



CITY OF



WHITEHORSE

WHITEHORSE LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

How to prepare a Landscape Plan



July 2012



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Landscapes that complement the municipality's topography, natural features, street layout, open spaces and architecture.



CITY OF WHITEHORSE LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

1.0 Introduction

Whitehorse City Council wants to encourage landscapes that complement the municipality's topography, natural features, street layout, open spaces and architecture.

In order to achieve this, Council has developed landscape guidelines for people to consider as part of the planning permit application process for residential, commercial and industrial developments.

Purpose and Scope of the Landscape Guidelines

The guidelines will help applicants develop a landscape concept plan that is consistent with Council's current policies, strategies and programs.

The guidelines will also be used more generally to encourage well designed and sustainable landscapes across the City of Whitehorse.

The guidelines apply to all developments that require a landscape concept plan to be submitted as part of a planning permit application. The guidelines have been prepared to assist with efficient processing of planning permit applications. The guidelines outline the amount and type of information required to assess proposals and applies to applications for some residential developments, multi-unit developments, commercial and industrial sites where landscape concept plans are required as part of a planning permit application.

Applicants should speak to a planning officer to determine if a landscape concept plan is required as part of the application.

Objectives of the Landscape Guidelines

The objectives of the landscape guidelines are:

- To encourage well designed and high quality landscapes associated with new developments and redevelopment of existing infrastructure
- To identify when a landscape concept plan is required as part of a planning permit application
- To clearly outline the type and amount of information required for landscape concept plans to assist with efficient processing of planning permit applications
- To clearly outline the requirements of environmentally sustainable development principles and assessment tools
- To promote Council policies as outlined in the planning scheme.



2.0 Whitehorse Planning Scheme

The Whitehorse Planning Scheme comprises state and local planning policies, Council's Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), zoning and overlay provisions, and planning controls that specify how land in the municipality can be used and developed.

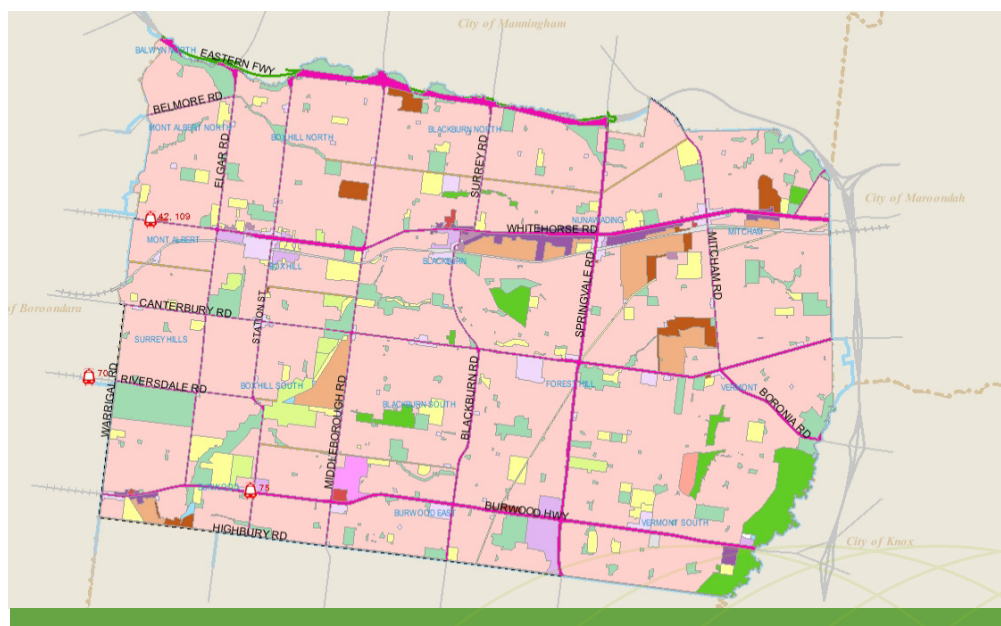
Council has a strong policy commitment to ensure that tree and vegetation cover is included with all new developments.

In addition, some properties have overlay controls that identify and protect areas with significant trees or landscape character. These overlays include:

- Significant landscape overlays
- Vegetation protection overlays
- Neighbourhood character overlays
- Environmental significance overlays.

Native vegetation is also protected on sites of 4000m² or greater in area.

Further information regarding the planning scheme and overlay controls can be found on Council's website at www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Planning.html





3.0 Landscape Plan Process

Council encourages applicants to submit landscape concept plans with all planning permit applications.

Landscape concept plans provide a conceptual landscape layout for the site without the detail of a full landscape plan. They are particularly relevant for medium density housing developments, applications on land affected by a significant landscape overlay or neighbourhood character overlay, and any development of land where some of the site will be landscaped. Some larger and more complex planning permit applications will require the submission of a detailed landscape plan earlier in the application process.

Applicants should undertake assessment of the existing trees and any relevant protection requirements for trees to be retained before the proposed development is designed.

Background Information

Applicants should research and collate background information such as site conditions and overlay provisions. They should also commission a report for all existing trees from a qualified arborist.

Design Phase

Applicants should undertake the landscape design of the proposed development in conjunction with the building design, taking into account the arborist's report recommendations. They should incorporate environmentally sustainable design initiatives early in the design phase.

Submit Planning Permit Application

Applicants should submit all relevant documents to Council including the landscape plan and arborist's report.

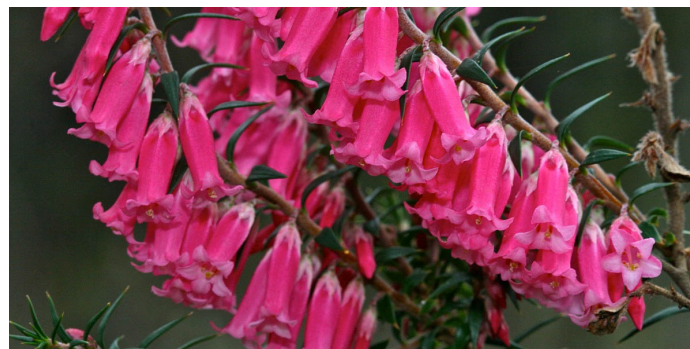
Respond to Planning Permit Conditions

Once applicants have received a planning permit, they should prepare a detailed landscape plan in accordance with the approved landscape concept plan and any relevant planning permit conditions. Most planning permit applications will not require the submission of a detailed landscape plan until

the planning approval is granted. Council officers will advise applicants if a landscape concept plan is required before a decision has been made on the application. The landscape plan may need to be amended once a decision on the application has been made.

Requirements for arborist's reports, landscape concept plans and landscape plans can be found on page 13 of these guidelines.

Further information regarding the planning permit process can be found on Council's website at www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Planning.html





4.0 Landscape Design

A well- designed landscape can provide cost effective, attractive and enjoyable places for people to interact and connect with the surrounding natural environment.

Landscape Design Professionals

Council recommends that landscape concept plans, and landscape plans (if required), are carried out by a qualified landscape architect or designer who is familiar with Council's planning permit application requirements. Landscape design and plan preparation is a specialist task that requires expertise in design, ecological processes and plant knowledge. The development of a landscape concept plan should begin in the early stages of the project to ensure integration with the building design and engineering requirements.

To find a landscape architect or designer, check your local directory or contact the organisations below:

Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA)
www.aila.org.au

Landscape Industries Association of Victoria (LIAV)
www.liav.com.au

Landscape Design Principles

Landscape design principles should be established during the early stages of the planning and design phase of new developments. These principles will outline important issues and elements and guide decision making throughout the process.

Applying simple site specific design principles can create a landscape that is efficient and functional and can have significant lifestyle and environmental benefits.





5.0 Landscape Concept Plan

A detailed landscape concept plan, and landscape plan (if required), should be prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced landscape design professional.

The provision of adequate and accurate information helps Council to process applications more efficiently. An arborist's report should be prepared before the design phase begins. Further information regarding arborist's reports can be found in Section 7.0 Vegetation Retention.

The landscape concept plan and landscape plan should adhere to the following specifications:

- Be drawn clearly and accurately to scale – typically 1:100, 1:200 or 1:500
- Be no larger than A1 paper size
- Include title box with drawing name, property address, date of drawing, scale and north point
- Include legend clearly identifying all information that has been shown on the plan
- Include legend to clarify graphic symbols shown on the plan
- Include notes as required to clarify information shown on the plan.

As part of your application, supply Council with three full-size sets of black and white plans.

Base Plan and Site Analysis

Applicants should prepare a base that accurately reflects the existing site conditions. The base plan should include:

- Property boundaries
- Existing buildings, showing ground floor windows and doors
- Other existing structures
- Natural features
- Easements and underground services
- Built form and major trees abutting the neighbouring site boundary within four metres
- Existing street trees
- Existing vegetation to be retained and removed, drawn at realistic size
- Botanical and common name of vegetation removed and retained.

- Vegetation protection zones as specified in the arborist's report
- Existing site contours and levels.

Once the base plan has been prepared a site analysis can be undertaken. The site analysis should identify:

- Existing physical conditions, opportunities and constraints
- Site conditions such as solar orientation and views to be retained or screened.

Landscape Concept Plan

Once an understanding of the site conditions has been gained, applicants should undertake a landscape concept plan. The landscape concept plan should include:

- Proposed buildings, showing ground floor windows and doors
- Other proposed structures such as sheds or pergolas
- Proposed vehicular and pedestrian access
- All features drawn and labelled clearly
- All surfaces drawn and materials labelled clearly
- Proposed contours and levels
- Location, height and materials of retaining wall and/or batters
- Proposed vegetation (drawn at mature size)
- Existing and proposed fence heights and types
- Utilities such as bin storage and clothes line
- Tree protection measures.

The plant schedule should include:

- All proposed plants with both the botanical and common name
- Quantity of all proposed plants
- Size at time of installation; pot size for understorey planting and height for tree planting
- Typical size at maturity; height and width
- All trees to be removed with both botanical and common name.



Landscape Plan

The landscape plan typically responds to relevant conditions set out in the planning permit.

The requirements of landscape plans are site and function specific. Council officers will advise the requirements of a landscape plan (if required).

Landscape Design Statement

For larger and more complex developments, a landscape design statement will be required. The statement is a brief document that outlines the design intent and underlying design principles.

The statement may also be a useful tool for providing information regarding the proposal that is best communicated in written form rather than drawn on a plan; for example, design that reduces maintenance or responds to heritage issues.





6.0 Environmental Sustainability

Council is committed to creating an environmentally sustainable municipality.

A critical component in achieving this is ensuring that developments meet high environmental standards. Council's Sustainability Strategy 2008-2013 aims to integrate environmental sustainability principles into land-use planning, new developments and redevelopment of existing infrastructure. Developments are expected to achieve best practice in addressing the principles of environmentally sustainable development from the design stage through to construction and operation.

Sustainable Design Assessment and Landscape Design

Council's planning permit application process includes environmentally sustainable development considerations. Council strongly encourages all development applications to address sustainability early in the process by preparing a sustainable design assessment that summarises the sustainable design initiatives being incorporated into the development. This will help to avoid unnecessary planning amendments and delays in the future. While the sustainable design assessment tools address the whole development, most of the critical elements in constructing environmentally-sustainable developments can be addressed in a well designed and resolved landscape concept plan, including:

- Energy efficiency
- Water resources
- Stormwater management / water sensitive urban design
- Materials selection
- Waste management
- Transport
- Urban ecology
- Innovation
- Ongoing building and site management.

To assist applicants in completing a satisfactory sustainable design assessment, the Sustainable Tools for Environmental Performance Strategy (STEPS) and/or Sustainable Design Scorecard (SDS) should be used. Further information can be found on Council's website

at www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Sustainable-Design-Assessment.html

Environmentally Sustainable Development and Landscape Design

There are many areas where sustainable building design and landscape design are interlinked. Some key principles of sustainably designed landscapes include:

- Plant deciduous trees to north and west-facing glazed areas to allow direct sunlight penetration during the winter months yet providing effective shading during summer.
- Incorporate on-site food production with herb and vegetable gardens, fruit trees and a compost heap for organic waste recycling.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle materials when possible.
- Select sustainable materials including materials that are produced from renewable resources, locally sourced, recyclable, made from post-consumer sources, durable and/or are rapidly renewable.
- Retain existing site topsoil for re-use once building construction has been completed.
- Retain and protect existing quality trees and plant communities wherever possible, especially native and indigenous species.
- Where trees cannot be retained, ensure suitable trees are incorporated in the proposed development.





Water Conservation

Landscape designs should address water conservation by reducing and reusing water to decrease the demand for mains water for landscape purposes. Water conservation can be achieved by considering the following in the landscape design:

- Specify drought-tolerant plants
- Mulch all planted areas
- Reduce areas of lawn
- Allow for non-irrigated areas
- When required, specify efficient irrigation systems
- Direct water flow towards garden beds
- Install water tanks
- Install grey water systems.

Water Sensitive Urban Design

Water sensitive urban design is a sustainable way of managing urban water to reduce the environmental impact of development by reducing the amount of water flowing off-site into the stormwater system and increasing the quality of stormwater that does flow into the stormwater system or local waterways. Some key principles of water sensitive urban design include:

- Allow water to permeate the ground surface by maximising permeable ground surface treatment such as gravel, crushed stone, permeable paving or pavers on a sand base.
- Install systems which will capture and treat stormwater such as raingardens, swales or roof gardens.
- Recycle greywater for suitable household and landscape purposes.

Plant Selection

Developments should seek to minimise the loss of tree canopy wherever possible. Where canopy loss does occur, suitable replacement canopy trees should be included in the landscape design. Private developments are an important part of the overall urban environment. Plant species should be selected to grow well in the local environment and contribute to the local character. Species selection and planting themes should respond to local conditions and relate to the character, scale and proportions of the streetscape.

Plant species selection should consider the following:

- Select plants to have the desired functional outcome e.g. shade, screen etc.
- Consider site conditions such as aspect, soil type and wind direction.
- Select plants that are hardy and have low maintenance requirements.
- Select plants that have low water requirements.
- Select and locate plants for the right conditions based on requirements and growth rates.
- Select plants to contribute to bio-diversity and provide fauna habitat.
- Give preference to indigenous plants of local origin.
- Select plants that are commercially available.
- Do not use plant species that have been recognised as environmental weeds.

Indigenous plant information for all properties in the City of Whitehorse can be found on Council's website at www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Mapping-GIS-Online.html

For further information regarding suitable plant selection, contact the community nurseries listed below:

Bungalook Nursery

63-107 Fulton Road, Blackburn South
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~wcipp/welcome.htm>

Greenlink Box Hill

41 Wimmera Street, Box Hill North
<https://sites.google.com/site/greenlinkboxhill/>





7.0 Vegetation Retention

Council encourages private landscape developments to contribute to the character and environment of the local area by encouraging the retention of mature trees on site.

Arborist's Report

Applicants should submit an arborist's report with the initial planning permit application. The report should be completed prior to the design of the development and should assess existing trees on the development site, adjacent nature strip and on surrounding lots within four metres of the property boundary.

The arborist's report should include the following information:

- A site map that clearly identifies the location of each tree with corresponding legend
- Trees to be retained and trees to be removed
- The genus and species name of each tree
- Tree health and structure
- The safe useful life expectancy of each tree
- The diameter at breast height (DBH 1.4 metres above natural ground level)
- Tree protection zone
- Structural root zone
- The percentage encroachment into all tree protection zones by the proposed development
- The impact the development proposal will have on the health and structural integrity of the protected and retained trees
- Outline how retained and protected trees will remain viable under the proposed plans
- Recommendations to amend plans and minimise adverse impacts on protected trees during demolition and construction.

Tree Protection

Trees to be retained on site during construction may need protection when works are carried out in close proximity. The most common damage to trees caused during the construction phase is soil compaction, root damage and damage to the trunk and limbs from machinery. Landscape concept plans must describe how trees will be adequately protected.

Council may specify tree protection measures as a condition of a planning permit. Failure to comply with these conditions may result in enforcement actions. Typical tree protection guidelines prior to construction include:

- Establish a tree protection zone around each tree as nominated in the arborist's report.
- The tree protection zone must be fenced with a 1.5m high chain link fence.
- Erect warning signs along each side of the protection fence.
- Spread and maintain organic mulch to a depth of 50-100mm within the tree protection zone.

Tree protection guidelines during construction include:

- Do not build up soil or other material around the trunk.
- Avoid filling and excavation during construction.
- Do not permit fuel or chemicals within the tree protection zone.
- Do not store any materials within the tree protection zone.
- Do not attach anything to the tree such as signs etc.
- Water trees as required during hot and dry weather.
- Regularly remove weeds from within the tree protection zone.
- Tree protection zones and guidelines should be established in accordance with AS 4970-2009.

The tree protection fencing should be maintained in good order throughout construction and removed only when all construction works have been completed.

Protecting Shrubs and Groundcovers

Any shrubs and groundcovers to be retained and protected on site should be clearly marked with flagging tape or similar.