

# MARIBYRNONG NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER [2003] REVIEW



For the Maribyrnong City Council  
FEBRUARY 2010  
(revised October 2010)

FINAL REPORT

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is acknowledged that the City of Maribyrnong is on traditional lands of the Wurundjeri tribe of the Kulin Nation. We offer our respect to the Elders of these traditional lands, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### *City of Maribyrnong – Council Officers*

Katy McMahon

Strategic Planner / Project Manager

David Walmsley

Manager Strategy and Economic Development

### *Planisphere Urban Strategy Planners*

Lisa Riddle, Director

Project Director

Chris Renkin, Associate

Project Co-ordinator

Liz Jardine, Senior Strategic Planner

Survey, Mapping, Analysis

Scott Whyte, Planner

Survey, Mapping

Tina Ngu, Planner / Urban Designer

Mapping, Graphics

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
<b>1.....</b>	<b>1</b>
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Purpose.....	1
1.2 Study Area .....	1
1.3 Methodology .....	2
1.4 Structure of this Report .....	3
<b>2.....</b>	<b>4</b>
BACKGROUND / STRATEGIC CONTEXT .....	4
2.1 Setting the Scene.....	5
2.2 Maribyrnong Planning Scheme .....	10
<b>3.....</b>	<b>16</b>
WHAT IS NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER? .....	16
3.1 Neighbourhood Character Defined .....	17
3.2 Neighbourhood Character Principles.....	19
3.3 Neighbourhood Character Types.....	21
<b>4.....</b>	<b>25</b>
NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER FOR MARIBYRNONG .....	25
4.1 Survey.....	26
4.2 Review of Neighbourhood Character Precinct Boundaries.....	33
4.3 Character and Preferred Future Character.....	36
4.4 Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements.....	36
<b>5.....</b>	<b>40</b>
IMPLEMENTATION.....	40
5.1 Implementation Context.....	41
5.2 Non-Statutory Mechanisms.....	41
5.3 Statutory Implementation Recommendations .....	42



## INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Purpose

Planisphere has been appointed to assist Council in reviewing its 2003 Neighbourhood Character Study (NCS) which was also prepared by Planisphere. The NCS (2003) has not been adopted by Council nor implemented through the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme. Release of draft new residential zones and further strategic work being undertaken by Council since 2003 has provided an opportunity to review the Study. In particular, it is important to consider use of existing and new planning provisions for implementation of neighbourhood character objectives.

The primary purpose of this study is to review and update the 2003 Maribyrnong NCS to enable implementation of the Study findings, including:

- Determine the extent of change to neighbourhood character in the municipality, if any, since 2003.
- Incorporate the work undertaken by Council and Planisphere for the Colonial Ammunition Company Estate in 2007.
- Ensure integration of the neighbourhood character policy and guidelines with more recent strategic work undertaken by Council since 2003, including residential capacity analysis, Footscray Activity Centre Structure Planning, and Council's Planning Scheme Review.
- Advise and recommend Council on the most appropriate Planning Scheme mechanisms for implementation of the Review recommendations.
- Prepare Planning Scheme provisions, as required, for inclusion in the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme.

## 1.2 Study Area

This Study covers the residential areas of the City of Maribyrnong that are covered by the Residential 1 Zone (R1Z). Heritage Overlay areas identified in the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme are exempt from the Review.

The eastern edge of the City of Maribyrnong is located only four kilometres west of the Melbourne central activities district. It is located on the eastern edge of the flat western basalt plains, with topography sloping gently to the south across the City's area. One of the major physical features of the municipality is the Maribyrnong River, which forms the northern and eastern boundaries of the City. The lower part of the river has retained its traditional use as an industrial area, and further north parks, open space and residential properties line its banks.

The generally flat landscape of the City provides views to central Melbourne, particularly from its eastern edges, and the mix of residential and industrial development throughout the municipal area has produced a unique character of contrasts. As described in the Municipal Strategic Statement for the City, it is not uncommon to find peaceful parks and waterways adjacent to industrial structures which are sited alongside renovated workers' cottages of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A re-survey of neighbourhood character in Maribyrnong has been undertaken focusing on the areas of 'change' and areas previously considered worthy of a Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO) or Design and Development Overlay (DDO). These areas are identified in further detail in this report. A desktop review of all 2003 NCS Neighbourhood Character Statements has been undertaken to bring together common terminology and ready the statements for implementation into the Planning Scheme.

## 1.3 Methodology

The Neighbourhood Character Study Review 2009 was conducted in three stages and proceeded through a simple sequence of tasks. The methodology was based on the objectives and requirements of the project brief and was elaborated in discussion with the Council.

Each stage of the project included a meeting and discussions with the Project Working Group, which comprised Council officers and Planisphere staff.

The project commenced with a review of the 2003 Neighbourhood Character Study, followed by a detailed survey to determine the level of change that has occurred within each precinct as necessary. New preferred character statements were prepared and the project concluded with recommendations for changes to the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme and drafting of planning provisions to implement the Study.

The approach to neighbourhood character identification in this Study followed and confirmed the principles applied to the 2003 Study. That is, the existence of Character Area Types identified across the municipality. However, as part of this Study the original 33 character precincts were combined under these character area types, rather than by suburb breakdown. This has reduced the number of Precincts to 13 across the municipality.

### Community Consultation

There has been no community consultation undertaken as part of this Review. Extensive consultation was undertaken during preparation of the 2003 Neighbourhood Character Study, and as part of the Colonial Ammunition Company Estate project in 2007.

### Stage 1

#### Preliminaries

At the commencement of Stage 1, the study team confirmed Council's requirements, established the detailed timelines and approach for the study and commenced background research.

A desktop review of the 2003 Study and other relevant local policies was conducted. Discussion with Council's Statutory Planning Team Leaders informed the study team of known and emerging significant changes in urban character. Council provided the boundaries of the residential areas within the Footscray Activity Centre that are to be assessed differently as part of the Study, however guidance was required as to future neighbourhood character as they have been the subject of other planning or design studies.

#### Staff Workshop

A workshop was held with Council Statutory Planning Team Leaders to understand how the Neighbourhood Character Study is currently used, to obtain information on where change has occurred, and neighbourhood character issues are being raised as part of the planning application process.

### Stage 2:

In the next stage of the project the 2003 Study was reviewed in detail. This task involved:

- Street-by-street survey of residential areas. The purpose of this survey was to check the existing information for each precinct and note any changes to character that had occurred since 2003. (This survey was not as extensive as the detailed survey conducted for the original study as it was to review existing information, however areas that were identified as 'areas of change' were surveyed at a detailed level).

- Assessment of the thirty-three Precinct boundaries identified in the 2003 Study to confirm or revise as required. This included revising the approach to boundaries from a suburb and character based approach, to a character type based municipal wide approach.
- Identification of areas/elements warranting particular protection (for example by overlay controls in the planning scheme).

The Study focused on elements of the environment that may be incorporated into preferred future character-related planning controls, such as building height, site coverage or significant landscapes.

More information about the survey can be found in section 4 of the report.

### Stage 3:

#### **Implementation Recommendations**

Recommendations for the statutory implementation of the Study have been developed in consultation with the Project Working Group. Options that required careful consideration include implementation through overlays. This is detailed in Section 5.

We have also broadly addressed non-statutory mechanisms such as education and encouragement and, importantly, public realm works such as footpath treatments and street planting usually carried out by the Council.

Monitoring and review of the Neighbourhood Character Study is also a part of the recommendations.

## **1.4** Structure of this Report

This report presents the analysis for the neighbourhood character review, summarising the methodology, establishing the strategic justification for the recommendations, and recommending implementation options for the review including how the study can be translated into the existing planning scheme provisions, and draft new Residential Zones.

Section 2 of this report sets the scene for the neighbourhood character review. It provides a detailed overview of the original Neighbourhood Character Study and other relevant background documents, such as the residential capacity analysis, and Footscray Activity Centre Structure Plan.

Section 3 of this report provides detail on what is neighbourhood character, and describes the different neighbourhood character types as applied to Maribyrnong.

Section 4 provides the detailed analysis undertaken as part of the fieldwork and desktop study to review the NC statements and precinct boundaries. It also includes the thirteen Precinct Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements which are a key output of the Study.

Section 5 of this report provides the implementation options and recommendations for the Planning Scheme Amendment and any other non-statutory mechanisms.



## BACKGROUND / STRATEGIC CONTEXT



## 2.1 Setting the Scene

The Neighbourhood Character Study review must be integrated with strategic policy work undertaken by the City of Maribyrnong and the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) since 2003. A summary of the 2003 NCS is provided below. In addition, the following section identifies work that has been undertaken by Council since 2003 including a review of Council's Planning Scheme, spatial analysis of existing residential development options work, and relevant Structure Planning for activity centres. Further the review incorporates more recent work undertaken for the Colonial Ammunitions Company Estate. The DPCD have recently proposed a number of changes to the Victorian Planning Provisions. Coordination of this body of work will ensure implementation recommendations are compatible with up to date approaches to achieving neighbourhood character objectives for Maribyrnong.

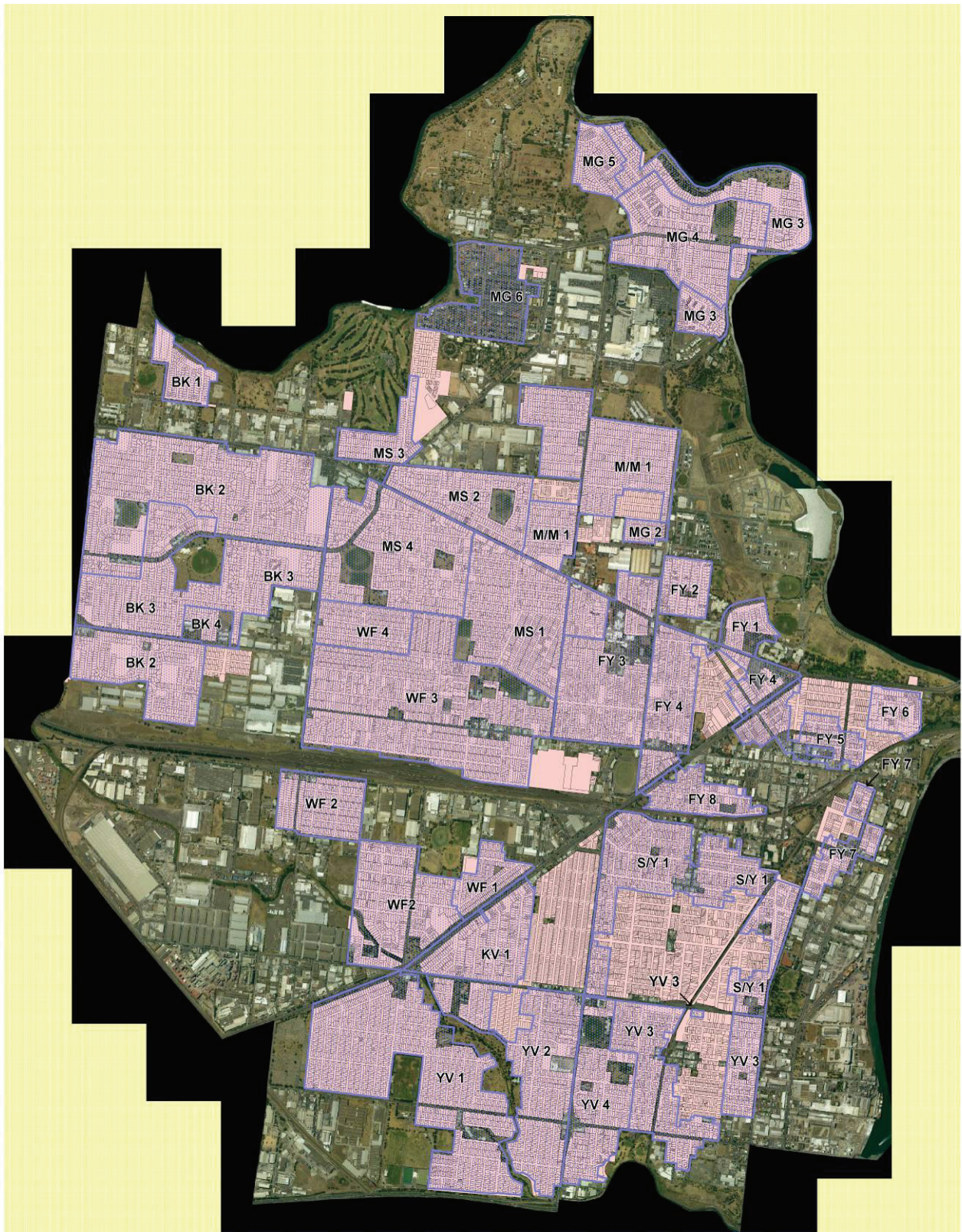
### Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Character Study 2003

---

The Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Character Study was prepared in 2003. To date the Study has not been adopted by Council nor implemented through Council's Planning Scheme. The Study identified 33 character Precincts within the City of Maribyrnong. The 2003 NCS was recommended to be implemented through a Local Policy at Clause 22, revisions to the MSS, and use of overlay controls. Five precincts were recommended for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Character Overlay, and one included within a Design and Development Overlay.

The 33 Neighbourhood Character Precincts are identified on the map overleaf. The Precincts are based on a suburb and character type approach.

## Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Character Study 2003 - Precincts Map



A description of neighbourhood character type is provided in Section 3 of this Report. The following table lists the NCS 2003 proposed neighbourhood character Precincts, their identified character type and recommended overlay controls (as relevant).

PRECINCT	CHARACTER TYPE	RECOMMENDED OVERLAY CONTROL
<b>FOOTSCRAY</b>		
FY1	Garden Suburban	Design and Development Overlay
FY2	Inner Urban	
FY3	Garden Suburban	
FY4	Garden Suburban	Neighbourhood Character Overlay
FY5	Inner Urban	Neighbourhood Character Overlay
FY6	Inner Urban	
FY7	Garden Suburban	
FY8	Inner Urban	Neighbourhood Character Overlay
<b>BRAYBROOK</b>		
BK1	Urban Contemporary	
BK2	Garden Court	
BK3	Garden Court	
BK4	Urban Contemporary	
<b>WEST FOOTSCRAY</b>		
WF1	Garden Suburban	
WF2	Garden Suburban	
WF3	Garden Suburban	
WF4	Garden Suburban	
<b>MARIBYRNONG/MAIDSTONE</b>		
M/M1	Garden Suburban	
<b>MARIBYRNONG</b>		
MG2	Urban Contemporary	
MG3	Garden Suburban / Garden Court	
MG4	Garden Suburban	
MG5	Garden Suburban / Garden Court with some Inner Urban characteristics	
MG6	Garden Suburban / Inner Urban	
<b>MAIDSTONE</b>		
MS1	Garden Suburban	
MS2	Garden Suburban	
MS3	Garden Suburban	
MS4	Garden Suburban / Garden Court	
<b>KINGSVILLE</b>		
KV1	Garden Suburban	
<b>YARRAVILLE</b>		
YV1	Garden Suburban	
YV2	Garden Suburban	
VY3	Inner Urban	Neighbourhood Character Overlay
VY4	Garden Suburban	
<b>SEDDON/YARRAVILLE</b>		
S/Y1	Inner Urban / Garden Suburban	Neighbourhood Character Overlay



## Colonial Ammunition Company Estate, Maribyrnong

---

The Colonial Ammunition Company Estate is a residential area bounded by Gordon, Rosamond, River and Mitchell Streets in Maribyrnong. The Estate was subdivided in 1924 and construction of housing commenced after the great depression in the 1930s, with the majority built during and just following World War 2. The Estate has a relatively high level of integrity with 90% of the original subdivision pattern remaining and 50% of dwellings being predominantly unaltered to the street frontage, with minimal new infill development. Concern by residents that new development was changing the character and integrity of the Estate, led to Council commissioning Planisphere in 2007 to undertake a review of neighbourhood character in the area.

The 2007 Study resulted in preparation of Colonial Ammunitions Company Estate Maribyrnong: Neighbourhood Character Guidelines, and recommendations on potential implementation mechanisms. Council did not pursue additional planning controls, however has trialled the Character Guidelines to guide statutory planning staff in decision making when considering new development and neighbourhood character objectives.

The review involved consultation with the local community. The recommendations of the Review were put on hold until the time of a more detailed review of Neighbourhood Character across the municipality and pending the release by the Department of Planning and Community Development of draft new residential zones.

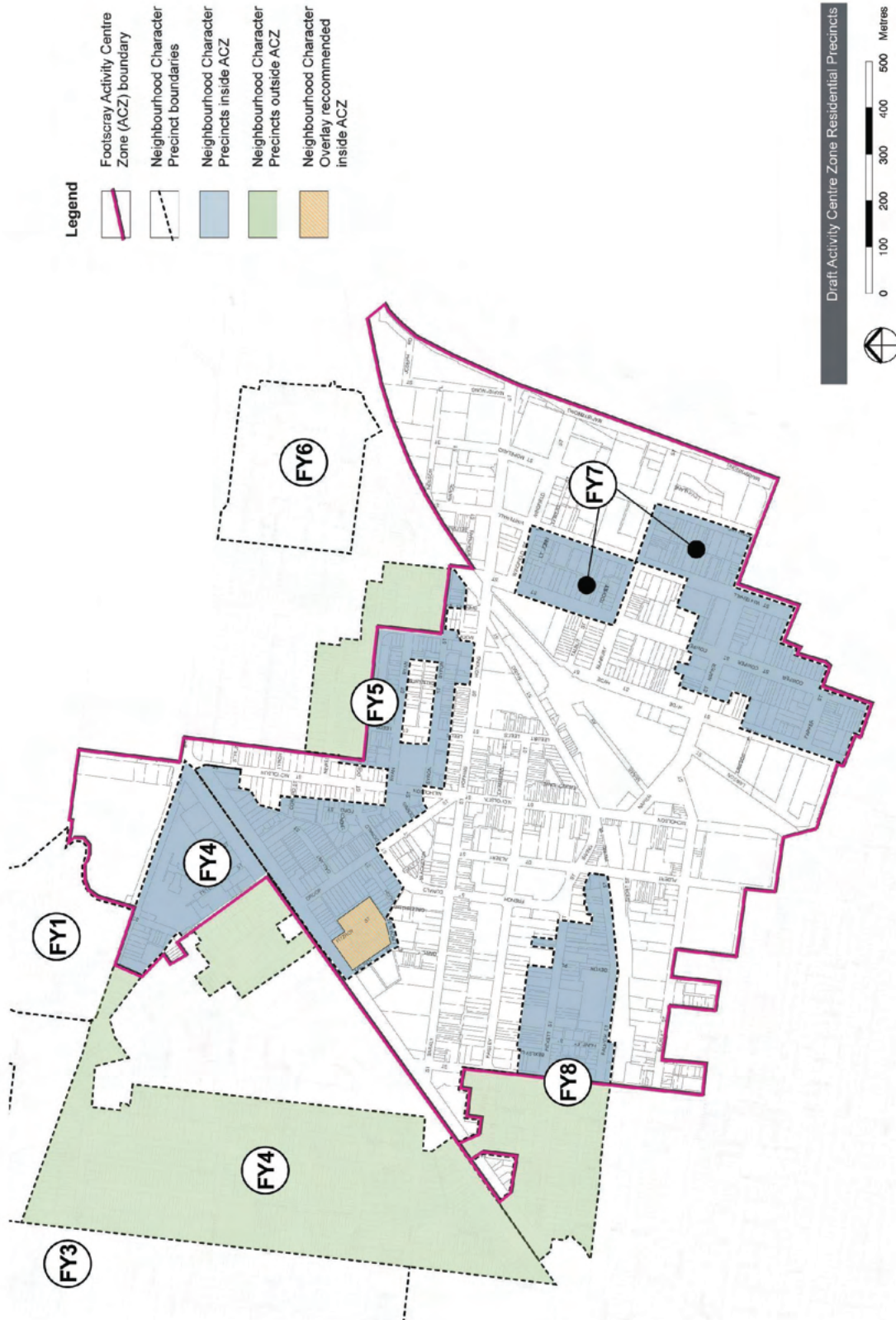
## Footscray Activity Centre Structure Plan

---

The Footscray Activity Centre is designated as a 'Principal Activity Centre' in the *Melbourne 2030 Strategy*. A Structure Plan has been prepared for the Footscray Activity Centre, including identification of the activity centre boundary. Parts of three of the Precincts proposed for Neighbourhood Character Overlay areas in the 2003 NCS, fall within the Footscray Activity Centre boundary. This includes parts of Precincts: Footscray 4 (FY4), Footscray 5 (FY5) and Footscray 8 (FY8). Precinct FY7 is included in the Activity Centre boundary in its entirety, however this precinct was not recommended for overlay controls in the 2003 Study.

The DPCD has recently released a new Activity Centre Zone (ACZ) to be applied to Principal and Major Activity Centres designated in Melbourne 2030. The Footscray Activity Centre will be included within the new ACZ. Implementation of the neighbourhood character objectives for residential areas will be via inclusion in a 'residential precinct' in the Schedule to the Activity Centre Zone. Therefore, they will not be included as part of the general implementation of the Neighbourhood Character Study.

The map overleaf identifies the Activity Centre boundary, and those parts of the original 2003 Neighbourhood Character Precincts that are included within the boundary. The NCS Review has surveyed these precincts in detail to determine whether inclusion within a Neighbourhood Character Overlay is still recommended.



## Spatial Analysis of Existing Residential Development (2009)

As part of Council's Planning Scheme Review, a spatial analysis of existing residential development was undertaken to determine where future housing may be accommodated within the City of Maribyrnong. The majority of medium density housing was directed to the Footscray Activity Centre, other Activity Centres, and two large brownfield sites in the north and east of the municipality.

Council's intent is to provide a range of housing types and sizes within the municipality and also identify locations targeted for growth or higher density development. The Spatial Analysis has identified that within the municipality there are currently a range of allotment sizes from small under 300 square metre allotments in Yarraville, Seddon and Footscray, and larger lots in Braybrook and Maidstone. Preserving the range of allotment sizes within the municipality contributes to housing diversity and will inform future Housing Strategy objectives.

Detailed application of concepts such as 'substantial', 'incremental' and/or 'minimal' residential change areas are yet to be defined in detail, however the capacity analysis will inform any future Housing Strategy to ensure that the municipality is able to accommodate future population growth.

## 2.2 Maribyrnong Planning Scheme

There are various sections of the State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks within the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme which may impact upon the project. A description of each relevant section and its implications follows.

### State Policies

#### State Planning Policy Framework

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) comprises of a statement of general principles for land use and development planning, and specific policies dealing with sectoral issues. Planning and responsible authorities must take into account and give effect to both the general principles and the specific policies applicable to issues before them to ensure integrated decision-making.

Clause 12 *Metropolitan Development* has recently been included in the SPPF to give statutory effect to the Metropolitan Strategy Melbourne 2030 (discussed in the following pages). It comprises the key directions of Melbourne 2030 and objectives and strategies for each.

At Clause 12.01 *A more compact city*, the SPPF aims to concentrate new development in activity centres which have a range of functions and are well connected by public transport. Activity centres include business, shopping, leisure and community facilities and, importantly, provide different forms of housing. The SPPF aims to locate a substantial proportion of new housing in or close to activity centres or large redevelopment sites that offer good access to services and transport. Higher density housing with more compact dwelling types is encouraged in these locations.

Specifically, the SPPF seeks to:

- Encourage higher density housing development on sites that are well located in relation to activity centres and public transport.
- Ensure housing stock matches changing demand by widening housing choice, particularly in the middle and outer suburbs.

- Ensure planning for growth areas provides for a mix of housing types and higher housing densities around activity centres.
- Ensure an adequate supply of redevelopment opportunities within the established urban area to reduce the pressure for fringe development.
- Ensure all new development appropriately responds to its landscape, valued built form and cultural context.

At Clause 12.05 *A great place to be* the SPPF seeks to:

- Recognise and protect cultural identity, neighbourhood character and sense of place by:
  - Ensuring development responds and contributes to existing sense of place and cultural identity.
  - Ensuring development recognises distinctive urban forms and layout and their relationship to landscape and vegetation.
  - Ensuring development responds to its context and reinforces special characteristics of local environment and place by emphasising:
    - The underlying natural landscape character.
    - The heritage values and built form that reflect community identity.
    - The values, needs and aspirations of the community.

The SPPF encourages sustainable residential development in terms of waste and stormwater management and energy and water use at Clause 12.07 *A greener city*.

In Clause 13 *Settlement*, the SPPF states the following issue as being of relevance to neighbourhood character:

Planning is to anticipate and respond to the needs of existing and future communities through provision of zoned and serviced land for housing, employment, recreation and open space, commercial and community facilities and infrastructure. Planning is to recognise the need for, and as far as practicable contribute towards:

- Health and safety.
- Diversity of choice.
- Adaptation in response to changing technology.
- Economic viability.
- A high standard of urban design and amenity.
- Energy efficiency.
- Prevention of pollution to land, water and air.
- Protection of environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources.
- Accessibility.
- Land use and transport integration.

Under the Settlement section, Clause 14.01 Planning for Urban Settlement, one of the objectives is:

To facilitate the orderly development of urban areas.

At Clause 14.01-2 General Implementation the SPPF states that:

In planning for urban growth, planning authorities should encourage consolidation of existing urban areas while respecting neighbourhood character.

Under the Housing section, the objectives in relation to medium density housing as outlined in Clause 16.02-1 are:

To encourage the development of well-designed medium-density housing which:

- Respects the neighbourhood character.
- Improves housing choice.
- Makes better use of existing infrastructure.
- Improves energy efficiency of housing.

Clause 19.03 of the SPPF includes the following objectives in relation to Design and Built Form:

To achieve high quality urban design and architecture that:

- Reflects the particular characteristics, aspirations and cultural identity of the community.
- Enhances liveability, diversity, amenity and safety of the public realm.
- Promotes attractiveness of towns and cities within the broader strategic contexts.

Clause 19.03-2 General Implementation states that:

Development should achieve architectural and urban design outcomes that contribute positively to local urban character and enhance the public realm while minimising detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.

There is a clear emphasis in the SPPF and all other Victorian Planning Provisions (VPPs) upon the importance of neighbourhood character and contextual design, and the ResCode provisions introduced to planning schemes in 2002 reflect this. The pressing issues of maintaining the liveability of Melbourne's residential areas, ensuring the long term sustainability of the city and providing a greater range of housing options are also clear in the recent amendment to the SPPF.

The Neighbourhood Character Study has been informed by Council's Spatial Analysis of Existing Residential Development work to ensure that these planning objectives are balanced with the desire to protect the valued character of Maribyrnong's established residential areas.

### Melbourne 2030

The metropolitan strategy, Melbourne 2030, sets out the strategic direction for the future growth and development of Melbourne over the next 25 years. It was released in October 2002 and incorporated into the State section of the planning scheme at Clause 12 in September 2005.

Of particular relevance to this study, Melbourne 2030 (at policy 5.2) describes neighbourhood character as:

*"... an important component of sense of place and a key element of Rescode. Identifying and defining neighbourhood character is not about imposing design styles, but about recognising distinctive urban forms and layout and their relationship to landscape and vegetation. Rescode and other planning requirements will be used to ensure protection of existing valued urban and neighbourhood character."*

Melbourne 2030 has identified activity centres within Maribyrnong, including Footscray and Highpoint which are classified as Principal Activity Centres, and Central West classified as a Major Activity Centre.

The major implication of Melbourne 2030 for the study is its emphasis upon the need to formulate policy to house the projected population of Melbourne. Each municipality is required, through the Regional Housing Working Group process and their Housing Strategy, to demonstrate where additional housing can be provided. Neighbourhood character and Rescode are, in theory, equally important directions of the study. However, it will be important for the Council to demonstrate to any planning panel and the DPCD, that any proposed neighbourhood character policy or controls do not conflict with the achievement of the housing objectives of the metropolitan strategy.



### **ResCode**

Before the introduction of ResCode in August 2001, character studies either aimed at introducing Local Variations to the Good Design Guide, or they made use of other planning mechanisms available in the VPPs (Victoria Planning Provisions). Local Variations proved to be difficult to achieve, and their potential seemed to have limited effectiveness compared to other VPP mechanisms, which include:

- Local Policy (including additions to the Municipal Strategic Statement)
- Overlay Controls (eg Design & Development Overlay, Vegetation Protection Overlay)

The introduction of the new residential provisions, collectively known as ResCode, has meant that neighbourhood character is now the mandatory starting point in the assessment of planning applications. ResCode offers a selection of tools that provide progressive levels of protection for neighbourhood character. These tools can enable protection of existing character or encouragement of a Preferred Future Character determined by Council. The introduction of these tools into Councils' Planning Schemes requires a full amendment process. The ResCode tools for the protection of neighbourhood character are discussed more fully in the following Chapter.

### **Standards and Zone Provisions**

The standards and zone provisions in ResCode provide a greater emphasis on neighbourhood character than the Good Design Guide where neighbourhood character was only one of many elements with equal weight. Where ResCode states that neighbourhood character should be respected (or similar expressions), this provides a clear opening for the Responsible Authority to refer to the guidelines and policies of a properly prepared character study. References of this type are strong and frequent, and there is also a clear neighbourhood character objective in relevant residential zones.

### **Local Planning Policies**

In addition, the Decision Guidelines in the relevant clauses of the VPPs state that the Responsible Authority *must* consider '...the Local Planning Policy Framework including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies'.

### **Schedules to the Zones**

Councils are able to add a schedule to a residential zone varying the following standards:

- Street setback
- Building height
- Site coverage
- Side and rear setbacks
- Private open space
- Front fence height

However a limitation on the usefulness of this mechanism, from the neighbourhood character perspective, is that it can only apply in the relevant residential zone throughout an *entire* municipality.

### **Minimum Lot Size**

Councils can vary the minimum lot size that triggers the need for a planning permit for construction of a single dwelling. Size, siting, and in some cases design, of single dwellings can be a neighbourhood character issue. However, once again this provision can only apply in the relevant

residential zone throughout an *entire* municipality, and at this stage only two options are readily available – the default of 300 sqm., or 500sqm.

## Local Policy Planning Framework

Council is currently reviewing its Planning Scheme, however the following summary is taken from the existing Municipal Strategic Statement and policy context.

### Clause 21 Municipal Strategic Statement

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) is part of the planning scheme. It is a concise statement of the key strategic planning, land use and development objectives for the municipality and the strategies and actions for achieving the objectives. The MSS establishes the strategic planning framework for the municipality. The statement encapsulates significant planning directions for the municipality and in turn provides the strategic basis for the application of the zones, overlays and particular provisions in the planning scheme and decision making by the Council.

The MSS provides an environmental, social and economic profile of Maribyrnong and describes the State and regional context of the City. It also details objectives and strategies for:

- Residential Land Use;
- The Maribyrnong River and Valley;
- Open Space;
- Economic Development
- Industrial Development
- Activity Centres and Retailing
- Education, Health and Community Facilities; and
- Transportation.

The Neighbourhood Character Study will result in the need to strengthen particular sections of the MSS as it relates to neighbourhood character. The Study provides the strategic research and justification for enabling the MSS to place greater emphasis on the importance of neighbourhood character within Maribyrnong. The MSS is currently being reviewed.

### Clause 22.01 Residential Land Use and Development Policy

This local planning policy applies to all areas in the City of Maribyrnong that have a Residential 1 zoning, and therefore applies to all the land encompassed by the Neighbourhood Character Study. This policy identifies that there is a desire to encourage small scale medium density development with minimal impact on existing residential character. One of the objectives of this policy is to ensure that the design quality of new housing development is improved. This policy supports two storey development if the design minimises stark contrasts with existing street character, and aims to preserve and enhance the current mixed period character of the City of Maribyrnong.

The recommendations of this Study will make a strong contribution towards the achievement of this policy. The policy will require updating to make reference to this Study. However it is understood that the revision of the MSS will result in less reliance on local policy.

### Clause 54.02 Neighbourhood Character

This clause relates to planning applications for one dwelling on a lot. It contains two objectives concerning neighbourhood character and integration with the street. In relation to neighbourhood

character, the key objective is to ensure that design respects the existing neighbourhood character or contributes to a preferred neighbourhood character, and to ensure that the design responds to the features of the site and the surrounding area.

This objective is achieved by ensuring development responds to the features of the neighbourhood and the site, and the proposed development must respect the existing or preferred neighbourhood character and respond to the features of the site. When deciding on an application, the Council must consider any relevant neighbourhood character objectives, policy or statement set out in the planning scheme.

#### Clause 55.02 Neighbourhood Character and Infrastructure

This clause contains five primary objectives concerning neighbourhood character, residential policy, dwelling diversity, infrastructure and integration with the street. In relation to neighbourhood character, the key objective is to ensure that design respects the existing neighbourhood character or contributes to a preferred neighbourhood character.

This objective is achieved by ensuring development responds to the features of the neighbourhood and the site. When deciding on an application, the Council must consider any relevant neighbourhood character objectives, policy or statement set out in the planning scheme.

#### Proposed New Residential Zones

The Department of Planning and Community Development has released three proposed new residential zones with the aim of replacing the existing Residential 1 Zone, Residential 2 Zone and Residential 3 Zone. They include:

- The Substantial Change Zone provides for housing growth by a mix of housing types that includes medium to higher density housing in appropriate locations.
- The Incremental Change Zone allows for a variety of housing types including medium density housing provided that it respects the character of the neighbourhood.
- The Limited Change Zone enables specific characteristics of the neighbourhood to be protected through greater control over new housing development.

The zones provide an opportunity for Council to identify residential areas with neighbourhood character value (as identified by a Neighbourhood Character Study), in which substantial residential growth would impact the integrity of the character. Council's can therefore direct housing growth and diversity to areas identified within a Housing Strategy that have limited neighbourhood character constraints. Each zone will have a Schedule that can be used to tailor specific development requirements, in particular objectives for neighbourhood character including height, setbacks and minimum lot size.



WHAT IS NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER?

### 3.1 Neighbourhood Character Defined

In December 2001 the Department of Infrastructure published a General Practice Note titled 'Understanding Neighbourhood Character'. Although the Note contains useful information, it fails to provide a single, all-encompassing definition of neighbourhood character. The nearest it comes to a succinct definition is: 'neighbourhood character is essentially the combination of the public and private realms'. The large number of matters it suggests as relevant tend to obscure, rather than illuminate, the essence of neighbourhood character. Yet there have been useful previous statements on this subject, either auspiced by the Department of Infrastructure, or produced by independent Panels.

A more succinct and encompassing definition was included in the Draft Practice Note on Neighbourhood Character published in June 2000 as part of the first draft of ResCode: *Neighbourhood character is the interplay of natural, built, social, cultural and economic conditions that make one place different from another.*

- This definition is helpful, but it has a number of shortcomings:
- It fails to focus precisely onto the meaning of neighbourhood character that is reflected in tools provided in the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs)
- It omits the adjective 'qualitative' in using the term 'interplay'.
- It makes no reference to the 'combination of the public and private realms' in the current Practice Note

It is true that people attribute widely differing meanings to the term 'neighbourhood character'. 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, how much open space or traffic there is. Because this character study has been commissioned to provide planning scheme policies and controls, it needs to be focussed on the physical planning outcomes that are capable of being influenced by planning scheme tools. Fundamentally we are aiming to answer the question: how do buildings and landscape interact? Built form, vegetation and topographical characteristics are the physical manifestation of neighbourhood character addressed in the VPPs. The Good Design Guide used these terms in defining neighbourhood character.

The term 'interplay' in the former Practice Note comes from the 1998 Advisory Committee report on the City of Monash neighbourhood character 'local variations' amendment, which coined the phrase 'qualitative interplay'. Qualitative interplay refers to the way that the main distinctive components of an area's character combine to produce a particular sense of place. This concept carries important implications:

- Neighbourhood character needs to be described in a written character statement; it is insufficient to simply produce a catalogue or list of characteristics.
- Character statements must be skilfully written to describe the synthesis of qualities that make one area distinct from another.
- Character statements should make clear which characteristics are most important, and the manner in which they relate to each other.

The term 'qualitative interplay' transcends 'private and public domains', as the Monash report emphasises. The character of buildings and their grounds cannot be divorced from the character of the street scene in which they sit. For example, in the inner suburbs of Melbourne buildings often present as solid 'walls' to the street, producing a hard, urban character. In some landscape-dominated areas on the urban fringe, natural bush vegetation flows across private property and public domain alike, only stopping at the edge of the roadway. Clearing all the trees on a private allotment would completely change the character of this type of area. So would the construction of

kerb, channel and footpath, or planting of street trees of an incompatible species or in a formal pattern.

Therefore, in summary, neighbourhood character is a synthesis of public and private domain characteristics, as listed in the provisions of ResCode. It is the qualitative interplay between those characteristics that make a place, town or neighbourhood distinctive. Some characteristics are more important than others in creating this distinctive character.

Surveying all characteristics, then listing the 'key' characteristics, is a useful analytical tool. However a written statement that explains the interplay of the character components is necessary to properly describe, assess and evaluate the character of a particular area.

The following definition of neighbourhood character, used by a Department of Infrastructure working party into neighbourhood character that met in late 1999, seems to the Study Team to accommodate all of these requirements. It forms the basis of the work undertaken in this Neighbourhood Character Review:

*Neighbourhood character is the qualitative interplay of built form, vegetation and topographic characteristics, in both the private and public domains that make one place different from another.*

## Focusing on ResCode

---

In many areas, building type, era and spacing, the proportions and combined appearance of the 'walls' and 'floor' of the street space, and the amount and type of vegetation, are the critical determinants of the area's character. How the buildings 'sit' in their landscape is critical. Vegetation includes street trees, front garden vegetation, and canopy trees in rear yards and public reserves forming a backdrop. Critical elements of the 'walls' and 'floor' of the street space are: the height, permeability and profile of the 'walls'; the depth of front setbacks, type of garden (eg lawn and roses, shrubs and trees, or an apparent continuation of the street space planting), presence and permeability of front fence; and the formality (or otherwise) of the street space.

Other character components can include traffic, noise, type of activity and demographic characteristics. Members of the public often cite these as important characteristics of their neighbourhood. People often raise amenity issues such as access to open space in character consultation sessions. All of these can be argued to be an essential part of an area's character.

The important question in considering each potential component of character is: *how relevant is this to the task in hand?* In preparing policy and controls for implementation through the planning scheme, the focus of the study needs to be on elements that are mentioned in ResCode provisions and can therefore be influenced by the appropriate planning controls. Many of these other elements can be addressed through alternate mechanisms such as social development strategies, traffic management plans or public awareness campaigns that are outside the scope of planning schemes.

## Neighbourhood Character is Not

---

The differentiation between different types of character area is not simply a question of architectural style or era of development. Neighbourhood character is founded on the layout and form of the areas, and the way that the built form interacts with and relates to the landscape. These factors should be the basis for the application of neighbourhood character policies. Neighbourhood character is not about the imposition of design styles. Rather it should be about recognising the distinctive characteristics of different urban forms, and their relationship to topography and vegetation. Getting this right is the best way of maintaining and enhancing the sense of place of the City's residential areas.

Nor is neighbourhood character about the amenity of adjoining properties as such, although it has implications for both these issues. In practical terms it does not, however, dictate planning controls

for either. For example, some of the recommended guidelines contained in the Character Precinct Brochures with regard to maintaining the rhythm of dwelling spacing in a Character Precinct or streetscape, may require that new buildings should be setback from both side boundaries. This may reduce the amount or number of buildings that can be accommodated on a site, and may also reduce potential amenity impacts from overlooking and overshadowing of adjoining properties. Site coverage and front setback controls may also have a similar effect in some instances. These are secondary outcomes of the neighbourhood character guidelines, and while not the primary intent, may reduce community concerns about other aspects of new development.

Nor is character about density controls. ResCode makes no provision for density controls, and it is considered that any policy that proposed density maximums or medium density housing saturation levels would not be supported by the Department of Planning and Community Development. ResCode has more extensive provisions relating to amenity issues and it is likely that once these provisions become more widely implemented many amenity concerns, often at the heart of density issues, will be reduced.

## 3.2 Neighbourhood Character Principles

The following principles of neighbourhood character were prepared by a former Department of Infrastructure (now DPCD) working party into neighbourhood character that met in late 1999. They were included in the Draft Practice Note on neighbourhood character published in June 2000 as part of the first draft of ResCode. These form the basis of the process and content of the work undertaken for the Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Character Study. The principles are:

### Community Values

1. The values of the local community are part of determining the appropriate response to neighbourhood character. Planning controls that aim to protect, change or improve character must draw on professional and community views.

The community should be involved in identifying the neighbourhood character measures appropriate to their area. Professionals assist in developing and translating these ideas into techniques to manage design.

### Physical Focus

2. Character, in its broadest sense, can include environmental, social and economic factors, but the planning system is concerned with managing the physical evidence of character and related social impacts.

The planning system is primarily focussed on achieving a wide range of objectives through the physical environment. Character is not concerned only with the private domain, as much of neighbourhood character is manifested in the public street space. However, some character issues are related to social outcomes or impacts. eg. The height of front fences is a town planning issue with character implications that may be physical (does a high fence contribute positively to the 'look' of the area?) and social (how do high fences affect social interaction?)

### Special Qualities of an Area

3. All areas have a character that can be described, evaluated and, in many cases, improved. In some areas protection of particular qualities may be warranted; but there is no distinction between areas of special character and 'the rest'.

The aim in placing greater priority on character is to improve the quality of the environment throughout Victoria's residential areas, not just in retaining or improving a few select 'special' areas that already have high amenity values. For this reason, neighbourhood character is equally relevant everywhere. Planning controls should aim to protect identified distinctive and valued elements.

### Interaction between Elements of Character

4. Character is about the interrelationships between various elements of an area, and so cannot be described or evaluated by considering individual elements in isolation.

Design responses need to consider the whole picture of a neighbourhood, rather than focussing upon one or two elements of the building form or siting.

### Neighbourhood Character and Other Planning Policies

5. State and Council policies provide the rationale for decisions about whether to protect, change or improve the neighbourhood character of an area. Area-specific controls should be developed in the light of these strategic directions.

A Council's Residential Development or Housing Strategy (as expressed in its Municipal Strategic Statement) may provide guidance about priorities in any particular area.

### Preferred Character

6. Neighbourhood character descriptions and evaluations should focus on the preferred character of an area.

Descriptions of existing characteristics are an important part of the process of identifying the 'starting point', but the desired character needs to be evaluated and considered in the context of other policy priorities. It may be that some areas should be encouraged to develop a new character, just as there may be some areas where critical elements need to be protected or reflected in all new development.

### Neighbourhood Character Typologies

7. There are a limited number of consistent neighbourhood character area types that can be defined, and frequently appropriate policy responses can be formulated without the need for expensive studies.

The 'Responding to Neighbourhood Character' ResCode Practice Note has adopted this approach in presenting possible policy responses to three typical residential character types. This is not to say that detailed analysis can be completely avoided, but much can be gained from shared understandings. Many Councils have undertaken very detailed character studies and this information may supplement the examples provided.

### Site Analysis

8. A site analysis, specifically from the neighbourhood character perspective, is necessary whether or not a detailed character study has been undertaken.

A site analysis is a mandatory requirement of ResCode.

### Character and Heritage

9. Character and heritage share many attributes, but there are important differences between the two concepts. Community values are a key justification for the protection of neighbourhood character. Policies to transform character may be appropriate in some areas.

Character studies evaluate the significance of built form, vegetation and topographical qualities, with reference to styles and ages where relevant, whereas heritage studies evaluate cultural heritage significance, with some reference to built form, vegetation and topographical qualities. (see below for further discussion.)

### Character and Amenity

10. The difference between neighbourhood character and amenity must be recognised.

Character and amenity are terms often used interchangeably, but in ResCode factors like visual and acoustic privacy and overshadowing should continue to be treated as issues separate to neighbourhood character.



### 3.3 Neighbourhood Character Types

Neighbourhood character is a fundamental of sense of place in residential communities. While many Councils have undertaken neighbourhood character studies, little or no attempt has been made to generalise the findings of these studies into a typology of neighbourhood character types. Broadly speaking, the following neighbourhood character types have been identified in the central region of Victoria:

Built Form / Landscape Relationship	Character Type
Built form dominated residential areas	'Inner Urban'
Spacious residential areas in a garden setting (formal street pattern, generally modified grid)	'Garden Suburban'
Spacious residential areas in a garden setting (informal, generally curving street pattern with courts/cul-de-sacs)	'Garden Court'
Landscape dominated residential areas	'Bush Suburban'

**Table 3: Victorian Neighbourhood Types**

These four categories illustrate the four main types of residential area that exist in the central region of Victoria, from an urban design perspective. Of relevance to the Maribyrnong area are the Inner Urban, Garden Suburban and Garden Court character types, with no areas subscribing to the 'Bush Suburban' character type.

The differentiation between these types is NOT based on architectural style or era of development. It IS founded on the layout and form of the areas, and the way that the built form interacts with and relates to the landscape. These factors should be the basis for the application of neighbourhood character policies. Neighbourhood character is NOT about the imposition of design styles. Rather it should be about recognising the distinctive characteristics of different urban forms, and their relationship to topography and vegetation. Getting this right is the best way of maintaining and enhancing the sense of place of the central region's residential areas.

An initial version of these character types, prepared by Planisphere, was included in the Draft Practice Note on Neighbourhood Character published in June 2000 as part of the first draft of ResCode. Although this Practice Note has since been superseded, it provided some useful principles about the nature of neighbourhood character. The upgraded version of the character types shown here is included in *Sense of Place: urban design principles for the metropolitan strategy*, a technical report on urban design prepared by Planisphere and published in October 2002 as part of *Melbourne 2030*. The remainder of this chapter is from that report.

Within each of these four main character types, there can be wide variations. These are important in differentiating the character of one neighbourhood from another, and in creating or strengthening sense of place. These variations are identified through the detailed survey, and are highlighted in the 'description' of each character precinct that appears in the Precinct Issues Papers, and on the final precinct brochures.

#### Areas with New and Changing Character

Some areas are subject to redevelopment, or have aspects of their character that are a cause of strong concern by local people, warranting change to the physical fabric. In both these instances, the appropriate planning strategy may well be to try to improve the character of the area by changing it. Achieving a measured and consistent change in the development character of an area requires a sound approach to planning. Definition of the new character will often require urban

design skills, and the process of managing change may require a sophisticated program of community involvement.

Areas yet to be developed (generally 'greenfield' areas) should be allowed to create a new character, within broad parameters such as relating to the built character of adjoining areas and expressing the underlying landscape character.

## 'Inner Urban' Neighbourhood Character Type

### Built form dominated residential areas

*Examples: Melbourne's inner suburbs (eg Carlton, Fitzroy, Port Melbourne, Williamstown); the centres of Bendigo and Ballarat, Maldon and Clunes.*

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 very narrow streets, often without connectivity, and no provision for parks and squares.

Our view of the inner suburbs of Melbourne and regional centres as living environments has been transformed in the last forty 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 exemplars of a more sustainable urban form.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dense, low rise residential and mixed use areas serviced by strip centres</li> <li>Largely intact Victorian colonial suburbs of high heritage value (probably world significance) associated with the rise of Marvellous Melbourne</li> <li>A walking, horse-drawn carriage and tram-based city</li> <li>Distinction between areas laid out by the Survey Department (eg Carlton), and areas without effective control of subdivision (eg Fitzroy, inner Bendigo)</li> <li>In outer areas, land sometimes remained undeveloped for decades, leading to mixed eras of development (eg Northcote, various pockets throughout Bendigo)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly urban character: buildings dominate the street scene</li> <li>Low rise scale, narrow fronted rhythm</li> <li>Small front setbacks, small or zero side setbacks, create unbroken 'walls' to the street</li> <li>Front property boundary always expressed by a fence</li> <li>Possibility of siting new, more intense development so that it is 'hidden' from view</li> <li>Fine-grain, connected street and laneway pattern, highly conducive to walking and cycling</li> <li>Served by a relatively dense network of strip activity centres and public transport services</li> <li>Many areas of mixed use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to conserve the heritage areas</li> <li>Maintain and enhance the hard urban character, with its solid, fine-grain streetscape 'walls', dense, connected street and laneway networks, minimal setbacks, and pedestrian-friendly environment</li> <li>Accommodate more intense development where these characteristics can be maintained, provided any shortfalls in the quality and quantity of public realm space are made good</li> </ul>

**Table 3: 'Inner Urban' Neighbourhood Character Type Summary**

## 'Garden Suburban' Neighbourhood Character Type

Spacious residential areas in a garden setting (formal street pattern, generally modified grid)

*Examples: the Melbourne middle suburbs (eg Camberwell, Essendon, Sunshine); most residential areas in Regional Centres and Country Towns/Townships/Coastal Towns*

The middle suburbs of Melbourne are possibly what most people have in mind when they talk about Melbourne's comfortable 'liveability', and compare its suburbs favourably as living environments with the affordable equivalents in Sydney. The middle suburbs became the crucible of the protests relating to urban consolidation, the Good Design Guide and neighbourhood character in the 1990s. 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 (20m) main roads (more likely to be 30m in regional Victoria). Mostly the street pattern is grid-based or grid-adapted. The roads are tree-lined avenues, often 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.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train and tram-based</li> <li>• Late-Victorian to 1960s/70s</li> <li>• Grid-based street pattern</li> <li>• Spacious streets and gardens</li> <li>• Detached houses, double or triple fronted</li> <li>• Footpaths and nature strips and tree avenues (often exotic)</li> <li>• Car storage usually off-street and behind the building line</li> <li>• Tram and/or railway station-based retail strips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spacious feel : space around and between buildings, open rather than enclosed street space, large setbacks</li> <li>• Green and leafy appearance in many areas</li> <li>• Low scale, dominant roof forms, strong horizontal emphasis</li> <li>• Gaps between buildings</li> <li>• Front property boundary usually defined by low, solid fence or moderate height 'transparent' fence (eg wire mesh)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a formal approach to street space design (eg regular avenues of trees, regular geometry of kerbing and traffic management devices)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Maintain the horizontal emphasis of massing and form resulting from the dominance of the roof form</li> </ul>

**Table 4: 'Garden Suburban' Neighbourhood Character Type Summary**

### 'Garden Court' Neighbourhood Character Type

Spacious residential areas in a garden setting (informal, generally curving street pattern with courts/cul-de-sacs)

*Examples: Melbourne outer suburbs such as Chirnside Park, Wantirna, Carrum Downs; areas of Regional Centres and Country Towns/Townships/Coastal Towns developed since approximately the late 1970s.*

From the 1960s to present time, garden court residential areas have emerged. They grew faster in the north-east, east and south-east than in the north, north-west and west Melbourne. These suburbs have grown on the fringes of Melbourne and other centres, where initially infrastructure and services were inadequate.

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, stand alone retail centres. In seeking to create more sustainable urban environments, government policy will need to address these deficiencies over the long term.

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.

More recent trends in Garden Court areas have seen reduced setback and road width standards, coupled with substantially increasing site coverage. Many estates of the 1990s include large numbers of two storey houses with much reduced setbacks. These changes have reduced the 'garden' aspect of the character, increasing the sense that the street is lined by a solid 'wall' of buildings. Although street and garden trees will eventually mature and 'soften' these streetscapes, they will continue to have a more built-form dominated character.

DESCRIPTION	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car-based</li> <li>• 1960s/70s onwards</li> <li>• Curvilinear plus court-based street pattern</li> <li>• Spacious streets and gardens</li> <li>• Detached houses, double or triple fronted</li> <li>• Two storey houses and higher site coverage common from 1990s</li> <li>• Nature strips, often without footpaths</li> <li>• Informal street tree planting, often native</li> <li>• Car storage usually off-street and behind the building line (in front of the building line in some more recent estates)</li> <li>• Car-based, stand alone retail centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-1990s: spacious feel – space around and between buildings, open rather than enclosed street space, large setbacks</li> <li>• From the 1990s: a more enclosed feel due to smaller setbacks, higher site coverage and two storey development</li> <li>• Green and leafy appearance in many areas</li> <li>• Low scale and horizontal emphasis of dominant roofs (pre-1990s)</li> <li>• Gaps between buildings (less from 1990s)</li> <li>• Less emphasis on separate definition of public and private domain: front gardens often not fenced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use an informal approach to street space design (eg informal groupings of trees, irregular geometry of kerbing and traffic management devices)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• In pre-1990s areas, maintain the horizontal emphasis of massing and form resulting from the dominance of the roof form</li> </ul>

**Table 5: 'Garden Court' Neighbourhood Character Type Summary**

The application of these character types to Maribyrnong is addressed in the next chapter.



## NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER FOR MARIBYRNONG

## 4.1 Survey

### Areas of change

To determine which Precincts from the 2003 Study require a follow up survey to assess the amount and types of change that have occurred, approved Planning Permit applications and completed Building permits since 2003, were mapped. Further, a workshop was held with Council's Statutory Planning Team Leaders to ascertain where they considered a degree of change had occurred and where neighbourhood character issues were being raised as part of planning permit application processes. These areas included:

- Braybrook 2 (BK2) - redevelopment for medium density housing on existing affordable housing sites reducing stock of larger residential allotments.
- West Footscray 3 (WF3) – character issues becoming more prominent in objections to planning permit applications for new housing development, and additions and alterations to existing dwellings within the West Footscray area.
- Footscray 2 and 4 (FY2 and FY4) – development has occurred around the Victoria University campus and tram corridor along Gordon and Droop Streets.
- Footscray 3 (FY3) – there has been considerable development around Western Hospital, including Eleanor Street, Swan Street, Gordon Street, Summerhill Road and MacPherson Street.
- In Seddon and Yarraville (S/Y1) - housing stock is being upgraded generally consistent with existing character, however needs clear guidance to ensure quality built form outcomes. This includes new residential development along laneways or service roads to the rear of existing residential properties (dual occupancies).

The following Precincts were identified as requiring more in-depth survey:

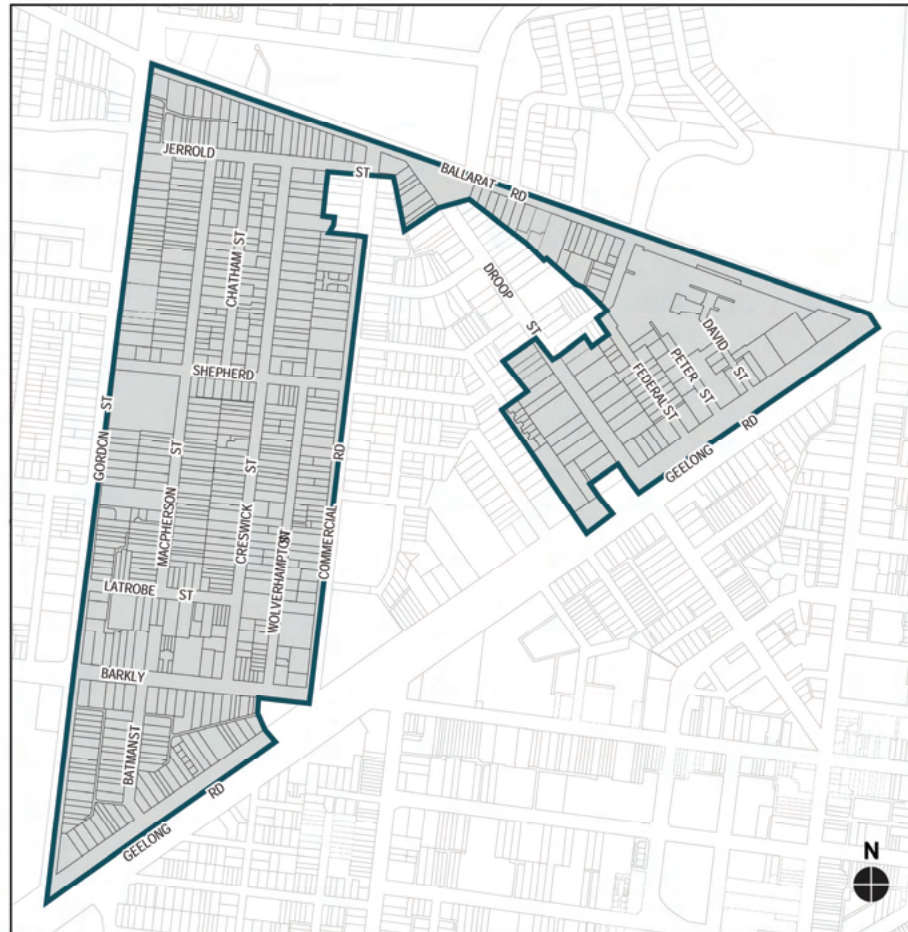
- The five Precincts recommended for Neighbourhood Character Overlay Controls, for which three are located in part within the Footscray Activity Centre boundary, including:
  - FY4 - Footscray 4 (part in Footscray Activity Centre Boundary)
  - FY5 - Footscray 5 (part in Footscray Activity Centre Boundary)
  - FY8 - Footscray 8 (part in Footscray Activity Centre Boundary)
  - YV3 - Yarraville 3
  - S/Y1 - Seddon/Yarraville 1
- The Colonial Ammunition Estate, Maribyrnong (part of Maribyrnong / Maidstone 1) – to confirm the Colonial Ammunition Estate work undertaken by Council and Planisphere in 2007/8.
- The Edgewater Estate, a new residential estate located east of Gordon Street and north of Ballarat Road.

The remaining Precincts were surveyed by a random selection of streets within the Precinct to confirm the key existing characteristics and neighbourhood character description of the 2003 Study.

The Map on page 6 shows the 2003 Study neighbourhood character precincts at a municipal wide context. Where in depth survey of a Precinct has been undertaken as part of this Review, an individual map of the focus area along with analysis is provided on the following pages.

#### Footscray 4 (FY4)

#### Map: NCS 2003 Footscray 4 Precinct - (FY4)



Footscray 4 (FY4) as shown in map above, was surveyed in detail for two reasons. First it was recommended for a Neighbourhood Character Overlay in the 2003 NCS, and is in part included within the Footscray Activity Centre boundary.

The section of Precinct FY4 included within the Footscray Activity Centre boundary has undergone significant change since the 2003 Study. Namely because it is close to the Victoria University Campus and has been developed for uses associated with the university, including demolition of buildings for car parking areas. This section of FY4 should not be included in the Neighbourhood Character Overlay and future character can be informed by the Footscray Activity Centre Structure Planning process.

The part of Precinct FY4 either side of Droop Street has undergone change. The significant sites in this strip have site specific Heritage Overlay controls. The areas location on a tram corridor along with the existence of larger allotments which have undergone more recent change suggest the area should be considered for its potential yield as part of the Housing Strategy.

The FY4 area located east of Gordon Street between Barkly Street in the south and Ballarat Road to the north, retains much of its original building stock. Most parts of the area have consistent front

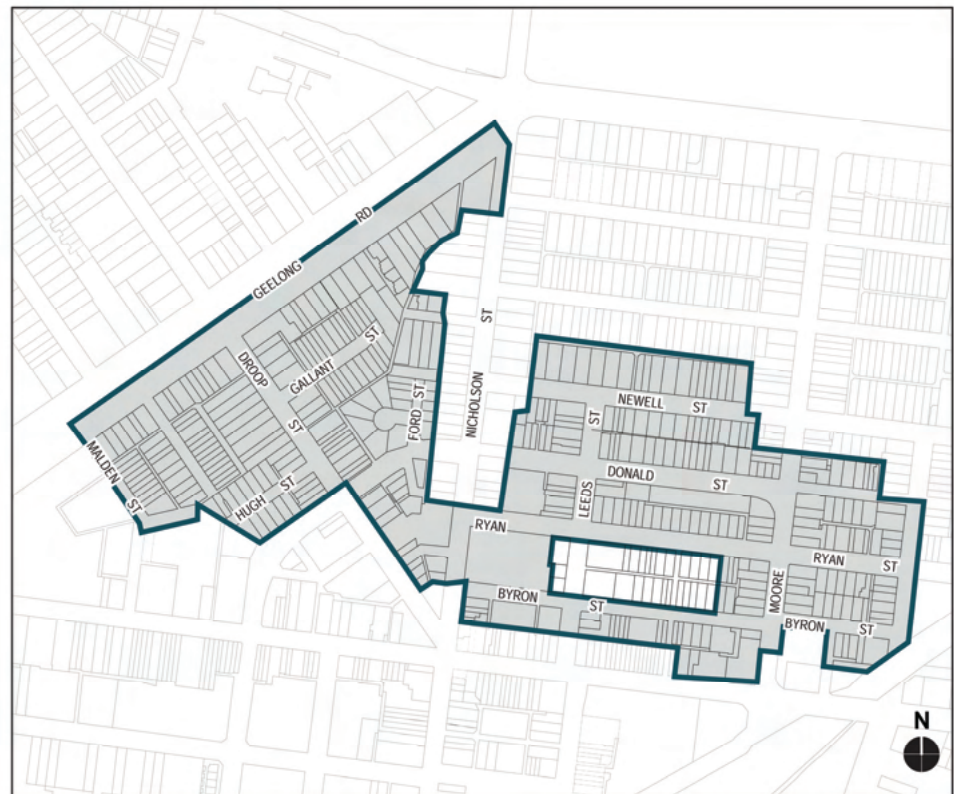


and side setbacks with low scale planting, are of single storey scale and similar architectural era which has been preserved through renovation. With the exception of the public housing estate on the corner of Macpherson Street and Shepherd Street, Barkly Street itself, and the southern end of Wolverhampton and Creswick Streets near to Barkly Street which contains 1960s flat development, the area is still considered worthy of inclusion within the Neighbourhood Character Overlay.

The pocket south of Barkly Street to Geelong Road has seen minimal change since the 2003 Character Study, however is not considered of an integrity to warrant special controls on character.

#### Footscray 5 (FY5)

#### **Map: NCS 2003 Footscray 5 Precinct - (FY5)**



The majority of the FY5 precinct, shown above, is located within the Footscray Activity Centre boundary. This Precinct is within close proximity to the commercial area of the Activity Centre along Hopkins Street. Much of the building stock is undergoing change, and is not consistent in style nor streetscape character to warrant neighbourhood character overlay protection.

However, a pocket of dwellings in the western part of the Precinct including Fitzroy Street, the northern side of Malden Street, and the eastern side of Geelong Road [service lane] between Fitzroy Street and Malden Street is recommended for additional neighbourhood character controls. The area differentiates from the remainder of the former FY5 precinct, due to the quality and integrity of the Victorian era building stock that demonstrates consistent front setbacks of approximately 3 metres; side setback of 1 metre from one side boundary; low fencing to 1.2 metres in height and low scale planting. The area warrants additional neighbourhood character objectives and controls within the Activity Centre Zone Schedule.

Only two pockets of Precinct FY5 are located outside of the Activity Centre boundary. The first on Newell Street (north of Donald Street) retains its valued character with consistent front and side setbacks the length of the street, and with the exception of one double storey dwelling and a Greek



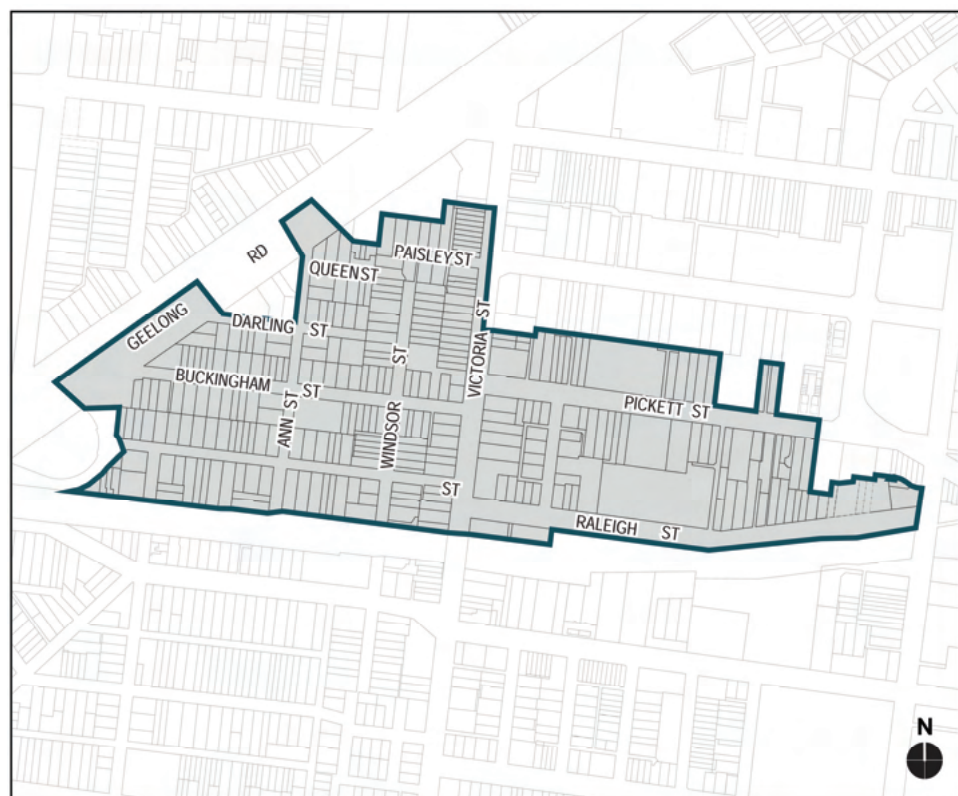
Orthodox Church on the corner of Leeds Street, a single storey streetscape. The low scale built form and hard landscape dominates the streetscape above any soft landscaping and planting, further reinforcing the visual consistency of setback and architectural era.

Newell Street between Nicholson Street and Moore Street is recommended for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Character Overlay.

The second small pocket east of Moore Street to Cowper Street and including Byron Street, Ryan Street, Donald Street and the west side of Cowper Street does not display the same level of consistency.

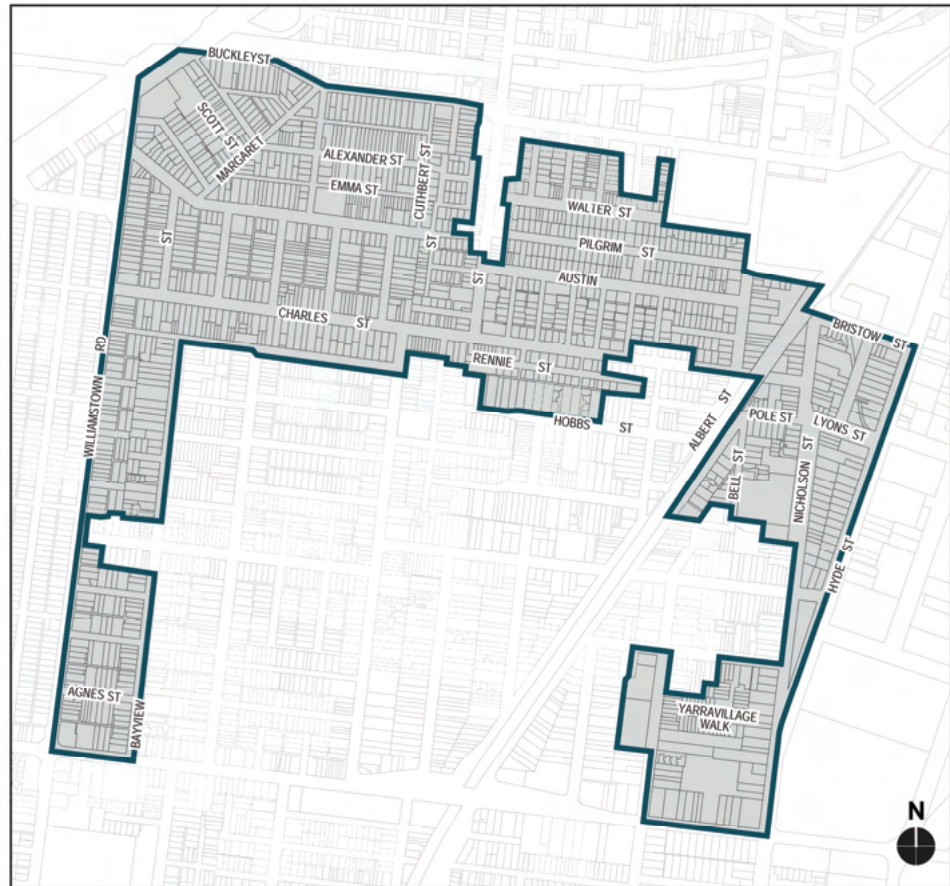
### **Footscray 8 (FY8)**

#### **Map: NCS 2003 Footscray 8 Precinct - (FY8)**



Precinct Footscray 8 (FY8) is divided by Victoria Street as shown in the map above. The area east of Victoria Street is located within the Footscray Activity Centre boundary. Although there is a base of older period buildings, the precinct contains a mix of styles, including single dwellings from several different eras, newer apartment buildings, a church, club/function buildings and 1960s walk up flats. Given the variation in building form, setbacks and materials it would be difficult to apply controls to cover any character elements in this area.

The western portion located within the boundaries of Geelong Road, Buckley Street, Victoria Street and Paisley Street includes consistent pockets of Victorian and Edwardian dwellings. A low level of redevelopment has occurred since the 2003 Study. Additional controls covering front fence height, setbacks, materials, building form and location of car parking areas and structures would enable retention of the features that contribute to this area warranting a Neighbourhood Character Overlay.

**Seddon / Yarraville 1 (SYV1)****Map: NCS 2003 Seddon / Yarraville 1 Precinct - (SYV1)**

The 2003 NCS identified a large Precinct in Seddon and Yarraville, SYV1 as shown in map above, for inclusion in a Neighbourhood Character Overlay. Since 2003, many building and planning permit applications were approved for areas within this Precinct, and this was confirmed by the Statutory Planning Team Leaders as an area of change. With much of the residential areas of Yarraville included within Heritage Overlays, and the precincts proximity to the Footscray Activity Centre, application of a blanket neighbourhood character overlay across the remaining residential areas of Seddon / Yarraville may not be consistent with potential housing objectives of Council. This will need to be informed by any future Housing Strategy undertaken by Council.

The survey revealed the following:

- The 2003 NCS is still applicable to the Precinct.
- Since 2003, development has occurred in this precinct mostly in the form of new infill townhouses and renovations to existing dwellings.
- Buildings in this precinct are generally very well-maintained and it is obvious that older period buildings are highly valued, given the level of maintenance and restoration.
- There are also many examples of infill that is respectful of the existing character.
- Additional control covering elements such as low front fence height, front and side setbacks, materials, building form and location of car parking areas and structures

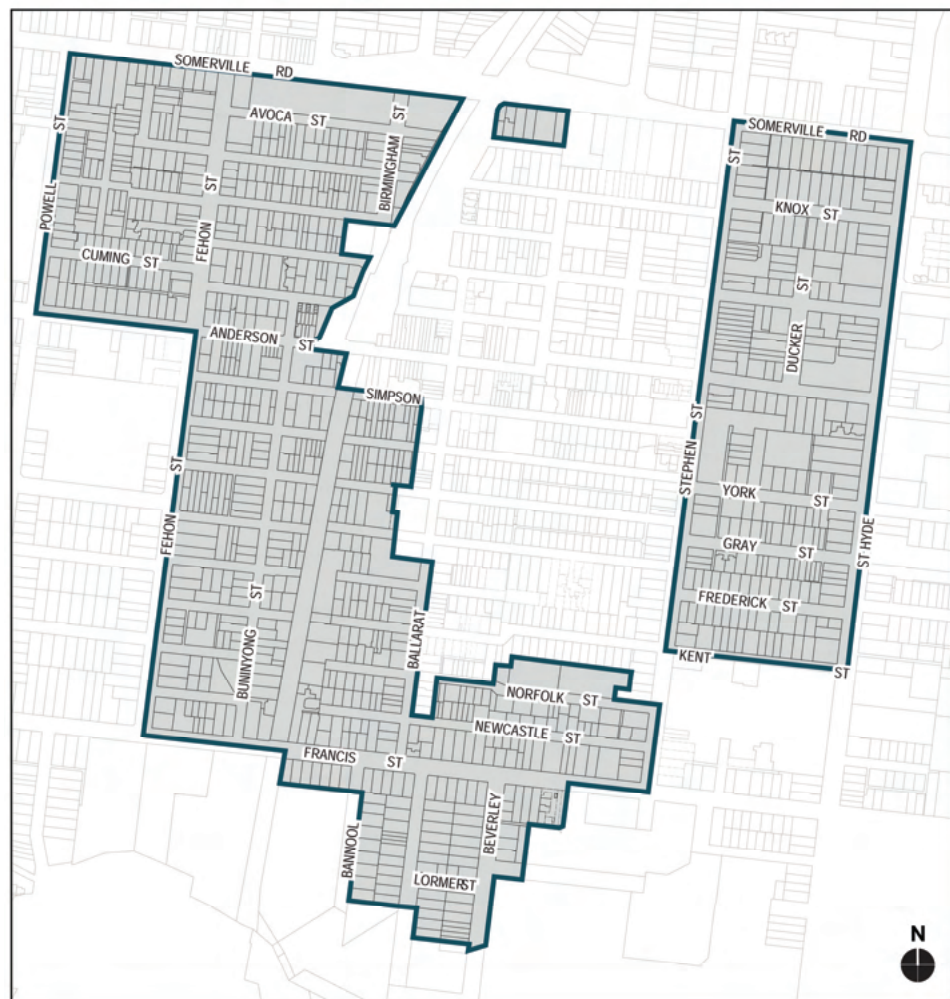
should be applied to future development to ensure that the valued and consistent characteristics of the area are retained.

- The area surrounding Austin Street and Pilgrim Street retains consistent and binding neighbourhood character elements which should be protected.

The area including Walter Street, Pilgrim Street and Austin Street generally between Victoria Street and Albert Street (see Map on page 56) is considered of higher integrity due to a unified consistency in characteristics such as height, built form, siting and use of materials and therefore warranted inclusion within a Neighbourhood Character Overlay,

### Yarraville 3 (YV3)

#### **Map: NCS 2003 Yarraville 3 Precinct - (YV3)**



Yarraville 3 as shown in the map above, was surveyed in detail to determine the level of change due to evidence of numerous building and planning permit applications approved for areas within this Precinct since the 2003 Study. The 2003 NCS identified a large Yarraville 3 Precinct that was to be considered for inclusion in a Neighbourhood Character Overlay. Much of Yarraville's residential areas are included within a Heritage Overlay in the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme, and like the Seddon / Yarraville Precinct, application of a blanket neighbourhood character overlay across much of the remaining residential areas of Yarraville may not be consistent with potential

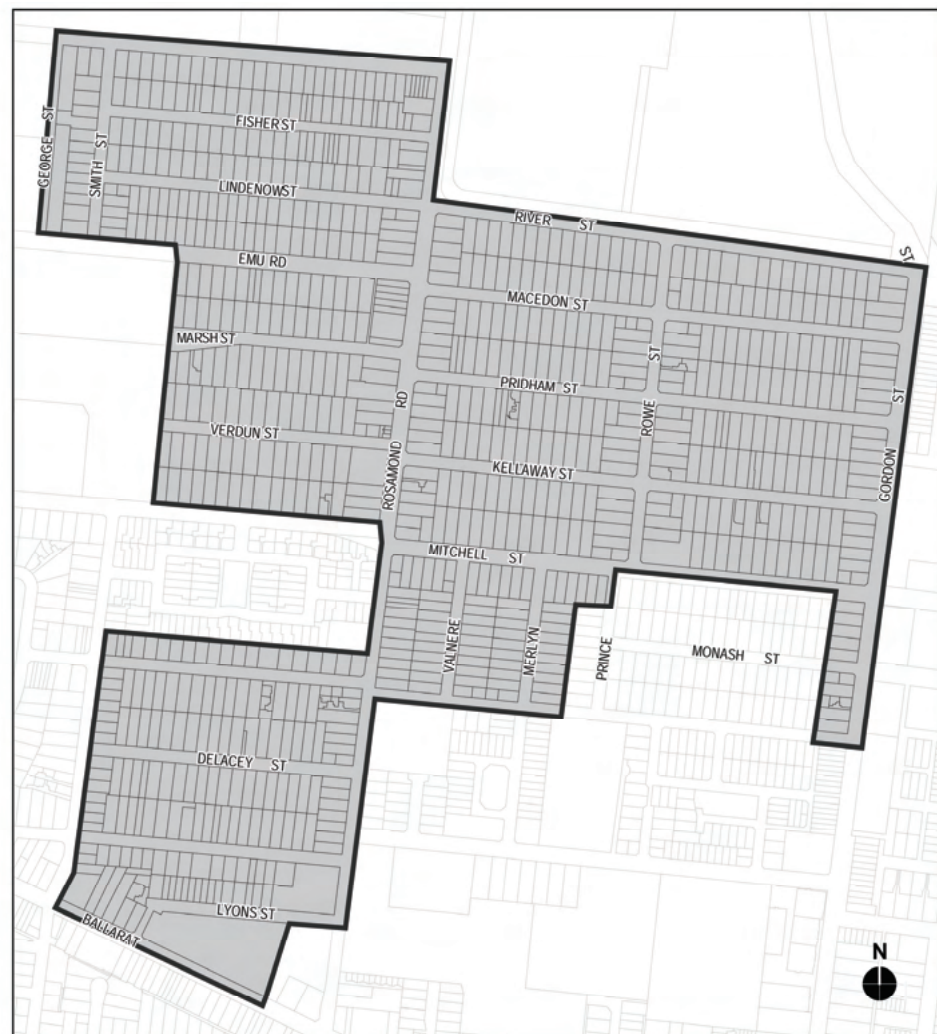


housing objectives of Council. This will need to be informed by any future Housing Strategy undertaken by Council.

New buildings generally attempt to reflect some of the key contributing characteristics, but are often let down by factors such as the dominance of car parking spaces and structures in the front setback, large expanses of brick or render / no variance in materials across facades, poor building forms (e.g. bulky buildings, flat roofs). Additional controls in one section of YV3 are warranted, including the area roughly bounded by Powell Street, Castlemaine Street, Anderson Road and Birmingham Street. The integrity of the area in terms of its consistent low front fence height, front setback with low scale planting, side setback, materials, building form, single storey scale and location of car parking areas and structures, combined with no evident change since the 2003 Study, sets it apart from other areas in the former YV3. Views toward the railway line and Yarraville Village framing the built form unifies the precinct. Other areas within the former YV3 do not display the same level of consistency in the streetscape, with evidence of additions and alterations or infill development changing the relationship between the built form and streetscape.

#### Maribyrnong / Maidstone 1 – M/M1 (Colonial Ammunition Company Estate part only)

**Map: NCS 2003 Maribyrnong / Maidstone 1 Precinct - (M/M1 – Colonial Ammunitions Company Estate)**



The Colonial Ammunition Estate retains its integrity as outlined in the Guidelines prepared in 2007. Post war modernist architecture is only starting to be valued for heritage or neighbourhood character significance and protected as a valued architectural era in its own right. The Colonial Ammunition Estate displays a high level of integrity of original Post War era built form within a defined physical boundary. Architectural style, consistent large vegetated front setbacks, building materials, predominant single storey scale, roof form, side driveway with rear carport, front nature strips and street tree planting combine to present an integrated sense of character. The grid street layout with long east west viewlines, street tree planting and nature strips, and the larger vegetated setbacks also present a suburban ambience unique within the Maribyrnong context.

There is some contemporary infill development and dual occupancy development that do not integrate into the lower scale consistent streetscapes, and if continue could erode the relatively high level of integrity of the Estate. Given some change, and the potential the larger allotments provide for redevelopment close to inner Melbourne, a neighbourhood character overlay should be considered for the Estate.

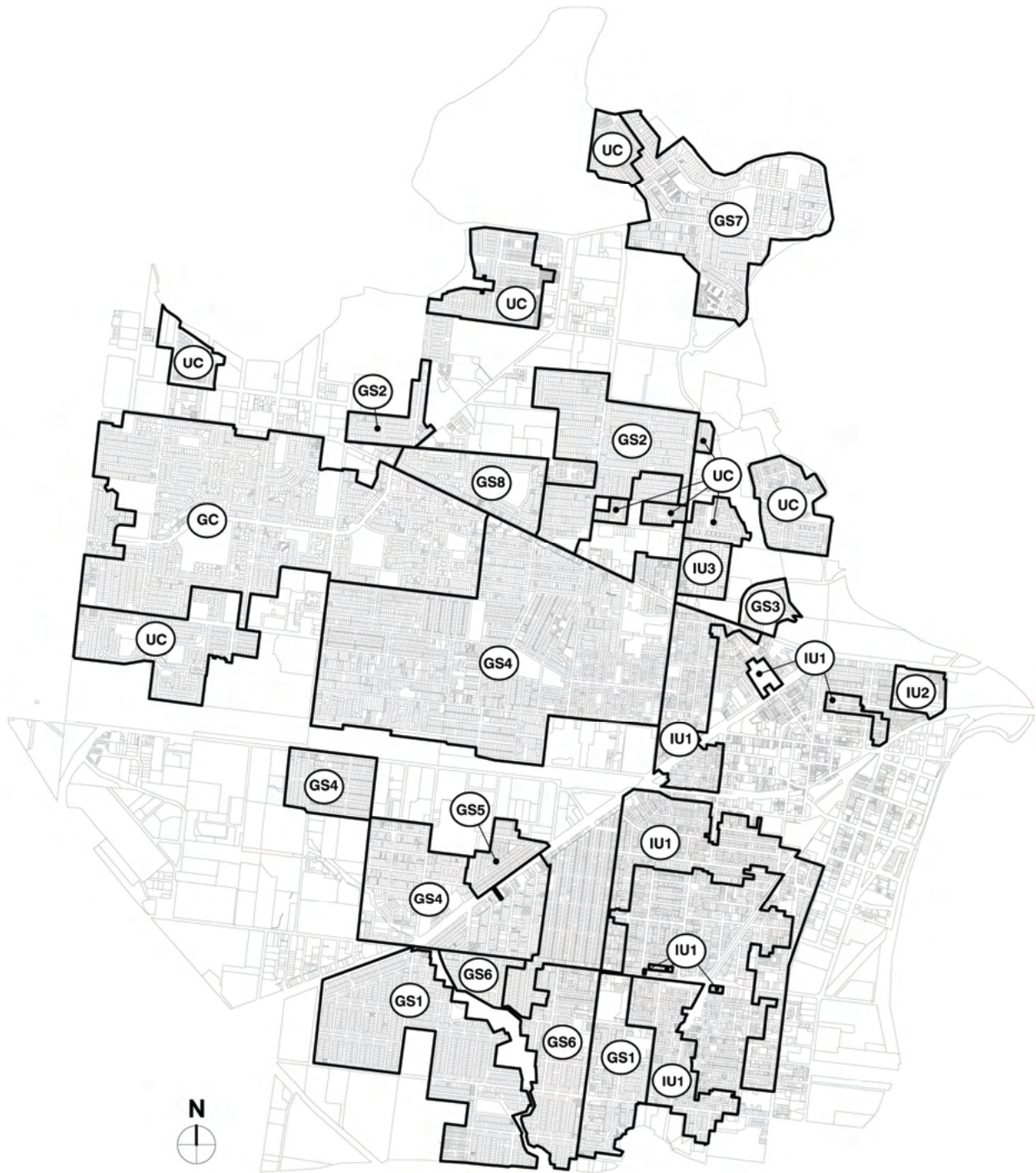
## 4.2 Review of Neighbourhood Character Precinct Boundaries

Upon completion of reviewing the Neighbourhood Character areas to update them in relation to field work and desktop surveys undertaken for the areas of change, it was found that a number of precincts could be merged together. The 2003 NCS categorised precincts by suburb and character type. The merging of already very similar precincts based on character type only (not suburb), lessens the number of neighbourhood character precincts from 33 to 13, so that they are more concise and will be more efficient in implementing them into the Planning Scheme. This will prove particularly useful for translation into the new draft residential zones.

In reviewing the neighbourhood character precinct boundaries, it was found that the 'character types' could be condensed, based on the most valued characteristics for that area and the desired design responses to be achieved. For those areas where the characteristics and objectives were quite similar they have been combined. The following table tracks the original Precinct to the new condensed Precinct, as follows:

New Precinct	2003 NCS Precincts	
<b>INNER URBAN</b>		
IU1	FY2	Footscray 2
Inner Urban 1	FY4	Footscray 4 (part)
	Fy5	Footscray 5 (part)
	Fy8	Footscray 8 (part)
	S/Y1	Seddon / Yarraville 1
	YV3	Yarraville 3
IU2	FY6	Footscray 6
Inner Urban 2		
IU3	FY2	Footscray 2
Inner Urban 3		
<b>GARDEN SUBURBAN</b>		
GS1	YV1	Yarraville 1
Garden Suburban 1	YV4	Yarraville 4
GS2	M/M1	Maidstone / Maribyrnong 1

Garden Suburban 2	MS3	Maidstone 3
GS3	FY1	Footscray 1
Garden Suburban 3		
GS4	FY3	Footscray 3
Garden Suburban 4	MS1	Maidstone 1
	WF2	West Footscray 2
	WF3	West Footscray 3
	WF4	West Footscray 4
	KV1	Kingsville 1
GS5	WF1	West Footscray 1
Garden Suburban 5		
GS6	YV2	Yarraville 2
Garden Suburban 6		
GS7	MG3	Maribyrnong 3
Garden Suburban 7	MG4	Maribyrnong 4
GS8	MS2	Maidstone 2
Garden Suburban 8		
<b>GARDEN COURT</b>		
GC	BK2	Braybrook 2 (northern section only)
Garden Court	BK3	Braybrook 3
	MS4	Maidstone 4
<b>URBAN CONTEMPORARY</b>		
UC	BK1	Braybrook 1
Urban Contemporary	BK2	Braybrook 2 (southern section only)
	BK4	Braybrook 4
	MG2	Maribyrnong 2
	MG5	Maribyrnong 5
	MG6	Maribyrnong 6
		Edgewater Estate (new)
<b>EXEMPT</b>		
Footscray Activity Centre Zone	Footscray 4 (part)	
	Footscray 5 (part)	
	Footscray 7 (all)	
	Footscray 8 (part)	



**Preferred Neighbourhood Character Areas**  
*Neighbourhood Character Study (2003) Review*  
 Maribyrnong City Council  
 October 2010

<b>GC</b>	Garden Court	<b>GS5</b>	Garden Suburban 5	<b>IU1</b>	Inner Urban 1
<b>GS1</b>	Garden Suburban 1	<b>GS6</b>	Garden Suburban 6	<b>IU2</b>	Inner Urban 2
<b>GS2</b>	Garden Suburban 2	<b>GS7</b>	Garden Suburban 7	<b>IU3</b>	Inner Urban 3
<b>GS3</b>	Garden Suburban 3	<b>GS8</b>	Garden Suburban 8	<b>UC</b>	Urban Contemporary
<b>GS4</b>	Garden Suburban 4				



## 4.3 Character and Preferred Future Character

Since the completion of the 2003 Neighbourhood Character Study, the Department of Planning and Community Development has sought more emphasis to be placed on *preferred future character*. Without an explicit emphasis on preferred character, neighbourhood character studies tend to dwell on existing characteristics. Neighbourhood character studies are now required to express a vision for the future and suggest how this could be achieved. This statement is the starting point in considering neighbourhood character issues and commonly it is given statutory weight through inclusion in a Council's MSS.

### Preferred Character Statement

The Preferred Character Statement is an expression of the elements of the neighbourhood that make it distinctive or valued, projected into the future. It therefore takes into account variations in both the characteristics of the locality and the extent to which these are important in defining its character. Some areas have a large number of elements that are valued or preferred and need to be represented in new development, and others have less. The retention of preferred/valued existing elements or reflection of preferred/valued elements in the new development creates a character that is a Preferred Future Character.

### Precincts and Preferred Character

As noted, *preferred* character is the main criterion for precinct delineation. The 2003 NCS delineated suburb and every variation in *current* characteristics which produced a large number of precincts (33). While this approach might have some benefits in achieving a finer grain of information, it tends to not be responsive to the community's aspirations for their area as there is no clear vision for new development to achieve.

Furthermore, preferred character should be a concept that provides a broad direction rather than prescriptive detail. Achieving an uninterrupted flow of landscape and vegetation across private and public domain might be the main aim of a preferred character statement. From this aim, numbers of policies and guidelines are derived. These are cognisant of the existing situation with boundary treatments, site coverage etc, but fine grain local variations in these characteristics today should not preclude the setting of an aim to create, in the future, a consistent character across a broader area. Town planning is, after all, about creating desired futures. Town planning policy should be arrived at after considering existing conditions. It should not necessarily be determined by them.

## 4.4 Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements

### Inner Urban Precincts

#### Inner Urban 1 – IU1

The low-scale intimacy of the streetscapes and the sense of history will be maintained and strengthened throughout this precinct. Older dwellings, including those from the Victorian, Edwardian and Interwar eras will be retained and complemented by newer development that is distinguishable from original building stock, but respectful of the key elements of these styles. New, low-scale buildings with pitched roofs will incorporate lightly-coloured timber and other non-masonry materials within well-articulated facades. Where newer development exceeds the



predominant height in the street, upper levels will be recessed to reduce their prominence. New buildings will be sited in accordance with the predominant pattern of setbacks in the street, which may include terraced housing or buildings abutting one side boundary. The visual interaction between dwellings and streetscapes will be maintained and strengthened by providing low, permeable front fences and small front setbacks with space for shrubs and flowering plants to soften the built form.

Particularly intact areas, including parts of Seddon and Yarraville directly south of the Footscray Activity Centre and the area south-west of Yarraville Station will continue to display consistency in characteristics such as height, built form, siting and use of materials.

### **Inner Urban 2 – IU2**

The balance between the built form and the garden settings of dwellings will continue to be the key valued characteristics of this precinct. Buildings will be sited to provide for space for existing trees, and garden settings will be strengthened through the ongoing planting of trees, in particular larger species within front gardens. The visual prominence of car parking structures and crossovers will be minimal, with single-lane crossovers and garages or car ports that are set behind the line of the front façade. The use of permeable surfacing will reduce runoff and give front and side setbacks a more natural appearance that complements the location of the precinct near the river corridor. Front fencing will maintain views to front gardens and the openness of streetscapes.

### **Inner Urban 3 – IU3**

The spaciousness of streetscapes, the way in which the dwellings address the street and the low visibility of buildings from the Maribyrnong River corridor will be maintained and strengthened. New development will be orientated towards the street and set back from all side boundaries in accordance with the pattern of setbacks in the street. The height of new buildings will remain below the dominant mature tree canopy height and new development will further contribute to the landscape character through the planting of new canopy trees. The prominence of car parking structures and driveways will be minimised through the provision of single-lane crossovers and garages that are set behind the line of the front facade. New development will be sited to minimise the prominence of buildings in views from the river corridor.

## **Garden Suburban Precincts**

---

### **Garden Suburban 1 – GS1**

The spaciousness of streets and the maintenance of older buildings will continue to influence the character of this precinct. Older dwellings, including those from the Victorian, Federation and Interwar eras will be retained and complemented by newer development that is distinguishable from original building stock, but respectful of the key elements of these styles. New development will incorporate pitched roofs and use materials that reflect the current building stock in the precinct, with a variation of materials across facades. Buildings will be sited to provide gardens that contribute to the overall leafy feel of the precinct. The garden settings of dwellings will be maintained and strengthened with the retention of existing canopy trees and the planting of new vegetation. Front fences will remain low and open, allowing views to gardens and dwellings.

### **Garden Suburban 2 – GS3**

The cohesiveness of streetscapes brought about by consistencies in the built form and the open, spacious qualities of streets will be maintained and strengthened. Older dwellings that contribute to the character of the area, including those from the Interwar and 1950s eras will be retained and complemented by newer development that is distinguishable from original building stock. Replacement buildings will reflect the low-scale appearance of buildings and will use materials that complement those commonly found within the precinct. New development will be sited to retain the spaciousness of precincts through the provision of setbacks on all sides of dwellings. Landscaping

that includes the planting of new canopy trees, shrubs and lawn areas will add to the garden settings of dwellings and provide a sense of leafiness in the precinct. Front fences will remain low or constructed of permeable materials to retain views to gardens.

### **Garden Suburban 3 – GS3**

The dominance of canopy trees in views from the river corridor will continue to remain a key feature of this precinct through the ongoing balance between tree canopies and roof tops. Buildings will be set back from all side boundaries and will be sited to provide for existing and new trees that are visible from the river corridor. The height of new development will be kept below the height of the dominant mature tree canopy. Buildings will be designed to follow the contours of the site and to incorporate materials that are of low reflectivity or are natural in appearance to reduce the prominence of the built form in views from the river corridor.

### **Garden Suburban 4 – GS4**

The mix of architectural styles and the consistencies across the built form will be maintained and strengthened through the provision of new development that adds to the layers of history throughout the precinct. Older dwellings that contribute to the character of the area, including those from the Victorian, Edwardian and Interwar eras will be retained and complemented by newer development that is distinguishable from original building stock. New development will respect the low-scale nature of buildings and will provide pitched roofs and other features that respond to the building form. Garden settings will be strengthened through new plantings that provide canopy trees, shrubs and garden beds that contribute to the leafiness of streetscapes. Where present, front fences will maintain the openness of streetscapes and allow views to gardens and dwellings.

### **Garden Suburban 5 – GS5**

This precinct will continue to be characterised by intact streets of older homes within garden settings. Older dwellings, including those from the Interwar and 1950s eras will be retained and complemented by newer development that is distinguishable from original building stock, but respectful of the key elements of these styles. New buildings and extensions will continue to emphasise the low-scale horizontal element of the built form and will incorporate the use of materials found commonly in the precinct, including timber. The prominence of extensions and two storey dwellings in the streetscape will be minimised through well-articulated, recessed upper levels. Buildings will be sited to reflect the current pattern of setbacks in the street and to accommodate gardens that comprise canopy trees, shrubs and lawn that contribute to the leafiness of the streetscape. Front boundaries will delineate between the public and private realm through the use of low, permeable fences that are suited to the building era, including timber and wire styles.

### **Garden Suburban 6 – GS6**

This precinct will continue to be characterised by the garden settings of dwellings and the older, well-maintained housing stock. The retention of older dwellings, including those from the Federation and Interwar eras will maintain the sense of history evident in the area, while new development will continue to add to the mix of architectural styles. New dwellings will respect the low-scale, horizontal emphasis of the existing built form and will incorporate well-articulated facades that add interest to streetscapes. New development will make the best use of small front setbacks through the planting of small trees, shrubs and garden beds that complement the existing vegetation in the streetscape. Buildings will be set back from all side boundaries in accordance with the predominant setback pattern in the street. Front boundaries will be used to delineate between the public and private realm through the use of low, permeable fences that allow views to gardens and dwellings.

### **Garden Suburban 7 – GS7**

The green, leafy feel of this precinct will be retained through the maintenance of established trees and gardens. The location of the precinct on the river corridor will be reflected in new development and gardens through the ongoing planting of canopy trees and, for buildings directly fronting onto the river, through the use of materials that are of low reflectivity or are natural in appearance. Buildings will be sited to allow adequate space for new vegetation within all setbacks, and also to reduce their prominence in views from the river corridor. Where located on steeper topography, the prominence of the built form will be minimised by designing buildings to follow the contours of the site. The visual prominence of car parking structures and crossovers will be minimal, with single-lane driveways and garages or car ports that are set behind the line of the front façade. The use of low or no front fences will allow vegetation to dominate streetscapes.

### **Garden Suburban 8 – GS8**

The spaciousness of streetscapes will remain the key feature of the character of this precinct. The consistency of the low-scale, modest building form will be retained and will continue to add to the sense of spaciousness through the provision of generous front and side boundary setbacks in accordance with the prevailing setbacks in the street. The visual prominence of car parking areas will be minimised with single-lane driveways and garages that are set well behind the line of the front façade. New development will add to the precinct through the reflection of the low-scale built form and will provide vegetation and landscaping that maintains the spaciousness of the precinct while providing a new leafy aspect. Front boundaries will remain low and open, and where present, fences will be low, constructed of permeable materials or lined with vegetation.

## **Garden Court**

---

### **Garden Court – GC**

The spacious, informal streetscapes of this precinct will be strengthened through the continued maintenance of existing dwellings and gardens, as well as replacement buildings that enhance these characteristics. Where possible, original dwellings including Interwar and 1950s homes will be retained and restored to promote a sense history within the precinct. New development will incorporate wide pitched roof forms with well-articulated facades that include variations in materials. The visual prominence of car parking structures and crossovers will be minimal, with single-lane driveways and garages that are set behind the line of the front façade. Dwellings will be surrounded by spacious gardens that comprise canopy trees, shrubs and lawn, and views to these landscaped areas will be retained through the provision of low, permeable or no front fencing.

## **Urban Contemporary**

---

### **Urban Contemporary – UC**

The garden settings of dwellings throughout the precinct will be strengthened through the provision of trees that contribute to an overall canopy. A variation in materials across facades will improve the contribution of buildings to streetscapes and create interest in the built form. The interaction between buildings and the streetscape will continue, with the provision of glazing at lower and upper levels, and low, permeable or no front fences that allow views to gardens and dwellings. The visual prominence of car parking structures and crossovers will be minimal, with single-lane driveways and garages that are set behind the line of the front façade.

Where located near the river corridor, native trees will enhance the connection between it and the precinct and provide the precinct with a distinctive character that sets it apart from other areas. The use of materials that are of low reflectivity or are natural in appearance will reduce the prominence of the built form in views from the river corridor.



## IMPLEMENTATION

## 5.1 Implementation Context

There are a variety of means by which the Council can implement the recommendation of this Study. ‘Statutory’ implementation, meaning introduction of planning controls in the planning scheme to protect neighbourhood character, are often the focus for implementation. However, other implementation measures that will assist in protecting and enhancing neighbourhood character are equally important. These can be grouped into four categories: Council works; community engagement and education; staff skilling; and statutory support.

## 5.2 Non-Statutory Mechanisms

As stated above, non-statutory implementation mechanisms include: Council works; community encouragement and education; staff skilling; and statutory support.

### Coordination of Council Strategies and Works

Integration of the design of the public and private domain is an essential starting point for the implementation of this Study. Design in the public domain covers a variety of elements, including street trees, road details such as the use of kerbs, channels, and footpath. It is not only a question of appearance, but also of location, and the desired geometrical arrangement of all the elements, and how they will relate to each other. The Council will need to consider how to tackle this issue. The best way of coordinating works in the public domain with the design principles established for each precinct by this study is, in the short term, to establish a coordination mechanism such as a Committee with representatives from the relevant different Departments within Council.

### Community Encouragement and Education

Education and encouragement is an essential aspect of implementation. The following strategies could be adopted:

- Education of real estate agents, developers and landowners generally.
- Education of design and building professionals.
- Encouragement schemes for ‘good character’ developments.

The kinds of techniques that could be used to give effect to these strategies could include:

- Information leaflets
- Workshops
- Award schemes
- Displays
- Media articles/events

The character precinct brochures developed as part of the 2003 Study, will be updated and will provide a strong basis for such programs.

## Staff Skilling and Design Advice

---

It takes time to come to grips with a concept like neighbourhood character and its implementation through the planning system. The Council's statutory planners need support and skilling 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. Training sessions, workshops and referral of current applications to urban design consultants are useful techniques. In addition, training may be required by other parts of the Council organisation 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 some recommendations such as increasing controls over buildings and vegetation and more detailed assessment of design, may result in increased workloads for planning staff.

The 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, the 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 that the best quality design is expected, and that applicants will be subject to delays or refusal if they fail to meet this expectation.

## Statutory Support

---

The main vehicles for statutory support are the preferred neighbourhood character statements described earlier in Section 4 of this Report. Planning controls will also provide significant help, as will the community education and encouragement initiatives referred to above. However, there are allied or associated measures that can be taken. Possibilities include:

- Permit conditions.
- Better enforcement of planning conditions.
- Increased publicity about penalties.
- Active monitoring of works undertaken without permission (eg illegal carports).
- Local Laws.

## 5.3 Statutory Implementation Recommendations

Implementation of neighbourhood character strategies can be undertaken using statutory and non-statutory methods and this chapter examines both types. Statutory implementation is perhaps the most important as it legally binds the Council, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) and the community to consider neighbourhood character objectives identified through a study such as this.

Council has established from the outset of this Review its intent to incorporate the Neighbourhood Character Study into the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme. The 2003 Neighbourhood Character Study was recommended to be implemented through a Local Policy at Clause 22, revisions to the MSS, and use of neighbourhood character and design and development overlay controls. Recent discussions with the Department of Planning and Community Development has established their desire to reduce the content of Clause 22, and reinforces the need to undertake Neighbourhood Character Review work in such a way that it achieves the dual outcomes of managing change within residential areas and delivering on M2030 housing aspirations. The mechanisms for implementation of neighbourhood character policy need the City of Maribyrnong to reconcile

residential capacity analysis work and the urban consolidation policies of state and local government. Over recent years a number of new tools to manage neighbourhood character issues have been introduced into the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs) such as Rescode and Schedules to zones. These tools can assist in retaining and enhancing the valued characteristics of the residential areas of the City.

### Considerations in Determining the Implementation Approach

In considering how to implement the Neighbourhood Character Study the following issues were considered:

- The number and extent of areas that are considered to have distinctive and consistent qualities in a regional and State-wide context.
- The values that the community place upon the existing characteristics of their neighbourhood, and how they would like it to be improved in the future.
- The level of threat to the important characteristics of those areas and the effectiveness of current planning controls in addressing these threats.
- The range of techniques available to strengthen the application of neighbourhood character considerations including statutory and non-statutory mechanisms.
- The best practice approach to implementation of neighbourhood character studies, and the likelihood of the Minister for Planning approving a Planning Scheme Amendment for additional neighbourhood character controls. Planisphere's experience in the preparation and implementation of many other neighbourhood character studies across Melbourne and regional Victoria has been drawn upon in making the recommendations in this report for the City of Maribyrnong.
- How the objectives of the Neighbourhood Character Study relate to Council's Spatial Analysis of Existing Residential Development objectives.

All of these factors have been taken into consideration in developing the recommended approach to statutory implementation of the Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Character Study.

#### Threats to character

The extent of threats to the important characteristics within each precinct needs to be assessed. Each Preferred Character Statement includes an assessment of the types of threats that are possible, overlaid with an understanding of the development pressures occurring.

#### Community values and acceptance

The likelihood of community acceptance of new controls over some forms of development will relate to the extent of community concern about the loss of particular aspects of the character of the precinct. The acceptability of controls can be assessed during the preparation of the study, through discussions with planning officers, however the ultimate test is the exhibition of any planning scheme Amendment.

#### Existing Planning Scheme controls

Strategies, policies and controls affecting neighbourhood character already contained in the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme need to be considered in determining the implementation options. The strategic context has been examined in this report, and the existing planning controls of the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme are examined in the following pages.



Whether the existing planning scheme policies and controls are able to protect the distinctive qualities of each precinct from the identified threats/pressure for change will determine implementation options.

#### Directions for DPCD and Planning Panels

Gaining an understanding of the current best practice approach to implementation is vital in determining the recommendations for this Study. This has been undertaken by way of discussion with the DPCD, examination of Practice Notes and consideration of the outcomes of Planning Panels for other neighbourhood character studies.

#### Likelihood of approval

The likelihood of approval of any planning scheme Amendment to introduce statutory controls by an independent State government appointed planning panel and the Minister for Planning is an important consideration. There is little point in recommending measures to the Council that are unlikely to be approved. The most important aspect of this consideration is the need to determine which parts of the study area require additional planning controls and those which can be successfully managed with existing controls and the range of other non-statutory implementation techniques available.

There are, however, other contextual issues that must be considered such as State policy and directives, and issues raised previously by panels in making recommendations on other similar planning scheme Amendments. A planning panel will also examine all of the above issues in their deliberation about a planning scheme Amendment.

#### Non statutory implementation

This is also an important part of the implementation program. Amongst other issues, it deals with implementation of neighbourhood character objectives within the public realm spaces. This is detailed in section 5.2.

#### Relationship to Council's Spatial Analysis of Residential Development

As discussed earlier, Council's Spatial Analysis of Residential Development has broadly identified suitable locations for housing growth, being within and around activity centres and on Strategic Redevelopment Sites. Further strategic work to be undertaken by Council by way of a Housing Strategy, will further demonstrate the capacity of areas within the municipality that can accommodate residential growth and justify limiting the level of change in other parts of the municipality so that particular neighbourhood character or heritage qualities can be preserved. In proposing additional planning scheme controls that potentially restrict the future housing opportunities of an area, Council must be able to demonstrate precisely the locations where housing can be provided and the capacity of these opportunity areas to meet housing projections.

#### Existing Planning Controls

The Study Area is zoned Residential 1, but excludes those areas covered by the Heritage Overlay (HO). However, individual HO sites or small groups of HO properties, which are often not covered by a statement of significance and may be left without a decision making framework, are retained within the precincts.

Areas within the Footscray Activity Centre boundary, and therefore subject to the Activity Centre Zone were reviewed however identified neighbourhood character objectives will be managed in the Schedule to the Activity Centre Zone.

The Design and Development Overlay (DDO1) applies to many residential precincts adjacent to the Maribyrnong River and requires a permit for development that exceeds 6 metres in height.

## Recommended General Approach

There are a number of actions that should be taken to improve the guidance provided to all parties involved in the development approvals process in the areas of Maribyrnong considered as part of this study. These actions will collectively assist: applicants to design more sympathetic buildings; nearby residents, Council officers and Councillors to assess the suitability of development proposals; and where necessary, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal members to determine upon planning appeal cases in these areas.

The aims of the statutory approach should be:

- To give the whole study recognition within the planning scheme, as an important background document.
- To provide appropriate 'triggers' within the MSS, to give an umbrella for controls.
- To enable the preferred neighbourhood character statements to be used as an assessment tool for all applications in the areas to which they apply.
- To ensure that, if necessary, additional statutory controls are provided to require permits for buildings, works or tree removal so that the findings of the Study, particularly in relation to preferred neighbourhood character, can be enacted.

Specifically, the following changes are recommended to effect all planning applications in the Precincts:

### Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)

Amend the MSS to include reference to this Study and to incorporate the Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements for the 13 Precincts. This action will require an amendment to the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme. This process is likely to take a minimum of six months however can be undertaken in conjunction with the Planning Scheme Review Amendment.

### Use of Overlay Controls

Planning controls that are additional to the general recommendations above are considered to be warranted in a small number of precincts. The effect of the combination of the various considerations in determining the appropriate approach, as detailed in a Section 4, varies from precinct to precinct depending upon the particular circumstances in each. In general, where this Study has defined an area as being of similar character throughout, then it is considered that the same controls should apply to that whole precinct or group of precincts. In order that the intent of the controls is understood, the criteria for the recommended controls will be explained, and the impact of these criteria examined in relation to the planning scheme.

Recommendations relating to specific precincts are contained in the following section.

### Buildings that Contribute to the Valued Character

Within Maribyrnong there are numerous Heritage Overlays that contain buildings or groups of buildings that have been assessed to be of heritage significance. In some other areas of Maribyrnong older buildings remain that are valued not so much for their individual heritage significance, but for their collective reminder of the historical background and origins of the area. In cases where the frequency of these buildings is such that the character of the area derives from or relies upon the concentration of these buildings, then a Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO)

is considered to be warranted. The Neighbourhood Character Study has identified a number of these areas.

The NCO provides the opportunity to apply demolition controls that can ensure that the Council and community are consulted prior to demolition of buildings. In this way the Council has the ability to assess the appropriateness of the building proposed to replace the existing building prior to demolition.

The NCO also provides control over alterations and extensions, enabling the Council to assess the impact of the proposed works upon the existing buildings and streetscapes, having regard to the neighbourhood character objectives for the area. There are six (seven including Footscray Activity Centre) precincts in Maribyrnong where the frequency of older style buildings is intrinsic to the character of the area and the NCO has been recommended, including:

- Garden Suburban 2 – Colonial Ammunition Estate (NCO1)
- Inner Urban 1 (NCO2)
- Inner Urban 1 (NCO3) (within Footscray ACZ Boundary)
- Inner Urban 1 (NCO4)
- Inner Urban 1 (NCO5)
- Inner Urban 1 (NCO6)
- Inner Urban 1 (NCO7)

### Height

The height of buildings is of concern when the building has the potential to dominate the landscape of an area or to extend through the tree canopy. A balanced view of buildings and vegetation in the landscape, from the Maribyrnong River valley for instance, is an important characteristic that is both valued by the community and in a professional assessment of the character of an area. Where buildings protrude through the tree canopy or where built form dominates the view due to a lack of vegetation, this characteristic is interrupted, if not destroyed. A single building has the potential to dominate short and long distance views from other localities, and this potential needs to be assessed on an individual basis.

This is an issue in several precincts where a balance between buildings and vegetation should be the subject of wider views and vistas. Many of these precincts are already covered by the Design and Development Overlay (DDO1), where a permit is required for development that exceeds 6 metres. In these precincts, the preferred character statement for the Precinct typically state that buildings should not protrude beyond the tree canopy height.

An additional precinct identified in the 2003 Study for a DDO1, and for which still not covered by the DDO1, but where a balance between built form and vegetation is integral to the character of the area, is the former FY1 – Footscray 1 now translated into Garden Suburban 3 Precinct (GS3). The DDO has therefore been proposed for this precinct, also requiring a permit for development over 6 metres in height.

### Front Fences

In areas where there is a consistency of front fence type, such as 1-1.2 metre open style, this aspect of the relationship to the street is very important to the streetscape character. It is not considered, however, that the lack of front fences or the consistent use of a particular type of front fence type alone warrants the imposition of a control mechanism. Where a permit is required, for a medium density housing development for example, the front fence guideline contained in the precinct brochure for that area should guide the consideration of the proposal.

However, in cases where the NCO is to be applied for other reasons and the front fence style has been identified in the preferred character statement to be of importance, the ResCode provisions should be altered, through the NCO schedule, to reflect the preferred character. (This does not preclude the retention of the 2 metre maximum fence height where the property abuts a category 1 Road Zone). In cases where other types of overlay are proposed or reviewed in the light of this study's findings, there may also be an opportunity to include objectives that ensure front fence height or style is considered. It should be noted that the NCO does not require a permit for a fence when no other development is undertaken.

## Recommended Overlay Controls

Planning controls that are additional to the general recommendations above are considered to be warranted in seven defined areas. The effect of the combination of the various considerations in determining the appropriate approach, as detailed in a previous chapter, varies from Character Precinct to Character Precinct depending upon the particular circumstances in each.

The precincts over which additional overlay controls or extensions/changes to existing overlay controls are recommended are detailed in the table below. In addition to the statutory controls outlined in the table, it is recommended that the overlay schedules be tailored to ensure the full range of neighbourhood character considerations are included in the decision guidelines. Further justification for the proposed overlay controls follows the table.

**Table: Recommended Overlay Provisions**

PRECINCT	RECOMMENDED OVERLAY	PERMIT REQUIRED FOR:	CHANGES TO RESCODE PROVISIONS:
Garden Suburban 3 (GS3) (formerly FY1)	Design and Development Overlay (extend and amend DDO1)	Site coverage over 50% Height above 6 metres	None
Garden Suburban 2 – Colonial Ammunition Estate NCO1 (formerly M/M1)	Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO1)	Demolition Construction of Dwelling Dwelling Alterations Outbuildings	Location and design of car parking structures (A9 and B15)  Detailed design (A19 and B31)  Front fence height (A20 and B32)
Inner Urban 1 NCO 2 (formerly FY4)	Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO2)	Demolition Construction of Dwelling Dwelling Alterations Outbuildings	Location and design of car parking structures (A9 and B15)  Detailed design (A19 and B31)  Front fence height (A20 and B32)

PRECINCT	RECOMMENDED OVERLAY	PERMIT REQUIRED FOR:	CHANGES TO RESCODE PROVISIONS:
Footscray Activity Centre boundary NCO3 (formerly FY5)	Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO3)	Demolition Construction of Dwelling Dwelling Alterations Outbuildings	Location and design of car parking structures (A9 and B15)  Detailed design (A19 and B31)  Front fence height (A20 and B32)
Inner Urban 1 NCO 4 (formerly FY5)	Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO4)	Demolition Construction of Dwelling Dwelling Alterations Outbuildings	Location and design of car parking structures (A9 and B15)  Detailed design (A19 and B31)  Front fence height (A20 and B32)
Inner Urban 1 NCO 5 (formerly FY8)	Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO5)	Demolition Construction of Dwelling Dwelling Alterations Outbuildings	Location and design of car parking structures (A9 and B15)  Detailed design (A19 and B31)  Front fence height (A20 and B32)
Inner Urban 1 NCO6 (formerly S/YV1)	Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO6)	Demolition Construction of Dwelling Dwelling Alterations Outbuildings	Location and design of car parking structures (A9 and B15)  Detailed design (A19 and B31)  Front fence height (A20 and B32)
Inner Urban 1 NCO7 (formerly YV3)	Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO7)	Demolition Construction of Dwelling Dwelling Alterations Outbuildings	Location and design of car parking structures (A9 and B15)  Detailed design (A19 and B31)  Front fence height (A20 and B32)

### Garden Suburban 3 (GS3)

#### **Proposed Overlay Control: Extension to DDO1**

This precinct is located on the skyline reaches of the Maribyrnong River, with its streets stepping down the contours. Despite its prominent location when viewed from the River valley, the buildings do not dominate. This is due to a balance between established vegetation, including tall canopy trees, and roof tops. The established garden character combined with the prominent visual location is unlike any other in Maribyrnong.

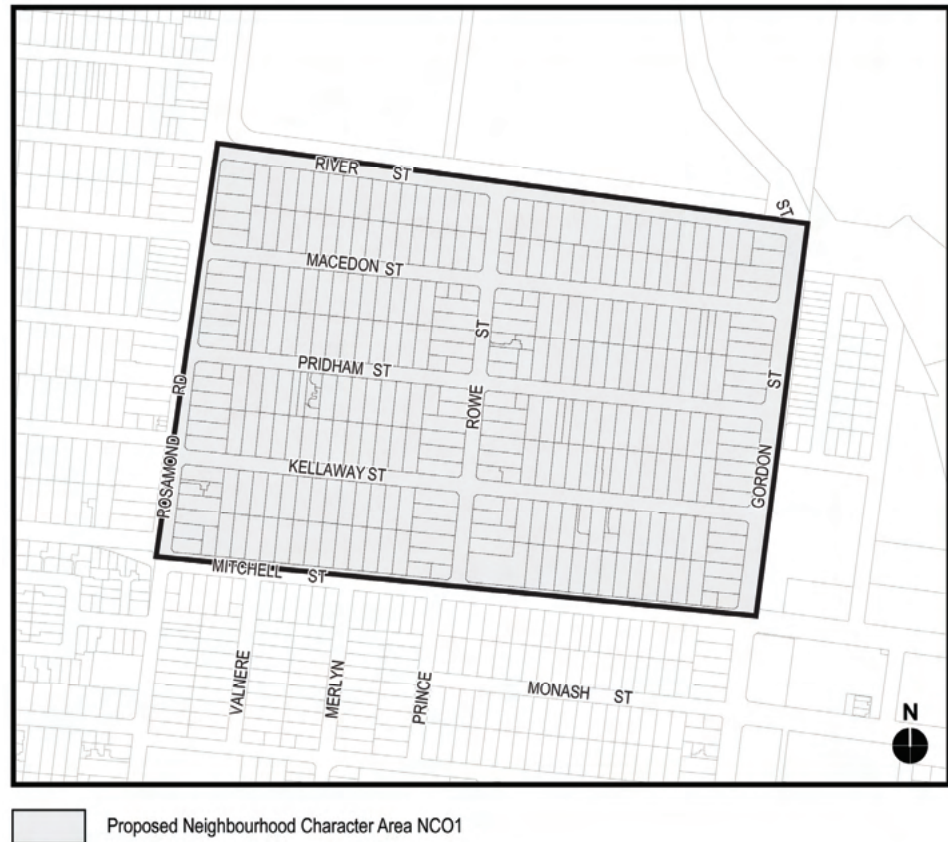
The threats to the character of this precinct include:

- Loss of canopy trees
- Development that protrudes above the established tree canopy
- Excessive site coverage that does not allow for planting of vegetation
- Visually dominant, bulky building forms

The precinct is currently zoned Residential 1 with no overlays in place. As a result, a permit is not required to construct a single dwelling or extend a dwelling on a site over 300sqm, and the standard provisions of Rescode apply when considering a development for which a permit is required.

In order to trigger a permit for those developments that may affect the established balance between tree canopies and roof tops, an extension to the Design and Development Overlay (DDO1) is proposed. In addition to the existing permit requirements for development over 6 metres in height and front fences, the overlay should be amended to provide a permit trigger for site coverage over 50%. The design objectives and decision guidelines should also be reviewed and updated to reflect this Study's findings, as well as the findings of the (Draft) Maribyrnong River Design Guidelines project completed by Planisphere in September 2002. The Maribyrnong River project also recommended a local policy for the DDO1 area, incorporating the design guidelines specific to development within, and visible from, the river valley.

### Garden Suburban 2 – Colonial Ammunition Estate (NCO1)



The Colonial Ammunitions Estate stands out from the precinct within which it is located, due to the consistent subdivision pattern, predominance of single storey dwellings with pitched roofs, and the use of materials. Architectural details including curved corners, parapeted elements such as porches and detailed brickwork add to the character of the precinct. The area has a relatively high level of integrity with 90% of the original subdivision pattern remaining and 50% of dwellings being predominantly unaltered to the street frontage. Low scale detached development in a garden setting is the prevailing form. This, combined with relatively consistent front setbacks of 8 metres presents a consistent streetscape rhythm with side driveways and matching single car garages at the rear. Low front fences and views to established front gardens are an important element of this precinct.

The threats to the character of this precinct include:

- Dwellings set too far forward.
- Dwellings built to side boundaries.
- 'Side by side' development
- Loss of existing streetscape pattern
- Built form that does not reflect the existing scale of development.
- Loss of street trees.
- Site coverage creating a dominant hard surface appearance in the streetscape.
- Car parking structures dominating the streetscape.
- Unarticulated built form.

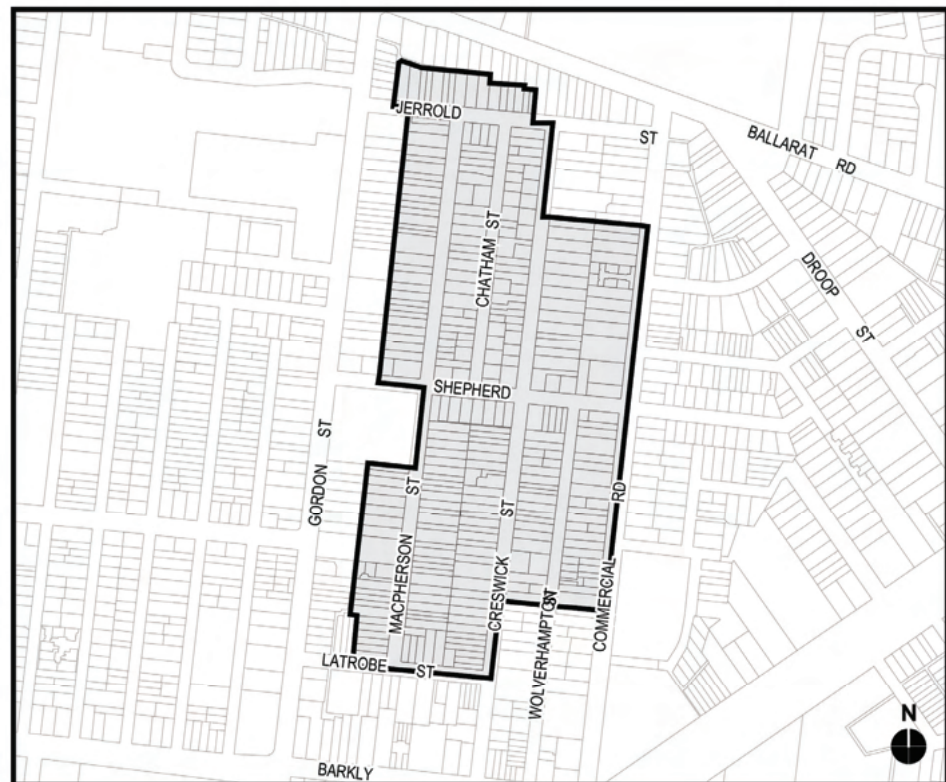


This precinct is zoned Residential 1. A permit is not required to construct a single dwelling or extend a dwelling on a site over 300sqm or for any site not covered by an overlay, and the standard provisions of Rescode apply when considering a development for which a permit is required.

A Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO1) is proposed for this area. The NCO will assist in retaining the distinctive and consistent features of the area, including front and side setbacks, building heights and front fences in both existing and new development.

#### Inner Urban 1 (NCO2)

#### **Proposed Overlay Control: NCO2 Footscray**



 Proposed Neighbourhood Character Area NCO2

This precinct is characterised by an architecturally diverse range of housing, but low scale Victorian and Edwardian timber homes are the prevailing form and style. This, combined with the small front setbacks and relatively narrow allotments, gives the streetscapes an 'intimate' feel. This is strengthened in a small number of streets where there are large, established, avenue plantings. Low front fences and views to small front gardens are an important element of this precinct. A sense of consistency is gained through the common aspects of dwellings, including building height, use of timber and corrugated iron, low front fences and small garden spaces.

The threats to the character of this precinct include:

- Period reproduction styles
- Decorative, period reproduction detailing
- Dominant or overwhelming new development
- Car parking structures that are inappropriately located or dominate the streetscape

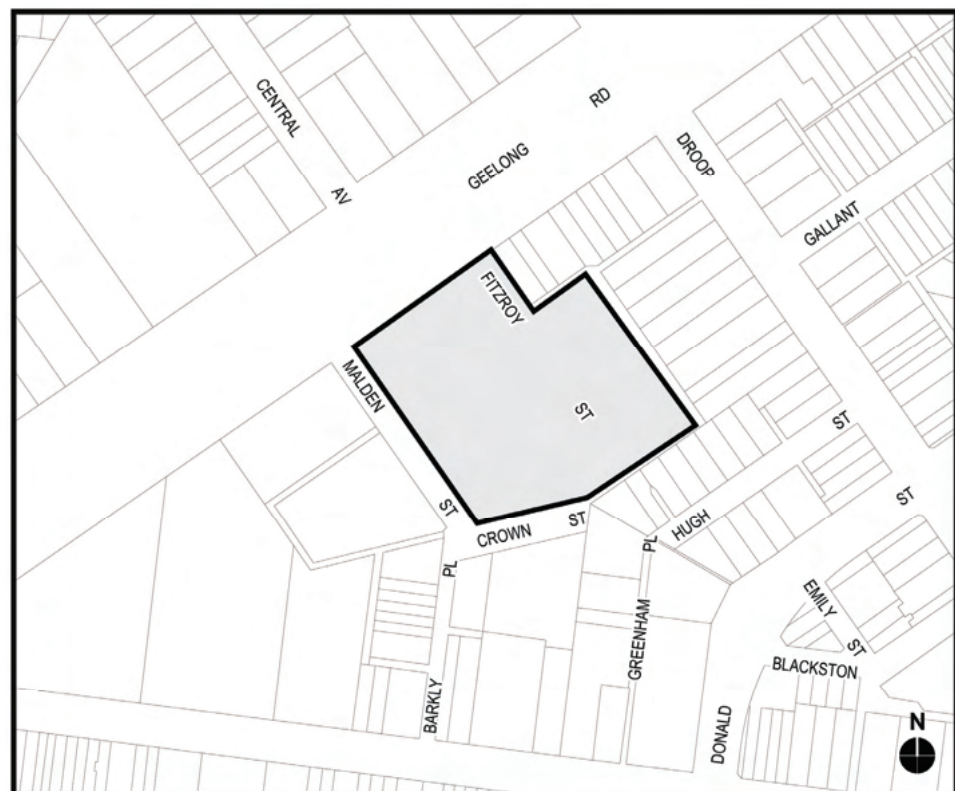
- Loss of bluestone
- Loss of vegetation, including canopy trees in the public and private domains

This precinct is zoned Residential 1. A permit is not required to construct a single dwelling or extend a dwelling on a site over 300sqm or for any site not covered by an overlay, and the standard provisions of Rescode apply when considering a development for which a permit is required. The exception to this is for those sites that are covered by the Heritage Overlay, of which there are a few scattered throughout the precinct. In these cases, a permit is required to construct, extend or demolish a building, and for all buildings and works. This precinct abuts a large Heritage Overlay area to the east, which has an influence on the character of the residential streets and building stock.

In order to strengthen the 'intimate' low scale nature of the built form, and ensure that new development is respectful of the surrounding heritage stock through sensitive and contemporary architectural responses, a Neighbourhood Character Overlay is proposed. The overlay schedule (NCO2) should include changes to Rescode provisions in relation to front fence height, design detail and location of car parking areas and structures.

#### Footscray Activity Centre (NCO3)

#### **Proposed Overlay Control: NCO3 Footscray**



 Proposed Neighbourhood Character Area NCO3

This area, which is included within the Footscray Activity Centre boundary comprises predominantly small Victorian single storey timber dwellings. The streets have a sense of inner urban compactness due to the relatively small allotment frontages, small setbacks and narrow nature strips. This is strengthened by the existence of low level front fences and front gardens. Bluestone kerb and channelling and laneways are a feature of this precinct.

The threats to the character of the precinct include:

- Period reproduction styles
- Decorative, period reproduction detailing
- Dominant or overwhelming new development
- Loss of bluestone
- Loss of vegetation, including canopy trees in the public and private domains

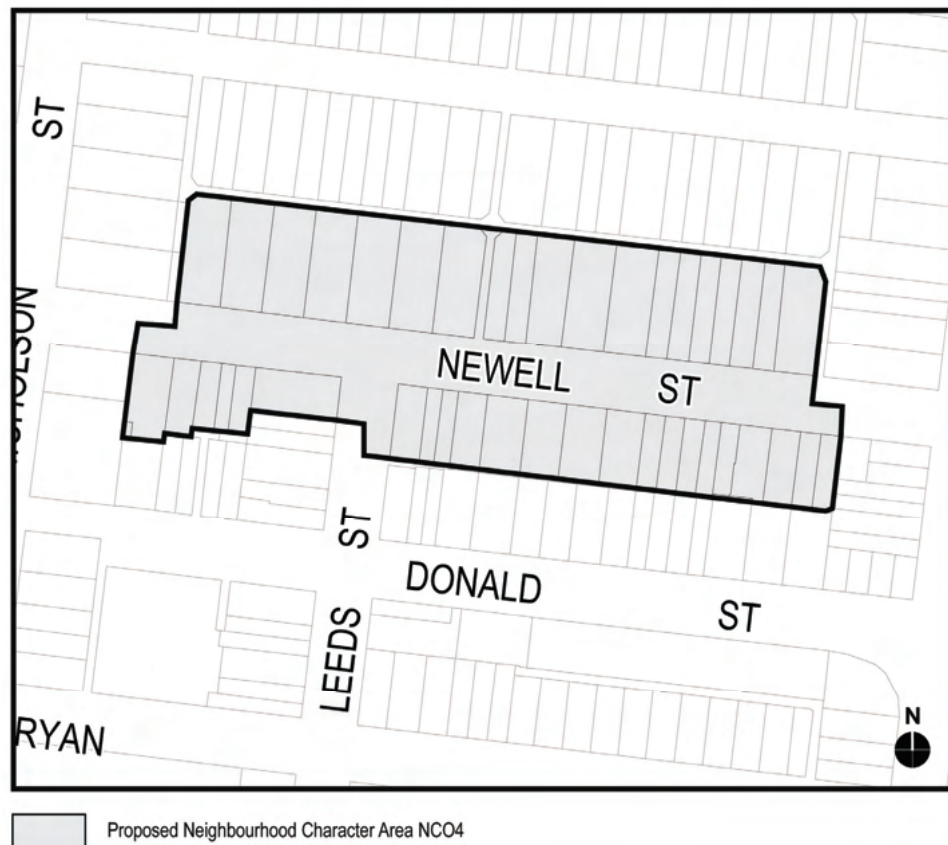
The precinct is currently zoned Residential 1, however will be included within the Footscray Activity Centre Zone. The older style dwellings are intrinsic to the character of this small precinct. On sites over 300sqm with no overlay controls, a permit is not required to construct, demolish or extend a single dwelling, and when a permit is required the standard provisions of Rescode apply.

In order to retain the mix of low scale dwellings and to ensure contemporary and thoughtful architectural responses, the Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO3) is also proposed to be implemented in this precinct.

It should be noted that the intent of the Activity Centre Zone is not to 'ideally' have additional controls such as Neighbourhood Character Overlays. There may need to be consideration given, and clarification sought from DPCD, as to whether if the NCO area was an individual Precinct within the ACZ (and not an NCO), would this provide the same level of protection as a Neighbourhood Character Overlay.

#### Inner Urban 1 (NCO4)

#### **Proposed Overlay Control: NCO4 Footscray**



This area comprises either side of Newell Street between Nicholson and Moore Streets, Footscray. The area contains a street of intact Victorian and Edwardian single storey timber dwellings. It has a sense of inner urban compactness due to the relatively small allotment frontages, small setbacks and narrow nature strips. This is strengthened by the existence of low level front fences and front gardens. Bluestone kerb and channelling and laneways are a feature of the area.

The threats to the character of the precinct include:

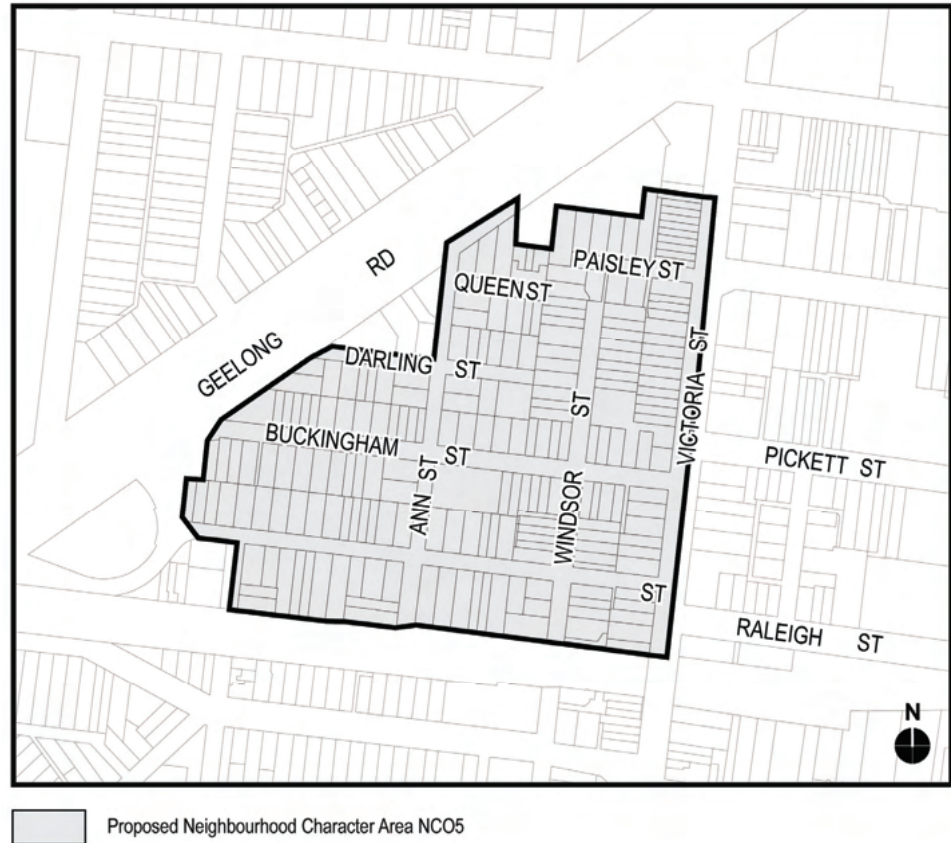
- Period reproduction styles
- Decorative, period reproduction detailing
- Dominant or overwhelming new development
- Loss of bluestone
- Loss of vegetation, including canopy trees in the public and private domains

The area is zoned Residential 1, and is located adjacent to Heritage Overlay areas to the west, north and east. The row of older style dwellings is intrinsic to the character of this area. On sites over 300sqm with no overlay controls, a permit is not required to construct, demolish or extend a single dwelling, and when a permit is required the standard provisions of Rescode apply.

In order to achieve a mix of low scale dwellings, and to ensure contemporary and thoughtful architectural responses, the Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO4) is also proposed to be implemented in this precinct. The NCO would assist in encouraging the retention of visible parts of buildings, and the development of buildings that are consistent with the key existing characteristics of the area. It will help to maintain the level of consistency and inner urban feel of streetscapes.

### Inner Urban 1 (NCO5)

#### Proposed Overlay Control: NCO5 Footscray



This precinct is characterised by a diverse range of older style housing, but single storey timber dwellings are the prevailing form. Some streets do not have nature strips and therefore street trees, where they exist, are often planted in the footpaths. This combined with the small setbacks gives the precinct an inner suburban feel. Low front fences and views to small front gardens are important in this precinct as are the remnant bluestone kerb and channelling in some streets.

The character threats that apply to this precinct include:

- Reproduction architectural styles
- Decorative, period reproduction detailing
- Dominant or overwhelming new development
- Loss of bluestone
- Loss of vegetation, including canopy trees in the public and private domains

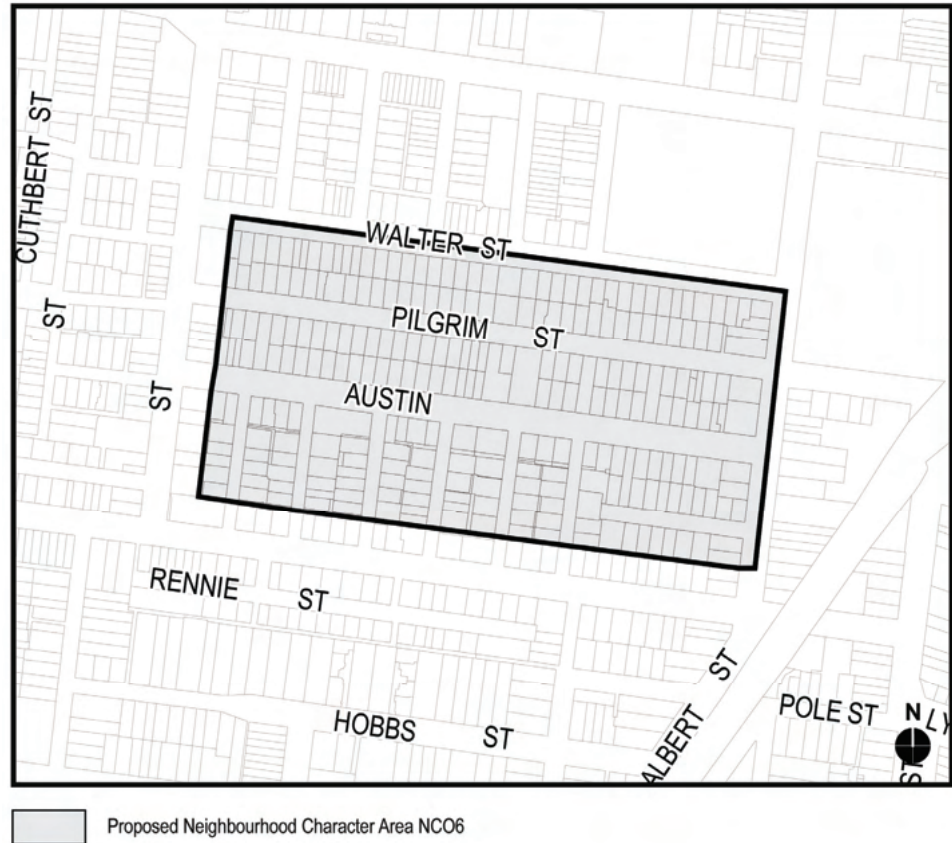
This precinct is located close to Heritage Overlay areas in the oldest part of central Footscray, and has scattered Heritage Overlay sites throughout. As with other proposed Neighbourhood Character Overlay areas, it is zoned Residential 1 and development that requires a permit on sites that are not covered by the Heritage Overlay is subject to Rescode.

In order to maintain the sense of history that permeates the area, the Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO5) is recommended for this precinct. The NCO will set guidelines and parameters for new development.



## Inner Urban 1 (NCO6)

### Proposed Overlay Control: NCO6 Seddon / Yarraville



This precinct is characterised by an architecturally diverse range of housing, but low scale timber homes are the prevailing form. Some streets do not have nature strips and therefore street trees, where they exist, are often planted in the footpaths, giving the precinct an inner suburban feel. Minimal setbacks from the front and side boundaries and the narrow lots add to this sense. Low front fences and views to small front gardens are an important element in this precinct.

The threats to the character of this precinct include:

- Period reproduction architectural styles and detailing
- Visually dominant or overwhelming new development
- Loss of bluestone
- Loss of laneways
- Loss of vegetation, including canopy trees in the public and private domains

This precinct is close to a large Heritage Overlay area, located in the older central part of Seddon and Yarraville. The surrounding heritage fabric therefore has an influence on the neighbourhood character of the area.

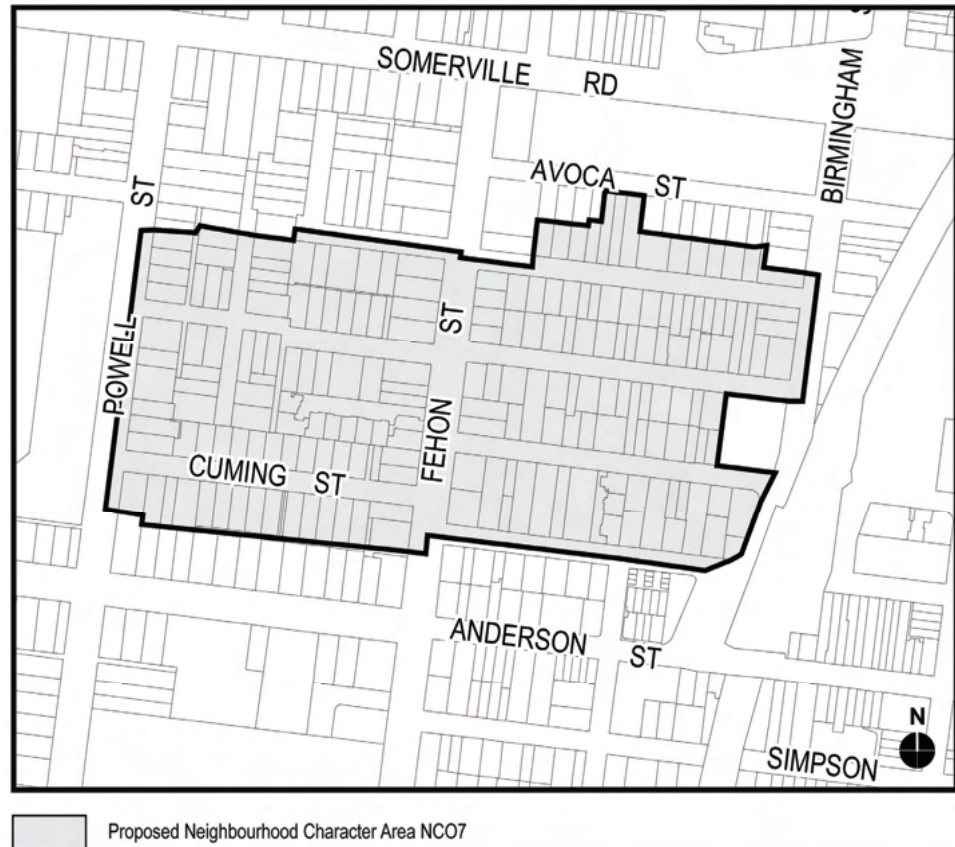
It is important that new development responds appropriately to the historic building stock and is easily distinguishable from the old. It is also important to the future character of the area that the diversity of dwelling styles and sense of history in the precinct remains, and therefore, the Neighbourhood Character Overlay is also proposed for this area. The overlay would provide a permit trigger for development including single dwellings, dwelling extensions, outbuildings and



demolition, so that the assessment of such applications can be undertaken with the aid of the proposed local policy, including design guidelines.

#### Inner Urban 1 (NCO7)

#### Proposed Overlay Control: NCO7 Yarraville



The streets in this precinct are intimately scaled due to the predominantly single storey dwellings, small allotments, low front fences and narrow streets. This is exacerbated by the narrow footpaths and generally low level vegetation in front gardens. Bluestone kerbing is a feature of many streets in this precinct and combined with the older housing stock, contributes to a sense of history. This is strengthened in some instances where there are established, exotic street trees.

The threats to the character of the precinct include:

- Period reproduction styles and decorative detailing
- Dominant or overwhelming new development
- Car parking structures that are inappropriately located or dominate the streetscape
- Removal of bluestone kerbs and channels

This precinct adjoins the old central 'core' of Yarraville village, much of which is protected by the Heritage Overlay. This precinct therefore draws its character from these historic influences and the existence of older dwellings in a very compact, inner urban form. Due largely to its character, Yarraville has become a very attractive place to live and is therefore subject to more development pressure and change than other areas of the municipality. Apart from the Heritage Overlay sites scattered throughout the area and sites over 300sqm, a permit is not required to construct, extend

or demolish a building, and the standard Rescode provisions apply to any development that requires a permit.

In order to achieve the preferred neighbourhood character, including intimately scaled streets and a strong sense of history, a Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO7) is proposed. It is also important that development within the precinct is respectful of surrounding heritage fabric and provides a contemporary, easily distinguishable architectural response. It is proposed that the standard Rescode provisions be varied in the schedule to the overlay in relation to front fence height, design detail and location of car parking areas and structures. The Neighbourhood Character Overlay would provide a permit trigger and facilitate assessment of applications against the proposed local policy, incorporating the character design guidelines.

# **2010 Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Character Review**

## **Addendum**

**Prepared by City of Maribyrnong Council Officers - March 2010**

---

# **Addendum to Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Character (2003) Review March 2010**

**Prepared by City of Maribyrnong Council Officers**

---

## **Introduction**

Maribyrnong Council undertook a municipal wide Neighbourhood Character Study (NCS) in 2003. The NCS was not adopted by Council nor implemented through the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme. In 2009 Council engaged planning consultants Planisphere to undertake a review of the study. The review included key outputs:

1. Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements;
2. Neighbourhood Character Guidelines (brochures); and
3. Consultant report: *Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Character (2003) Review*.

The consultants, in their final report, identify a number of areas that are of significant neighbourhood character. These areas are recommended for planning scheme protection through Neighbourhood Character Overlays.

The process of review included an internal working group consisting of Strategic and Statutory Planning Officers that undertook an assessment of the consultant's recommendations and/or outputs. The recommendations of the working group differ to the recommendations of the consultants. This addendum to the report outlines the key outputs of the review and details the differences in the Consultant's and Council Officer recommendations.

## **Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements**

A key output of the NCS review is the Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements. The approach to neighbourhood character identification in the review followed and confirmed the principles applied to the 2003 Study. That is, the existence of character area types identified across the municipality. However, as part of the review the original 33 character precincts were combined under these character area types, rather than by suburb breakdown. This has reduced the number of precincts to 13 across the municipality. Preferred character statements have been prepared for each of the 13 precincts.

The statements provide a succinct statement of the preferred character for the area based on identified existing key elements. The statements are recommended for inclusion within the planning scheme. Inclusion in the planning scheme facilitates the use of the statements to guide decision making on planning permits.

The Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements were adopted by Council at the December 2009 Ordinary Council meeting. Adoption of the statements has facilitated their use in the revised Local Planning Policy Framework of the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme, currently with DPCD for authorisation.

Council Officers support the consultant recommendations relating to the Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements.

## **Neighbourhood Character Guidelines (brochures)**

The 2003 study included draft guidelines prepared for each of the original 33 character precincts. The current review has resulted in revised guidelines for each of the 13 character precincts identified in the review. The brochures provide clear easily understood design guidelines along with the preferred character statement; precinct description; and lists of key existing characteristics, community values and issues/threats. The brochures will provide guidance to the community and developers on the preferred character for each precinct. The brochures are not proposed to form

part of the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme. They will be used to support the Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements which are proposed to be part of the planning scheme.

Council Officers support the use of the Neighbourhood Character Guidelines (brochures) in addition to the Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements.

### Identification of areas of significant neighbourhood character

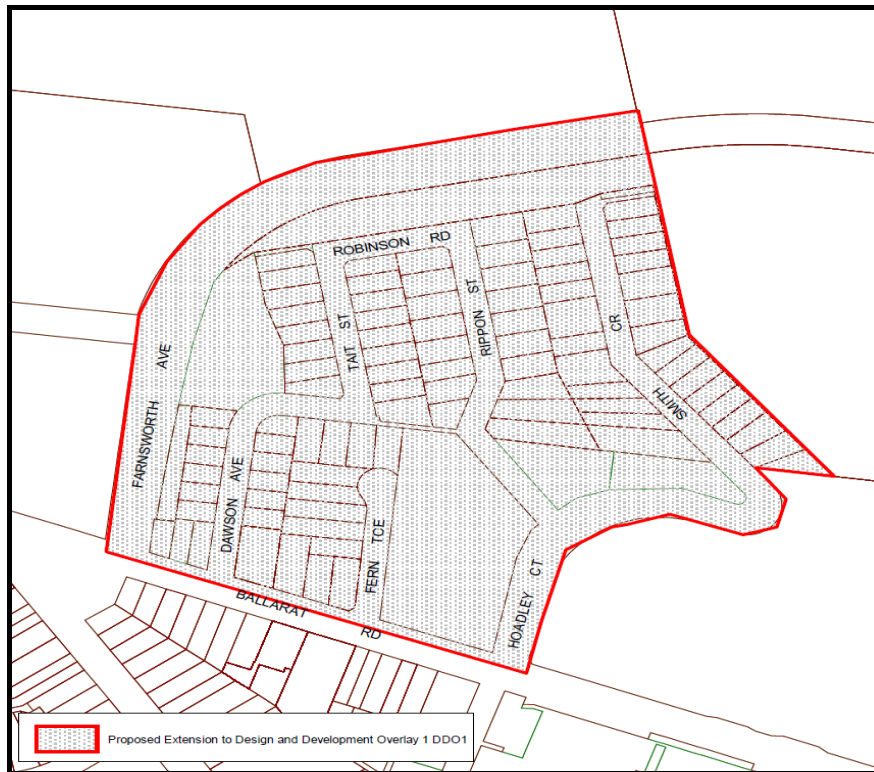
Eight areas have been identified as having neighbourhood character that is significant enough to justify additional planning controls. Council Officers support the majority of the consultant's recommendations. However, two of the recommendations are not supported and within one of the recommendations boundary changes are suggested. Table 1 below lists the precincts identified by the consultants as warranting additional planning controls and Council Officers assessment of the recommendation.

Precinct Name & Rcmnd #	Consultant Recommendation	Officer comment
GS3	Included in DDO1 DDO to be changed to require permit for 50% site coverage	<b>Not supported:</b> The Maribyrnong River Valley Project (MRVP), soon to be finalised, makes a series of recommendations for areas along the Maribyrnong River including the subject area. Revised planning controls will replace the existing DDO, thus changes to the DDO are not supported.
Colonial Ammunition Estate NCO1	To be included within a NCO.	<b>Supported.</b>
Macpherson Street – Commercial Road Footscray NCO2	To be included within a NCO.	<b>Not supported:</b> Working group assessment indicates inconsistent character throughout and character of area not significant enough to justify additional planning scheme controls.
Within ACZ NCO3	NCO within ACZ or use of schedule	<b>Supported – however within in ACZ</b> The working group supports the identification of the area as significant and the use of the schedule to the Activity Centre Zone (ACZ) to address Neighbourhood Character issues. Information has been forwarded onto the Footscray CAD working group, and it has been recommended that the area be identified as an individual sub precinct within the ACZ. The schedule to the zone will be used to address Neighbourhood Character issues.
Newell St NCO4	To be included within a NCO.	<b>Supported.</b>
Buckingham St area Footscray NCO5	To be included within a NCO.	<b>Supported with minor boundary revisions:</b> Working group supports identification of area as area of significant character. Only point under contention is the section North of Queen and Paisley Sts. Officers' recommendation is to exclude this area from the precinct.
Seddon Walter/ Pilgrim/ Austin sts NCO6	To be included within a NCO.	<b>Supported</b>
Yarraville NCO7	To be included within a NCO.	<b>Supported</b>

**Table 1 Consultant Recommendation and Council Officer comment.**

### Garden Suburban 3

The map below indicates the area, referred to as Garden Suburban 3 precinct, which was recommended for inclusion within the Design and Development Overlay DDO1.



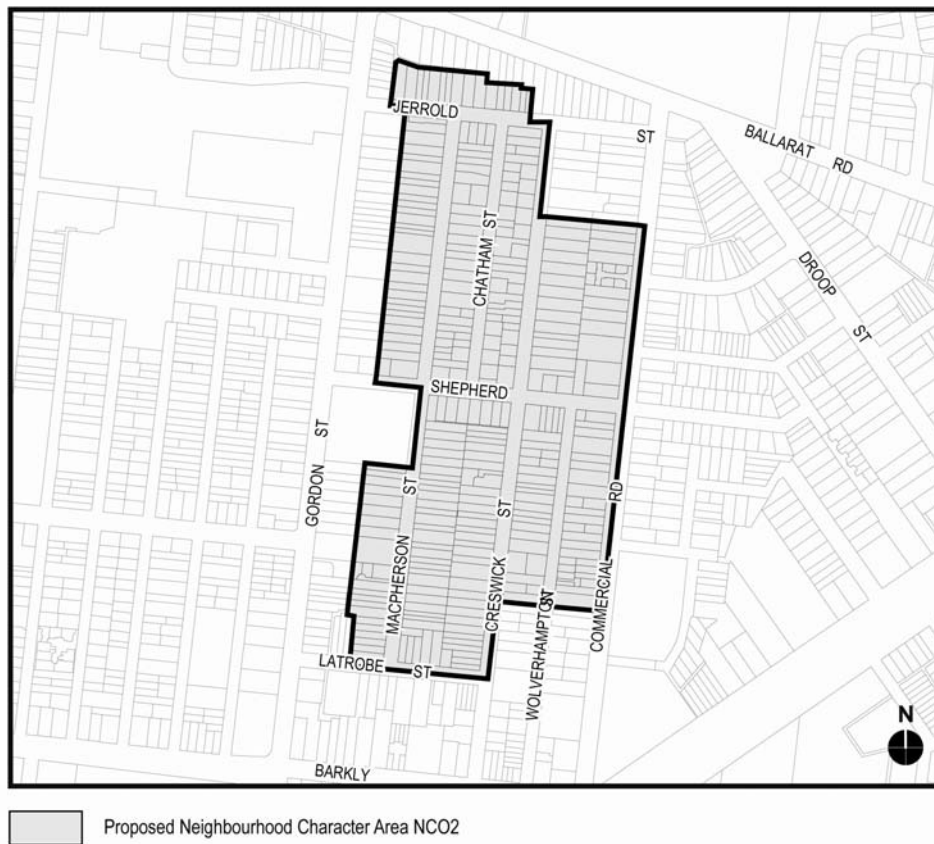
**Map 1 Garden Suburban 3 Precinct.**

The recommendation is not supported as the current DDO1 is soon to be superseded by new controls. The Maribyrnong River Valley Project (MRVP) a current regional planning project is looking at the protection of the Maribyrnong River and its environs. The aim of the project is to establish a long-term vision for the river valley and to develop planning guidelines to ensure its environment, recreation and aesthetic values are protected from increasing development pressures. Planning controls along the river will be reviewed as part of the project with the anticipated output being an integrated control, to replace existing controls, spanning the four municipalities of Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley and Brimbank. Undertaking an extension to the existing DDO, which is proposed to be replaced as part of the MRVP is considered unnecessary.



## Macpherson Street - Commercial Road, Footscray

The map below indicates the area, referred to as Macpherson Street - Commercial Road (NCO2), which the consultant recommended for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Character Overlay.



**Map 2 Macpherson Street - Commercial Road, Footscray Precinct**

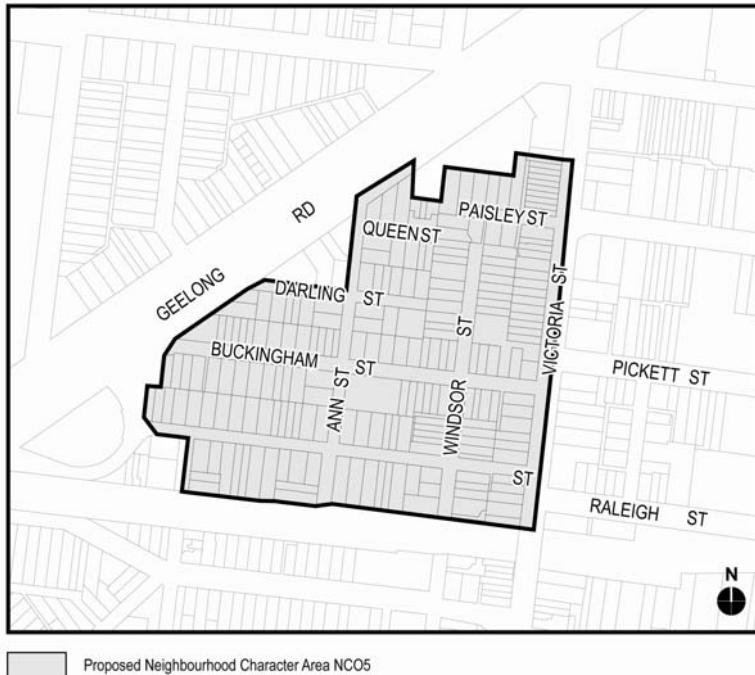
This recommendation is not supported as Council Officers do not agree the character of the area justifies additional planning controls. The reasons the recommendation is not supported include:

- The extent of built form variation within the precinct;
- The built form variation is often in groups as opposed to single dwellings thus having a greater impact;
- The variation in lot sizes and the subdivision pattern; and
- New development in 'back' streets (for example Wolverhampton Street) is creating a new character.

It is recommended development within the precinct be guided by the Preferred Character Statement and relevant guidelines for precinct Inner Urban 1 which the area falls within, and that additional planning controls are not warranted.

## Buckingham Street

The map below indicates the area, referred to as Buckingham Street precinct (NCO5), which the consultant recommended for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Character Overlay.



**Map 3 Buckingham Street, Footscray Precinct – Consultant recommendation**

The majority of the consultant recommendation is supported. However, inclusion of the area north of Queen and Paisley Streets is not supported as this area is considered to vary from the majority of the precinct and is of a more recent development era. This small area is also included within the Footscray CAD boundary. Inclusion of this area within the precinct detracts from the consistency of the precinct.

Council Officers recommend the boundary be revised as per the map below.



**Map 4 Buckingham Street, Footscray Precinct – Officer recommendation**