

Implementation of the Neighbourhood Character Study and Precinct brochures into the planning scheme via Amendment C131

Neighbourhood Character brochures were prepared in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Character Study in 2019.

The brochures included detailed design guidelines relating to site layout, setbacks, landscaping and built form to ensure new residential development is consistent with the relevant neighbourhood character objectives set out in the study.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (Victorian State Government) introduced new policy guidance in late 2019 which has affected the way council can implement the Neighbourhood Character Study and brochures into the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme.

Due to state government requirements, the translation of the brochures and the Study into the scheme has meant some of the character types, change areas and character precinct boundaries differ from the maps, local policy and zone schedules proposed to be introduced via Planning Scheme Amendment C131.

It is important to note that where possible, the character objectives and design guidelines within the brochures have been translated into local policy and controls within the zone schedules as part of Amendment C131.

The translation of the 2019 study / brochures into the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme via Amendment C131 in 2020 is explained in detail below.

Housing Change Areas	
2019 – brochures	2020 – Residential Development Framework Plan
<p>The brochures describe three change areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Limited ii. Moderate iii. Substantial 	<p>Council made adjustments in response to recent reforms to the state planning system. There are now four change areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Minimal ii. Incremental iii. Moderate iv. Substantial <p>The previous ‘Limited’ change area has been separated into two distinguishable areas being ‘Minimal’ and ‘Incremental’. Minimal change areas represent special character or heritage precincts, or locations affected by environmental constraints such as flooding or proximity to Major Hazard Facilities. Incremental change areas identify locations where housing growth will occur within the context of existing or preferred neighbourhood character.</p>

Character types	
2019 – brochures	2020 – Residential Development Framework Plan and new residential zone schedules
<p>The Neighbourhood Character Study and brochures describe six character types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Garden Court ii. Garden Suburban iii. Inner Urban iv. Urban Contemporary v. Inner Urban/Garden Suburban vi. Waterfront Suburban 	<p>The description of the neighbourhood character types has been modified to better fit with the revised housing change areas and improve clarity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Garden Court ii. Garden Suburban iii. Garden Urban iv. Urban Contemporary v. Inner Suburban vi. Waterfront Suburban <p>The previous ‘Inner Urban’ descriptor was made redundant as this area was within a heritage precinct and is now considered a <i>Minimal change</i> area and as such the heritage controls continue to protect this area. In accordance with direction from the state government to improve clarity, the previous ‘Inner Urban/Garden Suburban’ descriptor is now called ‘Inner Suburban’. The new ‘Garden Urban’ descriptor applies to <i>Moderate change</i> areas within the Garden Court and Garden Suburban character precincts. The new descriptors are included in the relevant zone schedules.</p>
Character precincts	
2019 – brochures	2020 – new residential zone schedules
<p>The brochures cover 28 character precincts. Each precinct map identifies the change areas within precinct, either Limited, Moderate or Substantial.</p>	<p>The character precincts have been broadly applied as new residential zone schedules and maps. The zone schedules have been tailored to include the neighbourhood character objectives and design guidelines from the corresponding character precinct brochure. In refining this work, there are now 19 residential zone schedules and corresponding maps.</p>
Neighbourhood character and heritage areas	
2019 – brochures	2020 – Residential Development Framework Plan and new residential zone schedules
<p>The brochures describe neighbourhood character objectives for residential areas, including many areas already protected by precinct heritage overlays.</p>	<p>The heritage overlay provides the means to control new development within many of the character precincts, particularly in Williamstown and Newport. The overlay requires council to consider whether the <i>‘location, bulk, form and appearance of the proposed building is in keeping with the character and appearance of adjacent buildings and the heritage place’</i>. Council has determined that the heritage significance of these areas has priority over more generalised neighbourhood character objectives. For this reason, precinct heritage areas have been removed from the character descriptors. The precinct heritage overlays will continue to guide development outcomes in these areas.</p>

Preferred character statements	
2019 – brochures	2020 – new local policy and residential zone schedules
Each of the 28 character precincts includes a preferred character statement describing objectives and strategies to achieve the preferred character for the area.	These statements have been transferred to new local policy in the planning scheme at Clause 15.01-1L, 15.01-2L and 15.01-5L. Objectives specific to particular character types have been included as neighbourhood character objectives within the corresponding residential zone schedule.
Design guidelines	
2019 - brochures	2020 – new residential zone schedules and other state reforms
Each brochure includes design guidelines relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siting • Building form • Vegetation • Front boundary treatment • Colours and materials • Site layout and subdivision 	The design guidelines have been translated as specific controls within the respective residential zone schedules. The key planning requirements relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscaping • Side and rear setbacks • Private open space • Front fence height Other elements of the guidelines have been addressed as part of state planning reforms or are conveyed through the local policy objectives and strategies in Clause 15.01-1L, 15.01-2L and 15.01-5L.
Special character areas	
2019 - brochures	2020 – new Neighbourhood Character Overlay schedules and maps
Some of the brochures identified Special Character Areas. These areas are located in Altona North, Altona and Williamstown North.	A new Neighbourhood Character Overlay has been introduced into the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme to protect the distinct character of these areas. The features of these residential areas are detailed in the overlay. The design of new residential development in these areas must consider and respond to the neighbourhood character objectives outlined in the overlay.