

Precinct Statement

Adopted 24 September 2012, updated October 2013



DESCRIPTION

This medium sized precinct in Kew adjoins Yarra Boulevard and the associated Yarra river parklands which contribute to the area's bushland feel. The precinct has a high concentration of post war Modernist dwellings, many by notable architects. Heritage overlays cover a number of individual properties. A large proportion of the central precinct is currently proposed for heritage protection. A number of new dwellings that exhibit innovative, contemporary design are also present.

The precinct includes Laver Street which has a similar character to the streets adjoining Yarra Boulevard. This character is created by the

absence of front fences, the often terraced front setbacks and the densely vegetated surrounds. The rest of the precinct is defined by its hilly topography and treed streets. Houses are generally constructed from brick and masonry with pitched or flat roof forms.

Larger block sizes and lot frontages (10 to 20m or greater) allow for medium sized front gardens that contribute to the leafy character of the area. While dwellings are generally detached, the siting of dwellings, including front and side setbacks varies greatly due to the curvilinear streets and hilly topography.

This precinct includes a proportion of tall dwellings (up to 3 storeys) arranged along

generally narrow streets in a curvilinear and cul-de-sac configuration as a response to the steeper terrain. Mature native trees and shrubs are characteristic in many streets.

Front boundaries are often defined by retaining walls or low front fences. While rear gardens are often small, they are generally densely planted. Few apartments or town houses are present. Many dwellings in this area are visible from the parklands adjoining the Yarra River.

Car parking is often integrated into the design of buildings through undercroft or similar arrangements.

Design Guidelines

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Concentration of post war Modernist houses;
- Large, detached houses of 2 or more storeys;
- Hilly topography;
- Leafy streetscapes, including native street trees in some areas which creates a bushland feel;
- Medium to large front setbacks;
- Densely vegetated, often small rear gardens;
- Landscaped front gardens; and
- Low or no front fences in many streets.

PREFERRED CHARACTER STATEMENT

To facilitate contemporary design that respects the detached, older houses in the precinct, including the post war Modernist dwellings, and which builds on the precinct's history of fostering innovative design. To maintain the precinct's densely vegetated feel and ensure development integrates with the surrounding natural, bushland setting.

This will be achieved by:

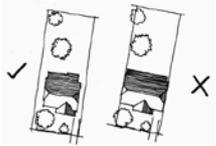
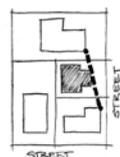
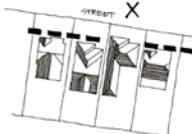
- Encouraging the retention of large trees and landscaped gardens;
- Ensuring the scale and siting of dwellings integrates with the streetscape and surrounding vegetation;
- Ensuring colours and materials blend in with the surrounding trees and landscaping;
- Ensuring garages and carports do not dominate the streetscape;
- Maximising soft landscaping and minimising areas of hard surfaces;
- Encouraging no or low front fences; and
- Encourage design that integrates with the heritage styles of the precinct.

THREATS/ISSUES

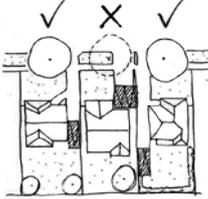
- Loss of historic buildings;
- Boundary to boundary development;
- Lack of soft landscaping / vegetation;
- High front fences that disrupt the rhythm of the street;
- Car parking structures in front setbacks that obscure views of the dwelling behind;
- Removal / loss of large trees, particularly natives; and
- Large or brightly coloured buildings that detract from the natural feel of the area and adjoining parklands.

Design Guidelines

TABLE OF ELEMENTS

CHARACTER ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID	ILLUSTRATION
VEGETATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain and enhance the landscaped setting of dwellings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure front gardens incorporate soft landscaping that complements the streetscape, including native plantings where this is characteristic. Ensure the retention of large trees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of large trees. Front gardens dominated by hard surfaces. Loss of front gardens. 	 <p><i>Encourage landscaped gardens</i></p>
SITING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure dwellings integrate with their surrounds and do not dominate the streetscape. To maintain the existing backyard character and leafy, natural feel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure buildings are setback from front and side boundaries to integrate with the streetscape and surrounding natural setting. Ensure buildings are sufficiently setback from rear boundaries to maintain the open, backyard character of the immediate area where this exists. Provide a secluded private open space with a minimum dimension of 4m to enable the planting and retention of large trees. Ensure new development on a corner site is adequately set back to provide a transition between the adjoining buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dwellings set too far forward. Dwellings built too close to their rear boundary with other residential properties. 	 <p><i>Side setbacks</i></p>  <p><i>Siting on corner sites</i></p>  <p><i>Front setbacks</i></p>
BUILDING HEIGHT AND FORM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure buildings integrate with the precinct's treed, landscape setting and do not dominate the streetscape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure buildings integrate with the prevailing scale and form of houses in the street and sit comfortably within the tree canopies in the immediate area. Ensure buildings follow the contours of the land and step down in accordance with the slope of the site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large bulky buildings that dominate the streetscape and detract from the views from the parkland adjoining the Yarra River. Buildings that exceed the height of tree canopies in the immediate area. 	 <p><i>Integrate with treed setting</i></p>

Design Guidelines

CHARACTER ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID	ILLUSTRATION
BUILDING MATERIALS AND DESIGN DETAILS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure building materials integrate within the precinct's natural setting while facilitating innovative design. To minimise period reproduction design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use muted colours and building materials which integrate with the landscaped setting of the precinct. Ensure new dwellings and visible additions complement the historic buildings in the precinct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bland design such as sheer or plain rendered façades. Bright colours that stand out amongst the natural setting of the area. Period reproduction design. 	 <p>Avoid bland design</p>
FRONT BOUNDARY TREATMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain the existing open character of streetscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require no or low front fencing in accordance with the prevailing streetscape character. Ensure the retention of original front fences where heritage overlays apply. Front fences along declared main roads (RD1Z) may be up to 2m in height where this is consistent with the prevailing fence height on the neighbouring properties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High solid front fences. 	 <p>Avoid high front fences</p>
CAR PARKING STRUCTURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimise the loss of front gardens and the dominance of car parking structures. To ensure basement garages do not increase the visual bulk of buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure driveways and car parking structures are located to the side or rear of dwellings. Ensure basements project no more than 0.5m above natural ground level, unless the finished floor level of abutting properties is greater than 0.5m. Where possible, locate the entry to basement garages to the side or rear of dwellings so they are not visible from the street. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Driveways and car parking structures that dominate the front setback or obscure views of the dwelling. Basement ramps that commence at the street frontage. Basement garages that result in buildings with a 2.5 to 3 storey appearance from the street. 	 <p>Location of car parking structures</p>

General Information

ABOUT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER STUDY

This Precinct Statement was completed in 2012. The methodology involved a review of the Residential Urban Character Study from 1996 as well as substantial community consultation and fieldwork. As a result of this review the City's residential areas have been divided into 75 precincts.

The common characteristics of each area in terms of building scale, setbacks, building style and form and the area's landscape character were taken into account when determining the boundaries of each precinct.

The resulting Neighbourhood Precinct Character Statements describe the existing character of each precinct as well as the precinct's preferred future character.

Those characteristics most valued by the community were reflected in the preferred character statements. The accompanying design guidelines table provides direction for new buildings which ensure future development assists in achieving the area's preferred character.

The Boroondara Neighbourhood Character Study is based on an analysis of existing neighbourhood character and does not take into account other planning policy objectives such as housing capacity, access to services and sustainability.

HOW THE PRECINCT STATEMENTS WILL BE USED

The Precinct Statements will be used when assessing planning permit applications in residential zones. In instances where no planning permit is required (e.g. for single dwellings on lots over 500m²), the Precinct Statements will be used when assessing report and consent applications to vary the siting requirements of the Building Regulations.

New development proposals will be assessed against the directions contained in the "objective", "design response" and "avoid" columns in the design guidelines Table of Elements. Proposals will need to demonstrate how they meet the objectives in the table if they do not meet the relevant "design response" or "avoid" criteria.

With the exception of the guidelines relating to rear garden character, the view from the street will be used to assess consistency with the design guidelines. Existing development that does not comply with the design guidelines should not be used as a precedent when designing new buildings or building extensions.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The Precinct Statements will be used in conjunction with other policies and guidelines in the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

Where a conflict occurs between the Precinct Statements and an existing Design and Development Overlay or Council's Heritage

Policy, the provisions of the Design and Development Overlay or Council's Heritage Policy will take precedence.

Glossary

CHARACTER ELEMENTS IN DESIGN GUIDELINES TABLE OF ELEMENTS

- **Building Height and Form** – refers to building height (as measured from natural ground level), roof form and the massing of building elements.
- **Building Materials and Design Details** – refers to external building materials, façade articulation and design elements such as verandahs, awnings, window configurations and eaves.
- **Car Parking Structures** – refers to the presence and location of on-site car parking structures such as garages, carports, driveways and uncovered car spaces.
- **Front Boundary Treatment** – refers to the presence, height and style of front fences.
- **Lot Frontage** – refers to the width of lots.
- **Siting** – refers to front setbacks, side setbacks and the area's rear garden character.
- **Vegetation** – refers to the trees and landscaping on the site.

GENERAL TERMS

- **'Box'-like** – refers to a building with proportions and detailing that give the building a box-like appearance. Typical characteristics include sheer two storey walls, no or narrow eaves, a symmetrical, un-articulated front facade and a low pitched or flat roof form with parapet detailing.
- **Historic Buildings** – refers to early buildings that date from the establishment of the area or that are important to the area's history.
- **Heritage Buildings** – refers to historic buildings that are subject to statutory protection through a Heritage Overlay or the Victorian Heritage Register.
- **Period Reproduction Design** – refers to design that incorporates mock heritage detailing such as Mock-Georgian and Mock-French Provincial elements.
- **Front Setback** – The distance between the front property boundary and the dwelling, categorised as:
 - **Small:** 0 to 5 metres
 - **Medium:** 5 to 9 metres
 - **Large:** 9+ metres
- **Front Fence Height:**
 - **Low:** 0.5 to 1.2m high
 - **Medium:** 1.2m - 1.5m high
 - **High:** over 1.5m high
- **Roof Forms:**
 - **Flat** – refers to a roof with a gradient of 10 degrees or less.
 - **Pitched** – refers to a roof with two slopes that meet at a central ridge.
- **Multi-Unit Dwellings:**
 - **Flats / Apartment Buildings** – refers to several dwellings contained in a multi-storey structure.
 - **Town Houses** – refers to dwellings of 2 or more storeys that have their own entrance and private yard, but which adjoin another dwelling.
 - **Villas** – refers to groups of dwellings which have their own entrance and private yard, which may or may not adjoin another dwelling, but which generally share common areas such as driveways and car parking.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Understanding Planning Terms Information Sheet, City of Boroondara, (search for this title at <http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au>).

What house is that? A Guide to Victoria's Housing Styles, Heritage Victoria, (search for this title at <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/heritage>).

ResCode provisions, Clause 54 and 55 of the Boroondara Planning Scheme at <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/boroondara/home.html>.