

PORT OF ECHUCA HERITAGE POLICY

This policy applies to all land zoned Commercial 1 Zone generally north of Heygarth Street, south of Law Court Place and bound by the Campaspe River to the west and the Murray River to the east within HO1 that covers the Port Heritage Precinct in Echuca.

Policy basis

Echuca is situated at the junction of the Murray and Campaspe Rivers and has its origins as a crossing place for stock, general merchandise, and freight between the pastoral stations of the Riverina, the Victorian central goldfields and Melbourne, from the early 1850's. With the arrival of railway in 1864, Echuca developed into an important river port town, becoming the colonies busiest inland port. Traffic peaked during the years leading up to the early 1880's and it was during this time that a thriving commercial centre developed around the Port.

Today the precinct has taken on a significantly different profile. The Port presents a unique tourism product that has experienced significant visitor numbers since the re-opening of the Port as a heritage tourist destination in 1974. The Port of Echuca is recognised as the "anchor" tourist attraction to the region. A recommendation from the Northern Rural and Regional Forum identified transport infrastructure improvements to the Port of Echuca as a key action area by the Forums Action Plan. This initiative is part of the wider potential for regional Victoria to benefit from heritage steam rail tourism and to create linkages and alliances with other regional centres to strengthen regional tourism. The Shire of Campaspe, Tourism Victoria, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and the Port of Echuca Authority recognise the Heritage Precinct as an area that has significant heritage and tourism potential to both the national and international market and are prepared to undertake significant development initiatives to realise this potential in accordance with the Echuca Heritage Precinct Master Plan

Objectives

To create the Port of Echuca as a nationally significant heritage tourism precinct.

To protect the heritage character and integrity of the historic port and environs.

To create a multi-layered tourism experience, including activities specific to the particular attractions and features of Echuca and the region.

To identify and promote under developed sectors and themes.

To consolidate the port precinct as a well serviced tourism centre including alternative accommodation types and improved entertainment and services.

To consolidate a unified heritage precinct and town centre, including stronger pedestrian links.

To protect key environmental and urban elements through policy, development control mechanisms, incremental relocation of river boat infrastructure and improved coordination with Murray Shire.

To identify key development sites for preferred uses.

To extend and consolidate the pedestrian network, including extensive avenue planting and new pavement works.

To implement the recommendations of the Echuca Heritage Precinct Master Plan.

To ensure that development enhances the broad boulevard of High Street and which entrenches its strong visual and physical role in the area.

To encourage sympathetic commercial signage and advertising which is appropriate for an area of State significance.

To encourage elements which reflect the character of the area including signage, fences, plant and equipment and paint colour schemes.

To ensure that streetscape works enhance the cultural significance of the area with respect to street trees, tree guards, public seating, pavement materials, public lighting and car park furniture.

Policy

It is policy that;

- The recommendations of the Heritage Precinct Master Plan are implemented in a strategic and coordinated manner by Council, the Murray Shire, other public authorities and public and private landholders.
- Key works in the Master Plan be encouraged and facilitated by the Shire of Campaspe and other relevant authorities. Key works include the reconstruction and extension of the historic wharf, re-establishment of the railway from the railway station to the wharf, and restoration of the railway complex.
- Short and long term parking and access arrangements be undertaken in accordance with the Master Plan to ensure vehicle congestion in the Port area is minimised.
- A Conservation Management Plan be prepared for historic port precinct buildings to determine appropriate restoration works on a building by building basis. Until a Conservation Management Plan is prepared all applications for development must be assessed by Council's Heritage Adviser with consideration given to existing heritage studies and Burra Charter principles.
- Development proposals are discouraged which impinge upon existing significant view lines towards and from the Port of Echuca area, including the view towards the forested area opposite the wharf, and the view line from the Iron Bridge and towards the Port.
- Applications for signage are encouraged to be understated and demonstrate the signage practices of the period of significance. All applications for signage should be assessed by the Heritage Adviser.
- Non residential buildings and works to the rear of an existing building are encouraged to be no greater in height than the existing building.
- Where a permit is required for an advertising sign it should be in keeping with the significance and character of the area; demonstrate traditional signage practices; and not obscure facades of nearby buildings.
- In commercial areas, the preferred location for advertising is on the verandah fascia, parapet fascia and shopfront window.
- Development around Hopwood Gardens is encouraged to reflect the pre-eminent role of the civic space, and respect the isolated nature of significant buildings abutting this space.
- The aesthetic, historic and environmental values of the Campaspe River and public land to its west is encouraged to be preserved and links between the Campaspe and Murray Rivers are to be encouraged and enhanced.

Reference documents

A Master Plan for the Heritage Precinct of Echuca, Cox Sanderson & KLM Gerner Consulting Group, March 2000

Echuca Wharf and Aquatic Reserve Conservation Management Plan, A. Ward 1998

Echuca Conservation Study, Andrew Ward, 1992