

BACKGROUND REPORT

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study

SEPTEMBER 2002

Acknowledgments

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Steering Committee

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Foreword

The brief for this Study was to review the landscape character of the residential areas around the Blackburn Lake outside the areas already within a Significant Landscape Overlay. The Study was commissioned in response to community concerns that parts of the Study Area were as significant as areas within the Overlay and that valued characteristics were under threat from development. The Study Area was determined at least in part by the Council's Tree Conservation Policy and its delineation of this area as being within a 'Bush Suburban Environment'. Within the Study Area the brief was to describe the character through words and photographs, and produce guidelines, policies and controls to maintain, enhance and improve the valued character.

Although from an external perspective the Study Area could appear reasonably homogenous, the Study found quite a lot of diversity. This diversity ranges from bushy residential environments where the vegetation dominates the streetscape, an area with buildings dating from early settlement of the region, to more open suburban areas where medium density housing has had a long term impact.

This study sets out the means by which to protect and enhance these valued characteristics of the Study Area. The success of this study will require collective understanding and concerted action by Council, Whitehorse citizens, developers and other agencies. We present this study as the vehicle for initiating protection, maintenance and enhancement of the neighbourhood character of the Blackburn Lake surrounds.

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Brief and Method

1.1 Brief

The brief for the Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study was to review the area surrounding the land within the existing Significant Landscape Overlay 1 and 2 to ascertain its relative landscape character significance.

The purpose of the Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study as stated in the Brief, was primarily to:

- Review the area identified in the Strategic Framework Plan (of the Whitehorse MSS) surrounding the existing Significant Landscape Overlay – Blackburn;
- Investigate the urban and vegetation characteristics of the area;
- Identify areas of special vegetation and landscape quality; and
- Ensure that the Overlay boundaries reflect the areas which have the appropriate balance between vegetation and built form.

The brief involved describing the landscape character of the Study Area through words and photographs, and producing guidelines, policies and controls to maintain, enhance and improve the particular characteristics of the area.

While the focus of the Study was upon the ‘vegetation and landscape quality’ of the residential areas within the Study Area, this concept is closely related to ‘neighbourhood character’ particularly when considering the range of tools available in the planning scheme to implement any recommendations of the Study. In areas where the relationship between vegetation and built form is the key characteristic of an area the term neighbourhood character can be used to describe this relationship.

The State government elected in 1999 undertook to make neighbourhood character the ‘mandatory starting point’ for consideration of residential planning applications. ResCode, the State code for residential development, was introduced in August 2001 and provides a range of tools for use in protecting or enhancing neighbourhood character, some of which are equally applicable to landscape related character.

The Study Area

The Study Area was defined by the Council as the area “bounded by the railway line to the north, Raleigh Street, Blackburn to the south (south of Canterbury Road), Springvale Road to the east and Middleborough Road, to the west, consistent with the Strategic Framework in the Municipal Strategic Statement.” All residentially zoned land in this area, with the exception of the land affected by the Significant Landscape Overlay, were included in the Study. The map in [Appendix 1](#) shows the Study Area.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology is based on the tasks listed in the proposal, elaborated into the following process:

Preliminaries

The initial step was to confirm the brief, detailed timelines and approach, and commence the background research, including:

- Review of the initial proposal.
- Preparation of detailed project timetable, including provisional dates for all meetings.
- Consultant background briefing session, including review of best practice.
- Literature review, including review of current planning controls and policies.

Neighbourhood Character Framework

This stage of the project established the framework for subsequent work, including preliminary identification of areas with similar characteristics and detailed consultation methodology. More information about the initial survey is provided in [section 4.1](#) of the report. The steps were:

- Initial windshield survey of all the residentially zoned land in the Study Area.
- Identification of the broad Character Area typologies found in the Area, including key characteristics of each. Character Area typologies are based on general form, layout and streetscape qualities of large areas.
- Initial documentation of threats to the existing character of these areas.

Survey and Mapping

Every street in the Study Area was surveyed, and relevant information collected, mostly in map form, and aggregated to blocks or groups of properties with like characteristics. More information about the detailed survey can be found in [section 4.1](#) of this report. A map of the precinct boundaries is included in [Appendix 1](#).

Define, Describe and Map Definitive Character Precincts

Character precincts were defined within the Study Area. These were described and presented in the form of 'Precinct Issues Papers'. All the Precinct Issues Papers are contained in [Appendix 2](#). The method is described in [section 5.1](#) of this report.

Prepare Draft Guidelines

Guidelines were framed in direct response to any mismatch identified between the threats to a precinct's character and the preferred future character of each precinct. We communicated the guidelines through character precinct brochures. The advantage of this approach is that the information for one area is all together in one hand-out, in a clear and easy to read form. The character precinct brochures include photographs, a map, preferred character statement and guidelines (more information in [section 5.2](#)).

Prepare Implementation Recommendations

The best statutory implementation mechanisms were developed and discussed with the Steering Committee. Options that required careful consideration include the preparation of a Local Policy, additions to the existing Significant Landscape Overlay and the Neighbourhood Character Overlay. [Chapter 6](#) contains full details.

An important aspect of this task was to apply a *discriminating* approach to statutory implementation. Only areas with certain characteristics warranted planning controls additional to those that are already in place, which is an approach that has been endorsed in a panel report on a study prepared by this practice.

1.3 Consultation

A communication strategy was developed with the Council at the start of the study process. This focussed on three elements: communication, participation and consultation.

The aim of *communication* was to inform a wide audience about the existence of the study, its progress, and opportunities for involvement. The purpose of *participation* was to involve a necessarily small group in helping to shape the content of the study as it emerged. *Consultation* provided an opportunity for widespread public comment on the study and input into the issues that it should have addressed. We therefore developed a consultation methodology that:

- Began with a Community Forum.
- Involved the Council's Steering Committee with representatives from across the Study Area (see below).
- Involved Councillors and staff as members of the Steering Committee.
- Enabled the Council to consult more broadly on the final report.

Other specific components of the Communication Strategy included:

Community Forum

A Community Forum was convened early in the study process to:

- Provide an opportunity to announce the start of the project and explain its purpose.
- Canvass the main issues of concern in the community.
- Build confidence in the study.
- Commence a 'Disposable Cameras' exercise.

The Community Forum was held on 22 May at the Whitehorse Centre. It was advertised through the local newspaper and notices in various public buildings in the area. Approximately 80 people attended the Forum, in addition to Council officers, consultants and Councillors.

'Disposable Cameras' Exercise

A 'Disposable Cameras' Exercise was initiated at the Community Forum. It involved distributing disposable cameras to community members, and asking them to take photographs of developments they liked and disliked, with locations and reasons. This technique engaged key members of the community in the study process; identified community perceptions; and provided an excellent start to the process of the mutual learning and understanding that should underpin a study of this nature.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was established by the Council prior to the commissioning of the Study to provide the participatory focus for the study process. The Committee developed the Study Brief and appointed the consultants. The Steering Committee enabling the consultant team to engage in detail with a small number of people from the residential community. Members were recruited from a number of sources, and included representatives of resident groups in the area and the National Trust. During the process of the Study (following appointment of the consultants) the Committee met 5 times, which allowed time for the group to 'form' and 'norm', and to provide productive input to the study at key stages.

Community Information

The community was kept informed of the Study's progress through the Council's regular column in the local newspaper.

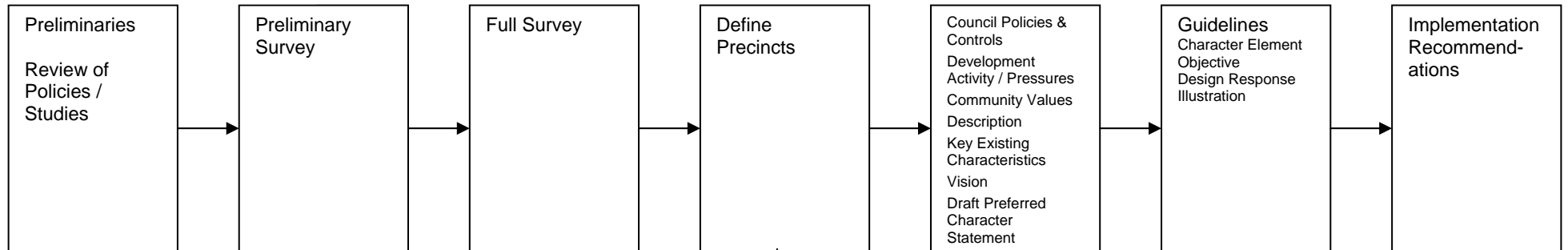
Public Consultation Period

A substantial public consultation period is to occur upon release by the Council of the final draft report, prior to a formal exhibition process for a planning scheme amendment to implement some of the recommendations of the Study.

The study methodology is summarised in the diagram on the following page.

Study Process Diagram

TASKS



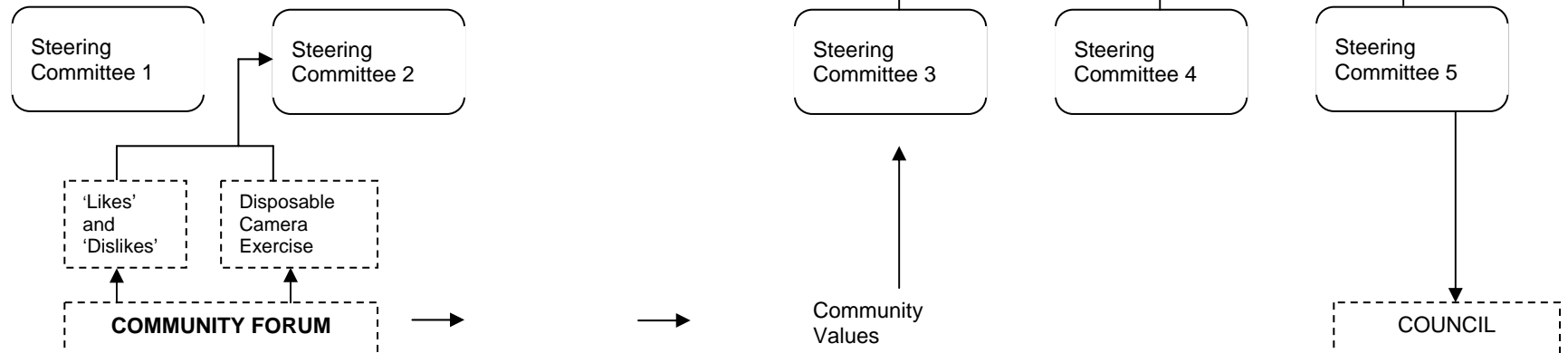
OUTPUTS



REPORT



CONSULTATION



2

Policy Context

2.1 State Policies

State Planning Policy Framework

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) is comprised 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 account of and give effect to both the general principles and the specific policies applicable to issues before them to ensure integrated decision-making.

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 *Settlement*, in Clause 14.01 Planning for Urban settlement one of the two 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 *Environment* at Clause 15.09 Conservation of native flora and fauna, the objective as stated at Clause 15.09-1 is “to assist the protection and conservation of biodiversity, including native vegetation retention and provision of habitats for native plants and animals and control of pest plants and animals”.

In relation to General Implementation, Clause 15.09-2 states that:

“If native vegetation must be removed as part of a land use or development proposal planning and responsible authorities should require the proponent, where prudent and feasible in the context of land use, to replace lost native vegetation of similar composition of locally indigenous species, either on the subject land or nearby land. Planning and responsible authorities should ensure that the siting of new buildings and works minimises the removal or fragmentation of native vegetation.”

ResCode

Before the introduction of ResCode, 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 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 Victorian State Government's 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 neighbourhood character determined by Council. The introduction of these tools into Council's Planning Schemes requires a proper amendment process. The ResCode tools for protection of neighbourhood character are as follows.

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’. This means that, if character policies are properly incorporated into the Planning Scheme, as is proposed with this study, those policies carry considerable weight not only with Councils but also at VCAT.

Schedules to the Zones

Councils are now 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.

Permits for Single Dwellings

Councils can vary the minimum lot size that triggers the need for a town 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.

Neighbourhood Character Overlay

The Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO) has been heralded as the most specific and effective tool for applying neighbourhood character policy. The permit requirements are comprehensive and can include demolition, tree removal and front fences as well as all buildings and works. This is the mechanism preferred by the Department of Infrastructure for implementing a character study *where an overlay type of control is justified*. It is clear that NCOs will only be allowed over confined and specific areas. They will not be able to apply across an entire municipality.

While this mechanism provides a useful additional neighbourhood character control tool, it has limitations because its permit requirements are so extensive. The overlay requires a permit for all buildings and works, and only dwelling outbuildings and swimming pools may be exempt from this requirement. It is not possible to exempt certain types of development, for example, all buildings under a certain height or buildings with low site coverage. This may be considered an advantage in certain circumstances, but clearly precludes the use of the Overlay over extensive areas of the City due to the administrative burden and the onerous permit requirements imposed on landowners. It requires discriminating application and is designed for this purpose.

This matter of the most appropriate planning tool for the implementation of the recommendations of this study is discussed in more detail in [Chapter 6 Implementation](#).

2.2 Council Policies

There are various sections of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme that impact upon the project. A description of its relevant sections and its implications is as follows:

Municipal Strategic Statement

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) is part of the planning scheme. The MSS establishes the strategic planning framework for the municipality. 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 statement 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 Whitehorse and describes the State and regional context of the City. It also details objectives and strategies for, amongst others:

- Enhancing Residential Character and
- Better Streetscape Design

The MSS sets the clear agenda for ensuring that new development makes a positive contribution to the character of an area, that sufficient open space is provided around dwellings for the retention and enhancement of landscape character and the need to retain and increase tall tree canopy in the City.

Implications for the Study

The Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study accords with the objectives of the MSS and may result in changes to only the Implementation section of Clause 21.05-3.

Tree Conservation Local Policy

The Whitehorse Planning Scheme contains a Policy at Clause 22.04 that implements the objectives in the MSS relating to the importance of tree canopy and landscape character. The Policy sits within the Local Planning Policy Framework and is intended to provide guidance to the Council in decision making about applications for planning permits.

The objectives of the Policy are:

- To assist in the management of the City's tree canopy by ensuring that new development minimises the loss of significant trees
- To ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment and ecological systems.
- To identify techniques to assist in the successful co-existence of trees and new buildings or works.
- To promote the regeneration of tall trees through the provision of adequate open space and landscaping areas in new development.

The Policy refers to the Whitehorse Urban Character Study 1996 and Supplementary Study 1997, and the categorisation within that study of various Streetscape Character Areas. The Policy advocates that all healthy trees be retained and that in areas where the Urban Character Study identified a dominance of vegetation, that this characteristic should be retained. It sets out various performance standards for the retention of trees, buildings and works near trees and provides techniques for successful tree retention and regeneration.

Implications for the Study

The Policy indicates the Council's strong commitment to the importance of trees in the municipality and the extent to which retention and regeneration of tree cover is considered intrinsic to the amenity of the City. The outcomes of the Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study will not conflict with the content of the Policy. It is possible that some aspects of the Policy will require revision as part of the current review of the MSS to ensure succinctness and improve clarity.

3

What is Landscape Character?

3.1 Landscape/Neighbourhood Character Defined

As mentioned earlier, the term 'landscape character or quality' can for the purpose of the implementation of the recommendations of the Study be substituted by the term 'neighbourhood character'. Both terms relate to the relationship between landscape, including vegetation, and built form. Neighbourhood character is the term more commonly used in the town planning sphere as it is used in the relevant statutory mechanisms to which the outcomes of the Study are largely directed.

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 VPPs (Victoria Planning Provisions).
- It omits the adjective 'qualitative' in using the term 'interplay'.
- It makes no reference to the 'combination of the public and private realms' as 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 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 (Victoria Planning Provisions). 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:

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

The 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 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, 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 creates a distinctive urban character. 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 us to accommodate all of these requirements. It forms the basis of the work undertaken in this Study for the Blackburn Lake surrounds:

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.

Focussing 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 an 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 back drop. 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 streetscape 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 each case 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 elements can be addressed through other mechanisms such as social development strategies 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. 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 central region's residential areas.

Nor is neighbourhood character about the amenity of adjoining properties or housing density 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 Precinct brochures with regard to maintaining the rhythm of dwelling spacing in a 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 not considered that any policy that proposed density maximums or medium density housing saturation levels would be supported by the Department of Infrastructure. ResCode has more extensive provisions relating to amenity issues and it is likely that once these provisions become more widely implemented many amenity concerns will be reduced.

3.2 Landscape/Neighbourhood Character Principles

The following principles of neighbourhood character were prepared by a Department of Infrastructure 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 Blackburn Lake Surrounds 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, a 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 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.

4

Landscape Character in the Blackburn Lake Surrounds

4.1 Surveys

Two surveys were undertaken: a Preliminary Survey and a Detailed Survey.

Preliminary Survey

This stage of the project established the framework for subsequent work, including preliminary identification of neighbourhoods and detailed consultation methodology. The steps were:

- Initial windshield survey of the study area.
- Identification of the broad Character Area typologies found in the Study Area, including key issues in each. Character Area typologies are based on the general form, layout and streetscape qualities of large areas of the City.
- Initial documentation of threats to existing character areas.
- Preliminary identification of neighbourhood precincts.

Preliminary character area types were defined in the initial 'windshield' survey of the municipality by the Study Team's urban designer. This analysis is summarised in the table at [Appendix 6](#).

The character types identified in the preliminary survey were subsequently used as inputs to the definition of precincts and the descriptions of precinct characteristics for the specific areas the Blackburn Lake surrounds.

Detailed Survey

A street-by-street survey of the Study Area was undertaken after the preliminary survey. This detailed survey aimed to gather summary information about the character of each street, and to create a photographic library of the area. The field notes from the detailed survey aggregate information about particular characteristics onto cadastral maps, divided into spatial units that reproduce conveniently at A4 size. Although some legend items are delineated along individual property boundaries, the survey was not intended to produce accurate information about characteristics property-by-property. The aim of the survey is to gather information about characteristics that remain consistent across a wider area, and to provide an indication as to where these characteristics change.

The amount and type of data collected was tailored to achieve the most effective result for the Council. Data collected was aimed at determining the 'key' characteristics of the Study Area, as opposed to a catalogue of unrelated or peripheral information. We adjusted the survey methodology successfully used in previous studies to:

- Reflect the particular issues of the Study Area.
- Anticipate particular data collection needs relating to ResCode and other implementation tools.

The detailed survey, covering every residential street in the Study Area, recorded the following information on maps:

Content of the Detailed Survey

BUILT FORM	LANDSCAPE	PUBLIC DOMAIN
Architectural Era	Private Garden Styles	Street Tree Size
Number of Storeys	Private Garden Species	Street Tree Planting Pattern
Development Style	Large tree stands	Street Tree Species
Front Setbacks	Topography and Views	Footpaths
Side Setbacks		Road Treatment
Front Fence Height		Kerbs
Front Fence Style		

The Council has been supplied with these maps in colour at A3 size.

4.2 Community Values

Three main sources have been used to identify community perceptions about the character of the Blackburn Lake surrounds: the Community Forum, the disposable cameras exercise, and the Steering Committees. Here we summarise the outcomes of these exercises, in so far as they are relevant to neighbourhood character.

Importance of Neighbourhood Character

At the community forum held at the start of the project, participants were asked these questions: What is character? What aspects of the character of your area do you like, and dislike?

Answers to the first question provide useful insights into the importance local people place on matters directly relevant to neighbourhood character as referred to in ResCode. In some communities, the discussion may be exclusively about the physical characteristics of the neighbourhood's buildings, streets and landscapes. In others, the discussion may focus on issues that have little direct relevance to this specific definition of character, for example street safety, traffic, maintenance, adequacy of services. Most discussions focus on a mix of ResCode-related character topics and non-planning scheme related topics, with the mix varying from community to community.

A commonly expressed view is that *people* are the most important aspect of an area's character. This is a valid perspective, one that cannot be argued against in an impassioned public forum. Planning scheme tools are explicitly formulated to avoid personalising land use issues, and no planner wants to become involved in debate about who should be allowed to live in an area. But it can readily be conceded that the built form character we see today is the result of actions by people, and that future evolution of character will be determined in the same way. Neighbourhood character cannot be viewed as a dry, academic branch of urban design theory, divorced from the values of local people. The 'look' of a place is only one aspect of its character, but it is one that the planning system allows us to influence for the good of the wider community. In doing so, we should be constantly aware of values and aspirations of local citizens.

Importance of Neighbourhood Character in the Blackburn Lake Surrounds

Approximately 80 residents attended the Community Forum held at the commencement of the project. The community presented a clear and sometimes passionate picture of the qualities they value about their part of Whitehorse. There was considerable agreement at the meeting about the aspects of the area that are valued. Some of the discussion was about the people in the area, the area's closeness to facilities and services, and problems with traffic, parking infrastructure or maintenance. There was, nevertheless, an immediate and direct priority placed on discussing vegetation and its relationship with built form. This is discussed in more detail in [section 5.3](#).

'Likes' and 'Dislikes'

Participants at the Community Forum were asked: What are the things you consider to be an important part of 'neighbourhood character', and what things do you like and dislike about your area? A detailed summary of responses is included as [Appendix 4](#). The most common 'likes' and 'dislikes' expressed during the Community Forum are summarised in the following table:

Summary of Community Forum Comments

LIKES	DISLIKES
Tree canopy	Overdevelopment
Open spaces	Unsympathetic development
Trees	Medium density housing
Bird life and fauna	Lack of street planting along Blackburn and Canterbury Roads
Large front yards	High fencing
Diversity of housing styles	Lopping of trees
Indigenous planting	Barrel draining creeks
Abundance of vegetation	Lack of setbacks
Unsealed roads	Inappropriate street trees
Creeks	Lack of mature street planting
Quietness	Overhead powerlines
Front gardens	Reduction and removal of vegetation
Parkland and bushland	Multi-storey development
The Lake	Noise
Treed setting	Gardens being replaced by concrete

Conclusions drawn from these findings can be found in [section 5.3](#) of this report. The findings of the community photographic survey served to reinforce many of these themes.

Disposable Cameras Survey

A number of common themes emerged from the photographic survey that often replicated results from the Community Forum, adding depth to the exercise findings.

Mature native trees and vegetation were consistently identified in these photos as contributing to the character of Blackburn Lake surrounds. Photographic surveyors highlighted treed streetscapes and avenue planting, as well as open front gardens, as positive characteristics. Inappropriate street planting, the removal of trees and vegetation, overly formal introduced planting, and the absence of vegetation were identified as negative attributes.

Concerns about medium density unit or townhouse development were prevalent, with photographers identifying inadequate front and side setbacks, overdevelopment, and poor dwelling design. However, there were also examples of medium density development that fitted in well with the landscape and were not unduly dominant. Broadly speaking, unsympathetic large scale residential development was seen to be undesirable, while existing planting in the private and public domain were seen as positive aspects of Blackburn Lake surrounds. The foremost issue that was strongly identified by the photographers was that development responds sensitively to the site, by blending in with the established treed and vegetated character of the area.

4.3 The Character of the Blackburn Lake Surrounds

Residential areas in the Blackburn Lake surrounds have qualities that distinguish them from other residential neighbourhoods in metropolitan Melbourne. Having undertaken the surveys and consulted members of the local community at the Community Forum, and having considered its own experience in undertaking previous character studies, the team was able to reach conclusions about the character in the Blackburn Lake surrounds.

Distinctive Qualities of the Blackburn Lake Surrounds

Vegetation and Landscape

Blackburn Lake is a unique feature of suburban Melbourne, and the areas that surround it are recognised for their indigenous and heavily treed landscape. Several streets within the Significant Landscape Overlay (and therefore outside the scope of the Study) are classified by the National Trust for their landscape quality. The special qualities of these streets has been recognised for some time and planning controls have been in place to maintain and enhance these qualities for over 15 years. The areas outside the Significant Landscape Overlay (the Study Area) exhibit varying degrees of the vegetative character of the areas within the SLO.

Overlaid on these different landscape types are the differing types of urban form. A major distinction between urban form types arises from different building types (eg house or office or shop or institution). As the Study Area included only residential land, variations in the urban form are restricted to differing housing forms and institutional buildings.

The majority of the residential areas in the Blackburn Lake surrounds are in many respects typical of many suburban areas of Melbourne where the dwellings are set within established gardens. The distinguishing feature of the Study Area is the extent to which these gardens dominate the streetscape and contain native or indigenous trees. The relationship of the area to the immediate Blackburn Lake vicinity is important, particularly where the area can support or improve the significance of the areas already within the SLO. Many of the residential areas within the Study Area draw some of their distinctiveness from the proximity of the substantial vegetation in the SLO area, as the large trees provide an important backdrop to the streetscapes and behind dwellings.

Much of what is important about the character of residential neighbourhoods in the Study Area is the relationship of buildings to landscape, and in particular tree cover. In areas with canopy tree cover, the density of development, and the amount of canopy tree cover contained in private gardens, public open spaces and road reserves is paramount.

Built Form Qualities

In Precinct 5 of the Study Area another distinctive quality, relating specifically to the built form, was identified. In this precinct the landscape character of the area was overlaid by a high representation of buildings dating from the early development of the area dating from the Victorian era. These buildings provide a clear link with the past of the area, and while their individual or collective heritage significance has not been assessed as part of this study, the period character of these dwellings was considered to be of relevant significance to the character of this precinct. It is for this reason that Precinct 5 differs from other precincts, in that there is a greater emphasis on built form as a valued characteristic.

Character Precincts

Character precincts are delineated in order to define areas that could share a common preferred character. The use of precincts also enables the study findings and guidelines to be presented and communicated in a way that is accessible to local people and useful to planning applicants and Council officers. In some cases, this leads to larger areas of common characteristics being subdivided.

It is important to note that *preferred* character is the main criterion for precinct delineation. Character studies that attempt to delineate every variation in *current* characteristics tend to produce very large numbers of precincts. While this approach might have some benefits in achieving a finer grain of information, it also results in some disadvantages.

Precinct Size

A constant problem with character studies is the sheer volume of information that is generated from the detailed survey. A major challenge is to be able to 'see the wood for the trees'. This has not been the case with the Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study, as the detailed survey focused exclusively on the Study Area, rather than the entire municipality. There are benefits in being able to focus attention on the handful of key characteristics whose 'qualitative interplay' is fundamental to maintaining or strengthening the preferred character of an area. For example, a widespread misunderstanding about character studies is that they seek to control the aesthetics of detailed design. This misapprehension may be exacerbated if the existing architectural style is always a decisive criterion in delineating precincts. There are many types of character area in which building design is not a major issue (eg in heavily treed environments). A character precinct may contain a variety of different building types and styles.

The actual size of a Precinct is determined by two factors, one based on the theory and the one on the practice. The first criteria is the similarity of the streetscape characteristics. Where the same set of factors are noted as significant to the preferred character these areas should logically be grouped together as the same set of guidelines will apply. The emphasis here is on ensuring that the same objectives and set of changes needed to achieve these objectives, apply to both areas. The second criteria is useability. If two similar areas are geographically remote it will be difficult for planners and applicants to find and relate the information to the particular area. For this reason similar areas with similar guidelines may be in different precincts.

Precincts and Preferred Character

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 shouldn't 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.

Precincts and Site Analysis

One final point. ResCode provides for a process of site analysis that encompasses an assessment of neighbourhood character. The preparation of a character study does not remove the need for a site assessment. Local conditions and the specific circumstances need to be assessed and considered alongside the preferred character for the area. They may also change over time. It is not necessary for a character study to provide a detailed brief for every site. The character study should provide the broad future direction, complemented by the site analysis, which assesses detailed local conditions.

Precinct Delineation

Character precinct delineation is arrived at by considering all of the factors outlined so far in this chapter. Particular emphasis is placed on the Detailed Survey findings, but because the basis of delineation is preferred character, all the other factors may also be relevant. More information about the process by which preferred character statements were arrived at is contained in [section 5.1](#).

5

Character Directions for Blackburn Lake Surrounds

5.1 Preferred Character

Information from the detailed survey maps was 'overlaid', assisted by an extensive library of photographs, to arrive at character precinct boundaries, and to help in describing the characteristics of each precinct, as described in [section 4.3](#). A map showing the final precinct boundaries is included in [Appendix 1](#).

Having produced a preliminary delineation of precincts, the study team assembled a set of Issues Papers, one for each precinct. A complete draft of these was presented to the Steering Committee, and time allowed for comments.

With the increasing emphasis of neighbourhood character theory on preferred character, it is necessary to develop a logical way to arrive at a preferred character statement. Without an explicit emphasis on preferred character, character studies tend to dwell on existing characteristics. Most of the survey work of a character study, and most of the discussions with residents, focussed exclusively on present characteristics. Initially at least, community members tend to be sceptical and guarded when the issue of a preferred future character is placed on the agenda. A common response is that they want 'no change', or that they have no desire to impose their view of a preferred character on others. A sound, simple process is needed to 'unlock' this subject, one that enables participants to see the sense and logic of it. It is also important for a future Planning Panel to be able to examine an explicit process by which preferred character statements have been crafted.

Precinct Issues Papers

The Precinct Issues Papers are reproduced in [Appendix 2](#). Note that the Precinct numbers changed in the final brochures as a number of Precincts were combined. The Issues Papers contain the following information for each Precinct:

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

Because character cannot be seen in isolation from other aspects of planning policy, information regarding the existing Council planning policy context, primarily from the planning scheme, has been included.

Development / Activity Pressures

Statutory planners from the Whitehorse City Council were consulted to determine where Council was receiving the greatest pressure for development. The Council provided a list of all medium density planning application since 1996 and building permit records for the same period to determine single dwelling applications. This permit information was mapped to show clearly where pressures are occurring in the Study Area. In total 72 permits were issued for medium density housing development since 1996, and a total of 125 building approvals were processed in the Study Area. Redevelopment is occurring throughout the Study Area, but particular concentrations are noted in the Precinct Issues Paper for that Precinct. Any development pressures specific to each Precinct are outlined in this section of the Precinct Issues Paper. Those pressures identified, if any, determine how the development guidelines should be targeted, and ultimately the choice of planning controls.

Community Values

Throughout the public consultation process community concerns were raised regarding various issues in different locations throughout the municipality. Those concerns raised are discussed in this section of the precinct issues paper. The issues raised by the community reflect values and matters to be dealt with in the development guidelines. The Community Forum held at the start of the Study process provide a substantial amount of input to this section.

Key Existing Characteristics

The existing neighbourhood characteristics for each locality are summarised in this section. The characteristics such as architectural styles, building materials, private garden types, fencing styles and road treatments were identified through the detailed survey.

Description

The description looks at the area as a whole and outlines distinct features that are common to the precinct.

Preferred Character Directions

Based on the previous information considered, the preferred character directions set out those character elements that should be maintained, those that should be strengthened and occasionally those that should be changed.

Preferred Character Statement

Each precinct issues paper concluded with a draft Preferred Character Statement that outlines the desirable character features for that precinct and how they should be achieved. The Preferred Character Statement is an important part of the Precinct Issues Paper because it provides the starting point for development of the

Guidelines (see next section). The introductory part of the statement establishes a broad direction, and the bullet points beneath set out the main menu of elements for which guidelines need to be prepared.

Issues / Threats

This section identifies issues that are a threat to achieving the preferred character of the precinct.

Precinct Photo Boards

A key feature of this methodology is the use of Precinct Photo Boards. These are foam core boards with photographs from each initially defined precinct. These have proved to be an invaluable means of engaging members of the community in discussion and debate about key characteristics, precinct boundaries etc. They become the principal vehicle for reviewing the boundaries and characteristics of each precinct with the Steering Committee. The precinct photo boards each display a collection of photographs and a boundary map of one of the 'draft' precincts. This occurred within the study team and at the fifth Steering Committee meeting.

Views of the Steering Committee

The fifth Steering Committee meeting reviewed the Precinct Issues Papers. The feedback received was generally positive, with comments noted in the preparation of the final Precinct Issues Papers and the Precinct brochures. Committee members made specific recommendations and useful comments in regard to the Preferred Character Statements.

5.2 Character Guidelines

Having amended the Precinct Issues Papers in the light of comments received, the study team prepared guidelines for each precinct. The guidelines, when added to selected information from the Precinct Issues Papers, are presented as draft precinct brochures.

Precinct Brochures

General Brochure

There is a General Brochure for the Blackburn Lake Surrounds that operates as an instruction sheet for the remaining Precinct Brochures. The General Brochure includes information about the Neighbourhood Character Study, points on how to use the Precinct Brochures, and a Precinct Map.

Precinct Brochures

The Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study area has been identified as having distinct precincts. The Precinct Brochures have a consistent layout and content. Written content includes a Character Description of the precinct, Community Values, Key Existing Characteristics, Preferred Neighbourhood Character, Issues/Threats, and Precinct Guidelines.

Visual content includes photos taken from within the precinct that are exemplary of the neighbourhood character for that area, and illustrations demonstrating how the Precinct Guidelines can be applied. On the reverse side of the Precinct Brochures are Design Guidelines for that precinct. The Design Guidelines address the following Character Elements where relevant to that precinct:

- Vegetation
- Existing Buildings
- Siting
- Building Form and Height
- Site Coverage
- Front Boundary Treatment
- Sites adjacent to the SLO boundary

The Design Guidelines address these Character Elements as relevant to the circumstances and preferred character of the precinct. For example, a precinct with a flat landscape will not include a design guideline relating to Topography / landform, but would have a Waterfront development guideline if it were located on the coastline.

Each Character Element is accompanied by:

- Objectives: which briefly states the desired action relating to each character element;
- Design Response: which outlines the specific ways in which the objective can be achieved;
- Avoid: which states what design methods to avoid when trying to achieve the objective; and
- Illustration: which is a small sketch demonstrating how the Design Response should or should not be implemented.

Views of the Steering Committee

The Precinct brochures were presented to the Steering Committee for viewing and comment. The response to the brochures was positive, indicative of the high level of community involvement in the Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study. Further comments made by Committee members were noted leading to the preparation of the final Precinct brochures.

The final precinct brochures can be reproduced in colour, and are provided separately from this report.

5.3 Key Character Issues

Having completed the precinct brochures, including the guidelines, the next task for the team is to consider implementation. A number of key character issues need to be addressed in considering the best implementation tools.

The Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precincts

Initially 12 Precincts were delineated in the Study Area. (See Appendix 2 for a map of the original 12 precincts.) After discussion with the Steering Committee and Council planning officers a number of Precincts were combined to create a final total of 9. Each Precinct has qualities that make it distinctive from the other and these are described in detail on the Precinct Brochures. These main influences in determining precincts in the Study Area are summarised below.

Precincts Abutting the SLO Area

Many precincts abut the SLO boundary. The SLO provides a substantial and notable backdrop to many areas of the Study Area. The contribution of the large indigenous and native trees to the character of the surrounding areas cannot be underestimated. While some areas in the vicinity have limited tree cover, the community perception and aspiration is often that the abutting areas have or could have a similar level of tree cover. This aspiration is reflected in the preferred Neighbourhood Character statements wherever it was considered achievable within the confines of the private domain and/or the public domain, as both contribute. It was considered particularly important by the community and the consultants to manage the areas at the SLO interface areas in order to provide a 'blurring' of the boundary. Without check, development trends could tend to create a hard edge to the SLO through removal of vegetation or planting of weed species. This would be of great detriment to the SLO area itself by exposing the edges to harsh environmental conditions and weed infestation. Ultimately this would also impact significantly upon the surrounding areas as the valued backdrop would be reduced.

A guideline has therefore been added to all relevant Precincts that places particular emphasis upon ensuring that properties along the SLO boundary consider the species of vegetation to ensure it is complementary to the SLO indigenous vegetation.

Precinct Distinctiveness

Precincts 1 and 2 are similar in many respects. Precinct 1 is the largest of the Precincts and contains a range of post war architectural styles. The dwellings are set within established gardens that have a rhythm of front and side setbacks that allows for the planting of gardens. Buildings are predominantly single storey, but two storey dwellings do occur, and these generally fit into the streetscape provided sufficient garden space is provided. Many gardens have large trees of mixed species and these frequently form a backdrop to the dwellings.

Precinct 2 differs from Precinct 1 partly because the topography is more sloping and has led to different building forms, such as split level and two storey in parts. This requires particular attention to ensuring the building form fits within the landscape and does not dominate views and vistas.

Precinct 3 is in 3 parts, all of which contain a heavily vegetated appearance. Buildings are sometimes not visible from the street, or partially visible behind front yard planting. While there are many exotic trees in the area, native and indigenous trees are also frequent. These areas have much in common with the areas within the SLO2 area, and the community identified a preferred character for these areas that related to the SLO2 areas.

Precinct 4 is the most heavily developed of the precincts in the Study Area and contains a number of medium density housing developments, many several years old, due to its proximity to the train station and shopping centre. Many of the developments in this area have little space for planting and while the area abuts the SLO2 area to the south and trees along the railway line to the north it is difficult to envisage that the area will return to its originally vegetated state. For this reason the area's preferred character provides for planting of some substantial vegetation wherever possible, but does not contain guidelines of the nature of some more vegetated and spacious areas in the Study Area.

Precinct 5 is distinctive for its remnant development from the Victorian and inter war eras. This has been discussed in section 4.3. There is also some substantial vegetation that is highly valued by the community and the opportunity to contribute further to the adjoining SLO and Blackburn Lake Sanctuary vegetation character. The proximity of this precinct to the SLO2 area has been addressed through the retention of native and planting of native trees on sites adjacent to the SLO.

Precinct 6 has a secluded feel as it is surrounded by Morton Park, a school, the railway line, and large canopy street trees. This precinct is characterised by occasional large indigenous trees, low scale dwellings, and its garden setting. There is opportunity for this precinct to provide a greater visual link between the park and the SLO2 to the east. Unlike Precinct 4, this precinct consists of larger lot sizes with a more vegetated character, so it is for this reason that the guidelines provide for the retention of and planting of trees.

Precinct 7 is characterised by its curvilinear street layout, proximity to the creek and its location within a gully. The topography of the area is reflected by the presence of tall trees or bushy understorey. There is an open feel to the courts due to the irregular orientation of the dwellings and large front setbacks.

Precinct 8 is a newly developed area dating from the 1990s, with sloping topography and open frontages, in close proximity to the creek and gully. This area is characterised by the two storey form of its dwellings and establishing gardens. In contrast to other precincts, this area has built form dominated streetscapes, with a notable absence of front fences.

Precinct 9 shares similar characteristics to Precinct 8, but lacks its distinct topographical features. Architectural styles date from the 1980s, with few tall trees. Front fences are also absent. The fact that this precinct is not as heavily vegetated as other precincts is reflected through the guidelines, which emphasise the retention of large trees and the provision of new trees wherever possible.

5.4 Development Principles for Institutional Sites

Three large institutions within the Study area were surveyed by the Study Team's urban designer to identify key elements of their existing character. The following development principles should be applied to any future redevelopment of these sites:

Victorian Deaf Society

Context

Landscape: Sloping, open grounds with tall pines on boundary of property, few trees within grounds.

Strategic: Develop using conventional layout and retaining existing perimeter trees. Create link to Lake Sanctuary.

Residential Character: Conventional subdivision, low pitch 1970s brown brick, in park-like setting.

Potential /Preferred Character: Open bush garden style – dwellings set in indigenous native gardens.

Development Principles

- Retain the sense of spaciousness on and around the site.
- Set development back from front boundary to retain openness of the streetscape.
- Retain all perimeter tall trees.
- Built form should be preferably confined to the existing building footprint.
- Dwellings should be set unobtrusively and sensitively within the site and landform.
- Provide a strong bio-link to Blackburn Lake Sanctuary through the use of indigenous species.
- Ensure new subdivision accords with strong ecological design principles to minimise run-off to Blackburn Lake. (eg. Minimise hard paving, provide litter traps)
- Dwellings should front to the Sanctuary.
- Develop a pedestrian link to Blackburn Lake Sanctuary.
- Avoid high rear fences abutting the Sanctuary.

Seventh Day Adventist Camp, Church and School

Context

Landscape: Undulating, open eucalyptus woodland to north-west and open spacious setting with little substantial vegetation abutting creek in south-east.

Strategic: Long term bio-link between site and Lake Reserve along creek and woodland.

Residential Character: Garden suburban of mixed housing and materials with scattered tall exotic tree species and bushy gardens.

Potential/ Preferred Future Character: Low –key cluster development set in existing woodland and within bushy indigenous gardens.

Development Principles

- Retain all existing eucalypts.
- Maintain a large, open front setback to any subdivision to maintain a sense of openness to the street.
- Low lying built form to sit below the existing tree canopy and follow the contours of the site.
- Develop new housing in 1970s style cluster style development in areas without significant vegetation.
- Use earthy tones or lighter building materials (eg. Timber, non-masonry materials).
- Buildings should be individual contemporary designs.
- Revegetate creek frontage with indigenous species and create a pedestrian link to the Lake Reserve.
- Ensure new subdivision accords with strong ecological design principles to minimise run-off to tributary into Blackburn Lake. (eg. Minimise hard paving, provide litter traps)
- Avoid large, imposing style houses on large lots, high solid walls, and imposing gate features.

St Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church and School

Context

Landscape: Sloping land with significant stands of old pine and cypress trees at front boundary, with more recent understorey planting of indigenous trees and shrubs. Flatter open area at the top of rise. Neighbouring park contains remnant eucalypts.

Strategic: Rear of site has intensive residential development potential.

Residential Character: School building 1950-60s glass and brick, set amongst 1970-80s brick dwellings and inter war timber cottages.

Potential/ Preferred Future Character: Garden court – dwellings set in native, open “soft” landscaped streetscape.

Development Principles

- Retain all exotic tall trees. (Removal of these perimeter trees would result in loss of character)
- Retain all understorey trees to ensure survival of existing tall exotic trees- difficult to thin out.
- Minimise disruption to root system and tree canopy of all trees.
- Develop rear of site within existing building footprint intensively.
- Develop ‘enclosed ‘ community style residential development screened by existing dense vegetation.
- Built form to be unobtrusive and fit within the landform.
- Maintain openness to the street and avoid walled (‘gated’) development with imposing entrance gates.
- Public domain (roadway edge and surrounding public spaces) to be well landscaped with indigenous species.

6

Implementation

6.1 Implementation Context

There are a variety of means by which the Council can implement the recommendations of this Study. 'Statutory' implementation, meaning introduction of planning controls in the planning scheme to protect landscape or neighbourhood character, is often the focus of concern. This aspect of implementation is discussed at length in the sections that follow.

However, other implementation measures that will assist in protecting and enhancing the character or landscape qualities are equally important, and are discussed first. These can be broadly grouped into four categories: 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, as discussed in [Chapter 3](#). Design in the public domain covers a variety of elements, including street trees, road details such as kerb and channel, pavement type and position and type of 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 has a well developed approach to the public domain in the areas covered by this Study, expressed in a Streetscape Policy and Strategy adopted in January 2002. This is a long term strategy that recommends particular street trees for the Study Area including informal groupings of indigenous trees as well as exotic species for deciduous highlight. The Council will need to determine the exact location of these species and timing of the introduction of new plantings.

In some cases, suggestions about treatment of the public domain are included in the character Precinct Brochures. These suggestions may assist the Council in determining details of the public domain treatment. However they are not recommended for inclusion in the statutory controls for the area.

Community Encouragement and Education

Education and encouragement, partly by means of forming partnerships, is an essential aspect of implementation. The following strategies could be adopted:

1. Continuing education of real estate agents, developers and landowners generally.
2. Continuing education of design and building professionals.
3. 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 partnership aspect could be fostered by bringing stakeholders with differing perspectives (eg residents and developers) together into the same forum. This may be best accomplished independently of a contentious planning application with statutory time limits.

The Community Forum held as part of the current study process, and the establishment of the Steering Committee, have already paved the way for these types of programs. The Character Precinct Brochures 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 review of current applications by 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 Precinct Character Statements and the Local Policy described below. 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 tree removal).
- Local Laws.

6.2 Statutory Implementation

Statutory implementation of the Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study is only one part of the total package of implementation techniques. However, it is perhaps the most important as it legally binds the Council, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) and the community to consider the outcomes of the Study and the Guidelines in the development arena.

The recommendations for statutory implementation must be framed having regard to the range of tools available in the VPPs (Victoria Planning Provisions) and in particular the new residential provisions inserted into every planning scheme in Victoria (collectively known as ResCode).

Neighbourhood character and preferred neighbourhood character forms the basis of the new residential provisions, introduced in 2000, with Councils encouraged to develop Local Policy to guide the consideration of neighbourhood character in the discretionary implementation of the new controls. In addition, Councils have been given a wider range of tools to introduce provisions that reflect the particular character of parts of their municipalities. The Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study will provide an invaluable resource and support for the introduction of controls of this nature if required.

Having regard, therefore, to the statutory framework within which the recommendations of the Study must be implemented, there are several possibilities for the implementation of the Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study within the development control system.

Options

Options for statutory implementation of the Study and Guidelines range from a minimalist 'guideline' approach to a highly statutory approach involving incorporation of large parts of the Study into the planning scheme as statutory documents. Many of these options, outlined below, can be used together, however each requires individual consideration:

- Adopt the Study, including the Precinct Brochures, as a Council guideline only with no formal statutory weight.
- Refer to the document in the planning scheme (Reference Document).
- Incorporate the entire Study into the planning scheme (Incorporated Document).
- Alter the MSS in the planning scheme to include elements from the Study.
- Extract parts of the Study and Guidelines to form a Local Policy in the planning scheme (in the Local Planning Policy Framework).
- Implement parts of the Guidelines relating to the form of buildings through a Neighbourhood Character or Design and Development Overlay for particular precincts.
- Implement parts of the Guidelines relating to vegetation and the balance between tree canopy and buildings through a Vegetation Protection or Significant Landscape Overlay (or alter existing Overlays) for particular precincts.
- Alter the schedule to the Residential 1 zone to vary certain standards of ResCode.

The advantages and disadvantages of each of these options are summarised below.

A. Council Guideline

The advantages of this option are:

- The Council could commence using the guidelines immediately.

- The Council would have the ability to change the Guidelines as it wishes.
- No planning scheme amendment would be required.

The significant disadvantage is that the strategy will not be of assistance at VCAT as the Study and Guidelines will not be considered to be of relevance to the consideration of applications without some reference in the scheme. The Department of Infrastructure actively discourages stand-alone Council policies.

B. Reference Document

The advantage of this option is that it provides some statutory weight to the strategy at VCAT. However, the Department of Infrastructure advises that Reference Documents are to be considered as 'background' only, and should not contain policies or guidelines that assist in determining upon planning applications. It is not the method preferred by the Department, as policy should be included in the scheme. However, referencing of the strategy and brochures is a sound and proper approach in conjunction with other statutory implementation mechanisms.

C. Incorporated Document – extract of the Study or each Precinct Brochure

In this option the whole or part of the study, or the Precinct Brochures that are incorporated into the planning scheme become a statutory document. The whole incorporated document therefore has statutory weight.

The disadvantage of this approach is that a planning scheme amendment process is required to change any part of the incorporated document. In addition it is unlikely that incorporation of the strategy would be supported by the Department of Infrastructure, as the Practice Note on incorporated and reference documents discourages the incorporation of documents that contain criteria, performance measures or decision guidelines. Incorporation of the Precinct Brochures is a possibility, however should the key elements of the brochures be included in Local Policy, this would be superfluous as well as cumbersome.

D. Include Elements of the Study in the MSS

The Council's MSS makes reference to neighbourhood character in the context of enhancing residential character. Reference to the Study should be included in the MSS, in particular, where the MSS focuses on landscape character, or the Blackburn Lake surrounds area.

E. Local Policy

The inclusion of a Local Policy within the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) would enable the provision of policy guidance for the assessment of planning applications. The Local Policy can serve to provide a set of general considerations that apply to all proposals within the Study Area for which a planning permit is required, or more preferably, the specific guidelines that apply to each Precinct. The Policy should include the key elements of the Precinct Brochures. The objectives, preferred character statements and guidelines can assist in designing and determining development applications.

Inclusion of a policy in the scheme provides the highest level of strategic direction, next to the MSS itself, and therefore the Council's objectives and the measures against which all applications will be assessed are clear.

It is noted that a Local Policy forms part of the planning scheme, and therefore an amendment is required to insert it into the scheme, and to alter it if necessary in future.

F. Design and Development Overlay

A Design and Development Overlay (DDO) requires that a permit be obtained for all development within the area covered (some types of development can be exempted). It ensures the implementation of the detailed guidelines in the consideration of all development in that area. A DDO can control, by permit, elements such as height, setback, site coverage, fences and development within certain distance of tree trunks.

It is noted, however, that a DDO does not control the demolition of buildings and cannot vary the ResCode standards. These controls are only available through the Heritage Overlay and the Neighbourhood Character Overlay. The introduction of a DDO requires delineation of the exact area to be covered; it cannot be applied to a whole section of the municipality such as the Study Area. It must be applied discriminately.

The Department of Infrastructure has advised that the use of Design and Development Overlays for the purpose of neighbourhood character implementation is not encouraged. DDOs are seen to be 'an Overlay of last resort', for areas where mandatory height limits are warranted, or change is encouraged and no other mechanism would achieve the desired outcome.

G. Vegetation Protection or Significant Landscape Overlays

A Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) or Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) requires a permit for removal of trees; and it can apply to all trees, or to any of native, indigenous or exotic vegetation or trees over a certain trunk diameter or height. The only limitations to the extent of controls under these Overlays are the practical issues of the ease of use and enforcement of the provisions.

In order for a VPO or SLO to be justifiable, the vegetation or landscape must be demonstrated to be of significance to the character of the area.

The VPO is primarily aimed at situations where the vegetation is of collective significance. The VPO can only require a permit for vegetation removal, and not for buildings and works. It is preferable that VPO controls be confirmed by a parallel study that identifies the environmental significance of vegetation.

The SLO has the distinct advantage of providing the opportunity to control the type of vegetation, the types of buildings and works and fences that require a permit, as necessary. Again, the Council needs to be aware that the introduction of an SLO will increase the number of planning applications in some areas, and that some community members may consider these controls to be over-regulation of their rights as property owners.

H. Neighbourhood Character Overlay

The Neighbourhood Character Overlay is part of the suite of tools to implement neighbourhood character considerations, provided by the new residential provisions (ResCode). Use of the NCO has some advantages and some disadvantages, therefore its use has to be carefully considered in each circumstance.

The advantages to the use of the Neighbourhood Character Overlay are that it provides the opportunity to:

- Alter the provisions of ResCode in relation to medium density and single dwellings both within and outside the planning system (ie. Single dwellings that require a permit under the Building Act only.);
- Include demolition controls; and
- Control all development and works, including fences.

The disadvantages of the NCO are:

- There is no ability to exempt certain types of development (eg. Buildings under a certain height, or all buildings except front fences), other than outbuildings and swimming pools. This potentially places a great administrative burden upon the Council wherever the Overlay is applied.
- It appears to delineate areas that have 'neighbourhood character', implying that other areas do not have character. This is, in our opinion, a false perception; all areas have character.

The application of the NCO should be to areas that need the controls in order to protect or change the identified character, as determined by the preferred character statement and the identified threats to the preferred character. At the time of writing, Practice Notes on the method of applying the NCO are imminent, but have not been published by the Department of Infrastructure.

I. Schedules to the Residential Zones

The new residential provisions include the ability for Councils to alter certain residential provisions for the whole municipality. These include: street setback, building height, site coverage, front fence height, side and rear setbacks, and private open space. The changes apply to single dwellings under the Building Act, as well as medium density housing and single dwellings for which a planning permit is required.

As the Schedules can be used only for changes that affect the whole City, the use of the schedules is necessarily limited to those matters that can be readily applied to all situations in the municipality. In the case of a municipality the size and diversity of the City of Whitehorse, these situations are probably non-existent. In any case, as the brief for this Study did not include the whole municipality, a decision about this aspect is not possible.

J. Single Dwelling Threshold

The new residential provisions enable the Council to alter the threshold lot size below which a planning permit is required for a single dwelling throughout Residential 1 and 2, Township, Mixed Use zones in the municipality. The default provision is 300m²; that is all dwellings to be constructed on lots less than 300m² require a planning permit. The schedule to the Residential zones can alter this threshold to 500m², thus requiring a planning permit for all single dwellings proposed on sites less than 500m².

Again, as the Study did not involve surveying the whole municipality, recommendations about this aspect cannot be made.

Determining the Appropriate Approach

The options proposed for any particular precinct in the Study Area must be chosen bearing in mind several critical considerations.

These considerations include:

- The types of characteristics identified in the Precinct and their relative significance in City-wide and regional terms. This aspect is supported by the extensive survey material gathered during the study, which identifies the consistency and form of the various characteristics and enables comparisons across the municipality and the metropolitan area. The consultants' experience in these types of studies throughout the State enables a regional and State context to be assessed.

- The extent to which the important characteristics within each Precinct are threatened. Each Preferred Character Statement includes an assessment of the types of threats that are possible, overlaid with an understanding of the developments pressures occurring. These factors are detailed in the Issues Papers prepared for each Precinct. The areas subject to greatest change, where development is occurring most frequently, are sometimes, but not always, those where important elements are under greatest threat.
- The likelihood of success of approval of the proposed controls by an independent State government appointed Panel/Advisory Committee and the Minister for Planning. 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 areas are those that require additional planning controls and which areas can be successfully managed with existing controls and the range of other implementation techniques discussed in the previous section.
- The provisions of ResCode, including the extent to which a Local Policy including neighbourhood character objectives for the areas included in the study will influence the types of development that may pose a threat to the achievement of the preferred future character. The need to influence single dwelling development is the primary critical aspect of this decision.
- The likelihood of community acceptability of new controls over some forms of development and the extent of community concern about the loss of particular aspects of the character of the Precinct.
- Strategies, policies and controls already contained in the Whitehorse Planning Scheme, in particular the SLO controls in the vicinity of the Study Area, and changes likely as a result of the forthcoming MSS review.

All these factors have been taken into consideration in developing the Recommended Approach to statutory implementation as described in the following section.

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 Whitehorse 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 ensure appropriate 'triggers' within the MSS, to give an umbrella for policy and controls;
- To enable the Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements and Precinct Design Guidelines contained in the Precinct Brochures to be used as an assessment tool for all applications in the areas to which they apply;
- To ensure that, where 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 have effect to all planning applications in the areas within the Precincts:

MSS

- Amend the MSS to include reference to the study and to reflect the primary aspects of the Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study.
- In Clause 21.05 "Enhancing Residential Character", add a dot point under the implementation sections of each relevant objective, stating "Apply the Neighbourhood Character Overlay to the area defined as Precinct 5 in the Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study."
- The Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study 2002 should be included in the list of References at the end of each objective of this Clause.

Local Policy

- Include a Blackburn Lake Surrounds Character Policy in Clause 22 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme.
- There are a number of options for the final format of the Local Policy. It is recommended that the Policy include the Preferred Neighbourhood Character statement (the words at the commencement of the Statement is sufficient. Eg. "*The consistent low scale dwelling forms and garden settings are to be maintained and strengthened*"), and the Design Objectives and Design Responses contained in the Precinct Brochures for each Precinct (in table format). The Development Principles for the three institutional sites could also be included in the Policy.

- The Policy needs to include a map delineating the area to which the Policy applies and the Precincts.
- Reference the study and all Precinct Brochures in the Local Policy to enable use of the additional supporting information contained in the Study and brochures in assessment of applications.

All these actions will require an amendment to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme. This process is likely to take a minimum of six to nine months.

The Council may consider implementing the recommendations of this Study through a planning scheme amendment process until completion of the wider Whitehorse Neighbourhood Character Study. This latter Study should be completed by March or April 2003. In the interim, the Council may wish to consider trialing the Strategy recommendations and Design Guidelines in the Precinct Brochures, for use in the assessment of applications immediately. However, it must be recognised that these will have no statutory force or effect until they are at least exhibited as a planning scheme amendment.

6.3 Use of Overlay Controls

Controls additional to those general recommendations above are considered to be warranted in two Precincts. The effect of the combination of the various considerations in determining the appropriate approach, as detailed in a previous section, 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. 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 Whitehorse 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 Whitehorse 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 is considered to be warranted. The Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study identified one such area.

The Neighbourhood Character Overlay 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 allowing demolition of a building, taking into account its individual contribution to the character of the area, and also the building proposed to replace it.

The Overlay also provides control over alterations and extensions, enabling the Council to assess the impact of the proposed buildings upon the existing buildings and streetscapes, having regard to the neighbourhood character objectives for the area, as described in the Local Policy (and the Precinct Brochures).

Vegetation Protection Controls

The findings of this Study support the introduction of vegetation protection controls in the area identified as Precinct 3, where it is recommended that a permit be required for the removal, destruction or lopping of large trees. This form of control is possible through the application of a number of Overlays under the planning scheme, however, as discussed in [section 6.2](#) above, only Significant Landscape or Neighbourhood Character Overlays are recommended for use in the implementation of neighbourhood character objectives.

The Significant Landscape Overlay has the advantage of enabling the control of buildings as well as vegetation removal, and the ability to exempt certain forms of development. This Overlay is particularly useful in a situation such as in certain Precincts in the Study Area where the vegetation dominates the landscape, or a balance between vegetation and buildings is sought, and the primary objective of the preferred character is to retain that significance of the landscape.

Site Coverage

Site coverage is of importance in heavily vegetated areas, to ensure sufficient permeable land remains to sustain the required density of trees and understorey. The default site coverage provision in Rescode is 60% and the permeability provision is 20%. It has been assumed that the drafting of Rescode has made a 20% allowance for the provision of paved areas such as driveways and outdoor areas.

In some areas, where, through investigation of recent planning applications and developments, it was found that the default ResCode site coverage would produce a development that would threaten the ability to provide for sufficient vegetation, an alternate site coverage requirement has been recommended. In this regard, the form of the development, that is, whether it is a single dwelling or a number of dwellings is irrelevant. The same considerations, relating to the provision of sufficient space on the site to retain and provide new vegetation, apply regardless.

In areas adjacent to the existing Significant Landscape Overlay 2 an assessment has been made of the relationship of the area included within the Overlay to the adjoining area. In certain precincts it has been found that the existing and preferred landscape/neighbourhood character is very similar to that already found in the Overlay area. In these cases it is recommended that the SLO2 controls be extended over the adjoining area. The SLO2 contains specific provisions relating to the site coverage of the ground and first floors of development, requiring a permit for proposals where the site coverage is more than 33% of the site at ground level and 25% of the site area at first floor level. In addition, hard surface and impervious areas that exceed 17% of the site area require approval. A total of 50% site coverage by buildings and hard surface areas is therefore allowed without approval.

These permit triggers are considered appropriate in the identified precincts in order to assess the particular requirements that should be applied where a building exceeds these site coverage levels. In this way the development details can be fully considered, including the other design elements, landscaping and existing vegetation, for example.

Front Fences

In areas where there is a lack of front fencing this is usually of utmost importance to the character of the area. Likewise, 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 Neighbourhood Character Overlay is to be applied for other reasons (eg. Retention of older buildings or trees) 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 schedule, to reflect the preferred character.

6.4 Recommended Overlay Controls

The precincts over which additional Overlay controls or amendments 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.

Neighbourhood Character Overlay

The application of a Neighbourhood Character Overlay is considered to be warranted in one Precinct; Precinct 5. This area, as distinct from others included in the Study, contains a concentration of pre-WW2 dwellings that are clear reminders of the early settlement of the area. The loss of large numbers of these dwellings would result in a loss of the distinctiveness of this part of Blackburn as one of the region's early settlements. Application of the Overlay will enable the Council to assess the merits of each proposed demolition, alterations and proposed replacement buildings as discussed above.

In addition, the areas contains a number of large trees that were either remnant indigenous or planted at the time of early settlement. The indiscriminate removal of these trees would be a loss of part of the context of the dwellings, but also of the Blackburn Lake surrounds itself. Consideration of applications for removal of these trees should take into account issues such as health, relationship to the surrounding dwellings and streetscape and any replacement vegetation proposed. Due to the importance of trees in this precinct it is considered that outbuildings and swimming pools should not be exempt from the planning permit requirements.

The Overlay should vary the ResCode requirement for front fences, from 1.5 metres to 1.2 metres. A permit is not required for a front fence in the area affected by the Overlay, but the varied requirement must be taken into account in applications for permits in the area (for new buildings for example), to ensure high fences do not result in an undesirable impact on the streetscape.

Appendix 7 contains a draft schedule for the recommended Neighbourhood Character Overlay. This should be referred to for specific wording, in addition to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme, and for legal context. The Precinct Brochures should be referred to for the related design objectives and design responses.

Significant Landscape Overlay

One precinct, (Precinct 3) comprising three discrete areas with similar characteristics, is recommended for inclusion within the Significant Landscape Overlay. It is considered that since the characteristics preferred future character of these areas is similar to that within the areas already subject to the Significant Landscape Overlay schedule 2, that this Overlay should be amended to include the areas within Precinct 3. The provisions of this Overlay are complex and the schedule should be referred to for specific requirements. In general the schedule requires a permit to :

- Remove, destroy or lop a tree with a single trunk circumference greater than 0.5 metre at a height of one metre above ground level.
- Buildings over 8 metres in height.
- Buildings set back less than 6 metres from the front boundary if single storey or 10 metres if two storey.
- Buildings set back minimum distances from side boundaries.
- Buildings over 25% site coverage at ground level and 15% at first floor level.
- Buildings or works setback less than 4 metres from trees.
- Works comprising hard surfaces that are greater than 17% of the site.

Various exemptions apply.

The recommended planning scheme amendment would therefore comprise a map amendment to include the areas within precinct 3 of this Study within the SLO2.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct One

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



DESCRIPTION

The areas within this Precinct are characterised by dwellings set within established, largely exotic gardens with regular setbacks. There are pockets where native trees are common. Buildings are generally low lying, with hipped and gabled roofs, and although two storey is common in some streets these buildings generally do not dominate the streetscape. The streetscapes have an openness created by the low to average height front fencing, and a lack of front fencing in some courts enabling a view of the dwellings and gardens from the street, and the spaces between buildings that allow glimpses of backyard planting. Properties adjacent to the SLO2 area have a backdrop of large native and indigenous trees, which could be further enhanced by planting on nearby sites. Large trees are frequent, and these are complemented by medium to large street trees.

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- > Architecture is predominantly post-War with scattered 70-90s of multi-unit and two storey infill development
- > Gardens are generally open, many well-established with mixed species, predominantly exotic plants and scattered large Pinoaks, Liquidambar, Spotted Gums or Lemon-scented gums.
- > Setbacks tend to be spacious 6-7 metres from the front, & side setbacks of 1 & 3-4 metres
- > Front fences are predominantly medium-low (1.2-0.8m) in height.
- > Roads are sealed with upstanding kerbs and footpaths on both sides of the street.
- > Street trees are inconsistent in size, spacing and species, with many 70s Prunus/ Native mix, inter-planted with more recent indigenous species.
- > This precinct abuts the SLO2 area along several roads, and views are available from some parts down to the tree canopy of the SLO area.

COMMUNITY VALUES

- > Retaining tree canopy and old habitat trees for wildlife.
- > Low and open fence styles.
- > Spacious setbacks of dwellings.
- > The diversity of single storey housing styles.
- > Siting and design of dwellings to provide solar access and retention of space for treed garden.
- > Leafy gardens and indigenous plants.
- > Mature street trees in nature strips.
- > Sympathetic redevelopment
- > Appropriate guidelines for vegetation removal and landscape planning for new development.

PREFERRED NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

THE ESTABLISHED GARDEN SETTINGS OF THE DWELLINGS AND OPENNESS OF THE STREETSCAPES WILL BE MAINTAINED AND STRENGTHENED, AND ABUTAL WITH THE SLO2 AREA ENHANCED, BY:

- > Encouraging the retention of existing trees and the planting of new trees wherever possible;
- > Ensuring particular attention to the retention and planting of native trees on sites adjacent to the SLO2 area;
- > Ensuring buildings are setback a substantial distance from at least one side boundary or the rear boundary;
- > Ensuring buildings are setback from the front boundary in accordance with the predominant setback in the street;
- > Ensuring buildings are sited and designed so as not to dominate the streetscape;
- > Ensuring front fences are low to average in height;
- > Encouraging consistent street tree planting.

ISSUES/THREATS

- > Removal of large trees
- > Boundary to boundary development
- > High, solid front fencing

DRAFT

This brochure provides guidelines for the design of new dwellings and dwelling extensions to ensure that proposals assist in achieving the preferred neighbourhood character for the precinct. The guidelines will be used in assessing planning applications.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct One

DESIGN GUIDELINES

CHARACTER ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID	ILLUSTRATION
Vegetation	To maintain and strengthen the garden settings of the dwellings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Retain large trees and provide for the planting of trees wherever possible. (Locate footings outside root zone.) > Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all planning applications. > Dwellings should be setback at least 5m from a rear or side boundary to accommodate vegetation. 	<p><i>Removal of large trees.</i></p> <p><i>Lack of landscaping and vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>Extensive paving of the front yard.</i></p> <p><i>Retention and planting of environmental weeds.</i></p>	
Siting	To maintain the consistency of building front setbacks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The front setback of buildings should be no less than the average setback of the adjoining two dwellings. 	<p><i>Buildings that are set further forward than the closest of the buildings on the adjoining two properties.</i></p>	
	To reflect the rhythm of existing dwelling spacing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Buildings should be setback at least 1 metre from one side boundary. > Dwellings should be located at least 5m from a side or rear boundary to accommodate vegetation. 	<p><i>Boundary to boundary development.</i></p>	
	To minimise the dominance of car storage facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Locate garages and carports to the side or rear, behind the line of the dwelling. 	<p><i>Garages forward of the dwelling.</i></p>	
Building Form and Height	To ensure buildings do not dominate the streetscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Respect the predominant building height in the street and nearby properties. 	<p><i>Dwellings that exceed by more than one storey the predominant building height in the street and nearby properties.</i></p> <p><i>Large, 'boxy' buildings with unarticulated wall surfaces.</i></p>	
Front Boundary Treatment	To maintain the openness of the streetscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Provide low or open style front fencing up to 1.2m in height, other than in exceptional circumstances. 	<p><i>High, solid front fencing.</i></p>	
Sites Adjacent to the SLO2 Boundary	To enhance and encourage the extension of the bushland qualities of the adjoining Significant Landscape Overlay 2 area into the surrounding residential area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Building mass should be located on the site away from the SLO boundary. > Minimise hard surfaces on sites adjoining the SLO2 environs. > Retain native vegetation and plant complementary native or indigenous vegetation wherever possible. 	<p><i>Buildings located on the SLO2 boundary.</i></p> <p><i>Extensive hard paved surfaces.</i></p>	

DRAFT

The Objectives define the intention of each Character Element. The Design Responses are assumed to satisfy the relevant Objective. Refer to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme for other Requirements.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Two

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



DESCRIPTION

The topography of this Precinct, which is located around a small gully and ridge, makes this area distinctive and has led to a mix of building styles and forms. Dwelling styles include a mixture from the post-war to present day, in both timber and brick, and frequent two storey or split level due to the slope of the land. The cohesiveness of the area is derived from the large native and exotic street trees that are a particular feature and sometimes form an avenue. Dwellings are set within established, predominantly exotic gardens and regular setbacks and low or open style fences create an openness to the streetscape. The street trees are occasionally complemented by large trees in private gardens. Along the eastern part of the Precinct trees in the SLO2 area provide a backdrop that could be enhanced by planting on adjacent properties.

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- > Architecture is predominantly post -War, with some 70-present infill development. Dwelling style is influenced by the sloping allotments, creating opportunities for many two storey or split-level housing styles.
- > Gardens are mixed, with established mixed species predominating and scattered large trees.
- > Setbacks vary due to topography on the west side of Salisbury Av in particular, predominantly 6-7 metre front and 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks.
- > Mixture of timber and brick dwellings.
- > Front fences vary, with retaining walls and a sense of openness predominating. Otherwise low-average front fences predominate.
- > Street trees are mixed species and sizes, mostly regularly spaced. An avenue on Salisbury Av is large and established.
- > Roads are sealed with upstanding kerbs and footpaths of both sides of the street.
- > Topography is sloping, at times moderately steep.
- > This Precinct abuts the SLO2 area to the east.

COMMUNITY VALUES

- > Retaining tree canopy and old habitat trees for wildlife.
- > The importance of preserving tree canopy and existing significant trees.
- > Spacious setbacks of dwellings.
- > The diversity of single storey housing styles.
- > Low and open streetscape.
- > Appropriate landscape planning for new development.
- > Maintaining the atmosphere of leafy front gardens.
- > Conservation of the indigenous environment.

PREFERRED NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

THE GARDEN SETTINGS OF THE DWELLINGS AND OPENNESS OF THE STREETSCAPES WILL BE MAINTAINED AND STRENGTHENED AND ABUTAL WITH THE SLO2 AREA COULD BE ENHANCED BY:

- > Encouraging the retention of existing trees and the planting of new trees wherever possible;
- > Ensuring particular attention to the retention and planting of native trees on sites adjacent to the SLO2 area;
- > Ensuring buildings are setback from both side boundaries and the rear boundary;
- > Ensuring buildings are setback from the front boundary in accordance with the predominant setback in the street;
- > Ensuring buildings are sited and designed to follow the contours of the site;
- > Ensuring front fences are low to average in height;
- > Maintaining the large street trees.

ISSUES/THREATS

- > Removal of large trees (including street trees).
- > Boundary to boundary development.
- > High, solid front fencing.

DRAFT

This brochure provides guidelines for the design of new dwellings and dwelling extensions to ensure that proposals assist in achieving the preferred neighbourhood character for the precinct. The guidelines will be used in assessing planning applications.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Two

DESIGN GUIDELINES

CHARACTER ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID	ILLUSTRATION
Vegetation	To maintain and strengthen the garden settings of the dwellings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Retain large trees and provide for the planting of trees wherever possible. (Locate footings outside root zone.) > Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all planning applications. 	<p>Removal of large trees.</p> <p>Lack of landscaping and vegetation.</p> <p>Extensive paving of the front yard.</p> <p>Retention and planting of environmental weeds.</p>	
Siting	To maintain the consistency of building front setbacks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The front setback of buildings should be no less than the average setback of the adjoining two dwellings. 	Buildings that are set further forward than the closest of the buildings on the adjoining two properties.	
	To reflect the rhythm of existing dwelling spacing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Buildings should be setback from both side boundaries a minimum of 1m. > Dwellings should be located at least 5m from a side or rear boundary to accommodate vegetation. 	Boundary to boundary development.	
	To minimise the dominance of car storage facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Locate garages and carports to the side or rear, behind the line of the dwelling. 	Garages forward of the dwelling.	
Building Form and Height	To minimise the impact of the building on the landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Buildings should be designed to follow the contours of the site. 	<p>Major excavation to accommodate dwellings, driveways or associated outbuildings.</p> <p>Large, 'boxy' buildings with unarticulated wall surfaces.</p>	
Front Boundary Treatment	To maintain the openness of the streetscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Front fencing should be limited to 1.2m in height, other than in exceptional circumstances. 	High, solid front fencing.	
Sites Adjacent to the SLO2 Boundary	To enhance and encourage the extension of the bushland qualities of the adjoining SLO2 area into the surrounding residential area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Building mass should be located on the site away from the SLO boundary. > Minimise hard surfaces on sites adjoining the SLO2 environs. > Retain native vegetation and plant complementary native or indigenous vegetation wherever possible. 	<p>Buildings located on the SLO2 boundary.</p> <p>Extensive hard paved surfaces.</p>	

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The Objectives define the intention of each Character Element. The Design Responses are assumed to satisfy the relevant Objective. Refer to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme for other Requirements.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Three

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



DESCRIPTION

This Precinct is distinctive due to the frequency of very large native and indigenous street trees and clusters of large trees, particularly on the east side of Sheehans Street, which frame the vista along the streetscape. Dwellings are set within established to bushy gardens and are occasionally hidden from view by the vegetation. A frequent lack of front fencing or low fences provides an open feel to the streetscape. Despite the presence of the large indigenous trees, there is a strong exotic feel to the streetscape due to the exotic shrubbery, deciduous trees and informal nature strip planting. The vegetation in this Precinct complements the backdrop of canopy trees of the vegetation-protected area and creek environment that abuts to the north.

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- > Architecture is predominantly single storey post War styles.
- > Gardens are established with mixed species with many large exotic, native and indigenous native trees, giving a distinct bushy feel.
- > Setbacks vary, but mostly spacious 6-7 metres from the front and 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks.
- > Front fences are mixture of either low and open, or varying heights.
- > Street trees are mixed in size, height and spacing, featuring some very large indigenous eucalypts.
- > Topography slopes gently to the north, the street enclosed by the large street trees.
- > Roads are sealed with up standing kerbs and footpaths on both sides of the street.

COMMUNITY VALUES

- > Retaining tree canopy and old habitat trees for wildlife.
- > The abundant variety of vegetation types.
- > Spacious setbacks of dwellings.
- > The diversity of single storey housing styles.
- > Low and open fence styles.
- > Leafy gardens with space for trees.
- > Appropriate guidelines for vegetation removal and landscape planning for new development.

PREFERRED NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

THE VEGETATION DOMINATED STREETSCAPE AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE CREEK ENVIRONS TO THE NORTH WILL BE MAINTAINED AND STRENGTHENED BY:

- > Ensuring large trees are retained and encouraging the planting of indigenous and complementary native trees and other vegetation;
- > Ensuring adequate space is allowed around dwellings to retain and accommodate large trees;
- > Ensuring front setbacks are consistent with others in the street, and are well vegetated;
- > Ensuring buildings are located below the predominant tree canopy height;
- > Ensuring building and impervious surface site coverage is minimised;
- > Encouraging the use of vegetation as an alternative to front fencing, and low to average height open style front fences;
- > Encouraging the maintenance of large native or indigenous street tree planting.

ISSUES/THREATS

- > Removal of large native trees
- > Insufficient front setbacks
- > High site coverage by buildings or impervious surfaces
- > High front fences

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This brochure provides guidelines for the design of new dwellings and dwelling extensions to ensure that proposals assist in achieving the preferred neighbourhood character for the precinct. The guidelines will be used in assessing planning applications.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Three

DESIGN GUIDELINES

CHARACTER ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID	ILLUSTRATION
Vegetation	To maintain and strengthen the bush garden setting and the relationship of the area to the SLO2 environs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Retain large trees wherever possible. (Locate footings outside root zone.) > Provide for the planting of indigenous and complementary native trees and other vegetation. > Ensure front setbacks are well vegetated with substantial shrubs and trees. > Dwellings should be located at least 5m from a rear or side boundary to accommodate vegetation. > Prepare a landscape plan demonstrating the above, to accompany all planning applications. 	<p><i>Removal of large trees.</i></p> <p><i>Lack of landscaping and vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>Extensive paving and other impervious surfaces.</i></p> <p><i>Retention and planting of environmental weeds.</i></p>	
Siting	To maintain the consistency of building front setbacks.	> The front setback of buildings should be no less than the average setback of the adjoining two dwellings.	<i>Buildings that are set further forward than the closest of the buildings on the adjoining two properties.</i>	
	To reflect the rhythm of existing dwelling spacing.	> Buildings should be setback from both side boundaries a minimum of 1 metre.	<i>Buildings located on the side boundary.</i>	
	To minimise the dominance of car storage facilities.	> Locate garages and carports to the side or rear, behind the line of the dwelling.	<i>Garages and carports forward of the dwelling.</i>	
Building Form and Height	To ensure buildings do not dominate the streetscape.	> Buildings should not protrude above the predominant tree canopy height.	<p><i>Buildings that exceed the predominant tree canopy height.</i></p> <p><i>Large, 'boxy' buildings with unarticulated wall surfaces,</i></p>	
Site Coverage	To ensure adequate space is available on private land for the retention and planting of vegetation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The building site coverage should not exceed 40% and the total hard surface coverage should not exceed 60%. > Any proposal that exceeds the above site coverage measures, must demonstrate compliance with the Site Coverage and all other Objectives. 	<i>Total hard surface site coverage greater than 65%.</i>	
Front Boundary Treatment	To maintain the openness of the streetscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Provide low or open style front fencing up to 1.2m in height. > Use vegetation as an alternative to fencing wherever possible. 	<i>High or solid front fencing.</i>	

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The Objectives define the intention of each Character Element. The Design Responses are assumed to satisfy the relevant Objective. Refer to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme for other Requirements.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Four

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



DESCRIPTION

This Precinct is distinctive due to the high proportion of medium density developments and the limited space around many buildings for substantial planting. Building styles vary from single storey post-war era to recent two storey development. Gardens are generally exotic and lower-level and contain few large trees. Front and side setbacks are sometimes small, although are typically larger on sites that have not been redeveloped. Large, regularly spaced street trees provide an important unifying element to the streetscapes. Trees adjoining 'Elmore Walk' and the verge along the railway line provide an important backdrop and potential 'greenlink'.

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- > Architecture is a mix of single-storey post-War styles and many multi-unit developments from the 1970s, 80s and 90s.
- > Gardens with exotic lower-level plants predominate, with scattered large trees to the rear of properties.
- > Front setbacks vary from 4 metres to a spacious 6-7 metres, and side setbacks are 1 & 3-4 metres.
- > Roads are sealed with up standing kerbs and predominantly footpaths on both sides of the street.
- > Front fences are mixed, with South Parade more open and the main streets having medium- high front fences.
- > Street trees are mixed species and generally large and regularly spaced.
- > Topography is gently sloping to the west and north.
- > This Precinct abuts the SLO2 area to the south of Laburnum Street.

COMMUNITY VALUES

- > Sympathetic, single storey dwelling styles.
- > The abundance of wildlife and natural environment with indigenous species.
- > Preservation of tree canopy and understorey.
- > The green streetscapes and proximity to bushland.
- > The treed setting and soft surfaces of the area.
- > A sense of privacy in an adequate backyard.
- > Spacious setbacks and sense of openness.
- > Private gardens and the combinations of plants that provides for wildlife breeding sites.
- > Sympathetic redevelopment that contains space for gardens.

PREFERRED NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

THE INTERFACE OF DEVELOPMENT WITH THE STREETScape AND VEGETATION AROUND DWELLINGS WILL BE IMPROVED BY:

- > Ensuring new development provides for the retention and planting of substantial vegetation;
- > Ensuring dwellings are setback from at least one side boundary and the rear boundary;
- > Ensuring dwellings are setback from the front boundary sufficient distance to adequately provide for substantial vegetation and gardens;
- > Encouraging open style front fencing or the use of vegetation as an alternative to front fencing;
- > Ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of the large street trees, and trees along the railway line.

ISSUES/THREATS

- > Boundary to boundary development
- > Lack of provision for vegetation
- > High, solid front fences

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This brochure provides guidelines for the design of new dwellings and dwelling extensions to ensure that proposals assist in achieving the preferred neighbourhood character for the precinct. The guidelines will be used in assessing planning applications.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Four

DESIGN GUIDELINES

CHARACTER ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID	ILLUSTRATION
Vegetation	To improve the interface of new development with the streetscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Retain large trees and provide for the planting of trees wherever possible. (Locate footings outside root zone.) > Provide for the planting of substantial vegetation, particularly in the front setback. > Prepare a landscape plan demonstrating the above, to accompany all planning applications. 	<i>Removal of large trees.</i>	
Siting	To provide for adequate space in the front yard for substantial vegetation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The front setback of buildings should be no less than 6m or the average setback of the adjoining two dwellings, whichever is the greater. 	<i>Buildings that are set further forward than the closest of the buildings on the adjoining two properties.</i>	
	To reflect the rhythm of existing dwelling spacing and provide for side or rear garden planting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Buildings should be setback from both side boundaries. > Dwellings should be located at least 3m from a side or rear boundary to accommodate vegetation. 	<i>Boundary to boundary development.</i>	
	To minimise the dominance of car storage facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Locate garages and carports to the side or rear, behind the line of the dwelling. 	<i>Garages and carports forward of the dwelling.</i>	
Front Boundary Treatment	To encourage an openness to the streetscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Provide open style front fencing up to 1.2m in height. > Use vegetation as an alternative to fencing wherever possible. 	<i>High, solid front fencing.</i>	

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The Objectives define the intention of each Character Element. The Design Responses are assumed to satisfy the relevant Objective. Refer to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme for other Requirements.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Five

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



DESCRIPTION

This Precinct is distinctive due to the presence of buildings that date from the Victorian era, with a large proportion of Inter-war and immediate post-war styles with pitched roofs, and occasional new dwellings. The character of the area derives from this mixture of eras and the spacious, usually exotic garden surrounds, with some with large trees. Buildings are usually setback from both side boundaries allowing glimpses of rear garden planting. The streetscapes have an open, spacious feel due to the wide grassed verges in some streets and the low or open style fencing. Where they occur, street tree avenues and a backdrop of trees in the vegetation protected area to the south add to the garden dominated feel of the area, which could be enhanced along the boundary by complementary planting on abutting sites. The remaining bluestone kerbing and rear laneways are important to the historical context of the area.

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- > Architecture is a mix of late 19th Century to present reproduction styles, with many dwellings constructed between 1888 and 1925.
- > Predominantly single storey with frequent two storey.
- > Gardens are varied, with mostly established exotics and some bushy front gardens. There are some very large trees in front and rear yards.
- > Setbacks are spacious generally ranging from 13 metres to 7 metres from the front and 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks, with some buildings in grounds with substantial setbacks on all sides.
- > Street trees are a mix of large exotic avenue planting to mixed sizes, species and spacing. Some streets are enclosed with tree canopy.
- > Front fence styles are generally open or low.
- > Roads are sealed with either upstanding or bluestone kerbs, and footpaths on either side of the street. Occasional rear laneways remain.
- > Topography is sloping in the north.
- > This Precinct abuts the SLO2 area to the south and west, and provides a 'greenlink' between Morton Park and the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary.

COMMUNITY VALUES

- > Sympathetic, single storey dwelling styles.
- > The abundance of wildlife and natural environment.
- > Preservation of tree canopy and understorey.
- > Green streetscapes.
- > The treed setting and soft surfaces of the area.
- > The privacy of adequate backyard space.
- > Spacious setbacks and sense of openness.
- > Private gardens and the combinations of plants.
- > Sympathetic redevelopment.

PREFERRED NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

THE VARIETY OF HOUSING STYLES AND THE SPACIOUS GARDEN SETTINGS, AND ABUTMENT WITH THE SLO AREA AND THE BLACKBURN LAKE SANCTUARY, WILL BE MAINTAINED AND ENHANCED BY:

- > Encouraging the retention and restoration of pre World War 2 dwellings;
- > Encouraging the retention of large trees, the planting of indigenous trees, and garden planning;
- > Ensuring particular attention to the retention and planting of native trees on sites adjacent to the SLO2 area;
- > Ensuring buildings have large setbacks from both side boundaries and the rear boundary;
- > Ensuring buildings are setback a substantial distance from the front boundary in accordance with the predominant setback in the street;
- > Encouraging new buildings to respect the predominant single storey, pitched roof building forms in the area;
- > Ensuring front fences are low or average height and open style;
- > Encouraging the continuation and expansion of street tree avenues.

ISSUES/THREATS

- > Demolition of pre WW2 dwellings.
- > Lack of garden space or planning.
- > Boundary to boundary development.
- > Large bulky buildings.
- > High front fences.

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This brochure provides guidelines for the design of new dwellings and dwelling extensions to ensure that proposals assist in achieving the preferred neighbourhood character for the precinct. The guidelines will be used in assessing planning applications.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Five

DESIGN GUIDELINES

CHARACTER ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID	ILLUSTRATION
Vegetation	To maintain and strengthen the garden settings of the dwellings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Retain large trees and provide for the planting of indigenous and complementary native vegetation wherever possible. (Locate footings outside root zone.) > Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all planning applications. 	<p><i>Removal of large trees.</i></p> <p><i>Lack of landscaping and vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>Extensive paving of the front yard.</i></p>	
Existing Buildings	To encourage the retention and restoration of buildings that contribute to the character of the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Retain and restore pre World War 2 dwellings wherever possible. 	<i>Demolition of parts of intact or in good condition pre World War 2 dwellings that are visible from the street.</i>	
Siting	To maintain the consistency of building front setbacks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The front setback of buildings should be a minimum of 7 metres and not less than the average of the two adjoining buildings, whichever is the greater. 	<i>Buildings that are set further forward than the closest of the buildings on the adjoining two properties.</i>	
	To reflect the rhythm of existing dwelling spacing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Buildings should be setback at least 1m from one side boundary and 3m from the other. > Dwellings should be located at least 5m from the rear boundary to accommodate vegetation. 	<i>Boundary to boundary development.</i>	
	To minimise the dominance of car storage facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Locate garages and carports to the side or rear, behind the line of the dwelling. > Use rear laneways where possible. 	<i>Garages and carports forward of the dwelling.</i>	
Building Form and Height	To ensure buildings do not dominate the streetscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Respect the predominant building height in the street and nearby properties. > Incorporate pitched roof forms on buildings visible from the street. 	<p><i>Dwellings that exceed by more than one storey the predominant building height in the street and nearby properties.</i></p> <p><i>Large, 'boxy' buildings with unarticulated wall surfaces.</i></p>	
Front Boundary Treatment	To maintain the openness of the streetscapes and fencing appropriate to the building era.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Provide low or open style front fencing up to 1.2m in height, other than in exceptional circumstances. > Fence style should be appropriate to the building era. 	<i>High front fencing.</i>	
Sites adjacent to the SLO boundary	To enhance and encourage the extension of the bushland qualities of the SLO2 area into the surrounding residential area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Building mass should be located on the site away from the SLO boundary. > Minimise hard surfaces on sites adjoining the Lake environs. > Retain native vegetation and plant complementary native or indigenous vegetation wherever possible. 	<p><i>Buildings located on the SLO boundary.</i></p> <p><i>Extensive hard paved surfaces.</i></p> <p><i>Retention and planting of environmental weeds.</i></p>	

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BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Six

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



DESCRIPTION

The Precinct contains a mixture of predominantly low scale housing styles within mixed native and exotic established gardens that sometimes contain large indigenous trees. While front setbacks vary, buildings are usually setback from both side boundaries. Surrounding larger trees in the vegetation protected area to the east and the adjacent school site and Park to the west, combined with the large canopy street trees, create an enclosed, secluded feel. The area has the potential to provide a greater visual and ecological link between the Park and the SLO2 area through more complementary planting. Front fence styles are mixed, but low or open styles are common.

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- > Architecture is a mix of single storey 1970-80s and post-War styles, with multi-unit development on Glen Ebor Street.
- > Gardens are a mix of species in predominantly established settings, with units having low level styles. Some large trees and indigenous eucalypts present.
- > Front setbacks vary between 4 and 7 metres, with 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks.
- > Street trees are large, regularly spaced, mixed species.
- > Front fences are mixed.
- > Roads are sealed with upstanding kerbs and footpaths on both sides of the street.
- > This Precinct abuts Morton Park to the west and part of the SLO2 area to the east.

COMMUNITY VALUES

- > Sympathetic, single storey dwelling styles.
- > The abundance of wildlife and natural environment with indigenous species.
- > Preservation of tree canopy and understorey.
- > The green streetscapes and proximity to bushland.
- > The treed setting and soft surfaces of the area.
- > A sense of privacy in an adequate backyard.
- > Spacious setbacks and sense of openness.
- > Private gardens and the combinations of plants that provides for wildlife breeding sites.
- > Sympathetic redevelopment that contain space for gardens.

PREFERRED NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

THE GARDEN SETTING OF THE DWELLINGS WILL BE MAINTAINED AND THE NATIVE TREE ENVIRONMENT AND ADJUTAL WITH THE ADJOINING SLO AREA ENHANCED BY:

- > Encouraging the retention and planting of trees, particularly indigenous and native species;
- > Ensuring buildings are offset from both side boundaries and the rear boundary;
- > Ensuring buildings respect the low scale nature of the building form;
- > Encouraging low or open style front fencing.

ISSUES/THREATS

- > Removal of large indigenous and native trees.
- > Large bulky buildings.
- > High front fences.

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This brochure provides guidelines for the design of new dwellings and dwelling extensions to ensure that proposals assist in achieving the preferred neighbourhood character for the precinct. The guidelines will be used in assessing planning applications.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Six

DESIGN GUIDELINES

CHARACTER ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID	ILLUSTRATION
Vegetation	To maintain and strengthen the garden settings of the dwellings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Retain large trees and provide for the planting of indigenous and complementary native trees wherever possible. (Locate footings outside root zone.) > Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all planning applications. 	<p><i>Removal of large native trees.</i></p> <p><i>Lack of landscaping and vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>Extensive paving of the front yard.</i></p> <p><i>Retention and planting of environmental weeds.</i></p>	
Siting	To maintain the consistency of building front setbacks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The front setback of buildings should be no less than the average setback of the adjoining two dwellings. 	<p><i>Buildings that are set further forward than the closest of the buildings on the adjoining two properties.</i></p>	
	To reflect the rhythm of existing dwelling spacing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Buildings should be setback from both side boundaries a minimum of 1m. > Dwellings should be located at least 5m from a side or rear boundary to accommodate vegetation. 	<p><i>Boundary to boundary development.</i></p>	
	To minimise the dominance of car storage facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Locate garages and carports to the side or rear, behind the line of the dwelling. 	<p><i>Garages forward of the dwelling.</i></p>	
Building Form and Height	To ensure buildings do not dominate the streetscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Respect the predominant building height in the street and nearby properties. 	<p><i>Large bulky buildings.</i></p>	
Front Boundary Treatment	To maintain the openness of the streetscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Provide front fencing up to 1.2m in height, other than in exceptional circumstances. 	<p><i>High front fencing.</i></p>	

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The Objectives define the intention of each Character Element. The Design Responses are assumed to satisfy the relevant Objective. Refer to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme for other Requirements.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Seven

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



DESCRIPTION

The Precinct is distinctive due to its predominantly post-war housing stock and spacious native and exotic garden surrounds. The proximity of the creek and topography of the area within a gully is reflected in the presence of tall native and exotic trees in many gardens, and bushy understorey vegetation in some. The courts have an open, spacious feel due to the irregular orientation of the dwellings, spacious front gardens and side setbacks, and low or a lack of front fencing. Street tree planting is irregular with no particular consistency.

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- > Architecture is predominantly post- War, with some streets with up to 50% two storey development.
- > Private gardens are established with mixed species, some gardens very bushy with large, scattered trees and some remnant vegetation.
- > Setbacks are spacious 6-7 metres at the front, some substantially greater, with at least 1 & 3-4 metre side frontages.
- > Front fences are generally open, with some low-open with no side fences forward of the dwelling.
- > Street trees are mixed in species, size and spacing.
- > Topography slopes towards the gully to the north, providing good views to the creek frontage and the many indigenous and exotic canopy trees.

COMMUNITY VALUES

- > Retaining and maintaining existing trees and vegetation in the area.
- > Mature street trees along nature strips.
- > Preserving habitat for birdlife.
- > Sympathetic redevelopment.
- > The existing tree canopy.

PREFERRED NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

THE SPACIOUSNESS OF THE AREA AND SUBSTANTIAL GARDEN SETTINGS WILL BE MAINTAINED AND ENHANCED BY:

- > Encouraging the retention of tall trees and planting of trees wherever possible.
- > Ensuring buildings are setback a substantial distance from the front and rear boundaries.
- > Ensuring buildings are setback from both side boundaries.
- > Ensuring buildings are set within the landscape.
- > Encouraging low or average height open style front fences, or none where this predominates in the street.
- > Encouraging the planting of consistent street trees to complement the garden environment.

ISSUES/THREATS

- > Removal of large trees.
- > Buildings built too close to the front or side boundaries.
- > High front fences.

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This brochure provides guidelines for the design of new dwellings and dwelling extensions to ensure that proposals assist in achieving the preferred neighbourhood character for the precinct. The guidelines will be used in assessing planning applications.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Seven

DESIGN GUIDELINES

CHARACTER ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID	ILLUSTRATION
Vegetation	To maintain and strengthen the bush garden setting and the relationship of the area to the SLO2 environs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Retain large trees wherever possible. (Locate footings outside root zone.) > Provide for the planting of indigenous and complementary native trees and other vegetation. > Ensure front setbacks are well vegetated with substantial shrubs and trees. > Prepare a landscape plan demonstrating the above, to accompany all planning applications. 	<p><i>Removal of large trees.</i></p> <p><i>Lack of landscaping and vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>Extensive paving and other impervious surfaces.</i></p> <p><i>Retention and planting of environmental weeds.</i></p>	
Siting	To maintain the consistency of building front setbacks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The front setback of buildings should be a minimum of 7 metres or no less than the average setback of the adjoining two dwellings, whichever is greater. 	<p><i>Buildings that are set further forward than the closest of the buildings on the adjoining two properties.</i></p>	
	To reflect the rhythm of existing dwelling spacing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Buildings should be setback from both side boundaries and a minimum of 2m from one side boundary. > Dwellings should be located at least 5m from a side or rear boundary to accommodate vegetation. 	<p><i>Buildings located on the side boundary.</i></p>	
	To minimise the dominance of car storage facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Locate garages and carports to the side or rear, behind the line of the dwelling. 	<p><i>Garages and carports forward of the dwelling.</i></p>	
Building Form and Height	To ensure buildings do not dominate the streetscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Buildings should not protrude above the predominant tree canopy height. 	<p><i>Buildings that exceed the predominant tree canopy height.</i></p>	
	To minimise the impact of the building on the landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Buildings should be designed to follow the contours of the site. 	<p><i>Major excavation to accommodate dwellings, driveways or associated appurtenances.</i></p>	
Site Coverage	To ensure adequate space is available on private land for the retention and planting of vegetation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The building site coverage should not exceed 40% and the total hard surface coverage should not exceed 60%. > Any proposal that exceeds the above site coverage measures, must demonstrate compliance with the Site Coverage and all other Objectives. 	<p><i>Total hard surface site coverage greater than 65%.</i></p>	
Front Boundary Treatment	To maintain the openness of the streetscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Provide low or open style front fencing up to 1.2m in height. > Use vegetation as an alternative to fencing wherever possible. 	<p><i>High or solid front fencing.</i></p>	

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BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Eight

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



DESCRIPTION

This is a newly developed area where the dwellings dominate the streetscape due to their two storey form and location relatively close to the front and side boundaries. The gardens are still establishing although remnant eucalypts and large exotic trees occasionally provide a backdrop. The sloping topography and views to the south and west has encouraged the two storey form. The streetscapes are open to the building due to a general lack of front fencing. The area has a bushy feel near creek frontage due to remnant vegetation and enclosed skyline from large trees situated in the gully. Street trees could compensate for the small garden sizes.

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- > Architecture is 1990s brick and reproduction styles, predominantly two storeys with garages forward of the dwelling.
- > Private gardens are predominantly lower level exotic styles with scattered large exotic trees, with indigenous remnant eucalypts along the creek frontage.
- > Front setbacks are predominantly 3-4 metres and 1 metre or 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks
- > Street trees are small, exotic and irregularly spaced
- > Frontages are open with some fences forward of the dwelling
- > Roads are sealed with roll-over kerbs and no footpaths
- > Topography is sloping with views to the creek frontage in the gully to the south

COMMUNITY VALUES

THE EASTERN BLACKBURN LAKE COMMUNITY VALUES:

- > Retaining and maintaining existing trees and vegetation in the area.
- > Mature street trees along nature strips.
- > Preserving habitat for birdlife.
- > Sympathetic redevelopment.
- > The existing tree canopy.

PREFERRED NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

THE BUILT FORM DOMINATED STREETSAPES WILL BE ENHANCED BY:

- > Encouraging the retention of existing large trees;
- > Ensuring front fences are not constructed;
- > Encouraging the planting of large street trees at regular intervals and in pockets to reinforce the creek environs.

ISSUES/THREATS

- > Front fences.
- > Removal of remaining tall trees.

DRAFT

This brochure provides guidelines for the design of new dwellings and dwelling extensions to ensure that proposals assist in achieving the preferred neighbourhood character for the precinct. The guidelines will be used in assessing planning applications.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Eight

DESIGN GUIDELINES

CHARACTER ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID	ILLUSTRATION
Vegetation	To strengthen the garden settings of the dwellings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Retain large trees and provide for the planting of trees wherever possible. (Locate footings outside root zone.) > Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all planning applications. 	<p><i>Removal of large trees.</i></p> <p><i>Extensive paving of the front yard.</i></p> <p><i>Retention and planting of environmental weeds.</i></p>	
Siting	To maintain the consistency of building front setbacks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The front setback of buildings should be no less than the average setback of the adjoining two dwellings. 	<p><i>Buildings that are set further forward than the closest of the buildings on the adjoining two properties.</i></p>	
Front Boundary Treatment	To maintain the openness of the streetscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Provide no front fencing. 	<p><i>Front fencing.</i></p>	

DRAFT

The Objectives define the intention of each Character Element. The Design Responses are assumed to satisfy the relevant Objective. Refer to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme for other Requirements.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Nine

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



DESCRIPTION

This is a newly developed area on a sloping hillside where the dwellings dominate the streetscape due to their frequent two storey form and small front and side setbacks. The gardens in some areas are still establishing and generally low level and exotic as there is little space for large trees. Occasional remnant eucalypts and pines provide a backdrop near the gully to the south. The streetscapes are open to the building line due to a lack of front fencing and grassed verges that extend to the roadway. Regular street trees are not evident, but could compensate for the small garden sizes.

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- > Architecture is late 1980s brick and some newer reproduction styles, mostly two storeys with garages to the front of dwellings.
- > Gardens are lower level or low level exotic styles.
- > Front setbacks are 3-4 metres with 1 metre side setbacks.
- > There are generally no street trees, some small exotic species or remnant vegetation near gully.
- > There are no front fences, some also with no side fences.
- > Roads are sealed with roll-over kerbs and either one or sometimes two footpaths. Wide grassed verges in some streets.
- > Topography is sloping to hilly with views to the SLO area to the west and some to the large Forest Hill Chase shopping centre building to the south.

COMMUNITY VALUES

- > Retaining and maintaining existing trees and vegetation in the area.
- > Mature street trees along nature strips.
- > Preserving habitat for birdlife.
- > Sympathetic redevelopment.
- > The existing tree canopy.

PREFERRED NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

THE BUILT FORM DOMINATED STREETSAPES WILL BE ENHANCED BY:

- > Encouraging the retention of existing large trees.
- > Ensuring front fences are not constructed.
- > Encouraging the planting of large indigenous street trees at regular intervals and in pockets, to reinforce the remnant trees and nearby lake environs.

ISSUES/THREATS

- > Front fences.
- > Removal of remaining tall trees.

DRAFT

This brochure provides guidelines for the design of new dwellings and dwelling extensions to ensure that proposals assist in achieving the preferred neighbourhood character for the precinct. The guidelines will be used in assessing planning applications.



BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Precinct Nine

DESIGN GUIDELINES

CHARACTER ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID	ILLUSTRATION
Vegetation	To strengthen the garden settings of the dwellings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Retain large trees and provide for the planting of trees wherever possible. (Locate footings outside root zone.) > Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all planning applications. 	<p><i>Removal of large trees.</i></p> <p><i>Extensive paving of the front yard.</i></p>	
Siting	To maintain the consistency of building front setbacks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The front setback of buildings should be no less than the average setback of the adjoining two dwellings. 	<p><i>Buildings that are set further forward than the closest of the buildings on the adjoining two properties.</i></p>	
Front Boundary Treatment	To maintain the openness of the streetscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Provide no front fencing. 	<p><i>Front fencing.</i></p>	

DRAFT

The Objectives define the intention of each Character Element. The Design Responses are assumed to satisfy the relevant Objective. Refer to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme for other Requirements.



ABOUT THE STUDY

The aim of the Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study is to ensure that residential development respects and enhances the landscape and neighbourhood character of the area. The Study Area includes residential areas surrounding the existing areas within Significant Landscape Overlays 1 and 2 in the Whitehorse Planning Scheme. The areas within the Overlays are subject to particular planning controls in order to retain and enhance their heavily vegetated character. The Study Area is shown on the map overpage.

The landscape character of the Blackburn Lake surrounds often derives from the amount and type of vegetation around the houses. The relationship of the buildings to the landscape and to the adjoining Blackburn Lake sanctuary and the Creek environs is a common consideration throughout. The Study describes the distinctive characteristics and the future preferred character of each part of the Study Area, developed with community input, using words and pictures. It goes on to translate these variations in character into planning guidelines and policies. These guidelines are to be used in formulating and assessing development proposals.

The study defines a total of 9 precincts in the Study Area. The precincts were defined mainly on the basis of the distinctive relationship of dwellings to the streetscape and landscape found in different parts of the area, vegetation type and density and geographic location. All precincts are shown on the map on the rear of this brochure.

The Study was conducted with considerable input from a Steering Committee of community representatives from within the Study Area.

HOW TO USE THE PRECINCT BROCHURES

A PRECINCT BROCHURE HAS BEEN PUBLISHED FOR EACH PRECINCT IN THE STUDY AREA. A SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS OF THE PRECINCT BROCHURES FOLLOWS:

CHARACTER STATEMENT

DESCRIPTION Summarises the elements of the Precinct that make it different or distinctive.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS List of key elements of the existing neighbourhood character, covering aspects such as vegetation density and type, era and style of development, setbacks, front fence style and public domain treatments such as street trees and kerb materials.

COMMUNITY VALUES A summary of values raised by the community of the Study Area through a workshop held in the area during preparation of the study, and by the Steering Committee.

PREFERRED NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER STATEMENT Establishes a future direction for development in the precinct, and then lists the key components of that direction. Issues/threats to the achievement of the preferred neighbourhood character are also listed.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

A tabulation of Objectives, Design Responses and 'Avoid' statements for each listed Character Element. The columns of the table are explained below.

CHARACTER ELEMENT lists aspects of the neighbourhood character such as vegetation, siting, height and form and front boundary treatment.

OBJECTIVES state the intention and desired outcome for that character element.

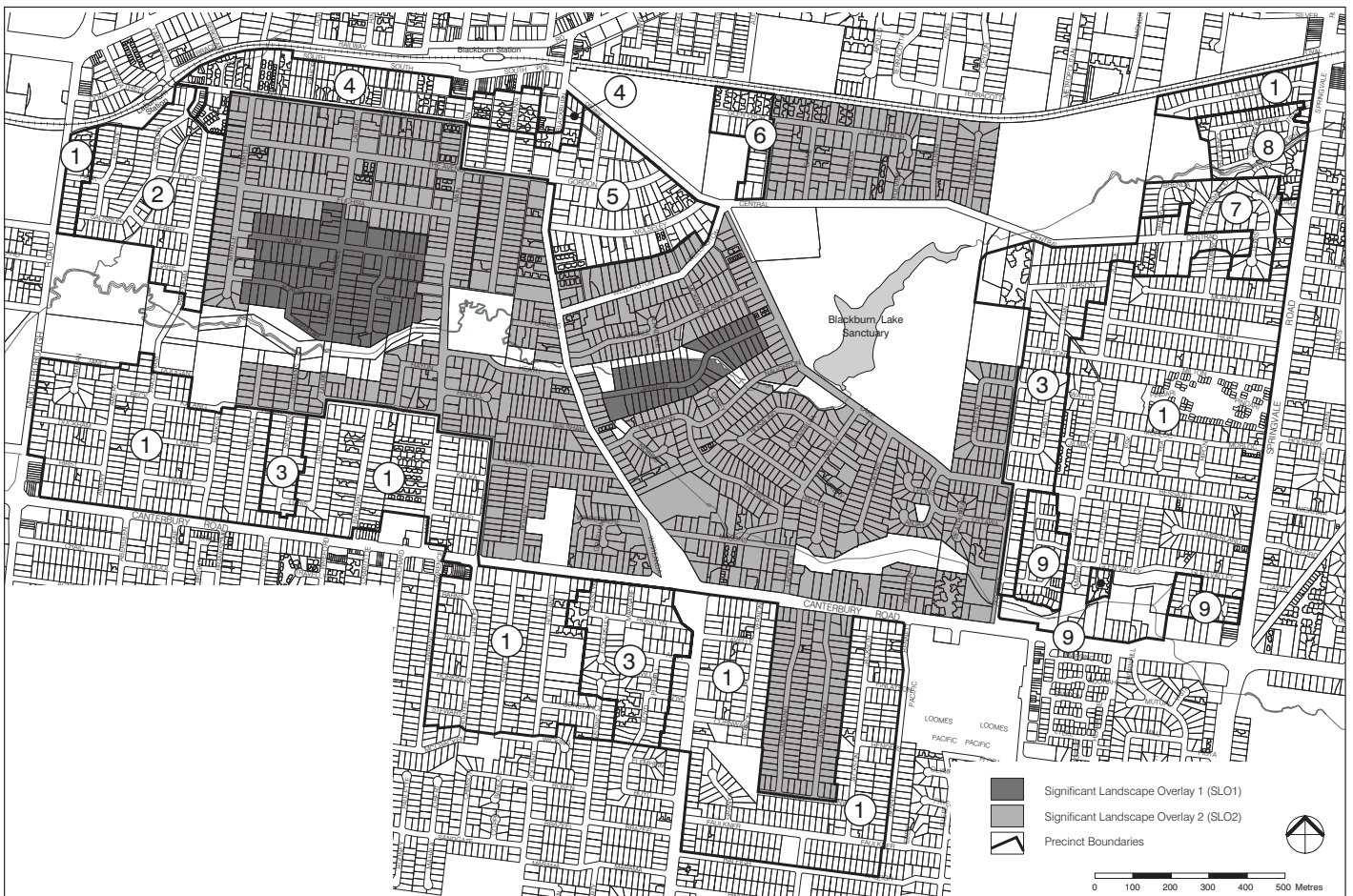
DESIGN RESPONSES are the preferred method to satisfy the relevant character element objective(s). Other methods of achieving the relevant objective may be demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction.

AVOID statements specify inappropriate design responses.

ILLUSTRATIONS visually demonstrate some of the Design Response or Avoid statements.

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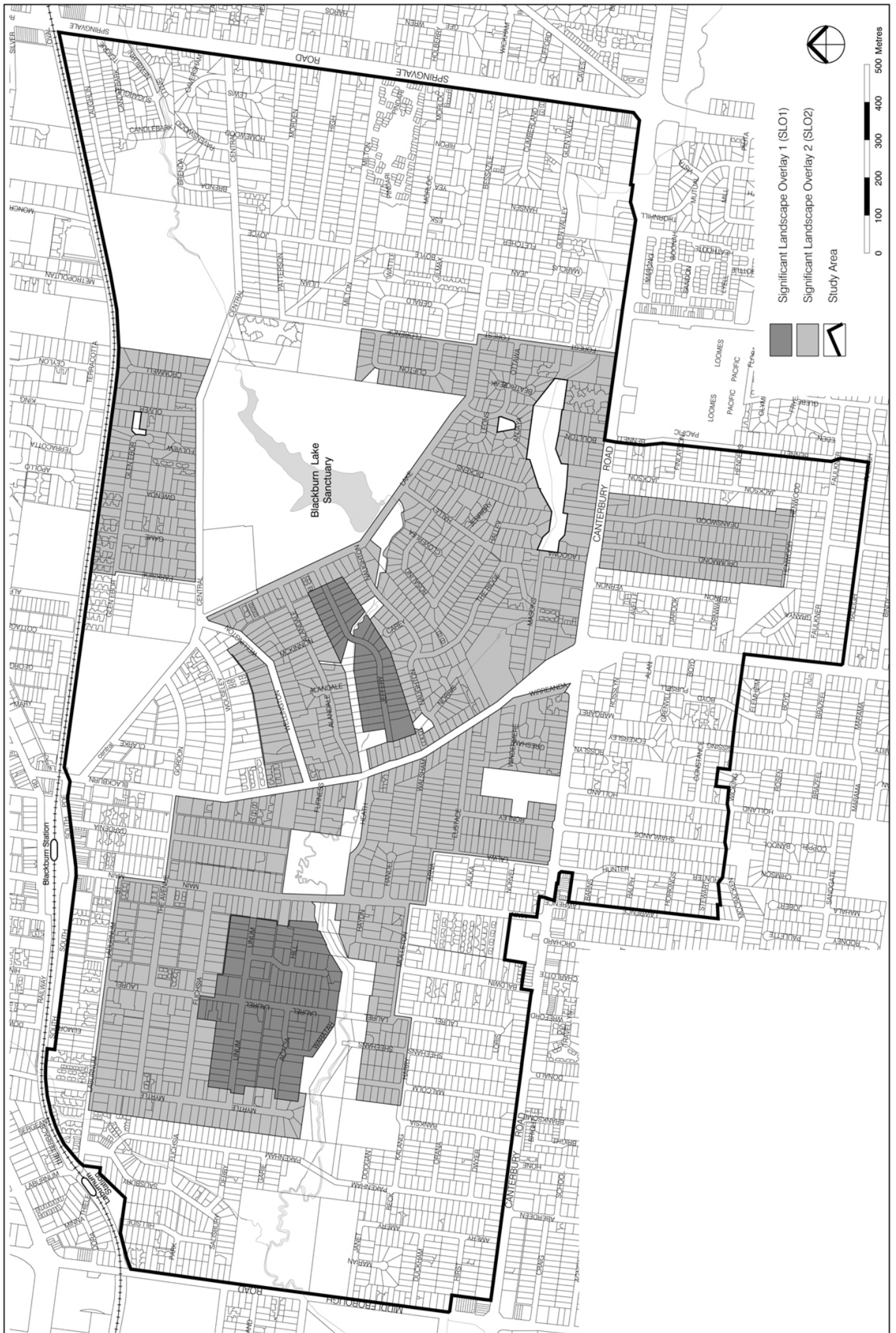
CHARACTER PRECINCTS MAP



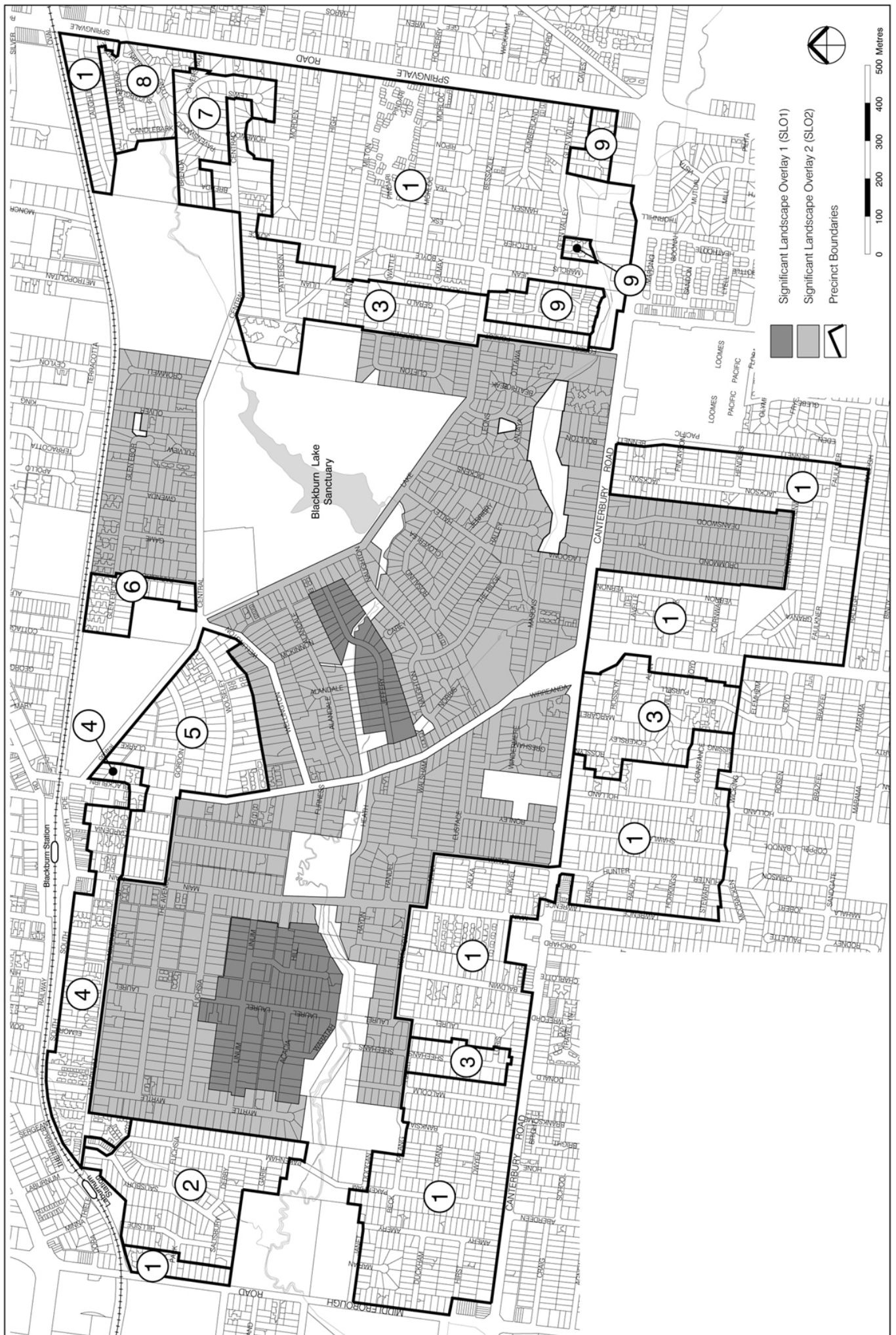
Please refer to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme for information about the boundaries of and the planning requirements within the Significant Landscape Overlays.

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Study Brief and Maps of Study Area



Study Area



Precinct Map

Precinct Issues Papers



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT ONE

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality

- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve historically significant existing buildings, trees and structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment or ecological systems

Development Activity/Pressures

- Medium density development, usually 2 or 3 dwellings, is occurring particularly in areas towards Middleborough Road, along Main St and south of Canterbury Road.

- New single dwellings are being constructed in the northern pockets, around Main St and Baldwin Rd and south of Canterbury Road.

Community Values

The Blackburn Lake surrounds community values:

- retaining tree canopy and old habitat trees for wildlife
- low and open fence styles
- spacious setbacks of dwellings
- the diversity of single storey housing styles
- siting and design of dwellings to provide solar access and retention of space for treed garden
- leafy gardens and indigenous plants
- appropriate guidelines for vegetation removal and landscape planning for new development

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is predominantly post-War with scattered 70-90s of multi-unit and two storey infill development
- Gardens are generally more open, many well-established with mixed species, predominantly exotic plants and scattered large Pinoaks, Liquidambars, Spotted Gums or Lemon-scented gums.
- Setbacks tend to be spacious 6-7 metres from the front, & side setbacks of 1 & 3-4 metres
- Front fences are predominantly medium- low
- Roads are sealed with upstanding kerbs and footpaths on both sides of the street
- Street trees are inconsistent in size, spacing and species, with many 70s Prunus/ Native mix, inter-planted with more recent indigenous natives
- This precinct abuts the SLO2 area along several roads

Description

The areas within this Precinct are characterised by dwellings set within established, largely exotic gardens with regular setbacks. There are pockets where native trees are common. Buildings are generally low lying, with hipped and gabled roofs, and although two storey is common in some streets these buildings generally do not dominate the streetscape. The

streetscapes have an openness created by the low to average height front fencing, enabling a view of the dwellings from the street, and the spaces between buildings that allow glimpses of backyard planting. Properties adjacent to the SLO area have a backdrop of large native and indigenous trees, which could be further enhanced by planting on nearby sites. Large trees are frequent, and these are complemented by medium to large street trees.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain: garden settings of the dwellings and openness of the streetscape
Strengthen: complementary street trees and tree planting on private land

Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The garden settings of the dwellings and openness of the streetscapes will be maintained and strengthened and abuttal with the SLO2 area enhanced by:

- Encouraging the retention of existing trees and the planting of new trees wherever possible;
- Ensuring particular attention to the retention and planting of native trees on sites adjacent to the SLO2 area;
- Ensuring buildings are setback a substantial distance from at least one side boundary and the rear boundary;
- Ensuring buildings are setback from the front boundary in accordance with the predominant setback in the street;
- Ensuring buildings are sited and designed so as not to dominate the streetscape;
- Ensuring front fences are low to average in height;
- Encouraging consistent street tree planting.

Issues/Threats

- Removal of large trees
- Boundary to boundary development
- High, solid front fencing



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT TWO

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved.
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future.
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality.
- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve existing buildings, trees and historically significant structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares.
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment or ecological systems.

Development Activity/Pressures

- Several medium density developments in recent years, generally 2-3 dwellings.

Community Values

The (west) Blackburn Lake Community values:

- retaining tree canopy and old habitat trees for wildlife
- the importance of preserving tree canopy and existing significant trees
- spacious setbacks of dwellings
- the diversity of single storey housing styles
- low and open streetscape
- appropriate landscape planning for new development
- maintaining the atmosphere of leafy front gardens
- conservation of the indigenous environment

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is predominantly post –War, with some 70- present infill development. Dwelling style is influenced by the sloping allotments, creating opportunities for many two storey or split-level housing styles.
- Gardens are mixed, with established mixed species predominating and scattered large trees. The area is framed by large pines to the north along the railway line embankment and large street trees.
- Setbacks vary due to topography on the west side of Salisbury Av in particular, predominantly 6-7 metre front and 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks.
- Mixture of timber and brick dwellings.
- Front fences vary, with retaining walls and a sense of openness predominating. Otherwise low-average front fences predominate.
- Street trees are mixed species and sizes, mostly regularly spaced. An avenue on Salisbury Av is large and established.
- Roads are sealed with upstanding kerbs and footpaths of both sides of the street.
- Topography is sloping, at times moderately steep.
- This Precinct abuts the SLO2 area to the east.

Description

The topography of this Precinct, which is located around a small gully and ridge, makes this area distinctive and has led to a mix of building styles and forms. Dwelling styles include a mixture from the post-war to present day, in both timber and brick, and frequent two storey or split level due to the slope of the land. The cohesiveness of the area is derived from the large native and exotic street trees that are particular feature and sometimes form an avenue. Dwellings are set within established, predominantly exotic gardens and regular setbacks and low or open style fences create an openness to the streetscape. The street trees are occasionally complemented by large trees in private gardens. Along the eastern part of the Precinct trees in the SLO2 area provide a backdrop that could be enhanced by planting on adjacent properties.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain:	Garden settings, openness and large street trees
Strengthen:	Garden settings and space for the planting of trees, the landscape settings of the buildings

Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The garden settings of the dwellings and openness of the streetscapes will be maintained and strengthened and abuttal with the SLO2 area could be enhanced by:

- Encouraging the retention of existing trees and the planting of new trees wherever possible;
- Ensuring particular attention to the retention and planting of native trees on sites adjacent to the SLO2 area;
- Ensuring buildings are setback from both side boundaries and the rear boundary;
- Ensuring buildings are setback from the front boundary in accordance with the predominant setback in the street;
- Ensuring buildings are sited and designed to follow the contours of the site;
- Ensuring front fences are low to average in height;
- Maintaining the large street trees.

Issues/Threats

- Removal of large trees (including street trees)
- Boundary to boundary development
- High, solid front fencing



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT THREE

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality
- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve existing buildings, trees and historically significant structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment or ecological systems

Development Activity/Pressures

- Little development pressure in this area over the last 5 years
- Potential for future pressure due to desirable location and environment

Community Values

The Blackburn Lake surrounds community values:

- retaining tree canopy and old habitat trees for wildlife
- the abundant variety of vegetation types
- spacious setbacks of dwellings
- the diversity of single storey housing styles
- low and open fence styles
- leafy gardens with space for trees
- appropriate guidelines for vegetation removal and landscape planning for new development

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is predominantly single storey post War styles
- Gardens are established with mixed species
- with many large exotic, native and indigenous native trees, giving a distinct bushy feel
- Setbacks vary but mostly spacious 6-7 metre
- front and 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks
- Front fences are mixed of either low and open or a mixture in heights
- Street trees are mixed in size, height and spacing, featuring some very large indigenous eucalypts
- Topography slopes gently to the north, the street enclosed by the large street trees
- Roads are sealed with up standing kerbs and footpaths on both sides of the street

Description

This Precinct is distinctive due to the frequency of very large native and indigenous street trees and clusters of large trees, particularly on the east side of Sheehans Street, which frame the vista along the streetscape. Dwellings are set within established bushy gardens and are occasionally hidden from view by the vegetation. A frequent lack of front fencing or low fences provides an open feel to the streetscape. Despite the presence of the large indigenous trees, there is a strong exotic feel to the streetscape due to the exotic shrubbery, deciduous trees and informal nature strip planting. The vegetation in this Precinct complements the backdrop of canopy trees of the vegetation-protected area and creek environment that abuts to the north.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain: large canopy trees, vegetation-dominated streetscape
Strengthen: the relationship of the area to the abutting creek environment

Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The vegetation dominated streetscape and relationship to the creek environs to the north will be maintained and strengthened by:

- Ensuring large trees are retained and encouraging the planting of indigenous and complementary native trees and other vegetation;
- Ensuring adequate space is allowed around dwellings to retain and accommodate large trees;
- Ensuring front setbacks are consistent with others in the street, and are well vegetated;
- Ensuring buildings are located below the predominant tree canopy height;
- Ensuring building and impervious surface site coverage is minimised;
- Encouraging the use of vegetation as an alternative to front fencing, and low to average height open style front fences;
- Encouraging the maintenance of large native or indigenous street tree planting.

Issues/Threats

- Removal of large native trees
- Insufficient front setbacks
- High site coverage by buildings or impervious surfaces
- High front fences



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT FOUR

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality
- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve existing buildings, trees and historically significant structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment or ecological systems

Development Activity/Pressures

- Significant development pressure for medium density housing development due to proximity to railway station and shopping centre
- Several recent medium density developments, often two storey
- Occasional redevelopment of single dwellings
- Substantial number of medium density developments already exist

Community Values

The Central Blackburn Lake community values:

- sympathetic, single storey dwelling styles
- the abundance of wildlife and natural environment with indigenous species
- preservation of tree canopy and understorey
- the green streetscapes and proximity to bushland
- the treed setting and soft surfaces of the area
- a sense of privacy in an adequate backyard
- spacious setbacks and sense of openness
- private gardens and the combinations of plants that provides for wildlife breeding sites
- sympathetic redevelopment that contains space for gardens

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is a mix of single- storey post –War styles and many multi-unit developments from the 1970s, 80s and recent.
- Gardens with exotic lower-level plants predominate, with scattered large trees to the rear of properties.
- Front setbacks vary from 4 metres to a spacious 6-7 metres, and side setbacks are 1& 3-4 metres.
- Roads are sealed with up standing kerbs and predominantly footpaths on both sides of the street.
- Front fences are mixed, with South Road more open and the main streets having medium- high front fences.
- Street trees are mixed species and generally large and regularly spaced.
- Topography is gently sloping to either the west or north.
- This Precinct abuts the SLO2 area to the south of Laburnum Street.

Description

This Precinct is distinctive due to the high proportion of medium density developments and the limited space around many buildings for substantial planting. Building styles vary from single storey post-war era to recent two storey development. Gardens are generally exotic and lower-level and contain few large trees. Front and side setbacks are sometimes small, although are typically larger on sites that have not been redeveloped. Large, regularly spaced street trees provide an important unifying element to the streetscapes.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain:	Large regularly spaced street trees
Strengthen:	Space around buildings for planting of trees and gardens, vegetated interface with the streetscape

Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The interface of development with the streetscape and vegetation around dwellings will be improved by:

- Ensuring new development provides for the retention and planting of substantial vegetation;
- Ensuring dwellings are setback from at least one side boundary and the rear boundary;
- Ensuring dwellings are setback from the front boundary sufficient distance to adequately provide for substantial vegetation and gardens;
- Encouraging open style front fencing or the use of vegetation as an alternative to front fencing;
- Ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of the large street trees.

Issues/Threats

- Boundary to boundary development
- Lack of provision for vegetation
- High, solid front fences



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT FIVE

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality
- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve existing buildings, trees and historically significant structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment or ecological systems

Development Activity/Pressures

- Some medium density development, particularly near Central Rd and Blackburn Rd
- Several new single dwellings in recent years

Community Values

The Central Blackburn Lake community values:

- sympathetic, single storey dwelling styles
- the abundance of wildlife and natural environment
- preservation of tree canopy and understorey
- green streetscapes
- the treed setting and soft surfaces of the area
- the privacy of adequate backyard space
- spacious setbacks and sense of openness
- private gardens and the combinations of plants
- sympathetic redevelopment

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is a mix of late 19th Century to present reproduction styles, with many dwellings constructed between 1888 and 1925.
- Predominantly single storey.
- Gardens are varied, with mostly established exotics and some bushy front gardens. There are some very large trees in front and rear yards.
- Setbacks are spacious generally ranging from 13 metres to 7 metres from the front and 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks, with some buildings in grounds with substantial setbacks on all sides.
- Street trees are a mix of large exotic avenue planting to mixed sizes, species and spacing. Some streets are enclosed with tree canopy
- Front fence styles are generally open- low
- Roads are sealed with either upstanding or bluestone kerbs, and footpaths on either side of the street
- Topography is sloping in the north.
- This Precinct abuts the SLO2 area to the south and west, and provides a 'greenlink' between Morton Park and the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary..

Description

This Precinct is distinctive due to the presence of buildings that date from the Victorian era, with a large proportion of Inter-war and immediate post-war styles with pitched roofs, and occasional new dwellings. The character of the area derives from this mixture of eras and the spacious, usually exotic garden surrounds, with some with large trees. Buildings are usually setback from both side boundaries allowing glimpses of rear garden planting. The streetscapes have an open, spacious feel due to the wide grassed verges in some streets and the low or open style fencing. Where they occur, street tree avenues and a backdrop of trees in the vegetation protected area to the south add to the garden dominated feel of the area, which could be enhanced along the boundary by complementary planting on abutting sites. The remaining bluestone kerbing is reminiscent of the historical context of the area.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain:	variety of older housing stock particularly Victorian to Inter war era housing, spacious garden settings, bluestone kerbing
Strengthen:	tree planting, open frontages

Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The variety of housing styles and the spacious garden settings, and abuttal with the SLO area and the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary, will be maintained and enhanced by:

- Encouraging the retention and restoration of pre World War 2 dwellings;
- Encouraging the retention and planting of trees and garden planning;
- Ensuring particular attention to the retention and planting of native trees on sites adjacent to the SLO2 area;
- Ensuring buildings have large setbacks from both side boundaries and the rear boundary;
- Ensuring buildings are setback **a substantial distance** from the front boundary in accordance with the predominant setback in the street;
- Encouraging new buildings to respect the predominant building forms in the area;
- Ensuring front fences are low or average height and open style;
- Encouraging the continuation and expansion of street tree avenues.

Issues/Threats

- Demolition of pre WWII dwellings
- Lack of garden space or planning
- Boundary to boundary development
- Large bulky buildings
- High front fences



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT SIX

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality
- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve existing buildings, trees and historically significant structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment or ecological systems

Development Activity/Pressures

- Existing medium density development located on all sites to the north of Glen Ebor Rd
- No recent development south of Glen Ebor Rd

Community Values

The Central Blackburn Lake community values:

- sympathetic, single storey dwelling styles
- the abundance of wildlife and natural environment with indigenous species
- preservation of tree canopy and understorey
- the green streetscapes and proximity to bushland
- the treed setting and soft surfaces of the area
- a sense of privacy in an adequate backyard
- spacious setbacks and sense of openness
- private gardens and the combinations of plants that provides for wildlife breeding sites
- sympathetic redevelopment that contain space for gardens

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is a mix of single storey 1970-80s and post- War styles, with multi-unit development on Glen Ebor Street
- Gardens are a mix of species in predominantly established settings, with units having low level styles. Some large trees and indigenous eucalypts present.
- Front setbacks vary between 4 and 7 metres, with 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks.
- Street trees are large, regularly spaced, mixed species.
- Front fences are mixed
- Roads are sealed with upstanding kerbs and footpaths on either side of the street.
- This Precinct abuts Morton Park to the west and part of the SLO2 area to the east.

Description

The Precinct contains a mixture of predominantly low scale housing styles within mixed native and exotic established gardens that sometimes contain large indigenous trees. While front setbacks vary, buildings are usually setback from both side boundaries. Surrounding larger trees in the vegetation protected area to the east and the adjacent school site and Park to the

west, combined with the large canopy street trees, create an enclosed, secluded feel. The area has the potential to provide a greater visual and ecological link between the Park and the SLO2 area through more complementary planting. Front fence styles are mixed, but low or open styles are common.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain:	existing trees and space for trees, spaces between buildings
Strengthen:	openness of the streetscape, native and indigenous planting

Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The garden setting of the dwellings will be maintained and openness of the streetscape and the native tree environment enhanced by:

- Encouraging the retention and planting of trees, particularly indigenous and native species;
- Ensuring buildings are offset from both side boundaries and the rear boundary;
- Ensuring building respect the low scale nature of the building form;
- Encouraging low or open style front fencing.

Issues/Threats

- Removal of large indigenous and native trees
- Large bulky buildings
- High front fences



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT SEVEN

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality
- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve existing buildings, trees and historically significant structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment or ecological systems

Development Activity/Pressures

- Intermittent medium density housing is occurring throughout the area, generally 2-3 units
- Construction of new single dwellings is occurring frequently

Community Values

The eastern Blackburn Lake community values:

- retaining and maintaining existing trees and vegetation in the area
- mature street trees along nature strips
- preserving habitat for birdlife
- sympathetic redevelopment
- the existing tree canopy

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is a single storey mixture of predominantly post-war and some 1970-80s styles.
- Gardens are mixed species in a range of styles with scattered large trees to the west and in the central area, mainly at rear boundaries. Some patches of bushy gardens with a strong exotic feel.
- Setbacks are spacious 6-7 metre front and 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks, with the south containing many 3-4 metre front setbacks.
- Mixed street tree species, size and spacing with some streets with recent indigenous plantings interspersed with existing Prunus/Ash, native combinations.
- Front fences are mixed. The south and courts have open frontages with side fences forward of the dwelling, while the north of the precinct has a mix of low-average height fences.
- Roads are sealed with upstanding kerbs and footpaths on both sides of the street.
- Views are predominantly to the west towards the canopy of the SLO area down a gentle slope.

Description

The areas within this Precinct are characterised by post-war to 1980s dwellings set within established, largely exotic gardens with regular setbacks. Buildings are generally low lying, with

hipped and gabled roofs, and although two storey is common in some streets these buildings do not dominate the streetscape. The streetscapes have an openness created by a lack of front fencing in some courts and the low to average height front fencing in other areas, enabling a view of the dwellings from the street, and the spaces between buildings that allow glimpses of backyard planting. Large trees are frequent, and these are complemented by medium to large street trees.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain:	garden settings of the dwellings and openness of the streetscape
Strengthen:	complementary street trees and tree planting on private land

Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The garden settings of the dwellings and openness of the streetscapes will be maintained and strengthened by:

- Encouraging the retention of existing large trees and the planting of new trees wherever possible;
- Ensuring buildings are setback a substantial distance from at least one side boundary and the rear boundary;
- Ensuring buildings are setback from the front boundary in accordance with the predominant setback in the street;
- Ensuring buildings are sited and designed so as not to dominate the streetscape;
- Ensuring front fences are low to average in height;
- Encouraging consistent street tree planting.

Issues/Threats

- Removal of large trees
- Boundary to boundary development
- High, solid front fencing



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT EIGHT

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality
- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve existing buildings, trees and historically significant structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment or ecological systems

Development Activity/Pressures

- Recently developed area
- Predominantly single dwellings
- Medium density along Springvale Rd

Community Values

The eastern Blackburn Lake Community values:

- retaining and maintaining existing trees and vegetation in the area
- mature street trees along nature strips
- preserving habitat for birdlife
- sympathetic redevelopment
- the existing tree canopy

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is 1990s brick and reproduction styles, predominantly two storeys with garages forward of the dwelling.
- Private gardens are predominantly lower level exotic styles with scattered large exotic trees, with indigenous remnant eucalypts along the creek frontage.
- Front setbacks are predominantly 3-4 metres and 1 metre or 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks
- Street trees are small, exotic and irregularly spaced
- Frontages are open with some fences forward of the dwelling
- Roads are sealed with roll-over kerbs and no footpaths
- Topography is sloping with views to the creek frontage in the gully to the south

Description

This is a newly developed area where the dwellings dominate the streetscape due to their two storey form and location relatively close to the front and side boundaries. The gardens are still establishing although remnant eucalypts and large exotic trees occasionally provide a backdrop. The sloping topography and views to the south and west has encouraged the two storey form. The streetscapes are open to the building due to a general lack of front fencing. The area has a bushy feel near creek frontage due to remnant vegetation and enclosed skyline from large trees situated in the gully. Street trees could compensate for the small garden sizes.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain: large trees and bushy creek frontage
Strengthen: street tree planting

Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The built form dominated streetscapes will be enhanced by:

- Encouraging the retention of existing large trees;
- Ensuring front fences are not constructed;
- Encouraging the planting of large street trees at regular intervals, and in pockets to reinforce the creek environs.

Issues/Threats

- Front fences
- Removal of remaining tall trees



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT NINE

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality
- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve existing buildings, trees and historically significant structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares

Development Activity/Pressures

- The area does not appear to be under development pressure at present

Community Values

The eastern Blackburn Lake Community values:

- retaining and maintaining existing trees and vegetation in the area
- mature street trees along nature strips
- preserving habitat for birdlife
- sympathetic redevelopment
- the existing tree canopy

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is predominantly post- War, with some streets with up to 50% two storey development.
- Private gardens are established with mixed species, some gardens very bushy with large, scattered trees and some remnant vegetation.
- Setbacks are spacious 6-7 metres at the front, some substantially greater, with at least 1 & 3-4 metre side frontages.
- Front fences are generally open, with some low-open with no side fences forward of the dwelling.
- Street trees are mixed in species, size and spacing.
- Topography slopes towards the gully to the north, providing good views to the creek frontage and the many indigenous and exotic canopy trees.

Description

The Precinct is distinctive due to its predominantly post-war housing stock and spacious native and exotic garden surrounds. The proximity of the creek and topography of the area within a gully is reflected in the presence of tall native and exotic trees in many gardens, and bushy understorey vegetation in some. The courts have an open, spacious feel due to the irregular orientation of the dwellings, spacious front gardens and side setbacks, and low or a lack of front fencing. Street tree planting is irregular with no particular consistency.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain: spaciousness, established gardens with trees
Strengthen: consistency of street tree planting

Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The spaciousness of the area and substantial garden settings will be maintained and enhanced by:

- Encouraging the retention of tall trees and planting of trees wherever possible;
- Ensuring buildings are setback a substantial distance from the front and rear boundaries;
- Ensuring buildings are setback from both side boundaries;
- Ensuring buildings are set within the landscape;
- Encouraging low or average height open style front fences, or none where this predominates in the street;
- Encouraging the planting of consistent street trees to complement the garden environment.

Issues/Threats

- Removal of large trees
- Buildings built too close to the front or side boundaries
- High front fences



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT TEN

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality
- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve existing buildings, trees and historically significant structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment or ecological systems

Development Activity/Pressures

- Only occasional medium density and single dwelling development in recent years

Community Values

The eastern Blackburn Lake Community values:

- retaining and maintaining existing trees and vegetation in the area
- mature street trees along nature strips
- preserving habitat for birdlife
- sympathetic redevelopment
- the existing tree canopy

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is predominantly single storey post- War styles.
- Private gardens are generally more bushy, exotic with scattered large trees (some indigenous) and have a lush feel, otherwise styles are more open with fewer trees. The SLO area is a predominant feature as a backdrop to the west.
- Setbacks are predominantly 6-7 metres from the front and 1 & 3-4 metres from the sides.
- Front fences are mixed.
- Street trees are mixed in size, species and spacing, with predominantly natives- recent trees being indigenous.
- Roads are sealed with upstanding kerbs and two footpaths on either side of the street.
- Flat – sloping topography provides views to the lower lying SLO area abutting to the west.

Description

This Precinct is distinctive due to the frequency of very large native and indigenous trees and clusters of large trees, which often frame the vistas along the streetscapes. The low scale dwellings sit within established to bushy gardens and are occasionally hidden from view by the vegetation. The native vegetation in this Precinct complements the backdrop of canopy trees of the vegetation-protected area and Blackburn Lake Sanctuary that abuts to the west. Although front fence styles are mixed, most front boundaries are either unfenced or have low or open style fencing which provides a view of the gardens from the street. The indigenous street trees add to the native vegetation dominant appearance of the area.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain:	large canopy trees, native vegetation-dominated streetscape, garden settings
Strengthen:	openness to the street, the relationship of the area to the abutting lake environment

Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The native vegetation dominated streetscapes and relationship to the lake environs to the west will be maintained and strengthened by:

- Ensuring large trees are retained and encouraging the planting of indigenous and complementary native trees and other vegetation;
- Ensuring adequate space is allowed around dwellings to retain and accommodate large trees;
- Ensuring front setbacks are consistent with others in the street, and are well vegetated;
- Ensuring buildings respect the low scale nature of development in the area;
- Ensuring building and impervious surface site coverage is minimised;
- Encouraging the use of vegetation as an alternative to front fencing, and low to average height open style front fences;
- Encouraging the maintenance of large native or indigenous street tree planting.

Issues/Threats

- Removal of large native trees
- Large bulky buildings
- Insufficient front setbacks
- High site coverage by buildings or impervious surfaces
- High front fences



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT ELEVEN

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality
- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve existing buildings, trees and historically significant structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment or ecological systems

Development Activity/Pressures

- Several pockets have been completely developed in recent years
- Frequent medium density development
- Several new dwellings constructed recently
- Little redevelopment possibility

Community Values

The eastern Blackburn Lake Community values:

- retaining and maintaining existing trees and vegetation in the area
- mature street trees along nature strips
- preserving habitat for birdlife
- sympathetic redevelopment
- the existing tree canopy

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is late 1980s brick and some newer reproduction styles, mostly two storeys with garages to the front of dwellings.
- Gardens are lower level or low level exotic styles.
- Front setbacks are 3-4 metres with 1 metre side setbacks.
- There are generally no street trees, some small exotic species or remnant vegetation near gully.
- There are no front fences, some also with no side fences.
- Roads are sealed with roll-over kerbs and either one or sometimes two footpaths. Wide grassed verges in some streets.
- Topography is sloping to hilly with views to the SLO area to the west and some to the large Forest Hill Chase shopping centre building to the south.

Description

This is a newly developed area on a sloping hillside where the dwellings dominate the streetscape due to their frequent two storey form and small front and side setbacks. The gardens in some areas are still establishing and generally low level and exotic as there is little space for large trees. Occasional remnant eucalypts and pines provide a backdrop near the gully to the south. The streetscapes are open to the building line due to a lack of front fencing and grassed verges that extend to the roadway. Regular street trees are not evident, but could compensate for the small garden sizes.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain: open street frontages
Strengthen: street tree planting

Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The built form dominated streetscapes will be enhanced by:

- Encouraging the retention of existing large trees;
- Ensuring front fences are not constructed;
- Encouraging the planting of large street trees at regular intervals, and in pockets to reinforce the remnant trees and nearby lake environs.

Issues/Threats

- Front fences
- Removal of remaining tall trees



PRECINCT ISSUES PAPER

PRECINCT TWELVE

Relevant Council Planning Policies and Controls

- Influence and regulate the design of new residential development to ensure positive contributions to residential character is achieved
- New residential developments should provide sufficient open space to enhance and retain landscape character now and for the future
- To retain and increase tall canopy trees and general leafy nature of the municipality
- Ensure non-residential uses in residential areas respect character and amenity of the area
- To enhance and preserve historically significant buildings, trees and structures
- Improve the amenity and character of main thoroughfares
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the natural environment or ecological systems

Development Activity/Pressures

- Very little development pressure in recent years

Community Values

The southern Blackburn Lake Community values:

- retaining tree canopy and old habitat trees for wildlife
- the enjoyment of the abundant variety of vegetation types
- spacious setbacks of dwellings
- the diversity of single storey housing styles
- the low and open fence styles
- preserving existing leafy gardens
- experiencing the 'marriage' of lifestyle and nature in the area
- appropriate guidelines for vegetation removal and landscape planning for new development

Key Existing Characteristics

- Architecture is predominantly post-War and 1970-80's styles, with a mix of single and double storey and some multi-unit development.
- Private gardens are established with mixed species, many are bushy and contain large, mostly exotic trees. Some patches of exotic, open suburban styles.
- Setbacks are generally 3-4 metres, with 1 & 3-4 metre side setbacks.
- Front fences are mixed, with many open and side fences forward of the dwelling. Bushy gardens often form a screen to street frontage
- Roads are sealed with an upstanding kerb and footpaths on both sides of the street
- Topography slopes gently to the east. Views feature tall canopy trees that enclose the area
- Street trees are mixed in species, spacing and size, with some large native trees a feature in Boyd Street.

Description

This Precinct is distinctive due to vegetation dominated streetscapes with frequent large native and exotic trees and the dense understorey on many properties. The single and double storey dwellings are set within informal, established to bushy gardens and are occasionally hidden from view by the vegetation. A frequent lack of front fencing or low or open style fences and nature strip planting by residents provides an informal and open feel to the streetscape. Despite the frequent presence of the large native trees, there is a strong exotic feel to the streetscape due to the exotic shrubbery, deciduous trees and mixture of street tree species.

Preferred Character Directions

Maintain: large canopy trees, informal, vegetation-dominated streetscapes
Strengthen: the street tree planting

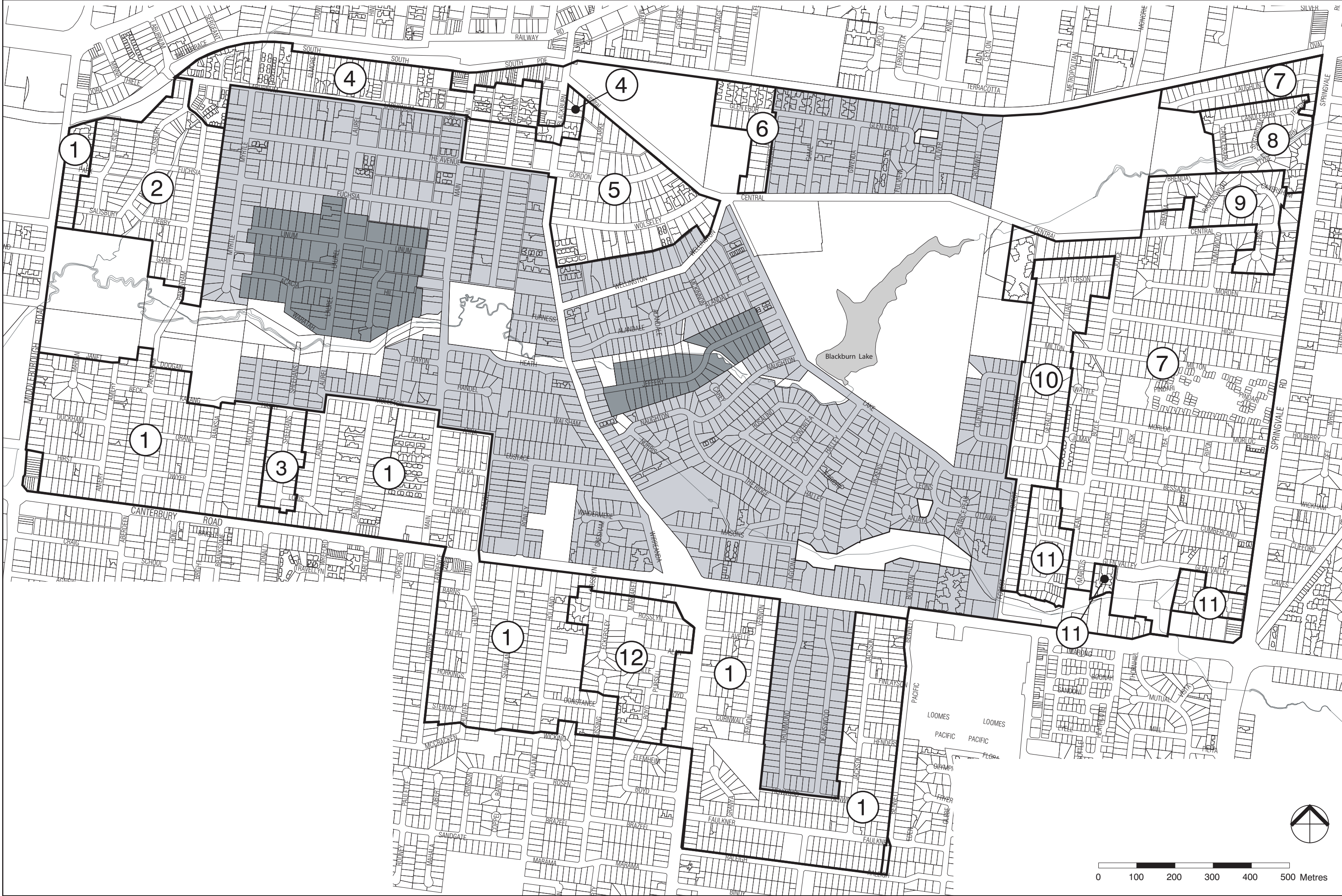
Draft Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statement

The informal, vegetation dominated streetscapes will be maintained and strengthened by:

- Ensuring large trees are retained and encouraging the planting of indigenous and complementary native trees and other vegetation;
- Ensuring adequate space is allowed around dwellings to retain and accommodate large trees;
- Ensuring front setbacks are consistent with others in the street, and are well vegetated;
- Ensuring buildings are located below the predominant tree canopy height and within the landscape;
- Ensuring building and impervious surface site coverage is minimised;
- Encouraging the use of vegetation as an alternative to front fencing, or low to average height open style front fences;
- Encouraging the maintenance of large native or indigenous street tree planting, and informal street treatments.

Issues/Threats

- Removal of large native trees
- Insufficient front setbacks
- Buildings that dominate the streetscape
- High site coverage by buildings or impervious surfaces
- High front fences
- Formal street treatments



List of Responses to Precinct Issues Papers

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study

Response to Comments on Precinct Issues Papers

July 2002

Name	Precinct	Comments	Response
Helen Woodside, Strategic Planner	One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are we going to be more specific, ie. Off-set by ...metres from boundary? 	In the Design Guidelines.
	Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key characteristics state spacious 6-7 m front setbacks- may be generally more than this. Draft preferred statement: Given that not just neighbouring properties, it's important that the front setback description is correct 	After reviewing setbacks to confirm, average front setbacks appears to be 8-12 metres, with some 6-7 metres. Brochure will be amended.
	Six	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description: In response to "while front setbacks vary", says that the key characteristics should be clearer. 	As above
	Eight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where is Precinct eight? 	Map has been corrected.
Blackburn Village Residents Group	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would like to commend Planisphere for their efforts to date. Main concerns are precincts 4 & 5, areas bordered existing SLO (3,6 and parts of 1) 16 Florence Street has had its Precinct no. omitted on map. BVRG generally agrees with classification for Precincts 3, 10, 12, although some softening/flexibility may be required so that there are no future hard edges to boundaries Precinct boundaries and N C Statements need to include specific provision for Blackburn Creeklands/Lake is further protected Study outcomes must ensure that they also be consistent with MSS and "enhance" the character, and impose a strategy to allow strategically important areas that presently do not have a treed character to remain open and encourage the planting of tall canopy trees to further "enhance and protect" Blackburn Lake/ Creeklands and SLO areas Minimise boundaries along roadways, except opposite parkland or open space. Ensure that Greenlinks are consolidated and strengthened. 	<p>Precinct 7.</p> <p>A new guideline has been developed and the preferred character statements amended accordingly, to encourage a blurring of the SLO boundary on adjoining properties..</p> <p>The study aims to enhance the adjoining SLO areas by encouraging the planting of more vegetation, and appropriate siting of buildings.</p> <p>We have attempted to do this.</p> <p>The Guidelines provide for greater vegetation and encourage</p>

	Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that consideration of 'Precinct adjacency issues', where precinct types about more sensitive precincts (ie 1 & 4), allowing a tapering effect into lesser precinct to avoid hard visual edges. Enhance bordering properties so that value of SLO is not devalued. 	indigenous and native vegetation where adjacent to the SLO and other areas where important to the character of the area.
	Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public buildings in area occupy open space and contribute to treed character and should be considered. 	The Council is considering commissioning a character study for the whole municipality.
	Six	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precincts need to provide opportunities for local community and Council to extend areas with desirable characteristics in future. 	This change has been made.
	One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose re-classifying central Blackburn lots east of Laburnum street to be put in Precinct 5 (Refer to map). Recommendations for description: most 1888-1925, single storey and 2 dual occupancy; many large trees to front of houses, others with trees at rear. Some bushy front gardens; front setbacks vary, average 13 m, sloping topography to north. No need for small precinct 4 on Central Road, considering setbacks, development type, architectural style and vegetation. Architectural era and vegetation quality of houses along Main and Gardenia Streets qualify this area to be incorporated (see map) to Precinct 5. The criteria for this precinct needs to acknowledge that it provides a green and cultural link to Morton Park and BL sanctuary. Importance of precinct for ecological links to SLO and Morton Park. St Thomas the Apostle Church and school contribute to open space and canopy trees of Precinct and should be protected for the future. 	<p>Changed.</p> <p>Changed.</p> <p>Added.</p> <p>Development guidelines will be prepared for the Residentially zoned land of the school and the Seventh Day Adventist site.</p>
Sandra Pullman	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street trees should be chosen to create a canopy and a sense of mystery, to create contrasts in light and screen views. 	The importance of street trees is noted in the Study.
Margaret Mrongovius	One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precinct 1 running between SLO and precinct 2 could erode value of 2 if inappropriate development occurred. Enforcement of any adopted code- can this be mentioned in the issues papers? No mention of MU dwellings being a threat to character, mentioned by residents. 	<p>Precinct 2 has been extended eastwards to the SLO boundary.</p> <p>Enforcement is a matter for Council consideration. The issues papers are not public documents. The General brochure for the Study makes it clear that the guidelines are to be used in the assessment of planning applications.</p> <p>Medium density housing is a housing type not a form of development. Medium density housing would need to demonstrate that it meets all the design objectives.</p>
	One, Two &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing setbacks in new developments sets a precedence for 	Front setbacks are dealt with in the Design Guidelines.

	Four	<p>further small setbacks being introduced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of term 'traditional' as opposed to 'prominent' when referring to setbacks. • Expansion of description 'boundary-boundary dev.' of both single and MU dwellings in threats/Issues. • Location of pine trees in precinct two. • Setbacks required to maintain sustainability of substantial vegetation. • Threat of multiple unit and dual occ. In precincts 1 & 2. 	<p>This issue is dealt with in more detail in the guidelines.</p> <p>This issue is dealt with in more detail in the guidelines.</p> <p>Deleted.</p> <p>This issue is dealt with in more detail in the guidelines.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
	Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could not find large pine trees near railway line as mentioned in description- two large ones near station. • Could not find large pines in south of precinct. • Similar changes to issue and threats as in precinct one. 	Deleted
	Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of 'sustainable' in preferred vegetation character statement as problems arise regarding long-term health of plants and existing trees, and provision for large canopy trees • 	<p>This aspect is dealt with on more detail in the guidelines eg. Locate development outside root zone.</p>
Blackburn & District Tree Preservation Society	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough and comprehensive process, with community input is applauded. • Large number of precincts is of concern due to practical difficulties for Council planners and possible confusion for users. • Suggested amalgamation of precincts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 and 11 (and possibly 4) • 12 could aspire to 10 • 1 could aspire to 3, with greater emphasis on the need for indigenous or native species • New policy needs to be embodied in Council documents and strategies. • Setback distances are not prescribed. • Insufficient mention of site coverage as a measure. • Use of the terms indigenous and native needs to be defined. • More emphasis needed on defining the essential and unique 	<p>Judgement about the useability should be left until the brochures are considered. We do not believe there are too many at this stage, however advice will be sought from the statutory planners also.</p> <p>The guidelines for all these areas vary slightly depending upon their current characteristics and the changes that are considered appropriate and needed.</p> <p>Agree. The Council should consider this issue. The Guidelines do set down figures for use in assessing planning applications. These are not prescriptions however, but guidance on the most appropriate response to the objective.</p> <p>The term indigenous has been used where we have thought it important that local trees as opposed to natives or exotics are important to the character and habitat.</p> <p>The brochures do include vegetation as the most important characteristic in all areas. Several factors contribute to this and</p>

		<p>character ie. 'green and leafy'. Emphasis needed on indigenous vegetation and removal of environmental weeds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question: are other areas of the City to be studied for inclusion in SLOs?• Encourage Council to adopt a strategy to encourage planting and protection of indigenous vegetation in residential areas surrounding bushland parks and in greenlinks.	<p>impact upon the streetscape. The Council is considering commissioning a study for the remainder of the City. For Council consideration.</p>
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Community Forum Notes

BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

COMMUNITY FORUM 22 MAY 2002

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH OF CANTERBURY ROAD

Group 1

LIKES	DISLIKES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Footpaths for child safety ➤ No footpaths – character ➤ Underground powerlines ➤ Animal life, bird life, ie natural noise! ➤ Residential feel of current profile ➤ Neighbourhood character ➤ Tree canopy needs to be maintained ➤ Retention of single large block profile of neighbourhood character ➤ Maintain distance from street, space between houses ➤ The LAKE and the birdlife / wildlife attracted to it ➤ Well maintained, clean streets ➤ Street furniture well designed, parkland furniture that reinforces local character ➤ Community meetings that enable plenty of opportunities for locals to have a voice! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Allowing large development without consideration for appropriate landscape environment ➤ Council applying levy to individuals for landscaping changes ➤ Ugly old melaleuca trees in street ➤ No consultation on hospital development : becoming hospital precinct ➤ Lack of hospital parking ➤ Expansion of medical centres Margaret St / Roslyn St along Canterbury Road ➤ Lack of <u>timely</u> consultation on planning process : more notice for meeting, follow up ➤ Unsuitable development that lacks observation of sustainable environmental concerns ➤ Duplex /dual occupancy development inappropriate ➤ Geographic distinction on tree removal : some areas pay \$150, others can just cut down trees : discrimination for some residents ➤ Not kept informed of changes Council make to our residential area: need to be informed at the start not in between or end

Group 2

LIKES	DISLIKES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Trees ➤ Birds ➤ Public transport ➤ Possums ➤ Absence of footpath (Deanswood) ➤ Proximity of open spaces ➤ Variety of open spaces ➤ plants on median strips ➤ Parks/children's playground ➤ Footpath maintenance in some streets ➤ Solar lights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Possums ➤ Wall to fence houses/Inappropriate design ➤ Damaged footpaths – dangerous ➤ Prunus trees ➤ Failure to enforce planning permits ➤ Permit requirements ➤ Butchering of trees for power lines ➤ High density housing ➤ Inadequate guidelines for planting and removal of trees ➤ No maintenance of plants/trees on Council land ie. Regular pruning, removal of sick trees/planting of new appropriate trees/plants ➤ More trees along Blackburn and Canterbury Rds

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| ➤ Access to shops – Forest Hill Chase | ➤ Street lighting |
| ➤ Good landscaping at Forest Hill Chase | ➤ Lighting in park |
| ➤ Residents | ➤ Traffic management |
| | ➤ Forest Hill Chase |
| | ➤ Traffic off main roads |

MIDDLEBOROUGH ROAD TO BLACKBURN ROAD

Group 1

LIKES	DISLIKES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Deep setbacks from street ➤ Good open space ➤ Parks and creeks ➤ Individual style of housing ➤ Tree canopy ➤ Significant trees - not all indigenous ➤ Concern about green environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Houses too large for blocks ➤ High fencing ➤ Multi unit development ➤ Narrow nature strips ➤ Trees hacked for overhead cables ➤ Lack of concern over built environment ➤ Lack of concern over environmentally unfriendly buildings

Group 2

LIKES	DISLIKES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Single dwellings on large (with outside entertainment areas not possible in units) ➤ Diversity of low density housing styles – single storey ➤ Plenty of trees and vegetation ➤ Quiet areas ➤ Parkland and bushland ➤ Birdlife – different species ➤ Blackburn shopping village ➤ Special Landscape Overlay ➤ 'Marriage' of lifestyle and nature ➤ Recreational areas – playgrounds ➤ Walking/jogging tracks ➤ Like minded people an friendly neighbourhood ➤ Dead trees for bird habitat and possum habitat ➤ People move into the area and stay forever ➤ Good public transport ➤ Indigenous plants ➤ Older established trees ie the oak near the bowling club in the creeklands ➤ Friendly dogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dual occupancy – multi units ➤ SLO Boundary being down middle of street dividing neighbours ➤ Builders trying to build outside the rules ➤ Builders and Council ignoring residents' objections ➤ Devious developers ➤ 3 bedroom unit development – 2 storey not giving diversity in housing ➤ On street parking ➤ Parking meters (Box Hill – don't want them in Blackburn) ➤ Builders/developers extending houses, blocking out sunlight and too close to trees ➤ Overhead powerlines ➤ Barrel draining creeks ➤ Cutting down trees ➤ Concreting gardens in order to subdivide and build units ➤ Developers seeing our area as a gold mine ➤ Unclear rules about development outside SLO areas ➤ McDonalds rubbish in main street and the creeklands ➤ Pollution and rubbish in Gardiners Creek ➤ Developers buying home, bulldozing the house, cut down the trees and <u>then</u> applying for permit

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| ➤ Area is usually pleasant | ➤ More street lights in Main Street. Dark walking home from station |
| ➤ Back lanes | ➤ Large trucks coming thru back streets ie Molleton St |
| | ➤ Changing playground location to close to Laburnum Primary School |
| | ➤ Certain areas of creek – creek bank is collapsing – need retaining walls |

Group 3

LIKES	DISLIKES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Walking trails ➤ Parkland / Lake ➤ Trees ➤ Creeklands ➤ Birdlife/Wildlife ➤ Quieness/lack of traffic ➤ Walk to essential services ➤ Indigenous plants ➤ Back lanes kept free ➤ Sporting facilities nearby ➤ Social facilities (scouts, etc) ➤ Playgrounds for children ➤ Access to public transport ➤ Council services in parks – excellent ➤ Community committed to issues of a local sort ➤ Accessible library resources ➤ Traffic speed management ➤ Unsealed roads ➤ Footpaths (meandering and contoured) ➤ Safe stations at night ➤ Community (working bees) in creeklands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Multi-storey development in housing ➤ Power lines and cables ➤ Intrusive tree planting (cables as cause) ➤ Lack of setback (new houses) ➤ Bulky developments (oversize) ➤ Commuter parking ➤ Inappropriate street trees ➤ Fence heights (too high) ➤ Under-usage of independent car parking (too many in street) ➤ Canine health hazards ➤ Congestion at railway crossings (Blackburn and Middleborough) ➤ Late access from Laburnum Station ➤ Lack of leafy front yards in new developments ➤ Lack of knowledge about legitimate tree-pruning on own property ➤ Low penalties for developers ignoring regulations ➤ Increased traffic flow on main roads ➤ All kinds of pollution in creek ➤ Litter and general messiness of Blackburn Station

CENTRAL BLACKBURN – AROUND LAKE

Group 1

LIKES	DISLIKES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The lake ➤ Bush around lake ➤ Proximity to large shopping centre ➤ Indigenous trees and plants ➤ Quiet ➤ Bird life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pollution in lake and waterways coming into lake ➤ Noisy through roads ➤ Overhead power lines and transformers ➤ Unauthorised removal of plants ➤ Lack of car parking near station and near library ➤ Difficulty with approaching Council eg. Little help with advice/support regarding local indigenous sub-species

- Village shops
- Walking trails
- Public transport
- Off lead dog parks
- Schools
- Safe/secure
- Increasing house values
- Access to City, Dandenongs and freeway
- Heritage character (links to Heidelberg school of painters etc)
- People

Group 2

LIKES	DISLIKES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tree canopy, both indigenous and exotic ➤ Birdlife, possums and butterflies (large array) ➤ Clean air ➤ Quiet and peace ➤ Bushland parks – lake Creeklands as compared with manicured parks ➤ Vegetation both understorey and overlay ➤ Private gardens and plantings ➤ Safe environment ➤ Openness ➤ Parks ➤ Size of blocks ➤ Low density ➤ Natural links and corridors – lanes, bird corridors ➤ Strip shopping ➤ Significant Landscape Signs ➤ Nesting sites in private and public land for birdlife ➤ Funghi ➤ Local playgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Environmental weeds ➤ Ivy ➤ Multi Unit development ➤ Tree removal ➤ Too much hard surfacing ➤ Some planting is inappropriate under powerlines, BUT prefer no powerlines ➤ Medium density ➤ Barrel draining of creeks ➤ Too many cars in neighbourhood streets to use cars ➤ Definition of 'significant trees' is too broad ➤ Exotic roadside planting ➤ No community consultation before planting decisions are made ➤ Forest Hill Chase ➤ Lack of info re values of area in particular for new residents

Group 3

LIKES	DISLIKES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Blackburn Rd only one lane each way ➤ Blackburn Rd has a character ➤ Treed setting ➤ Community pride and respect for neighbours ➤ Predominantly single dwelling ➤ Houses are setback ➤ Bush to building ratio favours bush ➤ Predominantly soft surfaces ➤ Abundance of birdlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has become a developers' delight ➤ There is unsympathetic overdevelopment ➤ Over development is excluding younger families to buy here ➤ Dislike the changing character ➤ New precedence ➤ Higher density living – more cars, noise ➤ Council's inaction for broken rules ➤ Development which reduces privacy, amenity ➤ Exclusion of Wolseley Cres, Gordon Cres and Clarke St from SLO1 (only section

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Indigenous plant life ➤ Blackburn Lake area including accessibility and as a thoroughfare ➤ Passive and active recreation ➤ Canopy trees ➤ Privacy of backyards ➤ No high fences ➤ Green streetscapes 	<p>between Central rd and Blackburn Rd excluded)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unsympathetic overdevelopment
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EAST OF BLACKBURN LAKE TO SPRINGVALE ROAD

LIKES	DISLIKES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Trees ➤ Proximity to Lake and walks ➤ Upgrade of Lake (will be highly commended) ➤ Village atmosphere ➤ Jean St playground good ➤ Birdlife (but decreasing) ➤ Smell of wood fires burning at night!! (except for polluting aspect) ➤ New families generally maintaining feel of the area ➤ Safety/security generally for children – good for their upbringing ➤ Friendly environs/area generally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Traffic cutting through to Springvale Road (massive increase in this area since freeway) ➤ Noise increase in Springvale Road ➤ No sign on Caversham Crt saying “No thru Road” ➤ No signage or dog owners’ responsibility to pick up faeces etc ➤ Unit overdevelopment on many blocks – should be limited ➤ Not sufficient mature tree planting on nature strips ➤ Now very difficult to turn out of Central/or get into Central Rd re Springvale Rd ➤ More could be done to make Lake main playground better ➤ Reduction of vegetation with corresponding reduction in bird life ➤ Enforcement lacking of speeding cars, dog defecating etc ➤ Lack of parking at schools for dropping off and collecting kids ➤ Powerlines/poles – very intrusive ➤ Noisy road surface of Central Road (City of Whitehorse failed to deal with) ➤ General rubbish left either by residents/collection trucks

Community Forum Attendance List

BLACKBURN LAKE SURROUNDS STUDY

Community Forum 22/5/02

Attendance List

NAME	SUBURB
J & M Whitford	Blackburn
J and C Guggisberg	Nunawading
M & J Ford	Blackburn South
Mr C & Mrs M Probyn	Blackburn
Ms B Cahill	Blackburn
Mr D Morrison	Blackburn
Ms K Sims	Blackburn
Mrs B Heather	Forest Hill
Ms L Campbell	Blackburn
Mr J Laffin	Blackburn South
Ms S Black	Blackburn
Ms J Fletcher	Blackburn
Mrs S & Mr R Hopkins	Nunawading
Mr A Clark	Blackburn
Mrs J Hooper (Apology)	Blackburn
Mrs M Crouch (Apology)	Blackburn
Mr R Grainger	Blackburn
Mr B & Mrs G Troy	Blackburn
Ms E Leigh	Blackburn South
Mr M Swain	Blackburn
Mr B Gooden	Forest Hill
Mr C Jacobson	Blackburn
Ms I Christianson	Blackburn South
Mr P and Mrs N Moxham	Blackburn South
Mr D Knowles	Blackburn South
Mr R Hicks	Blackburn
Mr J & Mrs S Bennett	Blackburn
Mr P Dempsey	Blackburn
Mr R & Mrs J Danby	Blackburn
Mr J Poloni	Blackburn
Mr J & Mrs M Stewart	Blackburn
Mr D & Mrs V Hewitt	Blackburn
Mrs E & Mr G Angus	Blackburn
Mr K & Mrs E Auld	Blackburn
Mrs M & Mr J Lambert	Blackburn
Mr J Barrie Paul	Blackburn
Ms L Henry	Box Hill
Mr K Mellody	Blackburn
Mr D Berry	Blackburn South
Ms S Rowe	Blackburn
Ms A Clayton	Blackburn
Ms D Tribe	Blackburn
Ms L Price & Mr B Clarke	Blackburn

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study Community Forum 22/5/02 – Attendees

Ms H Willsher	Blackburn
Ms N Viney	Blackburn
Ms M Short	Blackburn
Mr G & Mrs P McGuire	Blackburn South
Ms E Poelman	Blackburn
Mr J Barnfather	Surrey Hills
Ms D Schoenfeld	Blackburn South
Mr D Hall	Blackburn
Ms M Gardner	Blackburn
Ms M Mrongovius	Blackburn
Mr G Harris	Blackburn
Mr I Wood	Blackburn
Mr I Skunca	Blackburn
Mr S Walker	Blackburn South
Mr A Clark	Blackburn
Mrs M & Mr D Brayshaw & Ms D O'Toole	Blackburn South
Ms J Parker	Blackburn South
Ms J Mihelcic & Mr F Ramigni	Forest Hill
Ms J Koska & Mr G Haltar	Blackburn

Preliminary Survey Notes

BLACKBURN LAKES SURROUNDS STUDY

PRELIMINARY SURVEY NOTES

Character Type	Locality- (street)	Main elements	Threats
1	Wolseley: Gordon	High canopy trees on skyline, open streetscape feel- wide nature trips with kerbs 90% exotic (lge pinoaks street trees), mixed architectural eras- mostly 50-90's and triple fronted. Setbacks varied from med. to deep, some other streets with small setbacks (Clarke). Strong exotic feel	New repro styles that are imposing, loss of garden space and excessive hard surfaces
2	South Road Laburnum	Generally fewer canopy trees of any type and more new infill housing and units on Main Rd and Gardenia. Simpler arch. Styles w'board houses 50-60's era predominates. 50-50% native –exotic vegetation in gardens. Significance of Rail corridor position. Exotic avenue of Pinoaks. SLO side has lge. setbacks and mixed fences. Mostly exotic, lower level gardens on other side with many new development and units at east end. Some mixed species tall trees in gardens.	Both area 2 and 3 have more native street trees than area 1.
3	Salisbury Derby Pakenham	Mixed street tree species (more natives). Open frontages, some low. Retaining walls on north side. Sloping topography. V. occ. lge pinaoks & liquidambar looks “urban.” Smaller, fewer street trees, similar arch. to above, fewer lge garden trees, occasional eucs. Mixed fences New euc. street trees, native –exotic garden mix. Narrower nature strip, fewer lge trees- open feel. Mixed fences. New 2 storey rendered & boundary-boundary dev. Sloping topography gives enclosed feel	
4	Beck Amery Canterbury Rd. Dwyer Orana Malcolm Sheehans	Native street trees Open feel-low trees, simpler sparser gardens. Brick & tile 60-80's single storey dwellings. Lge. eucs in some gardens to enclose area. More natives in gardens, mixed fencing makes a big difference- pockets with little in gardens. No-few street trees and narrow verge, mostly native species when used Small, exotic street trees, some lge eucs. Mixed street trees, taller ones in gardens- many exotic 20+yrs old. Open- low frontages. Melaleuca street trees, exotic natives in gardens with an exotic ‘bricky’ feel. 50-60's , triple fronted. Lush, leafy, tall streetscape & many more eucs in gardens. Same brick architecture, low-open frontages & informal planting on verge. “12 eucs makes all the difference.”	Narrower nature strip than 1

Map Number	Category Type	Main elements	Threats
4 cont.	<p>Laurel</p> <p>Baldwin</p> <p>Main street</p> <p>Kalka</p>	<p>Lower trees to give an open feel, with simpler gardens but the same arch era as previously. Low-open fence styles. Sloping topography.</p> <p>Moves to a high point to give views to creek canopy and a treed skyline. The view is to SLO vegetation-borrowed landscape to impact on sensation of lushness. Melaleuca street tree avenue. Gardens have in parts green frontages with extensive shrubs and no fences to cut view. Mostly exotic with mixed species. A 50's clipped gardenesque style area at one end. 50-60's arch. Sloping topography- flat.</p> <p>Native and ash street trees, med. height. Gives canopy effect. 70's arch & units. Average setbacks.</p> <p>Eucs present, mixed fences and vegetation species in gardens. Views to SLO vegetation has impact on feel to street. Sealed roads and kerbs.</p>	<p>For areas abutting buffer zone: Native fauna requires increased space for habitat, so require an increase in their provenance. Eucs require more space to grow and ground storey species need to be introduced to entire area for shelter</p>
5a	<p>Shawlands</p> <p>Constance</p> <p>Rosslyn</p> <p>Margaret</p> <p>Vernon</p> <p>Darnook</p> <p>Boyd</p>	<p>Melaleuca & Blackwood street trees with some exotics of med. Height. 50's w' boards and 60-70's brick with an exotic species trend in gardens.</p> <p>60's -new housing styles with an open feel. Mixed street trees, with some tall eucs in some areas as backdrop-gives impact. This area has a strong exotic feel to gardens, with average fence heights.</p> <p>Ironbark street trees very bold & striking, also garden canopy of eucs at end of street to enclose streetscape. Mix of high fences, 60's-80's brick arch styles.</p> <p>No kerbs, a low key feel, 50-60's arch of brick and w'board mix, random placement of varied street tree species and heights. Mixed garden species, more exotics-especially at the end of Rosslyn. Low-open fences. Single storey predominates.</p> <p>Totally different to Drummond. Melaleuca street trees; no-low front fences with mixed species in gardens of lower heights. 50's -new federation repro styles-brick. Average setbacks.</p> <p>Mixed street tree species, no-low front fences & w'board houses.</p> <p>Bushier, lush appearance. Taller trees in some gardens, eucs present with Melaleuca street trees, open-no front fences. 70's-80's arch of brick and tile. Mixed veg in gardens with a native feel. Lots of canopy. High fences along Boyd near Blackburn Rd.</p>	<p>General comment for areas: Native Eucs give a local identity, whereas Melaleucas with their stocky multi-stemmed trunks are more suburban and seen in Box Hill environs. Lily Pillies read as lush, rainforestry and exotic.</p>
5b	Henwood & Faulkner	<p>Very suburban-sparse vegetation in gardens, low-open front fences. Lower level gardens, average setbacks (7m) & 3-4 & 1 m side setbacks, single storey. Small, mixed species street trees. Very different appearance and feel to area.</p>	

5b cont.	Jackson	Melaleucas street trees, many 50-60's triple fronted brick dwellings. Half street has more trees and matches other parts of area 5. Mixed fence heights. Sloping topography, av. front setbacks.	
6	Forest rd. Bessazile Fletcher-Marcus Morlock Milton Gerald Patterson Joyce-Attwood Borden Crt Central Caversham Brenda	<p>Natives and eucs. as street trees. Native appearance to half of gardens with generally open frontages. Brick architecture.</p> <p>Lower level native-exotic mix in gardens. Varied species and sizes to street trees. Mixed arch. Of brick with average setbacks. 50-80s –present simple styles. Few fences.</p> <p>Area 6 is more suburban.</p> <p>50-90's w'board & brick mix with 5-7 m setbacks and 3-4 & 1 m side setbacks. No, low- 1.2 m front fences with mixed veg. in gardens. Styles more open with less height in shrubs and trees to give a suburban appearance. Vast areas with no trees on skyline.</p> <p>Old Melaleuca street trees, Low or no front fences. Av. arch styles for area with mixed veg in gardens as in Fletcher.</p> <p>Indigenous street trees (young). W'boards renovated and brick. Mixed fences styles. More veg. to give a thick frontage to gardens in parts. Old pines at rear. Brick houses tend to have less in gardens than w'boards. Average setbacks, kerbs and paths. Flat-lightly sloping topography.</p> <p>Eucs in gardens. mixed fences. Predominantly 50's w'board or present new 2 storey arch. Young indig. street trees. Av. setbacks. Sealed roads, kerbs and paths. Pine trees near school are a backdrop.</p> <p>Tall trees (pines and eucs) frame scene & Florence St. Mixed fences and veg. in gardens. Mixed height native street trees. Housing brick & w'board 50's-present simple arch styles. Loose garden styles (less clipped maintenance). Canopy of eucs present.</p> <p>Average-large setbacks. Exotic gardens generally with some large trees. 50-70's simple arch styles, with much w'board.</p> <p>Open feel, mixed veg in gardens with less height. Native street trees of low-med height. Mixed fence styles. Much brick arch.</p> <p>Large Euc street trees give impact. New infill brick and w'board 2 storey hsing amongst 50-60's arch of mixed materials. Mixed fences and varied setbacks, mixed veg. in gardens.</p> <p>Leafy 50-70's 2 storey English garden court, mixed veg in gardens and street (Casuarinas in Street), open frontages, bushy gardens. Views and axis slope to creek.</p> <p>Also sloping to creek, leafy near creek and retirement village (extensive landscaping). Eucs in gardens, narrow verge with small, mixed species street trees. Brick & w'board late 30's- 60's arch. Bushy gardens and some renovations to w'board houses.</p>	

BLACKBURN LAKES SURROUNDS STUDY
PRELIMINARY SURVEY NOTES

	Springvale Rd	Some Eucs in gardens and street trees. Larger setbacks-mixed. Brick houses of 70-90's era. Mixed – high front fences. Framed by backdrop of eucs along creek below.	
	Candlebark Crt, etc	New houses, brick or render, 2 storey, small setbacks, much boundary-boundary dev.t. Exotic new-establishing exotic gardens, many low level. Roll-over kerbs, some paths, small street trees (Melias). Could be in Chirnside Park. No relationship to creek frontage that abuts estate.	
	Laughlin	Large Pinoak avenue frames streetscape. 50-60's brick arch with low-open front fences. Mixed veg in gardens, with some open bushy gardens. Kerbs and paths. Garden suburban feel like other areas in study area.	

Recommended Neighbourhood Character Overlay Schedule

SCHEDULE 1 TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER OVERLAY

Shown on the planning scheme map as **NCO1**

BLACKBURN EARLY SETTLEMENT NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER**1.0 Statement of neighbourhood character**

The area of Blackburn affected by this Overlay schedule has an existing and preferred character based on the frequency of pre-World War II era buildings. Collectively the buildings are considered to contribute to the broader heritage, and understanding of the historical development, of the Blackburn area and surrounding areas.

The streetscape patterns and characteristics created by the frequency of the buildings of these eras, and their common building forms and elements, have a consistency and appearance that is valued by the local and wider community. The streetscape elements of particular importance in these areas include building form, siting including side, front and rear building setbacks and large trees. The trees complement and reflect the highly significant indigenous and native vegetation of the Blackburn Lake surrounds.

2.0 Neighbourhood character objective

To ensure that new buildings and works reflect the preferred character of the surrounding area.

To encourage the retention of existing pre-World War II dwellings and large trees.

To ensure that new buildings and works meet the objectives and the design guidelines contained in the relevant Precinct Brochure of the *Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study 2002*.

3.0 Permit requirement

A permit is required to demolish or remove a building.

A permit is required to remove, lop or destroy a tree.

4.0 Modification to Clause 54 and Clause 55 standards

STANDARD	MODIFIED REQUIREMENT
A20 and B32	Maximum front fence height is 1.2 metres, other than adjoining streets in a Road Zone where the maximum is 1.5 metres.

5.0 Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines of Clause 43.05 and Clause 65, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

- The extent to which the exterior of any pre-World War II era building, proposed to be demolished, is intact or repairable.
- The health of the tree as demonstrated by evidence from a qualified arborist.
- The extent to which the tree contributes to the achievement of the preferred neighbourhood character of the Precinct, and any replacement trees and other vegetation proposed.

- The extent to which the proposed buildings or works assists in achieving the Preferred Character Statement and Guidelines contained in the *Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study 2002* and the Neighbourhood Character Study Precinct Brochure for Precinct Five.

Reference

Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study 2002, including the Precinct Brochure for Precinct 5.