

22.01

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C125Pt2mona

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTER POLICY

This policy applies to all residential land.

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Policy basis

The City of Monash’s residential areas have a garden city character that is highly valued by the community.

The Municipal Strategic Statement recognises that these residential environments are important to the well being of the community and that Monash City Council is committed to the effective management of the ongoing process of change that is occurring in the urban areas of the municipality.

Previously, change across the municipality’s residential areas occurred incrementally across Monash. Over the past ten years or so, the amount of change has increased, with the emergence of more apartments, town houses and larger dwellings. There is also is growing demand for variation of dwelling types to accommodate aged persons and students. Analysis has shown that this is starting to erode the garden city character of the municipality.

Local residents and developers need a degree of certainty as to the form of development that is acceptable within residential areas. This policy provides guidance to ensure new development respects existing residential environments, with minimal streetscape or amenity impact, designed to achieve outcomes that enhance the garden city character of each area.

Residential growth should be directed to activity and neighbourhood centres that are well serviced by public transport, commercial, recreational, community and educational facilities to make optimum use of the services available. The heritage precincts, creek environs and Dandenong Valley Escarpment present limited redevelopment potential by virtue of their heritage values, proximity to creek reserves and relative inaccessibility to activity centres and transport nodes.

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Objectives

- To build upon the important contribution that landscaping makes to the garden city character of Monash.
- To encourage new development to achieve architectural and urban design outcomes that positively contribute to neighbourhood character having particular regard to the applicable preferred future character statement for the area.
- To protect and enhance the special character of the heritage precincts, the creek environs and the Dandenong Valley Escarpment.
- To encourage the provision of a variety of housing types to accommodate future housing needs and preferences.
- To achieve best practice environmentally sustainable development.
- To direct residential growth to neighbourhood and activity centres, the Monash National Employment Cluster and the boulevards (Springvale Road and Princes Highway).

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Policy

It is policy to:

General

- Ensure development is consistent with the preferred future character statement identified in Clause 22.01-4.
- Respect the character of surrounding development, including the maintenance of consistent setbacks.
- Preserve and enhance the treed character of Monash.

MONASH PLANNING SCHEME

- Ensure development protects and enhances the creek environs and the Dandenong Creek Escarpment.
- Ensure development conserves and enhances heritage places and areas.
- Minimise the impact of the scale and massing of development.
- Encourage the consolidation of sites to achieve residential intensification where this is specifically encouraged by the relevant zoning schedule.

Street setback

- Set back buildings from street frontages consistent with surrounding buildings to visually unify the streetscape.
- Provide spacious and well vegetated street setbacks capable of supporting canopy trees that soften the appearance of the built form and contribute to landscape character.
- Exclude garages, carports and car spaces from street setbacks.
- Recess garages and carports from the facade of the building to ensure that they do not compromise the appearance of new and existing buildings and are not a dominant element as seen from the street.
- Recess walls on boundaries from the facade of the building to reflect spacings between dwellings in the neighbourhood and to ensure the appearance of new and existing buildings is not compromised.
- Ensure development on corner blocks incorporates side street setbacks that provide an appropriate transition to the street setback of adjoining buildings.

Site coverage and permeability

- Ensure the extent of site coverage and hard paving respects the neighbourhood character.
- Exclude hard paving such as car parking, turning circles, driveways and basement car parking within street setback areas.
- Minimise hard paving throughout the site by limiting driveway widths and lengths, providing landscaping on both sides of driveways, and restricting the extent of paving within open space areas.
- Maximise on-site stormwater infiltration and urban cooling, and minimise overland stormwater flow by limiting hard paved surfaces and synthetic or man made surfaces.

Landscaping

- Provide sufficient and well located private open space, primarily unencumbered by easements, to provide for vegetation and large trees to be retained or planted within front, side and rear setbacks and secluded open space areas. Environmental weeds and artificial grass should be avoided.
- Site buildings to minimise the need to remove significant trees, and protect significant trees on the site and adjoining properties.
- Ensure development is adequately set back from existing and proposed trees to ensure their protection and longevity.
- Retain or plant canopy trees, particularly within front setbacks to soften the appearance of the built form and contribute to the landscape character of the area.
- Retain or plant canopy trees in rear setbacks to screen built form from adjoining backyards and any surrounding creek environs and contribute to garden character.
- Provide trees and vegetation that improve the environmental sustainability of buildings.
- Ensure street trees are retained and protected.

Side and rear setbacks

- Provide side setbacks that maintain an open, spacious streetscape character and separation of dwellings.
- Design buildings to reflect the spacing and rhythm of existing streetscapes.
- Provide side and rear setbacks capable of supporting canopy trees.
- Provide rear setbacks that support a green corridor of open space created by backyards in the neighbourhood.
- Minimise the impact of visual bulk to neighbouring properties, through suitable setbacks from adjacent secluded private open space to enable the provision of screening trees, and scaling down of building form to the adjoining properties.
- Provide a separation between dwellings constructed on the same site to break up built form and support additional landscaping.

Walls on boundaries

- Ensure walls on boundaries are consistent with neighbourhood character, including spacing between dwellings and the character of open vegetated backyards.
- Limit the length of walls on boundaries to ensure landscaping space is provided around buildings, and the amenity of adjoining properties is not adversely impacted.

Private open space

- Provide private open space areas of sufficient size and width to enable the retention and provision of canopy trees and other vegetation that reflect landscape character.
- Limit hard surface paving and decks that occupy a large proportion of private open space areas.
- Exclude the provision of secluded private open space within the street setback.
- Ensure private open space areas are sufficient for the recreation needs of the likely future residents, including useable dimensions, direct access to living spaces and good access to sunlight whilst contributing to the preferred garden city character.

Fences

- Provide no front fence where more than 75% of properties in the immediate neighbourhood have no front fence (immediate neighbourhood is the five properties on either side of the proposed development on both sides of the street, or five properties on either side of the development on both sides of the street, including intersections and if the proposed development is on a corner lot with dwellings fronting the side street, five properties in the side street).
- Ensure front fences complement the architecture of buildings and the neighbourhood character in terms of height, style, materials and colour.
- Limit the height of front fences to:
 - Maintain the character of open streetscapes and low fencing patterns.
 - Retain views of the architecture of the building.
 - Ensure buildings address and connect to the street.
 - Facilitate passive surveillance and social interaction between the street, front yards and the dwelling.

Vehicle crossings

- Locate and minimise vehicle crossovers to prevent traffic disruption, and preserve nature strips and street trees.
- Maximise landscaping in front setback areas by minimising the number of crossovers.

Built form and scale of development

- Development outside of the activity and neighbourhood centres, the Monash National Employment Cluster and the boulevards (Springvale Road and Princes Highway) will generally be low rise.
- Respect the height, scale and massing of existing dwellings in the neighbourhood.
- Ensure taller buildings incorporate sufficient articulation, including recessed upper levels, to respect the prevailing scale of the adjoining dwellings and the neighbourhood.
- Incorporate higher degrees of articulation for double storey development in streetscapes where the prevailing built form is single storey.
- Retain human scale, and by the inclusion of significant breaks and recesses in building massing, avoid large block like structures dominating the streetscape.
- Ensure buildings respect the built form, rhythm and proportions of existing dwellings in the neighbourhood.
- Respect the roof forms and pitches of existing dwellings in the neighbourhood.
- Discourage reproduction or mock-historic building styles incorporating superficial detailing whilst promoting contemporary designs of the present era.
- Utilise robust and low maintenance building materials and finishes that complement the neighbourhood, withstand weathering and create minimal adverse impacts (for instance, safe walking surfaces and limited reflective materials). Use muted tone materials and finishes within the creek environs.
- Minimise the visual and amenity impact of utility areas, such as electricity and gas facilities, waste and recycling areas, and services including antennas, air conditioning units, fire fighting equipment and letter boxes.
- Preserve backyard character by ensuring multi-storey development at the rear of properties incorporates generous articulation and setbacks including ground floor setbacks sufficient in width to support screening trees.
- Complement the landscape setting of adjoining public open space areas and the creek environs by minimising the scale and massing of the development, and incorporating landscaping, which ensures vegetation is the dominant element when viewed from the public open space, the creek reserve, the street and adjoining properties.
- Ensure the front doors and windows of buildings face the street and entrances are legible, accessible and sheltered to maximise accessibility, safety and amenity for occupants, visitors and those using the public streets.

Car parking

- Design development to minimise parking, traffic and pedestrian impacts in adjacent residential areas including ensuring cars can exit the site in forward direction.
- Design and locate car parking spaces to ensure they have minimal impact on pedestrian and vehicle movements both on-site and within the street.

Environment

- Design development to achieve best practice environmentally sustainable development in terms of energy efficiency, water resources, indoor environment quality, stormwater management, transport, waste management and urban ecology.
- Separate residential development from incompatible use and development.

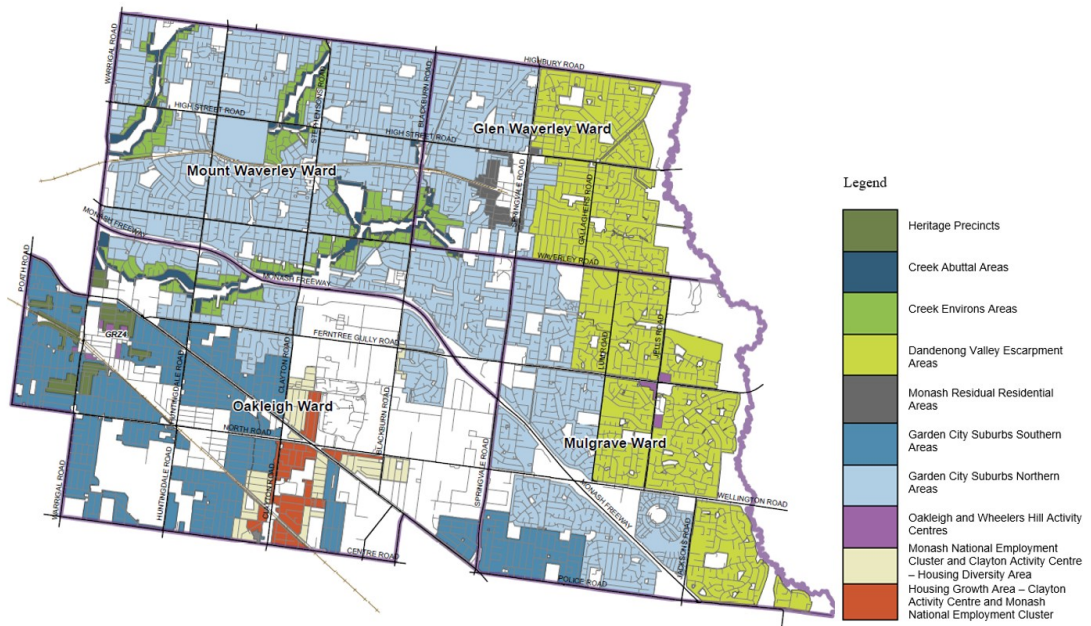
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Preferred future character statements

Residential character statements have been prepared for residential areas within the municipality, based on the residential character types listed in Clause 21.04-1. Development should respond to the preferred future character statement for the area. Map 1 shows the spatial distribution of the character areas.

Map 1: Residential character types



Heritage Precincts

Any future development within the five Oakleigh / Hughesdale Heritage Precincts will be designed to respect the heritage values of the precinct of which it forms a part.

The scale of new buildings or extensions to dwellings will continue to reflect the prevailing building scale, where dwellings present as single storey to the street, with any double storey elements constructed to the rear, behind the line of the hipped or gable roof line. The mixture of building styles will be retained, and appropriate features and materials will be guided through the directions provided within the Heritage Overlay (and citations).

Most dwellings will occupy a modest footprint, with considerable rear gardens. Generous open space areas for new dwellings and extensions will be provided, with setbacks from front and side boundaries reflecting the prevailing development patterns.

Creek Abuttal and Creek Environs

The neighbourhood character of this area will be defined by its spacious garden settings, tall canopy trees and consistent built form. New development will be designed to complement the established planting patterns and topography. There will be consistency in front setbacks and the maintenance of larger setbacks from the creek which will provide areas for planting and sustaining larger trees. Vegetation will dominate the streetscape and buildings will be recessive and normally hidden from view behind vegetation and tall trees. The larger rear setbacks will accommodate substantial vegetation, including large canopy trees. The landscape will be complemented by street trees and

a lack of front fencing. Regular front setbacks and side setbacks from at least one side boundary will reinforce the consistent setback patterns along the street, allow views between buildings and provide space for landscaping.

New dwellings will complement the older 1950s and 1960s building styles through the use of simple details, low building scale and articulated facades. They will be well-designed, energy efficient and adhere to sustainability principles. Long expanses of blank wall will be avoided, particularly when adjacent to public parks and open space areas. In this instance, the building should address the public area. Upper levels will be recessed and articulated to reduce visual dominance in the streetscape.

Design emphasis should be placed on promoting the preferred neighbourhood character by responding to the landscape setting.

This area will continue to provide lower scale residential development. Modest dwellings, with simple pitched rooflines and articulated facades, will continue to be the prevailing character.

New development will be well landscaped retaining the 'open landscape character' of the nearby creek environment and will taper down in scale closer to the creek. Development will visually connect to the creek environment through the use of colours and materials for buildings and fencing that blend with, rather than contrast with it.

Given the important recreational and ecological functions of the creek corridors, development on adjoining residential sites should seek to respect and enhance the existing character of these open spaces.

Dandenong Valley Escarpment

The neighbourhood character of this area will evolve within a landscape that has a large number of native trees spread throughout both the public and private realm. This provides an overhead canopy which unifies the diverse built-form of some neighbourhoods and provides a strong relationship with the semi-natural landscape of the Dandenong Valley. An important characteristic of the area is the view lines to the Dandenong Ranges, along streets and between buildings. New dwellings, or additions to dwellings, will seek to maintain these views.

Building scale, height and bulk will continue to enhance and reinforce the existing landscape and built form character and will generally be similar within neighbourhoods. Large scale contrasts between buildings will be discouraged except where existing trees and shrubs soften the junction between buildings or where there is a graduated change in scale.

Garages will be incorporated into the dwelling design so as not to dominate the facade of the building. New developments will typically be sited to address the street, be well designed, energy efficient and sustainable.

Front setbacks will be generous to enable the development and maintenance of significant native tree canopy and understorey vegetation. There may be variation at a neighbourhood level but there will be consistency within individual streets.

Dwellings will be designed to sympathetically integrate with any existing native trees and shrubs on or adjacent to the development site and to the topography. Facades will be articulated with recesses, openings and balconies. Robust and low maintenance materials and finishes that blend with the surrounding natural environment will be used. Long expanses of blank wall will be avoided, particularly when adjacent to public parks, reserves and other open space areas.

Existing trees will be retained where possible and landscaping will reduce the dominance of buildings and provide filtered views of the architecture. Most gardens will be open to the street with no walls or fences, allowing the soft naturalistic qualities of neighbourhoods to be retained. Large walls and fences will be discouraged except where they are already a visually dominant streetscape element. Gardens will be predominantly planted with native vegetation to contribute to the existing natural setting.

The soft quality of the street will be maintained by ensuring that there is only one single crossover per lot frontage.

Garden City Suburbs (Southern)

Modest dwellings with simple pitched rooflines and articulated facades will continue the prevailing development themes. On larger sites, low rise apartment development may be appropriate, provided the development is sited within generous open space, is well landscaped, retains the 'open landscape character' of the garden suburban setting and tapers down in scale closer to the boundaries of the site.

While the housing mix within this area will continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of the community, new development will complement the scale and siting of the original housing within the area. In doing so, it will enhance the generous spacious, open, landscaped character of the area.

This character area will be notable for its spacious garden settings, tall canopy trees, consistency in front setbacks and the maintenance of setbacks from at least one boundary and from the rear of the site. New dwellings will address the street and upper levels will be recessed and/or articulated to minimise the impression of building scale.

Front fences will be low to enable vegetation to be visible from the street, allow clear views of buildings and give the street an open quality. Fencing will complement the architecture of the building in design, colour and materials.

Existing mature trees and shrubs within properties should be retained and additional tree planting proposed to gradually create a tree canopy in the private domain, including at the rear of properties. This will create a visually permeable buffer between the house and street. The soft quality of the street that is derived from the wide nature strips and street tree planting will be maintained by ensuring that there is only one crossover per lot frontage.

Expanses of blank, or continuous, walls will be avoided, particularly when adjacent to public parks or creating the appearance of a continuous building mass. The character of existing public open space within the area will be protected by ensuring that buildings directly adjacent are set back and buffered with planting that complements that within the public open space.

Sympathetically designed architecture is encouraged in preference to imitations of historic styles.

Garden City Suburbs (Northern)

Although there will be changes to some of the houses within this area, including the development of well-designed and sensitive unit development and, on suitable sites, some apartment development, these will take place within a pleasant leafy framework of well-vegetated front and rear gardens and large canopy trees.

Setbacks will be generous and consistent within individual streets. Building heights will vary between neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods with diverse topography and a well-developed mature tree canopy will have a larger proportion of two storey buildings. In the lower, less wooded areas, buildings will be mainly low rise unless existing vegetation or a gradation in height softens the scale contrast between buildings. New development will complement the established buildings through consistent siting, articulated facades and use of materials. New development will consider energy efficiency and sustainability principles. Long expanses of blank wall will be avoided, particularly when adjacent to public parks, reserves and other open space areas, where the building should address the public area.

Architecture, including new buildings and extensions, will usually be secondary in visual significance to the landscape of the area when viewed from the street. New development will be screened from the street and neighbouring properties by well planted gardens that will ensure the soft leafy nature of the street is retained.

Gardens will consist of open lawns, planted with a mix of native and exotic vegetation and trees. Existing mature trees and shrubs will be retained and additional tree planting within streets and private gardens will add to the tree canopy of the area.

Buildings will be clearly visible through these low garden settings, and nonexistent or transparent front fences. Additional vehicle crossovers will be discouraged.

The built-form will be visually unified by well-planted front gardens that contain large trees and shrubs and street tree planting. Trees within lots to be redeveloped will be retained wherever possible to maintain the established leafy character.

Landscape elements such as remnant indigenous vegetation and the large old coniferous wind-rows will be retained until trees are no longer healthy or safe.

Oakleigh and Wheelers Hill Residential Areas

Oakleigh

The residential areas within the activity centre will be developed to increase residential diversity and choice, while creating a transition from the centre's commercial precincts to protect the amenity of surrounding residential areas.

This will be achieved by ensuring that building heights and side and front setbacks are appropriate, that upper floor levels of buildings within the precinct are recessed and well articulated from rear and side boundaries which abut or are opposite residential properties, and that new buildings or additions reflect the key architectural elements within the centre (including, where appropriate, pitched, hip and/or gable roof forms). Development will provide a high level of amenity, including privacy for occupants and neighbours, high quality private and public open space and canopy tree cover.

Wheelers Hill

Future development on the small amount of residential land within the centre will remain subservient to the predominant landscape character of Wheelers Hill.

Building heights will respond to the slope and terrain of each site. Development abutting existing residential properties should achieve a transition between the scale of the activity centre and that of the surrounding residential areas.

A 10 metre landscaped front setback should be provided for all development abutting main road frontages to ensure that a continuation of the "boulevard" character established throughout the City of Monash. The walls of buildings facing Ferntree Gully Road and Jells Road should be designed with extensive articulation and variation in massing to minimise the appearance of building bulk and height.

Development should be designed with consideration of the opportunities for walking, running, cycling and passive recreation activities as well as informal social interaction and casual surveillance of open areas.

Monash National Employment Cluster and Clayton Activity Centre – Housing Diversity Area

The Clayton Activity Centre and the cluster more broadly are expected to experience major redevelopment, as one of the key areas for employment growth within Melbourne. As such, the core of the activity centre and the cluster are anticipated to accommodate growth and more diverse housing needs. This area also forms an interface to the surrounding garden city suburbs. New development should provide a transition between these areas.

New housing will generally comprise multi dwelling developments such as units and, where appropriate, low rise apartments. Front and rear setbacks will be less than those preferred in the garden city areas, however will still provide the opportunity for landscaping. Landscaping and open space within developments will remain an important feature for this character area. Canopy trees within developments and separation between buildings will provide visual and environmental amenity for occupants and the residents of existing dwellings. New developments will be designed and constructed to a high standard, ensuring they provide a positive architectural impact.

Housing Growth Area – Clayton Activity Centre and Monash National Employment Cluster

The scale of new residential development will generally comprise larger footprint apartment development of a high-quality design and finish. Some infill town house and unit development will also occur.

Where possible on larger sites, developments will be multi-level, and set in open gardens. Although setbacks from all boundaries will be less than is common in other parts of Monash, the developments will ensure the incorporation of well-maintained landscaping to address the garden city character, albeit in a more urban form.

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Decision guidelines

It is policy that before deciding on an application, the responsible authority will consider, as appropriate:

- The applicable preferred future character statement.
- Whether the development will have an adverse impact on neighbourhood character.
- Whether the development will have an adverse impact on the amenity of adjoining properties.
- Whether the development will have an adverse impact on the environment.
- Whether the proposed development will be adversely affected by any adjacent industrial, commercial or trade activity.

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Policy references

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Waverley Park Concept Plan, August 2002

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