developed through a curvilinear subdivision. Garden Court areas have developed more recently, generally between the 1960s–90s. Dwellings are typically double fronted and constructed of brick.	
Garden Suburban	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 in the immediate post-war decades, between 1950s-70s. Dwellings are typically double or triple fronted and constructed of brick.	
Inner Urban	Inner Urban areas are built form-dominated or compact older residential areas and dwellings are generally constructed boundary to boundary with minimal front setbacks.	
Urban Contemporary	Urban Contemporary areas are residential areas with minimal garden space often related to large infill sites with development providing a positive interface to public open space. Development generally consists of attached townhouses and apartments.	



Neighbourhood Character Type	Neighbourhood Character Description	Example
Waterfront Suburban	Waterfront Suburban areas consists of large, contemporary-styled dwellings which take advantage of waterfront views through upper level balconies and large areas of windows at upper levels. Buildings in these areas use a mix of materials and colours and often have unusual dwelling forms. The key feature of Waterfront Suburban areas is that building design is influenced by proximity to the sea.	
Inner Urban/ Garden Suburban	Inner Urban/ Garden Suburban areas display characteristics of both types and character elements can switch between streets.	

Table 5: Revisions to the Hobsons Bay Character Types

A summary of the boundary changes, and the reasons for them, is provided below:

- rationalisation of variations of the Garden Suburban and Garden Court character types according to similar existing characteristics, guidelines, issues and threats
- consideration of development that has occurred in Hobsons Bay since the 2002 study
- better reflection of the preferred level of housing change as indicated in the Housing Framework Plan contained within the Housing Strategy
- clarification of the differences between character types and their preferred future character; and
- informing the implementation of the new residential zones in Hobsons Bay

The 2002 study’s ‘East’ precincts 8 and 9, and ‘North’ precincts 1 and 12, previously included in the Garden Suburban character type, are now designated as Inner Urban/Garden Suburban character type. Current ‘East’ Precinct 5, previously Garden Suburban Seaside, is also

included in the new combined character type. This reflects the existing streetscapes that often include both, tightly knit Inner Urban subdivision patterns and built form, as well as more spacious and leafy Garden Suburban subdivision patterns and built form.

The Urban Contemporary character type has been applied in newer development areas where dense, higher rise built form exists. This includes the Rifle Range estate where development will have different controls and guidelines that take into consideration the smaller side setbacks, more built form dominated and different public realm characteristics.

The main differences between Garden Suburban and Garden Court character types is their subdivision pattern, formal / informal nature, vegetation type and development era. Garden Suburban Crescent and the Garden Court / Garden Suburban character types have been included in the Garden Suburban character type in this study. These areas consist of a modified subdivision grid reflecting the formal qualities of the Garden Suburban character type and this type's principles are all applicable in these areas.

When reviewing the Waterfront Suburban character type, it was observed that similar development to this type had continued inland beyond its boundaries. The boundaries for

this type have been adjusted in Newport and Williamstown to add over 100 dwellings from adjacent precincts that reflect mainly contemporary two-storey development that exhibit design elements seeking to take advantage of sea views, e.g. balconies and extensive glazing. The Waterfront Suburban character type generally consists of built form of a much greater scale than the surrounding development and very few original dwellings; although a substantial number of Inter-war period dwellings survive along the Esplanade in Williamstown Beach.

## THE PROPOSED CHARACTER BOUNDARIES

Map 10 shows the proposed character boundaries.

These character boundaries have been refined based on the findings of this Study, the proposed Housing Framework Plan identified within the Housing Strategy 2018-36 and the Activity Centres Strategy 2018-36.

As part of this review, character precinct brochures have also been prepared which outline a range of design guidelines based on the preferred future character and local context of each precinct.

Different residential design guidelines apply for each change area within the proposed character precincts.

## CHARACTER TYPES

The character types identified in Hobsons Bay are discussed below.

### INNER URBAN



*Built form-dominated older residential areas. Examples: Melbourne's inner suburbs (e.g. parts of Williamstown, Carlton, Fitzroy, Port Melbourne).*

This intensive form of subdivision, much of it into small, narrow blocks, resulted in a built form-dominated character. This type of character is widespread in Melbourne's inner suburbs, but unusual outside Melbourne, except in the centre of some older regional centres and country towns such as Bendigo and surrounding settlements.

Some of these areas were subject to a planned approach, with formal street layouts and a more effective control of land release subdivision. Others grew more haphazardly, with streets of varying width, including many with very narrow streets, often without connectivity and no provision for streets and squares.

The inner suburbs of Melbourne and regional centres have been transformed in the last fifty years. Originally the focus of slum clearance policies, they have since

become desirable residential locations, valued for the urban lifestyle and heritage qualities. Urban designers see them as examples of a more sustainable urban form.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
<p>Dense, low rise residential mixed use areas serviced by strip centres</p> <p>Largely intact Victorian colonial suburbs of high heritage value (probably world significance) associated with the rise of Marvellous Melbourne</p> <p>A walking, horse-drawn carriage and tram-based city</p> <p>In outer areas, land sometimes remained undeveloped for decades, leading to mixed eras of development (e.g. Northcote)</p>	<p>Highly developed urban character with buildings dominating the street scene</p> <p>Low rise scaled, narrow fronted rhythm</p> <p>Small front setbacks, small or zero side setbacks, create unbroken 'walls' to the street</p> <p>Front property boundary always expressed by a fence</p> <p>Possibility of siting new, more intense development so that it is 'hidden' from view</p> <p>Fine-grained, connected street and laneway pattern, highly conducive to walking and cycling</p> <p>Served by relatively dense network of strip activity centres and public transport services</p> <p>Many areas of mixed use</p> 	<p>Continue to conserve the heritage areas</p> <p>Maintain and enhance the urban character, with its solid, fine-grain streetscape 'walls', dense, connected street and laneway networks, minimal setbacks, and pedestrian friendly environment</p> 

Inner Urban area in Williamstown

Inner Urban area in Williamstown

Table 6: General Inner Urban Character Type Summary

Table 7: Hobsons Bay Inner Urban Character Type Summary


ELEMENT	TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS
Existing buildings	<p>Mostly Victorian and Edwardian-era</p> <p>Postwar, 1960s, 1970s and more contemporary infill</p>
Vegetation	<p>Established, formal gardens with some established, canopy trees</p>
Siting	<p>Small front setback (1-3m)</p> <p>Small side setbacks (1.5m or less) with some terraced dwellings</p> <p>Car parking structure behind the dwelling with one crossover for vehicle access</p>
Lot Size	<p>Modified grid street layout</p> <p>Generally 300-500sqm with pockets of 200-300sqm particularly in Williamstown</p>
Building form	<p>Detached and attached single storey dwellings</p> <p>Low pitched roofs</p> <p>Single and double storey infill</p>
Materials & design detail	<p>Light-coloured weatherboard</p> <p>Corrugated iron or tiled roofing</p>
Front fencing	<p>Medium picket fences (1.2m)</p>
Public realm	<p>Narrow streets at the northern end and wider streets with gravel shoulders and grassy verges to the south</p> <p>Laneways</p> <p>Mix of street tree planting with some significant avenues of trees</p> <p>Bluestone kerbs and channels</p>

## Issues and Threats

- period reproduction styles
- fussy, decorative detailing
- dominant or overwhelming new development
- car parking structures that are inappropriately located or dominate the streetscape
- building forms inconsistent with the rest of the streetscape as viewed from the street
- loss of heritage fabric
- loss of street trees
- loss of gravel shoulders and grassy verges
- loss of bluestone
- loss of laneways
- tall and solid front fences

## Elements for Change

Table 8: Hobsons Bay Inner Urban Elements for Change

KEY ELEMENTS TO RETAIN	OTHER ELEMENTS TO RETAIN	FLEXIBLE ELEMENTS TO ACCOMMODATE HOUSING CHANGE
<p>Elements of the original built form (housing stock, fencing)</p> <p>Fine-grained built form and subdivision pattern</p> <p>Lightweight nature of development</p>	<p>Small front setbacks</p> <p>Small side setbacks</p> <p>Front property boundary always expressed by a fence</p> <p>Rear laneways</p> <p>Original style of landscaping</p>	<p>Rhythm of side setbacks</p> <p>Site coverage</p> 

Inner Urban area in Williamstown

## GARDEN SUBURBAN

*Spacious residential areas in a garden setting (formal street pattern, generally modified grid). Examples: the Melbourne middle suburbs (e.g. Altona, Camberwell, Essendon, and Sunshine) and suburbs developed in the immediate post-war decades.*

This character type is typically found in the middle suburbs of Melbourne. Outside Melbourne, most urban residential areas have the spacious 'garden suburban' character, because densities and site coverage tend to be lower than equivalent metropolitan areas.

Most garden suburban residential areas are laid out within a north-south, east-west grid of one chain (20metres) main roads (more likely to be 30metres in regional Victoria). Mostly the street pattern is grid-based or grid-adapted.

In the classic Garden Suburban style, the streets are tree-lined avenues, with concrete kerbs and footpaths, and grassed nature strips. Some housing has low walls fronting formal, trimmed gardens that are open to the street, and houses are located within the lot, rather than extending to its boundaries. The atmosphere of a garden suburb is one of space and trees, though the separation of private and

public land is clearly defined.

In Hobsons Bay, the dwelling stock is typically older (1950s-1970s) and brick is used. These areas do not have a particularly leafy-feel due to the lack of trees. Greenery is evident mainly because lawn is common in front setbacks and along nature strips. It is also noted that Brooklyn has been established in the Garden Suburban style though it does not have train or tram access.



Table 9: General Garden Suburban Character Type Summary

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
<p>Train and tram based</p> <p>Late Victorian to 1960s / 70s</p> <p>Grid-based street pattern</p> <p>Spacious streets and gardens</p> <p>Detached houses, double or triple fronted</p> <p>Footpaths and nature strips and tree avenues (often exotic)</p> <p>Car storage off street and behind the building line</p>	<p>Spacious feel: space around and between buildings, open rather than enclosed street space, large setbacks</p> <p>Green and leafy appearance in many areas</p> <p>Low scale, dominant roof forms, strong horizontal emphasis</p> <p>Gaps between buildings</p> <p>Front property boundary usually defined by low, solid fence or moderate height 'transparent' fence (e.g. wire mesh)</p>	<p>Use a formal approach to street space design (e.g. regular avenues of trees, regular geometry of kerbing and traffic management devices)</p> <p>Retain the spacious, green and leafy character, including views of backdrop vegetation between and over buildings, generous front garden setbacks open to view from the street, and grassed nature strip with minimal interruption</p> <p>Maintain the horizontal emphasis of massing and form resulting from the dominance of the roof form</p>



Garden Suburban area in Altona



Garden Suburban area in Newport



Garden Suburban area in South Kingsville



Garden Suburban area in Laverton

Table 10: Hobsons Bay Garden Suburban Character Type Summary

ELEMENT	TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS
Existing buildings	1950s-1970s dwellings
Vegetation	Established, formal gardens with established, canopy trees
Siting	Moderate front setback (5-6m) Side setbacks (1-3m)  Car parking structure adjacent or behind the dwelling with one crossover for vehicle access
Lot pattern & size	Grid street layout 500-700sqm
Building form	Detached single storey dwellings Low pitched roofs
Materials & design detail	Single and double storey infill Mostly brick, some areas of weatherboard  Tiled roofing
Front fencing	Low to medium brick and picket fences (1.2m)
Public realm	Wide streets  Mix of street tree planting with some significant avenues of trees  Concrete kerbs and channels

## Issues and Threats

- boundary-to-boundary development along the front building line
- car parking structures dominating the streetscape
- infill development occurring in rear gardens
- development with excessive bulk
- excessive hard surfaces in the front setback
- dark grey, boxy built form
- loss of permeable space for canopy trees (e.g. due to swimming pools)
- loss of canopy trees
- lack of replacement trees
- tall and solid front fences (e.g. to screen private open space)

## Elements for Change

Table 11: Hobsons Bay Garden Suburban Elements for Change

KEY ELEMENTS TO RETAIN	OTHER ELEMENTS TO RETAIN	FLEXIBLE ELEMENTS TO ACCOMMODATE HOUSING CHANGE
Space around dwellings for garden settings	Space for trees	Height of development
Dominant horizontal roof forms	Private open space with space for trees  Side setbacks	Rhythm of side setbacks  Visibility of extensions  Upper level setbacks

## GARDEN COURT

*Spacious residential areas in a garden setting (informal, generally curving street pattern with courts/cul-de-sacs). Examples. Parts of Altona Meadows Melbourne outer suburbs such as Chirnside Park, Wantirna, Carrum Downs*

From the 1960s to the 1990s, Garden Court became the fashionable style for new residential areas. They are particularly extensive in the north-east, east and south-east of Melbourne.

The term Garden Court refers to the combination of a Garden Suburban type of development superimposed on a pattern of curvilinear streets with cul-de-sacs or courts. This layout was designed to accommodate full car-based access as safely as possible, by eliminating 'rat runs' and providing low speed, low volume traffic environments within the courts.

A negative consequence of this type of layout has been the poor connectivity of the street system for bus routes and walking. These areas tend to be associated with car-based, standalone retail centres. In seeking to create more sustainable urban environments, government policy will need to address these deficiencies over the long term.

The area in Altona Meadows near Central Square with a formal grid pattern created into a series of courts and cul-de-sac is a distinct exception. This area is well-connected for walking and cycling.

The curvilinear street pattern results in the creation of informal street spaces which are often complimented by informal (often native) garden planting. There is often only one footpath, sometimes none at all.

Table 12: General Garden Court Character Type Summary

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
<p>Car-based</p> <p>1960s-1990s dwellings</p> <p>Curvilinear plus court-based street pattern</p> <p>Spacious streets and gardens</p> <p>Detached houses, double or triple fronted</p> <p>Nature strips, often without footpaths</p> <p>Informal street tree planting, often native</p> <p>Car storage usually off-street and behind the building line</p> <p>Car-based, standalone retail centres</p>	<p>Spacious feel – space around and between buildings, open rather than enclosed street space, large setbacks</p> <p>Green and leafy appearance in many areas</p> <p>Low scale and horizontal emphasis of dominant roofs</p> <p>Gaps between buildings</p> <p>Less emphasis on separate definition of public and private domain: front gardens often not fenced</p>	<p>Use an informal approach to street space design (e.g. informal groupings of trees, irregular geometry of kerbing and traffic management devices)</p> <p>Retain the spacious, green and leafy character, including views of backdrop vegetation between and over buildings, generous front garden setbacks open to view from the street, and grassed nature strip with minimal interruption</p> <p>Maintain the horizontal emphasis of massing and form resulting from the dominance of the roof form</p>



Garden Court area in Altona



Garden Court area in Altona Meadows



Garden Court are in Altona Meadows



Garden Court area in Seabrook

Table 13: Hobsons Bay Garden Court Character Type Summary

ELEMENT	TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS
Existing buildings	1970s-1980s dwelling stock
Vegetation	Established, formal gardens with established, canopy trees
Siting	Moderate front setback (6-7m) Moderate side setbacks (1-2m) Car parking structure behind the dwelling with one crossover for vehicle access
Lot pattern & size	Curvilinear street pattern with cul de sacs except for the central area in Altona Meadows with a grid pattern and non-continuous streets 500-600sqm
Building form	Detached single storey dwellings Low pitched and hipped roofs Garages in line with dwelling
Materials & design detail	Brick, render and weatherboard Tiled roofing
Front fencing	None or Low
Public realm	Varied and inconsistent trees Concrete curb and channels

## Issues and Threats

- boundary-to-boundary development along the front building line
- car parking structures dominating the streetscape
- infill development occurring in rear gardens
- development with excessive bulk
- excessive hard surfaces in the front setback
- loss of permeable space for canopy trees (e.g. due to swimming pools)
- loss of canopy trees
- lack of replacement trees
- dark grey, boxy built form
- tall and solid front fences (e.g. to screen private open space)

## Elements for Change

Table 14: Hobsons Bay Garden Court Elements for Change

KEY ELEMENTS TO RETAIN	OTHER ELEMENTS TO RETAIN	FLEXIBLE ELEMENTS TO ACCOMMODATE HOUSING CHANGE
Space around dwellings for garden settings	Space for trees	Height of development
Dominant horizontal roof forms	Private open space with space for trees	Rhythm of side setbacks
	Side setbacks	Visibility of extensions
		Upper level setbacks

## WATERFRONT SUBURBAN

*Residential areas located along the waterfront areas where extensive redevelopment has resulted in a mix of large dwellings with upper levels that take in water views.*

*Example: Queen Street, Altona and Beach Road, Beaumaris.*

The key feature of Waterfront Suburban areas is their proximity to the sea. These areas contain very few original dwellings due to constant pressure for redevelopment in these sought-after locations.

Waterfront Suburban residential locations originated as an integral part of a Garden Suburban areas (see separate Character Type description). They are categorised now as a separate Character Type because redevelopment has caused a marked change in a number of key characteristics, including:

- height and mass
- site coverage
- form and style
- materials and colours

The result is a built form that creates a pronounced 'edge' to the residential area, rather than a constitution of the spacious, low rise Garden Suburban character. Dwelling frontages are designed to exploit sea views. This, and the higher site coverage, mitigates against canopy tree planning on many lots.

Built form consists of large, contemporary-styled dwellings which take advantage of waterfront views through upper level balconies and large areas of windows at upper levels. Buildings in these areas use a mix of materials and colours and often have unusual dwelling forms.

Table 15: General Waterfront Suburban Character Type Summary

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
<p>1980s-present, with occasional original era (Victorian/Edwardian) dwellings</p> <p>Large detached dwellings or multi- dwelling development</p> <p>Streets follow the coastline</p> <p>Frontage street is a beach-front esplanade with coastal planting</p> <p>Footpaths and nature strips</p> <p>Car storage off-street, beneath the dwelling (including</p>	<p>Upper level balconies and large areas of windows</p> <p>Mix of built form configurations, materials and colours, including masonry and render</p> <p>Minimal roof form (often flat)</p> <p>Absence of large trees</p>	<p>Retain a front garden character, minimise frontage area devoted to car storage and access, and width of footpath crossings</p>



Waterfront Suburban area in Williamstown



Waterfront Suburban area in Altona

Table 16: Hobsons Bay Waterfront Suburban Character Type Summary

ELEMENT	TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS
Existing buildings	1980s to 2000s, with occasional original dwellings (Victorian and Edwardian in Williamstown and 1950- 1960s in Altona)
Vegetation	Established, formal gardens with few canopy trees
Siting	Large front setback (5-9m) with sea views all side setbacks, some boundary- to-boundary  Car parking structures in line with the existing building; car parking for newer developments are basement garages
Lot pattern & size	Garden Suburban lot pattern distorted to parallel the sea front  600-1,000sqm
Building form	Double and triple storey dwellings, including some apartment blocks  Low pitched colourbond and tile roofs
Materials & design detail	Large garages, semi-basement car structures Mix of materials including masonry, render and brick
Front fencing	Prominent facade glazing No or open style fences, occasional high fence
Public realm	Concrete kerb and channel Norfolk Island Pine promenade

## Issues and Threats

- garden settings dominated by car access and storage
- excessive non-permeable surfaces dominating the front set back
- car parking structures dominating the front elevation
- loss of permeable space for canopy trees (e.g. due to swimming pools)
- high and solid front fences

## Elements for Change

Table 17: Hobsons Bay Waterfront Suburban Elements for Change

KEY ELEMENTS TO RETAIN	OTHER ELEMENTS TO RETAIN	FLEXIBLE ELEMENTS TO ACCOMMODATE HOUSING CHANGE
Front setbacks	Front setbacks	Site coverage
Low, transparent or lack of fencing	Side setbacks	
Front garden landscape		



## URBAN CONTEMPORARY

*Higher density, built form-dominated residential areas with minimal garden space (Examples: Rifle Range Estate, Williamstown, Edgewater Estate in Maribyrnong, Kensington Banks, Caroline Springs town centre).*

Urban Contemporary development can often be found where large infill sites have been redeveloped and at the edges of metropolitan Melbourne in planned town centres. This development has generally established in response to activity centre policy and policy encouraging greater density in areas with good access to services.



Urban Contemporary are in Newport

Built form dominates and has a ‘tightly knit’ character. The neighbourhood tree canopy is often created through public realm planting rather than on site. Development frequently takes advantage of and provides a positive interface with public open spaces, such as development overlooking the lake at Caroline Springs. In the case of the Rifle Range development in Williamstown, street trees are complemented by vegetation, including trees, in the private realm.

Housing types are typically multi-storey townhouses or apartments. Mock-heritage styles are more prevalent in 1990s development. More recent development typically uses box forms, render, applied detail in timber or steel elements and white and grey tone

Table 18: General Urban Contemporary Character Type

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
<p>Dense, higher rise residential areas</p> <p>Frequent use of drought tolerant landscaping that requires minimal maintenance</p> <p>Car beneath the front of the dwelling or from the rear lane</p>	<p>Attached townhouse or apartment-style residential</p> <p>High site coverage</p> <p>Minimal or no front, side or rear setbacks</p> <p>Either single-developer terrace or apartment blocks in consistent style or eclectic mix of forms and styles (including mock heritage)</p> <p>Garages always provided, often in line with the dwelling frontage or accessed via a rear laneway</p> <p>Landscaping restricted to small front setbacks (if provided)</p>	<p>Minimise frontage area devoted to car storage and access, and width of footpath crossings</p> <p>Provide generous, consistent, continuous and connected footpath network</p> <p>Aim for consistency of dwelling type or style, as well as siting</p> <p>Compensate for absence of private garden space with generous public realm planting, generally formal in style</p>

Table 19: Hobsons Bay Urban Contemporary Character Type Summary

ELEMENT	TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS
Existing buildings	1990s -2000s
Vegetation	Newly planted, formal gardens with one to two canopy trees  Mixture of native and exotic trees and shrubs
Siting	Moderate front setback (4 - 5m)  Small side setbacks (1.5m or less)  Car parking structure behind the dwelling with one crossover for vehicle access, other car access to garages from rear laneways
Lot pattern & size	Semi curvilinear street pattern with some laneways  300-500sqm
Building form	Detached and semi-detached Double storey  Flat and low pitched roofs  Side or rear garages
Materials & design detail	Brick and render  Corrugated iron or tiled roofing
Front fencing	Low to medium
Public realm	Mix of street tree planting including natives and exotics  Concrete kerbs and channels

## Issues and Threats

- non-permeable surfaces dominating the front setback
- car parking structures dominating the streetscape
- poor interfaces with public spaces (lack of windows of habitable rooms)
- lack of garden settings and canopy trees
- loss of street trees
- high and solid front fences

## Elements for Change

Table 20: Hobsons Bay Urban Contemporary Elements for Change

KEY ELEMENTS TO RETAIN	OTHER ELEMENTS TO RETAIN	FLEXIBLE ELEMENTS TO ACCOMMODATE HOUSING CHANGE
Fine-grained built form and subdivision pattern	Positive built form interface with public areas	Height of development
Small private gardens and emphasis on vegetation in the public realm	Small front setbacks	Rhythm of side setbacks
	Small side setbacks	Visibility of extensions
	Low and transparent fencing	
	Rear laneways	



## CHARACTER POLICY

To determine the appropriate neighbourhood character provisions that should be applied to an area, several factors were considered. These included:

- the level of change required by the Housing Strategy 2018-36
- existing characteristics of each precinct
- development rates, types and trends
- whether an area has special character significance
- response to the residential design issues identified in this Study
- the tools available in the Planning Scheme

The Elements for Change table for each Character Type, included earlier in this chapter, lists the key elements to retain, and those character elements amenable to change to accommodate housing diversity.

Special character areas are discussed in the next section of this chapter. Residential design issues are addressed in the next chapter.

The tools in the planning scheme are addressed comprehensively in the Implementation chapter and were used to assist in arriving at a Preferred Character

Statement for each precinct.

The most important tools in this respect are the schedules to the new residential zones, which allow ResCode standards to be varied. Separate schedules to the Zone will be applied to different parts of the each Change Area, with varying provisions to achieve specific preferred character outcomes. The possibilities for schedule variations are summarised below.

### Minimal and Incremental Change Areas

Areas designated minimal or incremental Change in the Housing Strategy are candidates for rezoning to 'Neighbourhood Residential'. Schedule variations able to be contemplated for this zone include:

- Neighbourhood character objectives
- Minimum subdivision area
- Permit requirement for one dwelling on a lot
- Minimum street setback
- Site coverage
- Permeability
- Landscaping
- Side and rear setbacks

- Walls on boundaries
- Private open space (noting that Minimum Garden Area requirements are mandatory and cannot be changed)
- Front fence height
- Building height (alternative heights may be scheduled but can only be higher than what the zone allows)
- Application requirements
- Decision guidelines

### Moderate Change Areas

Areas designated Moderate Change in Council's Housing Strategy are candidates for rezoning to 'General Residential'. Schedule variations able to be contemplated for this zone include:

- Neighbourhood character objectives
- Exemption from the minimum garden area requirement
- Permit requirement for one dwelling on a lot
- Permit requirement for a front fence within three metres of a street for a dwelling on a lot between 300 and 500 square metres
- Minimum street setback
- Site coverage
- Permeability

- Landscaping
- Side and rear setbacks
- Walls on boundaries
- Private open space (noting that Minimum Garden Area requirements are mandatory and cannot be changed)
- Front fence height
- Building height (alternative heights may be scheduled but can only be higher than what the zone allows)
- Application requirements
- Decision Guidelines

### Substantial Change Areas

Areas designated Substantial Change in Council's Housing Strategy are candidates for rezoning to 'Residential Growth'. Schedule variations able to be contemplated for this zone include:

- Design objectives
- Minimum street setback
- Site coverage
- Permeability
- Landscaping
- Side and rear setbacks
- Walls on boundaries

- Private open space
- Front fence heights
- Maximum building height (alternative heights may be scheduled but can only be higher than what the zone allows)
- Application requirements
- Decision guidelines

## SPECIAL CHARACTER AREAS

The *Issues and Opportunities report* released in August 2014 stated that this Study will be able to identify areas for special character protection because its findings will be integrated with the parallel Housing Strategy prepared by Council.

This Study identifies special character that:

- warrants planning scheme protection because of its identified special character
- provides further guidance for decision-making in relation to non-heritage properties covered by the Heritage Overlay

As stated in the *Issues and Opportunities report*, for any nominated area of neighbourhood character significance,

it is necessary to demonstrate that the area:

- is exemplary, rare or atypical within the context of surrounding residential neighbourhoods
- strongly retains the character of the original or early era(s) of development
- shows particular consistency in terms of building siting and design or landscape quality
- is under threat from future development.

## Heritage Overlay Areas

Numerous streets with neighbourhood character significance are already subject to heritage protection in Hobsons Bay, as shown by the existing Heritage Overlay areas on the Proposed Special Character Areas Map 11, on page 69. As this study is not a heritage study, no extensions to Heritage Overlay areas are proposed. It is neither appropriate nor necessary for additional overlay protection to be applied to these areas for character reasons. Heritage Overlay areas are generally categorised as Minimal Change in Council's Housing Strategy.

## RECOMMENDED AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

Four areas were suggested in the *Issues and Opportunities report* as potential areas of special character as shown on the Map 11 on page 76. Two additional areas were identified by Council as a result of additional site inspections. These areas are as follows:

- Area 1: Freemans Road area, Altona North
- Area 2: Cherry Avenue area, Altona North
- Area 3: Inglis Street, Williamstown North
- Area 4: Chiffley Avenue area, Altona  
(previously precinct S1)
- Area 5: The Avenues area, Altona North
- Area 6: Belmar Avenue area, Altona

Further investigation has confirmed the character significance of these areas. Definitive boundaries have been drawn in association with development of the Housing Strategy. These areas are appropriate to be designated Minimal Change, and are therefore be candidates for rezoning to 'Neighbourhood Residential'. Schedule variations able to be contemplated for this zone include:

- Neighbourhood character objectives

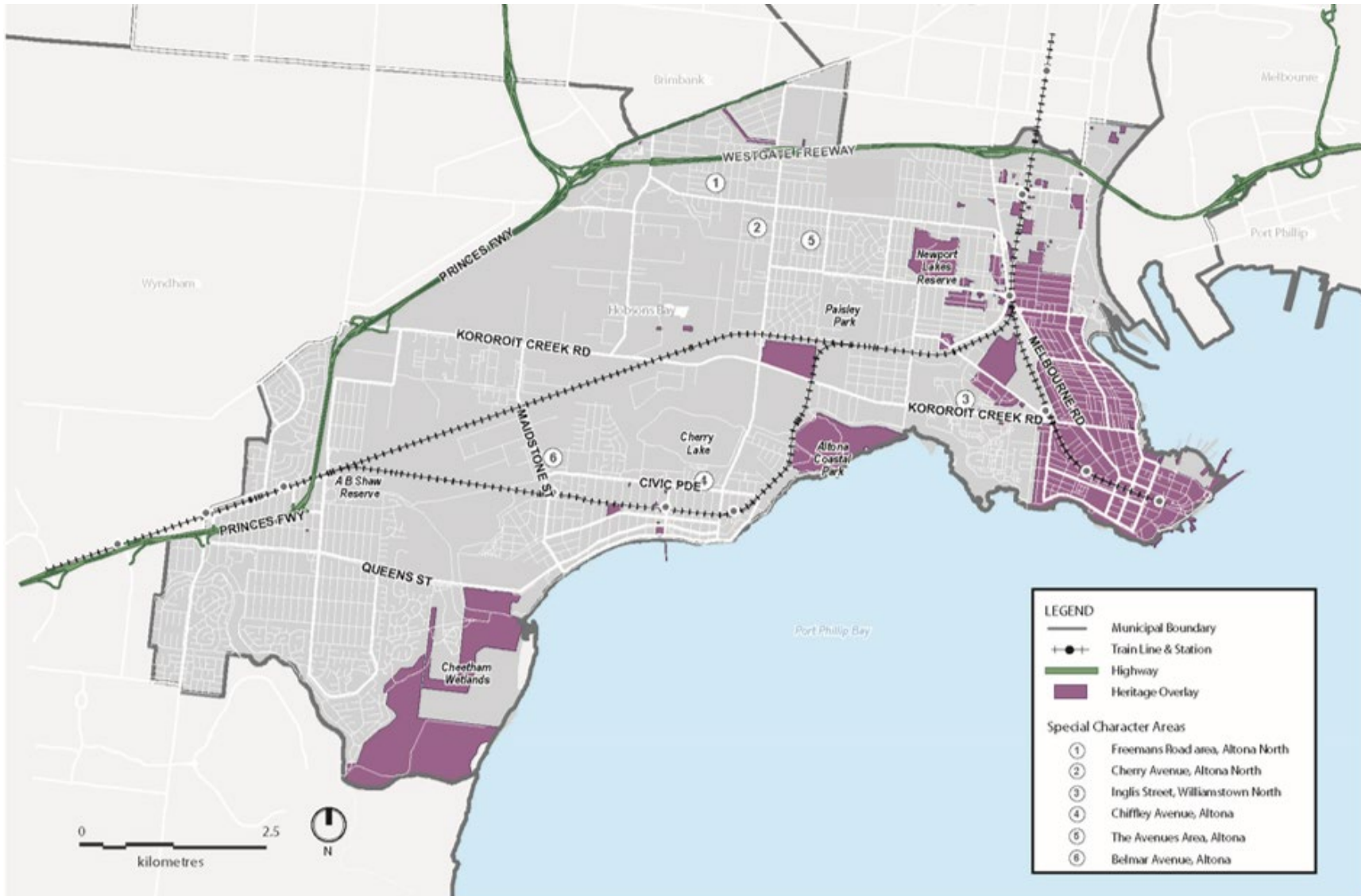
- Minimum subdivision area
- Permit requirement for the construction or extension of one dwelling or a fence associated with a dwelling on a lot
- Minimum street setback
- Setbacks (front, rear, side)
- Site coverage
- Permeability
- Landscaping
- Side and rear setbacks
- Walls on boundaries
- Private open space (noting that Minimum Garden Area requirements are mandatory and cannot be changed)
- Front fence height
- Building height (alternative heights may be scheduled but can only be higher than what the zone allows)
- Application requirements
- Decision guidelines



For these six areas, the additional controls provided by the Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO) would be beneficial. The NCO triggers a permit in the case of building demolition, a single dwelling being built and the removal of significant trees. The significance of these areas arises predominantly from their existing buildings.

Since the *Issues and Opportunities report* was released, more guidance has become available about the way the new zones are to be applied. This includes advice that the NCO may be considered superfluous in locations where the Neighbourhood Residential Zone is to be applied

In special character areas, a Design and Development Overlay (DDO) should be considered to encourage complementary fencing types, as this cannot be provided for in the NCO or through a ResCode variation in a residential zone schedule. A variation to the residential zone schedule can only modify front fence height requirements; whereas a DDO can also address colours and materials. The design of Local Policy and the decisions guidelines inserted in zone schedules should make clear the preferred front fencing outcomes if the DDO is not used.



MAP 11: PROPOSED SPECIAL CHARACTER AREAS



## AREA 1: FREEMANS ROAD AREA, ALTONA NORTH

This area's significance arises from its consistent streetscape of cream and orange post-war brick dwellings in garden surrounds. This precinct is characterised by single storey dwellings with consistent setbacks, low front fences and side setbacks. The consistent characteristics include its low-scale horizontal form and rhythm of the dwellings, the proportion and style of the dwellings and use of materials which all contribute to the significance of the precinct. This area is within the Garden Suburban character type.

This area comprises land north of Blackshaws Road and west of Freemans Road, Altona North. Refer Map 12, on page 71.

Table 21: Existing Characteristics for Special Area 1

### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- post war brick double and triple fronted single storey housing
- red or brown tiled roofs with chimneys
- orange and cream, often with decorative trim brickwork
- generous front setbacks
- side setbacks with one side for car access with car structures at the rear
- low matching brick front fences, some medium transparent fences or non-existent fencing

lawns dotted with trees and bushes, mostly exotic

Some modifications to original buildings and fencing are evident in the area, particularly painted and rendered brickwork.



Special Character Area 1: Freemans Road area, Altona North



 Special Character Area 1: Freemans Road Area, Altona North

Map 12. Area 1: Freemans Road Area, Altona North

## AREA 2: CHERRY AVENUE, ALTONA NORTH

Cherry Avenue's significance stems from its cream and orange post-war brick dwellings in garden surrounds. Houses in this street are similar to the wider precinct except that they remain in their original format with little visible evidence of extensions, alterations or dwelling additions. Consistent setbacks, built form and low scale horizontal development contribute to the significant character of the street. Setbacks are generous with no to low front fences running along the boundary of the property.

This area is within the Garden Suburban character type.

See Map 13 on page 73.

Table 22 Existing Characteristics for Special Area 2

### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

post war brick double and triple fronted single storey housing with chimneys

orange and cream, often with decorative trim brickwork

generous front setbacks

side setbacks with one side for car access with car structures at the rear


low matching brick front fences or non-existent fencing

lawns dotted with trees and bushes, mostly exotic

The location of Cherry Avenue warrants protection given its proximity to nearby conveniences and shops, which could create pressure for higher density residential development that could undermine the special character of Cherry Avenue.





 Special Character Area 2: Cherry Avenue Area, Altona North

Map 13. Area 2: Cherry Avenue, Altona North

### AREA 3: INGLIS STREET, WILLIAMSTOWN NORTH

Inglis Street's significance is attributable to a consistent row of single fronted, weatherboard houses, dating from the Victorian era. The key components which make up the character of the street are corrugated iron pitched, gable roofs with chimneys, verandahs and use of light coloured palettes. Small established gardens, often with at least one canopy tree sit behind low-style picket fences. Front and side setbacks are reflective of the consistent rhythm of the street. Setbacks from both side boundaries allow glimpses of rear garden planting to be seen from the street

This area comprises the northwest side of Inglis St. See Map 14 on page 75.

Table 23: Existing Characteristics for Special Area 3

#### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Victorian single-fronted detached weatherboard housing
- corrugated iron pitched, gabled roofs with chimneys
- small front and side setbacks
- verandahs
- light coloured building and fencing
- picket fencing
- small established gardens, often with trees



Special Character Area 3: Inglis Street, Williamstown



 Special Character Area 3: Inglis Street Area, Williamstown North

Map 14. Area 3: Inglis Street, Williamstown North

## AREA 4: CHIFLEY AVENUE AREA, ALTONA

This area's significance is due to the post-war brick dwellings in garden settings. Dwelling colours are usually orange or cream brick, with some examples of dark brown and decorative brickwork. Additionally the spacing, building form, scale, materials and roof pitch contribute strongly to the cohesive character of the precinct.

Streetscapes within this area consist of open frontages, generous front setbacks and side setbacks with generally one side for car access. Front gardens generally include lawn and exotic vegetation with often at least one canopy tree.

This area comprises Chifley Avenue, Cain Court, Pollard Court, Curtain Court and Scullin Street. See Map 15 on page 77.

Table 24: Existing Characteristics for Special Area 4

### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

post-war brick double and triple fronted housing  
orange and cream, often with decorative trim brickwork  
generous front setbacks

side setbacks with one side for car access with car structures at the rear

low matching brick front fences or non-existent fencing


lawns dotted with trees and bushes, mostly exotic

A few second storey extensions are evident in this area.



Special Character Area 4: Chifley Avenue area, Altona



 Special Character Area 4: Chifley Avenue Area, Altona

Map 15. Area 4: Chifley Avenue, Altona



## AREA 5 THE AVENUES AREA, ALTONA NORTH

This area's significance arises from its consistent streetscape of post-war cream and orange brick or weatherboard dwellings in garden surrounds. The area is characterised by single storey dwellings with consistent setbacks, low front fences and side setbacks. The consistent characteristics include its low scale horizontal form and rhythm of the dwellings, the proportion and style of the dwellings and use of materials which all contribute to the significance of the precinct. This area is within Garden Suburban character type.

This area comprises Mills Street, First Avenue, Second Avenue, Third Avenue, Fourth Avenue, Fifth Avenue and parts of Cresser Street, May Street and Marion Street. See Map 16 on page 79.

Table 25: Existing Characteristics for Special Area 5

### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

post-war brick or weatherboard double and triple fronted housing

orange and cream, often with decorative trim brickwork

generous front setbacks

side setbacks with one side for car access with car structures at the rear

low matching brick front fences or non-existent fencing

lawns dotted with trees and bushes



Special Character Area 5: The Avenues Area, Altona North

Does not form part of Special Character Area

Map 16. Area 5: The Avenues Area, Altona North

## AREA 6: BELMAR AVENUE AREA, ALTONA

This area's significance arises from its consistent streetscape of post-war cream and orange brick or weatherboard dwellings in garden surrounds. The area is characterised by single storey dwellings with consistent setbacks, low front fences and side setbacks. The consistent characteristics include its low scale horizontal form and rhythm of the dwellings, the proportion and style of the dwellings and use of materials which all contribute to the significance of the precinct. This area is within Garden Suburban character type.

This area comprises Fenfield Street, Belmar Avenue, Lindwood Avenue, Delmont Avenue and Medford Street. See Map 17 on page 81.

Table 26: Existing Characteristics for Special Area 6

### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

post-war brick or weatherboard double and triple fronted housing

orange and cream, often with decorative trim brickwork


generous front setbacks

side setbacks with one side for car access with car structures at the rear

low matching brick front fences or non-existent fencing

lawns dotted with trees and bushes



 Special Character Area 6: Belmar Avenue Area, Altona

Map 17. Area 6: Belmar Avenue Area, Altona



3

RESIDENTIAL  
DESIGN



## DESIGN ISSUES

In the *Issues and Opportunities report* released in August 2014, three questions were posed about Residential Design:

*Q7: To what extent have the design objectives of the 2002 study been realised?*

*Q8: Has the 2002 study produced good design?*

*Q9: How should Design Objectives be expressed?*

This chapter responds to these questions by examining:

- key design issues
- other design issues

### EXPRESSION OF DESIGN OBJECTIVES (Q9)

*Design objectives and guidelines need to be expressed in ways that make them readily translatable into new residential zone provisions.*

As foreshadowed in the *Issues and Opportunities report*, this study needs to revise the 2002 design objectives and guidelines to:

- target them specifically at the dwelling types favoured in each precinct
- reduce or eliminate repetition and extraneous variation of guidelines between precincts

- where practical, express them as proposed standards for inclusion in planning scheme schedules

### Key Design Issues

In examining the extent to which the design objectives of the 2002 Study have been realised, the *Issues and Opportunities report* addressed seven issues:

- domination of frontages by garages, hard surfaces and driveways
- intrusions into the 'backyard zone'
- inadequate space for canopy trees and unsympathetic landscaping
- impractical side setback provisions that were difficult to enforce
- roofs, basement parking and height
- interfaces with public open space
- use of colours and materials

### HOW THE ISSUES WERE IDENTIFIED

The expectation of the 2002 study was that residential development would conform to the Preferred Neighbourhood Character for each precinct, as elaborated in the design guideline objectives for that precinct.

A great deal of attention has been given to neighbourhood character in the processing of planning permits, since the 2002

study. Neighbourhood character and amenity are often the major factors in determining whether a permit should be granted, and they are often the main points of contention in the community. A high proportion of planning permit applications were modified to comply with neighbourhood character policy.

This experience combined with 'on the ground' outcomes, provides evidence of the extent to which the design objectives of the 2002 study, were realised, and informs the design issues that need attention. The sources for this evaluation were:

- observations by Council planners
- assessment of a selection of planning permit applications
- review of key VCAT determinations
- the findings of a design workshop attended by a reputable Melbourne architectural and urban design firm which regularly provides advice to Council on significant planning applications.

It has become clear that some design issues anticipated in 1997 and 2002 are more critical to neighbourhood character than others, and some are easier to resolve than others. The experience has informed analysis, identification and refinement of a number of key design issues.

## PREVALENCE OF THE DESIGN ISSUES

In the 2002 Study, Preferred Neighbourhood Character statements for each precinct summarise the design intent of the study. In the precinct brochures prepared for this Study, they take the form of a Preferred Character Statement of intent followed by a number of bullet point qualifiers. The Design Guidelines are mostly organised by headings for design elements such as siting, building form, vegetation, front boundary treatment and colours and materials for all precincts. Several precincts have design guidelines for additional elements such as existing buildings, site layout and subdivision.

Differences in preferred character and guidelines between character types (e.g. between Garden Suburban and Inner Urban) are generally significant. Differences in preferred character and guidelines between character precincts within the same character type are generally more subtle. Often they amount to differences of degree or emphasis such as, a variation in setback dimension, or the extent to which canopy tree cover is important

These differences remain valid and important. However the character-related issues that emerged in this review tended to be expressed generically. An example issue is 'excessive crossovers'. This generic problem has become a particular problem in certain character precincts. It most commonly arises where a single dwelling has been replaced by two or more dwellings, sited terrace-style at the front of a lot, each with its own driveway. The current review assessed the dimensions of the issue in terms of

its impact on preferred neighbourhood character, proposes a policy response, and adjusts the guidelines (or proposes variations to planning scheme standards), as appropriate.

Design issues were commonly found in areas where greater change has occurred. These locations are shown as orange-highlighted subdivisions on Map 18, on page 110 (in Chapter 4) While the community raised multi-dwelling development as generally having a detrimental impact on neighbourhood character, single dwellings, which usually do not trigger a planning assessment, can have greater adverse impact on streetscape character.

## OBSERVATIONS OF COUNCIL PLANNERS

Observations by Council planners were obtained at the inception meeting at the outset of the project. The design issues raised were:

- boundary-to-boundary development
- landscaping of medium density housing
- excessive crossovers and loss of on-street car parking
- garage-dominated elevations
- moonscaping (i.e. removal of all vegetation)
- parking structures
- use of cement sheeting (including 'blueboard', fibro cement cladding planks and weatherboards)
- importance of nature strip
- private open space in the frontage

- first floor setbacks
- projections into the front setback (e.g. piers, verandahs)

## FINDINGS OF THE DESIGN WORKSHOP

The design workshop began by considering these and other issues placed on the agenda by the study team and the architectural and urban design firm consulted. The major character issues facing Hobsons Bay were identified as:

- dominance of frontages by garages, hard surfaces and driveways
- intrusions into the 'backyard zone'
- inadequate space for canopy trees and unsympathetic landscaping
- impractical side setback provisions that were difficult to enforce

Other issues identified were:

- the way pitched roofs and semi-basement car parking are accommodated
- interfaces with parks and laneways
- use of colours and material



## GARAGES, HARD SURFACES AND DRIVEWAYS

### ISSUE

#### DOMINANCE OF FRONTAGES BY GARAGES, HARD SURFACES AND DRIVEWAYS

*The presentation to the street of a dwelling, its front garden setting and front boundary treatment, are, in combination, the single most important private realm aspect of neighbourhood character in every precinct*

Residential street character in a classic Australian suburb is a street flanked by dwelling fronts that contain habitable room windows and, usually, a front door. Between the dwelling and the street is the front garden, which provides a landscape setting for the dwelling. Where the boundary between the private garden and the public street is demarcated, it is by means of a low or visually permeable fence. The landscape of the front garden therefore becomes a part of the street scene for all to enjoy. The frontages of the dwellings become the walls defining the edges to this space. This visual relationship between the private dwelling and the public street is fundamental of suburban character. The interplay between these features and the landscape of the road reserve creates a neighbourhood character that is distinct and different for every street. Designed in the right way, it is a

relationship that fosters healthy lifestyles by making streets feel safer and more attractive for walking.

In terms of the private realm, this character is undermined and jeopardised by:

- front elevations dominated by garage doors
- front elevations devoid of habitable room windows
- front gardens dominated by hard surfaces, including driveways and car space hard standings
- high, impermeable front fences

Frontages dominated by driveways also adversely impact on the public realm, by:

- destroying the continuity of nature strips, and/or
- breaking the continuity of footpaths, and
- interrupting or eliminating the possibility of establishing a regular avenue of street trees



TYPES OF LOCATION AFFECTED	Areas under pressure for redevelopment (e.g. areas closer to Melbourne CBD, with lower quality housing stock, in close proximity to the foreshore and activity centres, not covered by a heritage overlay).
VCAT HISTORY	<p>Various VCAT decisions demonstrate that site design and street context are important considerations in decisions regarding front boundary treatment. These decisions considered the existence of habitable rooms in the front setback, whether the garage was set behind the dwelling and the quality of landscaping. Some VCAT cases note ‘existing’ character was used to justify more dominant hard surfaces and car structures and less landscaping. In some cases, boundary-to-boundary development was deemed appropriate when greater setbacks (both of front dwelling and of garage behind dwelling) and increased landscaping were proposed.</p>
	<p>Excessive yield (e.g. issue inevitably occurs with three dwellings side-by-side on a typical lot)</p> <p>Incongruous character</p> <p>Non-habitable rooms adorning the front facade</p> <p>Lack of existing street trees</p>
CAUSAL FACTORS	Primarily the north-east of the municipality (such as South Kingsville, Spotswood and Altona North) and Waterfront Suburban areas

### Existing Policy

Existing planning scheme policy and character study guidelines relevant to this topic are summarized in Appendix B.

### Feedback on the *Issues and Opportunities report*

Discussions with Council officers, Councillors and community members revealed strong support for this issue



Where concrete dominates, little room is left for vegetation, particularly trees



A horizon of trees is visible over buildings and between side setbacks



A consistent avenue of street trees – a common and desirable characteristic of Garden Suburban areas



Front gardens in Garden Suburban areas form part of the landscape of the street, an amenity everyone can share



High fences provide a poor interface to the street, obscuring views to front gardens.



High solid front fences make streets feel less safe and limit opportunities for passive surveillance.



Excessive amounts of hard surfacing in front setbacks, and dominant driveways, undermine Garden Suburban character and leave



It can be done. Medium density housing can be sited and designed in ways that maintain a positive relationship with the street and contribute to Garden Suburban character

## BACKYARD ZONE

### ISSUE

#### INTRUSIONS INTO THE BACKYARD ZONE

*The ‘backyard zone’ contributes (or has the potential to contribute) a treed backdrop to the character of many Hobsons Bay neighbourhoods, as well as providing an attractive amenity space for residents*

Aerial photography reveals that backyard zones in most Hobsons Bay neighbourhoods remain predominantly free of development. Community feedback from previous studies has highlighted the value placed by residents on the amenity of this space. Redevelopment of a single dwelling to medium density housing can result in built form being located close to the back fence, with only minimal amenity space provided at the rear. Some developments include upper floor massing in this rear zone, magnifying the impact. Character provisions requiring setbacks from side boundaries have tended to push development closer to the back fence. Relaxing this provision in some precincts would allow more effective protection of the backyard zone.

The notion of a ‘backyard zone’ has gained traction in the planning system since neighbourhood character provisions were first introduced and is now recognised in the reformed residential zones.

The latest reforms to the new residential zones introduced mandatory minimum garden area requirements to the Neighbourhood Residential and General Residential Zones (in April 2017) for lots greater than 400 square metres

TYPES OF LOCATION AFFECTED	Areas under pressure for redevelopment and adjacent sites (e.g. in and near activity centres)
	Large corner sites and adjacent sites
VCAT HISTORY	VCAT decisions have been mixed regarding the ‘backyard zone’. It was generally agreed that adequate space for landscaping to break up the dominance of built structures is an important element of neighbourhood character.
	Developments with sheer wall, rear facades were not deemed appropriate, however if they demonstrated reduced upper level setbacks with articulation and compliance with ResCode, they were considered more acceptable.
	Redevelopment/extensions of single dwellings into double storey and medium density housing Restrictive side setback requirements. Narrow and small lots
CASUAL FACTORS	Precincts abutting or adjacent to foreshore areas or Activity Centres (Altona and Williamstown)

Table 28: ‘Backyard Zone’ Issues

### Existing Policy

Existing planning scheme policy and character study guidelines relevant to this topic are summarized in Appendix B.

### Feedback on the *Issues and Opportunities report*

Discussions with Council officers suggested that this issue should be handled cautiously.

Firstly, the effect on yield needs to be considered in tandem with the outcome of the response to the side setback issue (below).

Secondly, there are few areas in Hobsons Bay where backyard tree planting has resulted in a continuous skyline canopy of large trees (though residents may aspire to this outcome – see the subsequent discussion on Canopy Trees and Landscaping).

Thirdly, the Housing Strategy will be a key determinant of potential to entertain a backyard protection policy.

These reservations are important; however there remains agreement that the tendency to ‘push’ building mass to the rear of a property is having an adverse impact on residential amenity in many areas. It is also clear from community feedback that vegetation is valued and desired in streetscapes.

*Note: since the Issues and Opportunities Report was prepared, the Victorian Government introduced mandatory minimum garden area requirements to the Victorian Planning Provisions (in April 2017). These new requirements affect all residential lots above 400 square metres in the Neighbourhood Residential and General Residential Zones provided in the table below*

*However there are no specific requirements that this garden area is to be provided in the rear, as such variations requiring the provision of minimum rear garden areas will ensure that Backyard zones are protected as shown opposite*

Lot size	Minimum percentage of a lot set aside as garden area
400-500 square metres	25%
501-650 square metres	30%
Above 650 square metres	35%

Table 29: Minimum Garden Area by lot size

## TREES AND LANDSCAPING

### ISSUE

#### INADEQUATE SPACE FOR CANOPY TREES AND UNSYMPATHETIC LANDSCAPING

Larger canopy trees, located in the street and in front gardens and backyards, provide a highly valued characteristic of many neighbourhoods. Landscaping style is an integral part of neighbourhood character, and requires stronger references to it in neighbourhood character guidelines.

Street tree planting makes its greatest contribution to neighbourhood character when it is large in scale and consistent in style. In Inner Urban and Garden Suburban neighbourhoods laid out in a formal street pattern, an avenue of trees with symmetrical canopies, planted at regular intervals, is usually the most congruent treatment. In Garden Court areas with an informal street layout, a more informal arrangement of natives is often more appropriate. In all these circumstances, driveway interruptions of the tree planting zone need to be kept to a minimum.

The tendency of developers to ‘moonscape’ a lot (remove all vegetation) prior to seeking a permit has been a consistent cause for concern for many years. Statutory protection of vegetation is only available in areas with special landscape significance, and for individually significant trees. While Councils can do their best to ‘encourage’ retention of canopy trees, the planning system offers greatest potential in requiring space to be kept for planting of new

canopy trees. This can take the form of a minimum dimension of permeable land in the front setback, and of private open space towards the rear of a lot. Site coverage and permeability controls can also play a part.

In many precincts, the aim should be to:

- establish what will in effect be a second tree avenue (additional to the street tree avenue), by planting canopy trees in private garden frontages
- provide sufficient space in every backyard for additional canopy trees to be planted

More emphasis is needed on the quality of landscaping, to assist a medium density development to contribute positively to local neighbourhood character. Front setback landscaping of medium density infill often looks out of place, compared with typical established front gardens. Shrubs in a pebbled bed, paving or planters in geometric patterns, and use of silver birches or Pittosporums for screening, are characteristics of many medium density development landscapes. The emphasis is on cost saving (upfront and maintenance), use of hardy, fast growing species, standardisation and avoiding trees that drop leaves. Much of the landscaping looks like it has been rolled out by the same team across the municipality, using the same materials. The aim now is to raise the level of professionalism and quality in medium density landscape design.

Experience has also shown that long driveways have inadequate landscaping. Driveway edges need to be softened with planting where they abut fence lines or walls. Long,

straight driveways can avoid the much disliked ‘gun barrel’ effect by being deflected around a canopy tree, half way into the site.



Street tree avenues are an important element of neighbourhood character

### Existing Policy

Existing planning scheme policy and character study guidelines relevant to this topic are summarized in Appendix B.

### Feedback on the *Issues and Opportunities report*

Discussions with Council officers, Councillors and community members revealed that low maintenance landscaping is favoured in situations where higher maintenance planting might not receive the care and attention it needs. This is seen as a more important issue than the points raised in the *Issues and Opportunities report*. Most residential areas of Hobsons Bay have less canopy tree cover

than equivalent suburbs in Melbourne’s east and south, and the 2002 study proceeded on the understanding that community values favour a more leafy appearance. Feedback received in stage one of this project supported this. Soil and climatic conditions naturally affect the suitability of species and size at maturity.

Otherwise the issues raised were supported.

TYPES OF LOCATION AFFECTED	Areas under pressure for redevelopment
VCAT HISTORY	Lack of existing canopy trees in the back yard have led to previous Council refusals being overturned at VCAT. This is mainly due to lack of existing canopy trees to support the garden setting outlined in the neighbourhood character policy.
CASUAL FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of statutory protection for vegetation</li> <li>Development preventing adequate space for landscaping</li> <li>Boundary-to boundary development</li> <li>Backyard development (e.g. alfresco areas, swimming pools)</li> <li>High site coverage</li> <li>Lack of existing street tree canopy in some areas</li> </ul>
PRECINCTS AFFECTED	Applicable to all character precincts

Table 30: Trees and Landscaping Issue

## SIDE SETBACKS

### ISSUE

#### IMPRACTICAL SIDE SETBACK PROVISIONS

*Relaxing side setback provisions in some precincts would allow more effective protection of the backyard zone to be introduced. This can be achieved without jeopardising goals about sense of spaciousness, streetscape rhythm and views of backyard trees.*

Generally the design guidelines for Garden Suburban and Garden Court precincts require development to be setback from at least one side boundary. Enforcing this guideline has been problematic for Council, and a number of VCAT decisions have overruled it, until the VCAT determination regarding 50 Watt Street, Kingsville South (P175/2004). In this case, the principle was upheld to the extent that a carport was insisted on, rather than a garage, in order to keep one boundary clear of a structure. While VCAT required the carport to maintain transparency the temptation to enclose the carport space remained and resulted in an amended application. Council had been unsuccessful in maintaining side setbacks for other development in the immediate vicinity and subsequently the owner was able to enclose the carport

Where Council has successfully achieved setbacks along a side boundary, the amount of the setback is often minimal – often a metre or less. This can result in a narrow strip of land between the side of the house and the fence, which serves no purpose and adds little to the amenity of the occupants.

The neighbourhood character rationale for maintaining a side setback is threefold:

- to maintain views between dwellings of planting in rear gardens
- to maintain a sense of spaciousness
- to maintain the rhythm of built form along the street

Side setbacks can also have other benefits. For example they can provide access to a property's backyard.





These characteristics belong to the Garden Suburban and Garden Court character types, and are some of the features that distinguish them from the terrace style of development in Inner Urban areas, where built form presents a solid wall edge to the street.

The *Issues and Opportunities report* offered the following propositions:

*The goal of maintaining views between dwellings of planting in rear gardens is really about allowing the back yard tree canopy to be visible from the street. Trees in back yards can be seen either between houses, or above them. The backyard tree canopy is usually very apparent above a garage, and above other single storey elements of a dwelling. A typical canopy tree will be visible above a normal single storey building after around ten years of growth. A provision requiring a single storey view corridor to be provided, from the front to the back of a lot, would allow back yard tree canopy to be visible from the street.*

*Any increase in potential development yield resulting from the removal of the setback will be mitigated to an extent by the single storey requirement, and counterbalanced by the proposal to exclude from development parts of the backyard zone.*

*An analysis will need to be undertaken to provide a basis for recalibrating the side setback guidelines in the character study. At present there are a number of permutations of the guideline, some advocating a setback on both sides, others*

*only on one side. The width of the setback also varies, and is expressed in different ways.*

*The side setback provisions could be deleted from some precincts, and replaced by an enforceable requirement to set back from the side boundary for a given distance (e.g. 5 metres) behind the frontage building line. Such a provision would still maintain the rhythm of built form along the street, and would maintain some degree of the sense of spaciousness*

TYPES OF LOCATION AFFECTED	Garden Suburban and Garden Court precincts under pressure for redevelopment
VCAT HISTORY	<p>VCAT decisions demonstrate that the context of the site and its presentation to the street are the most important considerations in determining whether a development proposal appropriately corresponds to its surrounding neighbourhood character. There are examples where VCAT has both granted and refused permits for proposals with boundary-to-boundary development.</p> <p>Boundary-to-boundary proposals have generally been refused on the grounds of insufficient setbacks, lack of space for landscaping, dominance of garages and inability to retain the 'garden setting' of the street. Successful proposals were able to demonstrate that boundary- to-boundary development was commonplace within the area and formed part of the 'emerging' neighbourhood character.</p>
CASUAL FACTORS	<p>Narrow blocks</p> <p>Desire to achieve maximum yield on a block, particularly on smaller blocks</p> <p>Use of double garages</p> <p>Reliance on vehicle as primary mode of transport</p>
CHARACTER PRECINCTS AFFECTED	Particularly in Garden Suburban and Garden Court precincts in Altona and Hobsons Bay North

Table 31: Side Setback Issues

Side setbacks can be an important part of character, but in some cases they produce results that do not benefit the view from the street as in the photo opposite.

### Existing Policy

Existing planning scheme policy and character study guidelines relevant to this topic are summarized in Appendix B.

### Feedback on the Issues and Opportunities report

There was a mixed response to this issue, and no evidence of community support for allowing more development on side boundaries. The propositions quoted above have been called into question from a number of standpoints:

- there are not many locations in Hobsons Bay where, at present, there are backyard canopy trees of sufficient size to make their presence evident from the street above a garage or single storey house
- further investigation of existing built forms reveals numerous instances where two storey developments occupying the full frontage of a lot, but with upper floors indented from the side boundary, fail to maintain the sense of spaciousness valued in garden suburban and other streetscapes
- they may further encourage 'pop up' designs, which are criticised below on aesthetic grounds.



# ROOFS, BASEMENT PARKING AND HEIGHT

## ISSUE

### ACCOMMODATING PITCHED ROOFS AND SEMI-BASEMENT PARKING

*Height controls need to accommodate pitched roofs and semi-basement car parking*

Much of Altona has a high water table, and large areas of Hobsons Bay are located on basalt rock, so basement car parking is either uneconomic, or must be tanked, or can only be partly depressed below ground. With most apartment and some town house and unit developments, basement parking is necessary, and also desirable as a means of avoiding parking dominating the ground floor frontage and setback.

The entrance ramps associated with basement car parking are difficult to accommodate in ways that contribute to neighbourhood character and attractive, walkable streetscapes. They occupy front garden space, and tend to visually dominate front setback areas. On a traditional single dwelling lot they occupy too high a proportion of the front setback, and should be avoided. For larger lots and developments, they are a reality that must be accepted.

Semi-basement car parks may have less dominating entrance ramps (because they can be shorter and shallower), but they

present a particular design challenge because they elevate the ground floor. This elevation of the ground floor changes the relationship between the building, the front garden and the street

Three consequences arise:

- guidance is needed about the circumstances in which basement parking is appropriate
- guidelines are needed about how semi-basement parking is best accommodated architecturally, to provide an active interface with the street, and to integrate with the landscaping of the front garden zone
- calculation of height limits needs to allow for the possibility that the ground floor will be 1.5 floors high, where semi-basement parking is provided



Basement parking accommodated in a way that retains the look and feel of a landscaped front garden



Pitched roofs also need to be allowed for, particularly:

- where the height limit is mandatory, and
- where the preferred envelope favours a top floor designed to appear as part of the roof space (forming an attic)

The use of attics generally works best in single storey streetscapes with the attic forming a dwelling’s second storey

Council has also raised the issue of other rooftop elements and whether they should be accommodated in height limits. Any height controls exclude rooftop services. These services, such as air conditioning units and lift shafts, should be hidden from view from any adjoining public space or designed as architectural roof top features.

### Existing Policy

Existing planning scheme policy and character study guidelines relevant to this topic are summarized in Appendix B.

### Feedback on the Issues and Opportunities report

Discussions with Council officers, Councillors and community members emphasised that developments with basement parking are often the worst offenders in relation to the garages, hard surfaces and driveways issue described above. This is probably resolvable by introducing appropriate standards or guidelines. There was little or no feedback about the pitched roofs issue, though it is known to be an issue to building designers.

TYPES OF LOCATION AFFECTED	<p>Areas under pressure for redevelopment</p> <p>Larger sites suitable for medium density housing</p>
VCAT HISTORY	<p>VCAT determinations have generally supported basement car parking structures as they demonstrate 'less intrusive' forms than typical street level car parking options, particularly along the foreshore areas and sites with larger lots. Basement car parking also provides the opportunity for more room for landscaping and a reduced building footprint.</p> <p>On one occasion, Council rejected a proposal where the basement car parking was below the recommended AHD. VCAT overturned the decision citing compliance with the emerging neighbourhood character and appropriate design response.</p>
CAUSAL FACTORS	<p>Practicality and expense of basement car parking</p> <p>Steep topography and sloping land</p> <p>Large land parcels</p> <p>Desire to achieve maximum yield on site</p> <p>Poor design</p>
CHARACTER PRECINCTS AFFECTED	<p>Foreshore precincts and precincts with an abundance of large lots</p>

Table 32: Roofs, Basement Parking and Height

# INTERFACES WITH PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

## ISSUE

### INTERFACES WITH PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

*Interfaces with public open space including parks, laneways and bike (shared use) trails warrant a different approach to siting and design, because they are frontages from a character perspective.*

Where residential lots back onto a recreation reserve, landscaped area or bike (shared use) trail, an ideal outcome is that the building forms the visual edge of the landscape, rather than the back fence, and the private garden blends with the landscape style of the vegetation in the public space. Also, users of the reserve are likely to feel safer if habitable room windows overlook the parkland. This ideal cannot be achieved in every circumstance – residents can be nervous about exposing garden space to public view. Nevertheless, treatments can often be devised that improve the interface, such as using planting for privacy or transparent fencing rather than relying exclusively on a high, solid fence. ‘Upside down’ house plans, with the living rooms on the upper floor, can assist with passive surveillance in some park interfaces.

Laneways are often public thoroughfares, and form an important part of an area’s character. Some consistency in building envelope along laneway frontages is desirable, and there is a precedent for the requiring building setbacks from the centre line of the lane.

## Existing Policy

Existing planning scheme policy and character study guidelines relevant to this topic are summarized in Appendix B.

## Feedback on the *Issues and Opportunities report*

Discussions with Council officers, Councillors and community members revealed broad agreement with the issues, but not about the policy response. Requiring specific setbacks from the centre line of the lane is difficult because laneways are a variety of widths in the municipality and they are not mapped.

TYPES OF LOCATION AFFECTED	Residential areas abutting public parks, reserves and recreation areas Sites abutting laneways
VCAT HISTORY	None
CASUAL FACTORS	Feelings of separation from public realm and lack of safety Quality and amenity of laneways and public parks
CHARACTER PRECINCTS AFFECTED	Precincts where dwellings abut open space or a laneway

Table 33: Public Open Space Interface Issues



# COLOURS AND MATERIALS

## ISSUE

### INTERFACES WITH PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

*Consistency of materials is a vital part the character of some areas of Hobsons Bay, and colour palettes of some contemporary designs make them stand out from their surroundings, rather than blending in with them.*

Some parts of Hobsons Bay have an attractive character because of the consistency of materials. For example, parts of Altona North are exclusively brick, and some enclaves have a particularly strong character because they make exclusive use of the same brick (the smooth warm orange brickwork are characteristic of the late 1950s). Similarly parts of Newport and Williamstown were once almost entirely weatherboard, and this character predominates in some locales. The Study needs to clearly identify those areas where maintaining similar or compatible surface finishes is essential to the future character.

Areas of suburban Melbourne developed from around the 1920s to the 1950s and beyond are often characterised by a warm colour palette in terms of their wall and roof colours. Reds and creams are the predominant hues in many brick areas. Yet much contemporary development makes use of a grey- based palette, and this exaggerates the contrast in style and form between new and old in a way that seems unnecessary and undesirable. Sometimes adopting the same (or similar) materials and finishes can be a

decisive factor in allowing an honestly contemporary design to complement, rather than compete with, its surroundings.

Use of cement sheeting (including ‘blueboard’, fibro cement cladding planks and weatherboards) has been a concern among Council planners, because of surface deterioration. However these concerns appear to have abated with recent improvements in product quality. Sheeting products can be suitable for cladding and detailing in non-brick character areas.

TYPES OF LOCATION AFFECTED	Areas subject to the Heritage Overlay and other areas with a consistent use of colours and materials
VCAT HISTORY	None
CAUSAL FACTORS	Cheaper material alternatives
CHARACTER PRECINCTS AFFECTED	Special character areas and precincts in Williamstown

Table 34: Colours and Materials Issues

## Existing Policy

Existing planning scheme policy and character study guidelines relevant to this topic are summarized in Appendix B.

## Feedback on the *Issues and Opportunities report*

Discussions with Council officers, Councillors and community members revealed general support for the propositions made in the Issues and Opportunities report, coupled with a recognition that an appropriate and effective policy response may be difficult to formulate.



Warm hues like reds and creams predominate in many Garden Suburban areas, yet much contemporary development makes use of a grey-based palette. This exaggerates the contrast in style and form between new and old



## OTHER DESIGN ISSUES

*The reality of development 'on the ground' since 2002 points to a number of concerns about poor quality design, as much from an amenity as from a character perspective.*

In the Issues and Opportunities report released in August 2014, the question was posed: Has the 2002 Neighbourhood Character Study produced good design? The issues raised were:

- 'pop-up' second floors
- 'gun barrel driveways'
- poor site planning
- interfaces with Freeway and Rail Corridors

As foreshadowed in the *Issues and Opportunities report*, this study:

- reviews the neighbourhood character policies and guidelines to minimise unintended consequences for residential amenity
- include special policies or guidelines for interfaces with freeway and rail corridors

### 'POP-UP' SECOND FLOORS

'Pop-up' second floors of new units have become commonplace as a response to the ResCode building envelope, and possibly also as a means of complying with character objectives. By pop-up, the second floor has a floor plate smaller than, and recessed on one or more sides from, the ground floor structure. The setback between

ground and first floor is expressed as a section of roof – it therefore appears to pop-up through a section of roof. Sometimes the resultant elevation design is well resolved in proportions and use of materials, as with many upper floor extensions to existing dwellings with expansive roofs. But when the technique is applied to unit developments it can appear fussy, disjointed and unresolved.

Design guidelines are needed that confront and resolve this issue.

Historically, single storey areas have almost always included some two storey homes, with parts of the upper storey flush with the ground floor.



Design Controls are needed to guide development where the second floor has a smaller floorplate than the ground floor (sometimes known as 'pop-up').

Standalone two storey new dwellings, often with relatively high site coverage, are commonly built with sheer elevations, perhaps because they generally do not need a planning permit.

### ‘GUN BARREL DRIVEWAYS’

‘Gun barrel driveways’ have been a cause for concern in urban design circles for many years. The main objection to long, straight driveways is that they are a large, unrelieved area of paving, highly visible from the street. The effect is mitigated to a degree if the view is terminated by habitable room windows, and is worsened if the end point is a garage door or back fence. The worst situation is when gun barrel driveways on neighbouring lots adjoin each other.

A major issue is the absence of vegetation. Planting strips either side of the driveway help to an extent, but the best solutions are to:

- rearrange the site planning to break the driveway half way into the lot; or
- deviate the driveway around a substantial canopy tree; or
- plant large trees so that their canopies overhang the driveway

It is noted that it is difficult to rearrange many developments to break the driveway halfway into the lot or restrict its length.



Long, straight driveways present too much hard surfacing, interrupting the garden character of the street

### POOR SITE PLANNING

Many unit developments are producing less than optimal living environments for their occupants because of poor site planning. Living areas often suffer from poor solar orientation and poor outlook. Private open space can be badly sited and proportioned. Space is wasted in narrow side setback passageways. Overlooking is too often resolved by means of blocking the view from a window or balcony, rather than through good site planning.

These problems have a variety of causes, and trying to squeeze too much yield from a site. To the extent that neighbourhood character considerations are a contributing factor, this study reviews the policies and guidelines to minimise unintended consequences for residential amenity including poor design skills, State regulations and trying to squeeze too much yield from a site. To the extent that neighbourhood character considerations are a contributing factor, this study reviews the policies and guidelines to minimise unintended consequences for residential amenity.

## INTERFACES WITH FREEWAY AND RAIL CORRIDORS

Finally, certain interface conditions demand special design responses. Park, laneway and bike trail interfaces have already been mentioned, because they are (or should be) an intrinsic part of neighbourhood character. Residential area interfaces with freeway and rail corridors require special treatment because of noise, and to present a more coherent, 'viewed at speed' aesthetic to those using the corridor. Backyard zone policies may not be relevant in such locations; forms of development could be encouraged that insulate the residential area from some of the noise effects.

### Existing Policy

Existing planning scheme policy and character study guidelines relevant to this topic are summarized in Appendix B.

### *Feedback on the Issues and Opportunities report*

Discussions with Council officers, Councillors and community members revealed strong support for the points made in relation to poor site planning. Response was ambivalent to gun barrel driveways and freeway/rail corridor interfaces issues. There was some disagreement in relation to the issue of pop-up second storeys. It was also argued that sheer second storeys are more likely to result in visual bulk issues, a greater issue than poor pop-up second storeys design.



# 4 CHARACTER AND HOUSING





## INTERGRATED CHARACTER AND HOUSING

Previous chapters of the study have provided the following analyses:

- Neighbourhood Character Precincts (Chapter Two) - Hobsons Bay Precinct boundaries
- Neighbourhood Character Types (Chapter Two) - Descriptions
- Main characteristics
- Principles
  - Elements for change for each character type
    - Key elements to retain
    - Other elements to retain
    - Flexible Elements to accommodate Housing Change
- Residential standards able to be varied to meet character objectives (Chapter Two)
- Special character areas (Chapter Two)
- Response to the residential design issues (Chapter Three)

These findings were considered in conjunction with the Housing Strategy in order to arrive at recommended implementation options. The planning scheme tools available for implementing a character study need to be borne in mind in this exercise – they are fully assessed in the Implementation chapter.

The main tools are:

- MSS
- Local policy
  - Preferred character statements
  - Guidelines
  - Character Element
  - Objective
  - Design response
  - Avoid
- Variations to Residential Zone schedules
  - Neighbourhood Residential Zone
  - General Residential Zone
  - Residential Growth Zone
- Overlays (principally the Neighbourhood Character Overlay and Design and Development Overlay)
- Reference or Incorporated Document

*More detail about these tools can be found at Appendix A.*

The Preferred Character Statements are the foundation of all the other planning scheme provisions for a given area.

## HOUSING STRATEGY FINDINGS

As discussed in Chapter One, Council has prepared a Housing Strategy which sets a housing growth framework for the next 20 years. The Strategy includes a Housing Framework plan which identifies locations for minimal, incremental, moderate and substantial housing change.

The application of the reformed residential zones will be the tool used to implement the three levels of housing change. Table 35 opposite summarises Council's proposed housing change areas and the relevant residential zone.

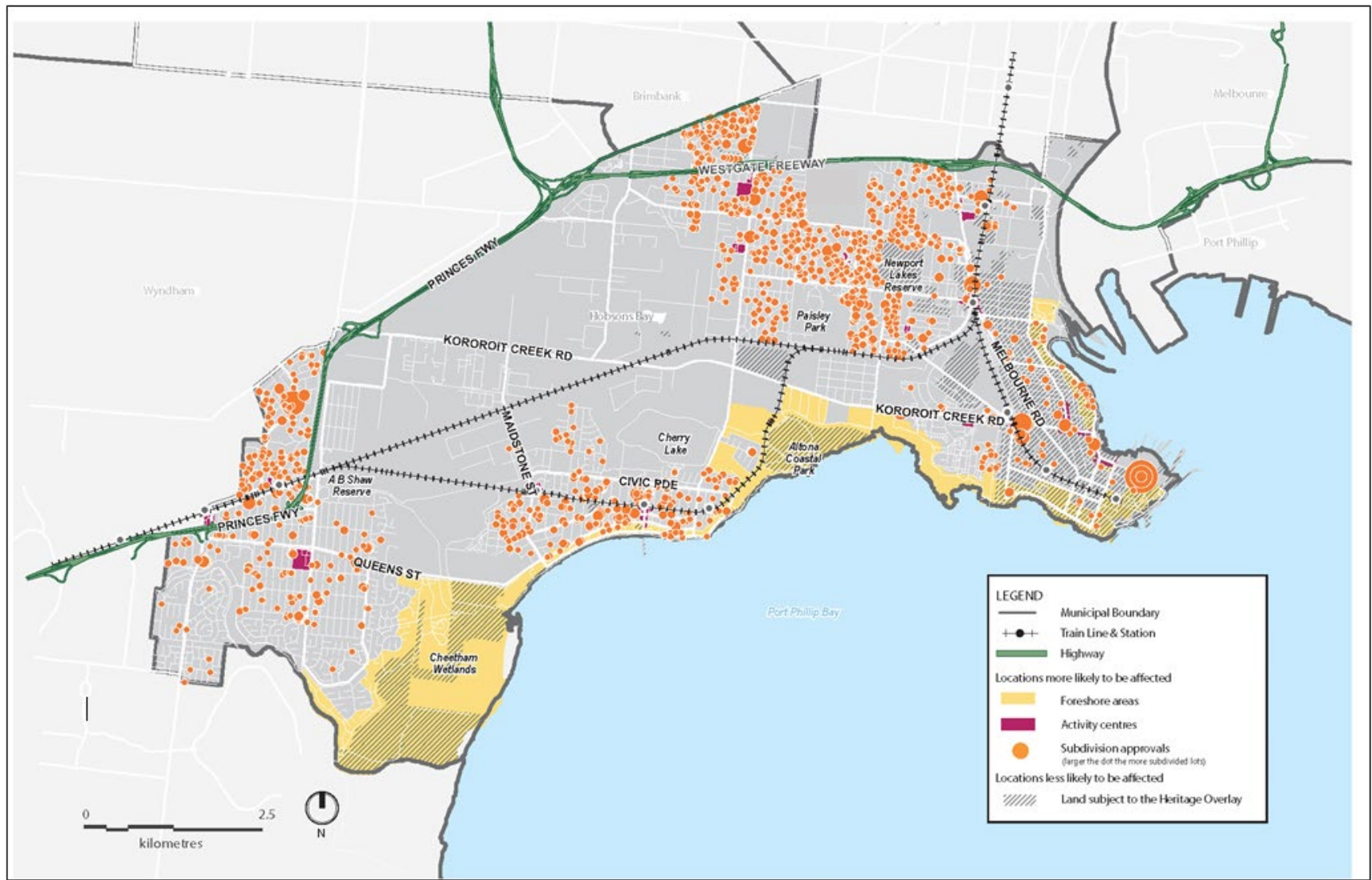
The Housing Strategy and the Neighbourhood Character Review provide strong policy guidance on the levels of change and growth that is appropriate in Hobsons Bay's residential areas.

While neighbourhood character is not explicitly required to be considered through the RGZ, design objectives still apply to ensure that future developments consider the context of adjoining properties and their interface with the street.

Design Guidelines have been developed for each character precinct to provide further detailed guidance on siting, building form, vegetation, front boundary treatment, colours, materials and site layout/subdivision. These guidelines will inform the preparation of relevant zone schedules

ZONE	CHANGE AREA	ZONE PURPOSE	CONSIDERATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER OBJECTIVES
Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)	Minimal and Incremental Change Areas	<p>To recognise areas of predominantly single and double storey residential development.</p> <p>To manage and ensure that development respects the identified neighbourhood character, heritage, environmental or landscape characteristics</p>	A schedule to this zone <b>must</b> contain the neighbourhood character objectives to be achieved for the area
General Residential Zone (GRZ)	Moderate Change Areas	<p>To encourage development that respects the neighbourhood character of the area</p> <p>To encourage a diversity of housing types and housing growth particularly in locations offering good access to services and transport</p>	A schedule to this zone <b>may</b> contain neighbourhood character objectives to be achieved for the area
Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)	Substantial Change Areas	<p>To provide housing at increased densities in buildings up to and including four storey buildings</p> <p>To encourage a diversity of housing types in locations offering good access to services and transport including activity centres and town centres</p> <p>To encourage a scale of development that provides a transition between areas of more intensive use and development and other residential areas</p>	A schedule to this zone <b>must</b> contain the design objectives to be achieved for the area

Table 35: Purpose of New Residential Zones, requirements for zone schedules and their alignment with change areas under the Housing Strategy



Map 18: Locations most affected by change, 2015



## ADDRESSING THE DESIGN ISSUES

The analysis in the Residential Design Chapter draws attention to design issues associated with the different character types within Hobsons Bay. The discussion here integrates this analysis with different tools available within the planning scheme. A useful starting point is to bundle together those issues that most affect each other – some items appear twice where this assists the analysis:

- interface with the street, setbacks and site planning
  - domination of frontages by garages, hard surfaces and driveways
  - space for canopy trees (front)
  - intrusions into the ‘backyard zone’
  - inadequate space for canopy trees (rear)
  - impractical provisions on side setbacks
  - ‘gun barrel driveways’
  - poor site planning
- allowable height
  - in relation to roof form
  - in relation to basement parking
- special interfaces
  - interfaces with public open space
  - interfaces with laneways
  - interfaces with freeway and rail corridors

- design detail
  - use of colours and materials
  - unsympathetic landscaping

## INTERFACE WITH THE STREET, SETBACKS AND SITE PLANNING

The analysis in the Residential Design Chapter draws attention to design issues associated with the different character types within Hobsons Bay. The discussion here integrates this analysis with different tools available within the planning:

- ResCode standard variations including:
  - landscaping
  - permeability
  - side and rear setbacks
  - walls on boundaries
  - private open space
  - front fence height
- other front fence provisions in the Design and Development Overlay (DDO)
- policy guidelines in the Local Policy Planning Framework (LPPF) or as Decision Guidelines in the Residential Zone Schedule
- guidelines in local laws regarding vehicle crossings

Of these, the tools shown in the table on the following pages are proposed as being most effective in addressing the design issues in regards to street interface, setbacks and site planning.

TOOL	TOOL TYPE	EXISTING PROVISIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES	REASONING
Landscaping provision	ResCode standard	<p>Landscape layout</p> <p>Encourages tree replacement</p> <p>Encourages tree retention where trees form part of neighbourhood character</p> <p>Landscape plan requirements</p>	<p>Retain large, established trees and provide for the planting of new trees wherever possible in all precincts</p> <p>Underground service infrastructure to maximise the opportunity to retain and plant canopy trees in all precincts</p> <p>–</p> <p>Require the provision of two canopy trees in the front setback wherever possible in all Garden Court and Garden Suburban areas (preferably with a minimum mature height of 8 metres)</p> <p>Where the front boundary width exceeds 20 metres, an additional canopy tree should be planted in two Garden Court precincts (S1 and W4) and all Garden Suburban precincts</p> <p>Plant at least two canopy trees with a minimum mature height of 8 metres to the rear or side of the development in all Garden Court and Garden Suburban precincts, except in substantial change areas</p>	<p>Provision of vegetation in the front setback improves the site’s interface with the street and minimises hard surfaces</p> <p>–</p> <p>Vegetation softens the impacts of built form</p> <p>Garden Court and Garden Suburban areas generally provide more opportunities for canopy trees to be provided in front setbacks and rear or side setbacks</p> <p>Urban Contemporary and Inner Urban/Garden Suburban Areas generally have more limited opportunities for canopy trees in front setbacks</p> <p>Emphasis is on coastal vegetation rather than trees for Waterfront Suburban areas; however retention and provision of trees is still encouraged</p> <p>Higher density residential development in substantial change areas may preclude the provision of canopy trees in side and rear setbacks, which also frequently is the case in Urban Contemporary areas.</p>

TOOL	TOOL TYPE	EXISTING PROVISIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES	REASONING
			<p>Require at least one canopy tree in the front setback wherever possible in Urban Contemporary and Inner Urban/Garden Suburban Areas (preferably with a minimum mature height of 8 metres).</p> <p>Plant at least one canopy tree with a minimum mature height of 8 metres to the rear or side of the development where possible in Inner Urban/Garden Suburban Areas.</p> <p>Use appropriate coastal species in the majority of the front setback in Waterfront Suburban areas</p>	<p>Garden Court and Garden Suburban areas generally provide more opportunities for canopy trees to be provided in front setbacks and rear or side setbacks.</p> <p>Landscaping controls have been provided in other municipalities: at least one large tree for every 400 square metres of site area including one large tree in the front setback (Banyule GR22) and to require 70% of ground level setback to be planted with substantial landscaping and canopy trees (Greater Dandenong RGZ1, GRZ1 and NRZ1)</p>
Permeability provision	ResCode standard	>20% of site should be permeable	<p>Provide permeable garden space for vegetation in the majority of the front setback in all precincts.</p> <p>Increase permeability to encourage the provision of vegetation in Garden Suburban, Garden Court and Waterfront Suburban minimal and incremental changes areas.</p>	<p>Provides space for vegetation and restricts the amount of hard surfaces on site.</p> <p>Adjusting this figure can be justified using existing characteristics and what is possible for preferred development (to be confirmed by capacity analysis as part of the Housing Strategy)</p>

TOOL	TOOL TYPE	EXISTING PROVISIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES	REASONING
Front fence height (within 3 metres of the street) provision	ResCode standard	Maximum height of 2 metres along major roads (Road Zone, Category 1 roads) and 1.5 metres in other streets	<p>Reduce heights to 1.5 metres along major roads and to 1.2 metres in other streets in all areas except special character areas</p> <p>In special character areas, limit height to 1.2 metres for Inglis Street and 0.5 metres for other areas</p>	<p>1.5 metres along major roads allows for the average height person to see over the top of fences and acknowledges the busy road interface</p> <p>In other areas, 1.2 metres provides for better visual connections with front gardens from the street and also allows for all types of typical fences in Hobsons Bay (including low brick and medium- height timber picket fences) to be provided</p> <p>In special character areas, more strict controls are recommended to encourage the retention and provision of matching fences (i.e. timber picket fences in Inglis Street and low brick fences in other areas)</p>
Side and rear setback provision	ResCode standard	If not on or within 200 mm of a boundary >1m from boundary and 0.3 metres more for every metre of height over 3.6 metres	<p>In Garden Suburban, Garden Court and Waterfront Suburban areas require a minimum setback from one side boundary of 1 metre for moderate areas and at least 1 metre from both side boundaries in minimal and incremental change areas</p> <p>In Urban Contemporary, Inner Urban and most Inner Urban / Garden Suburban areas require dwellings to be setback a minimum of 1 metre from at least one side boundary, unless buildings abut both</p>	<p>This provides for the retention of building spacing in Garden Suburban, Garden Court and Waterfront Suburban areas where less future change is proposed.</p> <p>This provides for at least some separation between buildings in more densely built urban areas, unless existing buildings already abut both side boundaries</p> <p>This provides for the retention of a rear landscape corridor to allow for the planting</p>

TOOL	TOOL TYPE	EXISTING PROVISIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES	REASONING
			<p>side boundaries on adjoining properties and this is the common pattern</p> <p>In Garden Suburban and Garden Court areas provide a minimum setback of 4 metres from the rear boundary.</p>	of trees to maintain Garden Suburban/ Garden Court characteristics.
Walls on boundaries provision	ResCode standard	Maximum 10 metres + 25% of remaining length of the adjoining lot's boundary	<p>In Garden Suburban substantial change areas, require new walls on boundary to be set back at least 3 metres behind the front building facade.</p> <p>In other Garden Suburban and Garden Court areas, walls on boundaries should be setback from the front building line; however garages and carports should be set back at least 3 metres behind dwelling fronts</p>	Indenting the walls on boundaries at side boundaries gives the impression of building spacing in the street which is a valued characteristic of Garden Suburban and Garden Court areas
Private open space provision	ResCode standard	Minimum 40square metres with 25square metres secluded, minimum 3 metres width or balcony 8square metres, minimum width 1.6 metres or rooftop 10square metres, minimum width 2 metres	In Garden Court and Garden Suburban minimal, incremental and moderate change areas, the minimum dimension for secluded private open space should be 4 metres, (with a minimum 40square metres private open space in moderate change areas and minimum 60square metres in minimal and incremental change areas) unless Clauses 32.08-4 and 32.09-4 require a greater area to be provided	A minimum dimension of 4 metres is accepted practice in approved residential zone schedules. This width provides better space for the planting of canopy trees.
Garden area requirements	General residential	Percentage of site must be provided as garden area.	In Garden Suburban and Garden Court areas the garden area requirements	Requiring minimum areas and setbacks in the other provisions means that there will

TOOL	TOOL TYPE	EXISTING PROVISIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES	REASONING
	zone requirement	The percentage varies according to the lot size. Clause 32.08-4 of the Scheme (GRZ) and Clause 32.09-4 of the Victoria Planning Provisions (NRZ).	should work in conjunction with the other design approaches proposed by the NCS as the setbacks and areas proposed are minimum.	not be conflict with Clauses 32.08-4 and 32.09-4, which are mandatory zone provisions.
Other fence provisions	DDO	None	<p>In Inglis Street special character area, require front fence to be constructed in a style that complements the predominant fencing style in the street (i.e. timber picket fences)</p> <p>In other special character areas, require front fence to be constructed in a style that complements the predominant fencing style (i.e. low scale orange, red or cream brick fences)</p>	In special character areas, strict front fencing controls are recommended to encourage the retention and provision of matching fences
Policy guidelines	LPPF or Zone Schedule Decision Guideline	<p>Policy encouraging vegetation on site, gardens in front setback</p> <p>Policy maintaining openness of the streetscape and the rhythm of built form in the street</p> <p>Policy seeking to minimise the dominance of hard surfaces, driveways and car parking structures</p>	<p>Improve the implementation of the proposed policy in the planning scheme, both in the local policy and zone schedule decision guidelines</p> <p>Rationalise the existing policy to be clearer about differences between character types and different levels of change</p> <p>Include decision guideline in zone schedules regarding the transparency of fencing</p>	<p>A lot of the detail from 2002 study's preferred character and design guidelines for each precinct was not included in the neighbourhood character policies currently in the planning scheme</p> <p>For the implementation of the new residential zones, this study needs to work with the Housing Strategy</p>

Table 36: Proposed Tools to Address the Interface with the Street, Setbacks and Site Planning

## ALLOWABLE HEIGHT

The following tools are available to address height issues:

- Zone schedule variations
  - Building height (must be higher than allowed by the zone)
  - Decision guidelines
- Other building height provisions using the Design and Development Overlay (DDO)
- Policy guidelines in the Local Policy Planning Framework (LPPF)

Of these, the tools shown in the table right are proposed as being most effective in addressing height design issues.

TOOL	TOOL TYPE	EXISTING PROVISIONS IN HOBSONS BAY	POTENTIAL CHANGES	REASONING
Building height provision	Zone schedule variation	Residential zone provisions	Height limits to be determined through future Structure Plans	Height limits will be provided when the residential zones are applied according to the Housing Strategy.
Other building height provisions	DDO or NCO	Height limit in foreshore areas	Provide upper level setbacks in special character areas	Seeks to retain the significance of these precincts

Table 37: Proposed Tools to Address Issues in relation to Allowable Height

## SPECIAL INTERFACES

The following tools are available to address the issues in relation to interfaces with public open space, laneways, freeways and rail corridors:

- Built form provisions using the Design and Development Overlay (DDO)
- Policy guidelines in the Local Policy Planning Framework (LPPF)

Of these, the tool shown in the table right are proposed as being most effective in addressing the design issues in regards to special interfaces.

TOOL	TOOL TYPE	EXISTING PROVISIONS IN HOBSONS BAY	POTENTIAL CHANGES	REASONING
Policy guidelines	LPPF or Zone Schedule Decision Guideline	None	Provide passive surveillance of public spaces where sites abut laneways and parkland  Recognise the opportunities provided by railway and freeway interfaces and the need for acoustic treatment in these locations	These cannot be included in residential zone schedules as requirements (ResCode variations).

Table 37: Proposed Tools to Address Issues in relation to Allowable Height



## DESIGN DETAIL

The following tools are available to address the issues in relation to colours and materials:

- Neighbourhood Character Overlay or Design and Development Overlay
- Policy guidelines in the Local Policy Planning Framework (LPPF)

Both of these tools are proposed as being most effective to address this issue as shown in the table below.

TOOL	TOOL TYPE	EXISTING PROVISIONS	POTENTIAL CHANGES	REASONING
Policy guidelines	LPPF or Zone Schedule Decision Guideline	Local policy regarding colours and materials	Review the policy statements to align with the Housing Strategy	Considers the need to minimise the number of residential zone schedules
Design detail provisions	DDO or NCO	None	Provide design detail provisions in special character areas	Retains and enhances the significance of these precincts

Table 39: Proposed Tools to Address Special Interfaces





5

IMPLEMENTATION



## PLANNING SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the recommended options in Chapter 4 (refer tables), requires the following changes to the existing planning scheme provisions.

### MSS AND LOCAL POLICY

The final Neighbourhood Character Study should be included as a reference document in the MSS, replacing the reference to the 2002 Study in Cl. 21.06-1.

Local Policies at Cl.22.07, 22.08, 22.09 and 22.10 should be replaced with a new planning policy that includes the preferred character statements for all precincts at a minimum, and preferably Objectives and Design Responses that are not elsewhere included through Overlays or Zone schedules, as outlined in Tables 36 and 37 on pages 123 and 124. The implementation of new Local policies will be in the form and content required under the new Planning Policy Framework approved under Amendment VC148 and sit within Clause 15.01 (Built Environment).

### ZONE SCHEDULES

A number of the recommended options can be implemented through the residential zone schedules. These are detailed in Table 35, including changes to existing zone

The Neighbourhood Character Design Guidelines will inform the content of the final residential zones.

### OVERLAYS

The Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO) should be applied to the six special character areas, and the schedules to the Overlay should include the Design Responses for each area, including the matters outlined in Tables 36 and 37.

The Design and Development Overlay (DDO) should be applied to the six special character areas in order to provide for a front fence permit trigger and requirements (i.e. the DDO can trigger a blanket permit requirement for a fence, regardless of height.)

The Neighbourhood Character Design Guidelines provide further detail to guide built form outcomes including the categorisation of design elements, objectives, design responses and elements to 'avoid' for each character precinct

## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

The neighbourhood character precinct design guidelines and brochures that have been prepared should be made publically available. These provide comprehensive information about each character type in a manner that is easily understood by the community and should be made

available at Council offices and accessible on Council's website.

## STREET TREES

Changes to street trees or street tree strategies will ideally have some reference to the neighbourhood context determined by this study. Street tree coordination, planting and maintenance could be improved throughout Hobsons Bay and could greatly enhance and differentiate neighbourhood character areas. It is recommended that a draft urban forest strategy continue to be developed to improve the landscaping character within Hobsons Bay's residential areas.

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE

Community awareness of the importance of neighbourhood character issues is an essential aspect of implementation. This applies to a range of different groups in the community where a range of approaches to communication are required.

This includes:

- education of real estate agents and developers
- working with residents' groups and landowners generally
- education of design and building professionals

The final report and brochures will form a large part of this communication. Additional techniques for consideration include:

- awards or encouragement schemes for 'good character' developments
- workshops with residents' groups, Council staff, developers or design professionals
- public displays
- media articles/events

## STAFF SKILLING AND DESIGN ADVICE

Council's statutory planners need continued support to make the best use of this study's recommendations. Correct approaches to site analysis, knowledge about acceptable design solutions, familiarity with architectural styles, and consistency of decisions are all important. Professional development opportunities to update knowledge and skills should be supported.

Training sessions, workshops and review of current applications by urban design consultants are useful techniques. In addition, training may be required by other parts of Council where the recommendations impact upon public domain works designed and undertaken by engineering personnel or contractors in accordance with

specifications prepared by Council staff.

Resourcing may be an issue in the implementation of the recommendations of this study, as increasing controls over buildings and vegetation and more detailed assessment of design may result in increased workloads for planning staff.

Council must be aware of this potential and monitor the effect of introducing new controls to ensure that implementation of the study is effective.

Above all, Council must determine to 'send out the right message' to the development community through consistent decision making as well as communication techniques discussed earlier. That message must foster an expectation of best quality design and that applicants will be subject to delays or refusal if they fail to meet this expectation.



# APPENDICES

Appendix A:  
Planning Scheme Implementation  
Options  
Appendix B:  
Existing Planning Policies

## APPENDIX A

### PLANNING SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

This appendix provides an overview of the current statutory tools available to implement this review. The Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme will need to be amended to introduce or amend any of the following tools.

### MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) provides Council's strategic rationale and context for all statutory controls introduced into the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme. Reference to the Neighbourhood Character Study can be included in the MSS, and provide the overarching objectives relating to the protection and management of neighbourhood character in the municipality. The MSS should contain the correct strategy to provide an umbrella to all other related provisions.

### LOCAL POLICY

The inclusion of a local policy within the still current Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) will provide the highest level of strategic direction, next to the MSS itself, and therefore, will ensure that Council's objectives and the measures against which all applications will be assessed are clear. This is expected to continue once the current LPPF, including MSS, becomes translated into the new Planning Policy Framework; however Local Policy content

may change after translation when the neighbourhood character controls in zone and overlay schedules are factored in.

Local policy can serve to provide a set of general considerations that apply to all proposals within residential areas for which a planning permit is required. For each neighbourhood character precinct identified, the policy could include the key elements of the study outcomes, being the preferred character statements, objectives and design responses.

In recent years, local policy is most often the preferred method of statutory implementation of neighbourhood character studies, for the reasons above. Statutory planners prefer more information in the policy, particularly inclusion of preferred character statements, objectives and design responses. However, some policy will be better situated within the zone and overlay schedules, which will make it easier to find when co-located with development controls.



## INCORPORATED DOCUMENTS

Whole or part of the study and/or design guidelines or precinct brochures could be incorporated into the planning scheme. The incorporated document would then have statutory weight.

The Department of Development, Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) Practice Note on incorporated and reference documents states that specific planning decision requirements should in most instances be extracted from external documents and included in the scheme as local policy or within a zone or overlay schedule. However, the Practice Note recommends incorporating all or part of documents where they contain lengthy guidelines.

The disadvantage of this approach is that a planning scheme amendment process is required to change any part of the incorporated document. This is cumbersome and time consuming, therefore the contents of the incorporated document must be relatively 'timeless' and not contain information that might become irrelevant or out-of-date readily. Specifically, this might apply to those parts of the brochures that describe the existing character of an area that may change over time.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Neighbourhood Character Study and the precinct guidelines could be included as reference documents in the planning scheme (e.g. in the MSS or Local Policies). The advantage of this option is that it provides background for decision making; however, DELWP advice on reference documents is that they are to be considered as 'background' only and should not contain policies or guidelines that assist in determining planning applications.

Referencing of the study and guidelines is a sound and proper approach only in conjunction with other statutory implementation mechanisms.

## RESCODE AND RESIDENTIAL ZONE SCHEDULES

ResCode is important in that it requires neighbourhood character to be addressed in planning applications as a fundamental consideration, along with any relevant study, such as this study.

To date, the limitation of ResCode in achieving the recommendations of a neighbourhood character study has been that the provisions apply uniformly to all areas within the same residential zone in a municipality. One of the

benefits of any variations to ResCode standards through the zones is that they affect the relevant regulation in the building system. This means that they are able to affect applications that do not require a planning permit.

The following residential zones can tailor the provisions to address design requirements within different parts of a zone:

- Mixed Use Zone (MUZ)
- Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)
- General Residential Zone (GRZ)
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)

Previously this was unavailable and as such, only those neighbourhood character objectives that were general in nature and are relevant to all areas could be implemented through a variation to ResCode standards.

The following information can be specified in the schedules to the new residential zones:

- Neighbourhood Character Objectives (in the NRZ and GRZ and Design Objectives in the RGZ)
- Variations to ResCode standards
  - Minimum street setback
  - site coverage

- permeability
- landscaping
- side and rear setbacks
- walls on boundaries
- private open space (noting that Minimum Garden Area requirements are mandatory and cannot be changed)
- front fence height
- building heights (alternative heights can be specified but can only be higher not lower than what the zone allows)
- application requirements
- decision guidelines

## OVERLAY CONTROLS

The VPP Practice Note 'Using the Neighbourhood Character Provisions in Planning Schemes' discusses the overlay controls that could be used to protect areas of neighbourhood character significance.

As noted, it is not clear how the new residential zones might change the role of existing overlays. For example, a Neighbourhood Residential Zone might replace areas subject to the Neighbourhood Character Overlay, with a

schedule containing the same requirements.

A Design and Development Overlay (DDO) requires a permit to be obtained for all development within the area covered (some types of development can be exempted). It ensures the implementation of the detailed guidelines in the consideration of all development in that area. A DDO can control elements such as height, setback, site coverage, fences and development within a certain distance of tree trunks. It cannot control demolition of buildings, nor removal of trees.

The DDO should only apply to small areas where a high degree of change is anticipated and specific design outcomes are desired. This may be applicable to areas around activity centres or along the transport corridors identified in the MSS for higher density housing, or to large redevelopment sites.

The DDO may also be required to address the design of fences where this is a particular concern as this is not possible through the Neighbourhood Character Overlay. The Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO)

The Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO) provides the opportunity to assess all applications for new dwellings or

demolition within an area. The ResCode schedule can be modified to suit the requirements for the particular NCO area and tree removal controls can be introduced.

The NCO should be applied to small, well-defined areas where there is strong justification.

A Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) or Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) can require a permit for removal of trees; and it can apply to all trees, Trees over a certain trunk diameter or height or to native, indigenous or exotic vegetation. In order for a VPO or SLO to be justifiable, the vegetation or landscape must be demonstrated to be of significance to the character of the area.

It should be noted that the new residential zones do not include provisions relating to vegetation, therefore these overlays may still be required in areas where vegetation is a key character element.

## COUNCIL GUIDELINE

Council could resolve to adopt the findings of this study and the associated design guidelines for use in the assessment of planning applications, but not to proceed further with amending the planning scheme. The advantages of this option are:

- Council could commence using the guidelines immediately
- Council would have the ability to change the guidelines as it wishes
- no planning scheme amendment would be required

The significant disadvantage is that the study and guidelines will not be of assistance at VCAT as they would not carry any statutory weight and would therefore not be of relevance to the consideration of applications without some reference in the planning scheme. In addition, DELWP actively discourages assessing applications with Council policies that are not within the planning scheme. Other than as a temporary measure while an amendment was being prepared and exhibited, this option would not be recommended

## APPENDIX B EXISTING PLANNING POLICY

This appendix sets out existing planning policy found in the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme that relates to each of the design issues raised in this review.

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	WEST PRECINCT AFFECTED	EAST PRECINCT AFFECTED	SOUTH PRECINCT AFFECTED	NORTH PRECINCT AFFECTED
To minimise the loss of front garden space and the dominance of car parking structures.	Locate garages and carports behind the line of the dwelling.	1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13
	Minimise paving in front garden areas including driveways and crossovers.	5, 8, 9, 10	5	1, 5, 7, 10	1, 7
	Provide vehicular access from a rear laneway if possible.		1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8		5, 8
	Minimise or provide only one vehicular crossover per frontage.		1, 4, 7, 8	6	
To minimise the dominance of car parking structures.	Minimise the creation and width of new crossovers.		6		
	Locate car-parking structures behind the line of the dwelling.	4	2		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
	Use of permeable driveway materials.	7			
To minimise the number of vehicular crossovers and the dominance of driveways and car parking structures.	Provide vehicular access from a rear laneway if available.		2, 9		
	Locate garages and carports behind the line of the dwelling.	2			
	Minimise paving in front garden areas including driveways and crossovers.	2			
To maintain the use of front setbacks for garden space.	Provide vehicular access from a rear laneway if available.				11, 12
	Locate garages and car parking structures at the rear of the site.		11		
	Provide vehicular access from a rear laneway if available.		11		

Table 40: Neighbourhood Character Local Policy for Garages, Hard Surfaces and Driveways

## GARAGES, HARD SURFACES AND DRIVEWAYS

There are a number of existing policy objectives relating to garages, hard surfaces and driveways.

Clause 21.06 aims to discourage the use of basement garages where they lead to the loss of effective landscaping or where it has the effect of increasing the height of buildings, particularly in coastal areas.

Clause 22.04 'Altona Meadows Urban Design Policy' has a number of objectives that relate to garages, hard surfaces and driveways. This includes:

- to encourage landscape edges between property boundaries and driveways generally in accordance with Hobsons Bay City Council Landscape Design Guidelines (1999)
- outdoor car parking should be landscaped to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority
- single driveways should be encouraged on allotments less than 14 metres wide
- lots less than 13 metres wide will require special attention to the width of garages and car spaces to ensure adequate maneuvering space is available.

Clauses 22.07-22.10 provide policy for Hobsons Bay West,

North, East and South. Each neighbourhood character precinct is provided with objectives and design responses. Table 40 on page 130 outlines the relevant policy guidance relating to garages, hard surfaces and driveways.

There are a number of Design and Development Overlays that affect residential streets in the Hobsons Bay area:

- Schedule 2 denotes that no vehicular access or egress driveways should be constructed to Birmingham Street except those required for emergency purposes or for access to a residential development
- Schedules 4 and 8 have decision guidelines in place that encourage views of garages and carport from the front to be minimised and views of semi basement car parks which are visible from any of the foreshore roads or foreshore areas to be avoided
- New or amended existing schedules could specify that crossovers should be restricted by width of lot, e.g. only provide new crossovers where they fit in with the rhythm of crossovers in the streetscape'

## BACKYARD ZONE

Some existing policy is provided in the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme in relation to the backyard zone.

Clause 21.06 'Built Environment and Heritage' includes Clause 21.06-1 which seeks to ensure that a sense of openness in backyards is retained in precincts where this is an important character element.

Clause 22.04 'Altona Meadows Urban Design Policy' has the objective to provide adequate secluded open space that will receive sunlight and is well integrated with living areas. It also provides 40 square metres of open space located to the rear or side of a dwelling with the minimum width of three metres.

Clauses 22.07-22.10 (neighbourhood character policies) provide policy in relation to the backyard zone as shown in Table 41.

The new reformed zones include mandatory garden area provisions which require a percentage of each site to be garden (for lots above 400 square metres). However, there are no specific requirements that this area be provided in the rear, as such variations requiring the provision of minimum rear garden areas will ensure that backyard zones are protected.

Table 41: Neighbourhood Character Local Policy for Backyard Zone

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	WEST PRECINCT AFFECTED	EAST PRECINCT AFFECTED	SOUTH PRECINCT AFFECTED	NORTH PRECINCT AFFECTED
To maintain the sense of openness in backyards and the tree canopy backdrop to the streetscapes.	If two or more dwellings are proposed, the dwelling(s) at the rear should be a single storey form.	4, 10		1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8	1, 2, 3, 4,

## TREES AND LANDSCAPING

There is extensive existing policy that relates to trees and landscaping.

Clause 11.02-1S ‘Supply of urban land’, part of Clause 11.02 ‘Managing Growth’ requires planning for urban growth to consider neighbourhood character and landscape considerations.

Clause 15.01-2S ‘Urban design’, part of Clause 15.01 ‘Built Environment’, requires each development provide landscaping that responds to its site context, enhances the built form and creates safe and attractive spaces.

Clause 21.03 ‘Settlement’ Objectives 5 and 6 seek to maintain and enhance the role of the Altona Beach and

Newport Activity Centre’s visual amenity via landscaping.

Clause 21.04 ‘Open Space’ objective 3 seeks to establish the Kororoit Creek corridor as a major focus for recreation and community activities. As part of this, it aims to protect landscapes which are representative of the creek corridor.

Clause 21.05-2 ‘The Coast’ includes objectives 4 and 5 which seek to protect the landscape values of the coast.

Clause 21.06 ‘Built Environment and Heritage’ encourage trees in private areas to complement green streetscapes. This clause aims to protect and improve street trees and nature strips. Objective 1 discourages the use of basement garages where they lead to the loss of effective landscaping. Objective 2 encourages the establishment of a landscape setting for new development.



Objective 4 seeks to encourage the use of a wider range of species of trees in developed areas. It also takes into account the traffic calming effects of street tree planting. It encourages careful consideration of a site's landscaping as a condition of application approval. Views worthy of protection or screening should also be considered in the design of landscaping.

Clause 21.06-2 'Heritage' aims to protect all heritage areas including heritage significant trees. Part of its implementation is to undertake a Significant Tree Study and prepare a Conservation Management Plan which incorporates guidelines for historic street trees.

Clause 22.01-1 'General Heritage Policy' identifies the need to ensure that the cultural heritage of Hobsons Bay is conserved and enhanced. This includes conserving significant street trees by not removing them unless they die or become a safety risk in the opinion of the Responsible Authority. If a street tree is removed, it is to be replaced with a semi-advanced species to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. This clause defines guidelines that the Responsible Authority must consider if new development will have an adverse effect on a significant tree. It also includes policy to ensure landscaping enhances the historic cultural landscape found

in a street or precinct.

Clause 22.01-2 'Government Survey Heritage Precinct Policy' aims to protect the distinctive cultural heritage significance of the precinct. Part of this is to protect significant trees on public and private land that contribute to the cultural landscape character.

Clause 22.01-4 'Hannan's Farm (Ramsgate Estate) and Williamstown Beach Heritage Precincts Policy' aims to retain mature trees on public and private land that provides appropriate cultural landscape and is related to the main period of development.

Clause 22.01-6 'Nelson Place Heritage Precinct Policy' aims to conserve and enhance the mature planting, rotunda, trees in Commonwealth Reserve and mature street trees in Nelson Place that contribute to the cultural landscape setting for the architecture.

Clause 22.04 'Altona Meadows Urban Design Policy' encourages the planting of trees and landscaping. The relationship of landscaping with the streetscape is to be noted in any design response. The clause outlines a number of directives which include:

- encouraging landscape edges between property

boundaries and driveways

- Council to seek funding for street planting
- maintaining links between local parks and courts and collector roads
- retaining existing mature trees and incorporating them into the design
- planting at least one substantial tree to each average lot
- planting trees that are common to and perform well in the area
- providing a front garden that contributes to the character of the street
- the maintenance of the open character of the area by requiring buildings at the front to be setback from at least one boundary
- retention of landscape setbacks and increasing those setbacks where necessary to overcome other site layout deficiencies

Clause 22.06 'Mixed Use Zone - Altona Activity Centre' seeks to enhance and reinforce the visual amenity of Pier Street via landscape guidelines.

Clauses 22.07-22.10 (neighbourhood character policies) provide policy in regards to trees and landscaping as

shown in Table 42. These are generally very similar with slight wording changes.

Schedule 1 to the Comprehensive Development Zone requires a landscape plan which includes showing tree planting that will conceal basement or semi-basement car parking and landscaping.

Clause 43.01 'Heritage Overlay' requires a permit to remove, destroy or lop a tree if the schedule identifies there are tree controls for that heritage place. This would not apply if the tree needs to be clear of an electric line or if the tree presents an immediate risk of personal injury or damage to property.

Schedule 2 to the Design and Development Overlay (DDO) 'Birmingham Street Area' states that no tree is to be removed without the consent of the Responsible Authority. Setback areas are to be landscaped and maintained according to a landscaping plan.

Schedule 8 to the DDO 'Foreshore Height Limitation' includes an outcome that ensures space is provided to the front and rear of the site for the planting of one substantial tree in each area.

Schedule 9 to the DDO 'Mason Street Newport - Residential Development adjoining Newport Lakes

Reserve' requires consideration that the proposal is accompanied by a landscape plan which includes landscaping and street tree species.

Schedule 13 to the DDO 'Part Precinct 9 - Former Cabots Site 302-330 Millers Road Altona North' seeks to retain significant trees along the northern boundary of the site. It also requires a landscape plan showing retention of trees where appropriate.

Council also has a Local Law that prescribes that a person must not destroy or remove any (private) tree that has a trunk diameter greater than 45 centimetres measured 1.5 metres above ground level without a permit.

Table 42: Neighbourhood Character Local Policy for Trees & Landscaping

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	WEST PRECINCT AFFECTED	EAST PRECINCT AFFECTED	SOUTH PRECINCT AFFECTED	NORTH PRECINCT AFFECTED
To maintain and strengthen the garden setting of the dwellings.	Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all applications for new dwellings that includes native trees and shrubs.	1, 8			
	Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all applications for new dwellings that includes substantial trees and shrubs.	2, 4, 6, 9			
	Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all applications for new dwellings that includes native trees and shrubs (Locate footings outside root zone).	7			
	Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all applications for new dwellings that utilises appropriate low maintenance, coastal species.		2		
	Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all applications for new dwellings that includes substantial trees and shrubs.		4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	
	Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all applications for new dwellings that utilises appropriate coastal species.		6		
	Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all applications for new dwellings that includes planting within the front setback.		9		
	Retain large, established trees and provide for the planting of new trees wherever possible.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1, 5, 7, 8, 10	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13
	Retain large, established trees and provide for the planting of new trees as well as low level vegetation wherever possible.				6
	Retain large, established trees and provide for the planting of new trees or new canopy trees wherever possible.				9, 10
	Retain large, established trees and provide for the planting of new wide spreading canopy trees wherever possible.				11
	Retain existing native and indigenous trees and understorey wherever possible. (Locate footings outside root zone).	8			
	Buildings should be sited and designed to incorporate space for the planting of vegetation.	10			
	Buildings should be sited and designed to incorporate space for the planting of significant vegetation.		3		
Buildings should be sited and designed to incorporate space for the planting of vegetation, including canopy trees.		11			
Buildings should be sited and designed to incorporate space for the planting of substantial vegetation.				7	4, 13

## SIDE SETBACKS

There are a number of policy statements in relation to side setbacks in the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme.

Clause 22.01-2 'Government Survey Heritage Precinct Policy' applies to land identified within the Government Survey Heritage Precinct in Williamstown. It identifies the need to encourage infill development to be setback from side boundaries and reflect existing patterns of development. The policy also ensures that side setbacks reflect the existing street pattern.

Clause 22.1-3 'Private Survey Heritage Precinct Policy' applies to all land within certain Heritage Overlay sites and precincts in Williamstown and Newport. Retention of the special heritage significance is to be achieved through the incorporation of side setbacks for additions or alterations to dwellings and the setback of all double storey elements.

Clause 22.01-4 'Hannan's Farm (Ramsgate Estate) and Williamstown Beach Heritage Precinct Policy' applies to land that is situated in these precincts. It promotes side setbacks that reflect the rhythm of the existing space between dwellings.

Clause 22.01-7 'Cox's Garden Heritage Precinct Policy' applies to land within this precinct that is one of the

original government subdivisions of Williamstown. It states that there should be minimal side setbacks for infill development. It continues to state that it promotes side setbacks that reflect the rhythm of the existing spacing between dwellings.

Clause 22.01-8 'Housing Commission of Victoria Estates Heritage Precincts Policy' supports the need to retain the distinctive cultural heritage significance by protecting side setbacks.

Clause 22.01-9 'Newport and Spotswood Residential Heritage Precincts Policy' encourages infill developments to promote side setbacks that reflect existing spacing between dwellings.

Clause 22.02 'Industry' encourages policy to ensure side setbacks to the street to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Clause 22.04 'Altona Meadows Urban Design Policy' states that side setbacks are a strong contributor to the character of the area and to provide generous setbacks on at least one side of the property.

Clauses 22.07-22.10 (neighbourhood character policies) provide policy in regards to side setbacks as shown in Table 43.

Schedule 1 to the Comprehensive Development Zone (CDZ1) states that building design should provide varying setbacks from all boundaries particularly to the north, south and east. This is to reduce scale and bulk of built form, maximise views and solar access and sheltered external spaces. Its setback requirements include varying setbacks from adjoining properties that must be landscaped where appropriate and be in keeping with the character of the area.

Clause 54.04 'Amenity Setbacks' ensures the setback of a building from a boundary respects the existing or preferred neighbourhood character and limits the impact on the amenity of existing dwellings.

Clause 54.04 'Amenity Impacts' ensures the setback of a building from a boundary respects the existing or preferred neighbourhood character and limits the impact on the amenity of existing dwellings.

Table 43: Neighbourhood Character Local Policy for Side Setbacks

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	WEST PRECINCT AFFECTED	EAST PRECINCT AFFECTED	SOUTH PRECINCT AFFECTED	NORTH PRECINCT AFFECTED
To maintain the existing dwelling pattern.		1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
To reflect the existing dwelling			3, 4, 6		
To maintain the pattern of spacing between buildings.	Buildings should be set back from at least one side boundary by a minimum of 1 metre.	4			

## PITCHED ROOFS AND SEMI-BASEMENT

Some existing policy is provided in relation to accommodating pitched roofs and basement car parking.

Clauses 22.01-2, 22.01-3, 22.01-4, 22.01-7 and 22.01-9 all seek to retain the construction of predominately weatherboard with pitched hipped or gabled roof. Clauses 22.01-2 to 22.01-10 have a policy that infill development needs to be compatible with the heritage places roof form and material as visible from the street.

Schedules 4 and 8 of the DDO requires views of garages and carport from the front be minimised and views of semi basement car parks which are visible from any of the foreshore roads or foreshore areas avoided. They also have in place guidelines on the pitch and eaves of roofs.

## PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Limited policy is provided in regards to the interface between private development and public open space.

Clause 21.04 'Open Space' encourages landowners to set aside privately owned land along watercourses for public open space.

Schedule 1 of the Comprehensive Development Zone states the protection of environmental qualities of public

open space from inappropriate development.

Schedules 4 and 8 to the DDO seek to protect the foreshore reserve and significant public open space from inappropriate development.

Schedule 11 to the DDO seeks to protect the foreshore reserve and significant public open space including the Point Gellibrand Coastal Heritage Park.

## USE OF COLOURS AND MATERIALS

Some policy regarding the use of colours and materials can be found in the existing planning scheme.

All sub-clauses in Clause 22.01 state that colours and materials in these areas should retain and reflect the existing character of the area.

Clause 22.04 'Altona Meadows Urban Design Policy' states that new residential and infill development should use materials and colours commonly used in the neighbourhood.

Clauses 22.07-22.10 (neighbourhood character policies) provide policy in regards to colours and materials as shown in Table 44 on page .143.



Schedules 4 and 8 to the DDO require the consideration of whether the development uses materials that harmonise with materials commonly found in the neighbourhood.

Schedule 5 to the DDO states that the materials of any buildings and works should be considered before development.

Schedule 9 to the DDO states that the choice of materials and colours should minimise the visual impact on the adjoining Newport Lakes Reserve.

## INTERFACES WITH FREEWAYS AND RAILWAY CORRIDORS

Very little policy makes reference to freeway and railway corridors in the planning scheme.

Clause 22.01-2 'Government Survey Heritage Precinct Policy' aims to retain the distinctive cultural significance of the precinct in Williamstown which derives partly from the railway line corridor.

Objective 6 in Clause 21.03 'Settlement' aims to maintain and enhance the role of the Newport Activity Centre through improving pedestrian amenity by enhancing the linkage of the centre separated by the railway corridor.

This would be achieved through signage, safety, accessibility and landscaping.

Schedule 10 to the DDO states that the design principles and built form of development of The Former Caltex Terminal would require reasonable residential amenity and protection from sources of air emissions, noise and vibration from the railway line as well as nearby industries.

## INTERFACES WITH LANEWAYS

Limited policy exists in the planning scheme that makes reference to laneways.

Clause 21.06-1 'Built Environment' aims to minimise loss of front garden space by encouraging car access from rear laneways if available, amongst other avenues.

Clause 22.01 'General Heritage Policy' aims to conserve and reconstruct public realm infrastructure such as laneways.

Clause 22.01-9 'Newport and Spotswood Residential Heritage Precinct Policy' aims to retain distinctive cultural heritage significance in the area which includes the rear laneways that illustrates the area's nineteenth century origins.

Table 44: Neighbourhood Character Local Policy for Colours and Materials

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	WEST PRECINCT AFFECTED	EAST PRECINCT AFFECTED	SOUTH PRECINCT AFFECTED	NORTH PRECINCT AFFECTED
To reflect the building materials in locations where there is particular consistency.	Where consistent brick colours are used on surrounding buildings, use similar toning in the colours of new buildings.				2
To use lighter looking building materials and finishes that complement the use of timber where it is particularly consistent.	Use timber or other non-masonry materials where appropriate, or incorporate lighter colours and materials into the design.				6
	Incorporate timber or other non-masonry materials where appropriate.		8	8	10, 11
	Use timber or other non-masonry materials, or a mixture of masonry and non-masonry materials where appropriate.		4		
To encourage the use of lighter looking building materials that complement the traditional use of timber where it is particularly consistent.	Incorporate timber or other non-masonry materials where appropriate.		3		
To use lighter looking building materials and finishes that complements the coastal setting.	Incorporate timber or other non- masonry materials and finishes where appropriate.		6		
To use lighter looking building materials and finishes that complements the bay side setting.	Incorporate timber or other non-masonry materials where appropriate		10		
To use a mix of materials that complement the predominance of weatherboard dwellings where this is particularly consistent.	Use a mix of materials, including timber and other non-masonry materials, in building design where appropriate.		5		
To use a mix of materials that adds interest and vitality to the streetscape	Use a mix of materials, including timber and non-masonry materials in building design where appropriate.			4	

## POP-UP SECOND FLOORS

Existing policy found in Clauses 54 and 55 have encouraged the development of 'pop-up' second floors including side setback, daylight to existing windows and overlooking provisions.

## 'GUN BARREL' DRIVEWAYS

Clause 22.08 (Hobsons Bay North Neighbourhood Character Policy) includes an objective to minimise the loss of front garden space and the dominance of driveways.

Design Standard 5: Urban Design of Clause 52.06-10 requires ground level access ways to not visually dominate the public space.

## SUB-OPTIMAL LIVING ENVIRONMENTS

Existing policy in Clauses 54 and 55 seek to provide for good amenity including energy efficiency and amenity provisions.

## ABSENCE OF VEGETATION

A number of policies relate to vegetation as previously mentioned under the heading 'Trees and Landscaping'.

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