

Borough of Queenscliffe: Urban Character Study

Guideline Pack No.2 Building Siting & Design Guidelines for Pt Lonsdale Natural Coastal Areas.



Part 2 of a 3 Part series

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Design Guidelines

The Character of the Borough of Queenscliffe.

Townscape Context

Throughout its history, the Borough of Queenscliffe has successfully positioned itself as one of Victoria's premier coastal townships with unique lifestyle and tourism destination qualities. The town's favourable Bellarine Peninsula setting, its proximity to Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat and its unique relationship with the coast (in particular Port Phillip heads, Swan Bay, Bass Strait and the Mornington Peninsula) have provided a basis for significant physical development and economic stability.

Within this context, the township has resisted significant redevelopment of sensitive areas and recognised that it is the inherent structure, size and dimension of Queenscliffe that has consistently been its primary appeal. It is the 'feel' of the Borough (and its parts) and the delicate balance of urban heritage, natural coastal, and rural residential themes that make Queenscliffe a memorable place. It is this unique combination of development diversity and intimacy that has (and will continue) to position Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale as an intensely popular living environment and tourism destination of regional and state significance.

The Borough's 'Urban Character Study' seeks to define the salient qualities that contribute to the 'feel' and 'look' of Queenscliffe. These guidelines work in accord with the findings of the study in encouraging the protection and consolidation of the key urban character attributes.

Queenscliffe's Urban Character Attributes:

There are a variety of elements that contribute to the 'feel' and 'look' of Queenscliffe. The most tangible elements are those directly linked to its physical form. It is also recognised however, that the Queenscliffe 'experience' is defined by far more than its buildings alone. The urban character of the Borough, and its place as a 'living' township is a result of its unique coastal location, its intimate village scale and its diverse urban form and structure. Specifically, this includes the Borough's

Visual Setting & Natural Environment

- Unique seaside position and relationship to Swan and Port Phillip Bays and Bass Strait.
- Outstanding urban skyline and natural coastal vistas with sea view opportunities.
- Sense of isolation, distinctive rural threshold and open pastoral backdrop.

Village Scale & Ambience

- Intimate municipal scale and diverse urban coastal village environments.
- Clearly distinguishable and separate villages of Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale.
- Predominant village density and prevailing single and double storey building scale.

Diverse Urban Structure

- Sensitive street grid arrangement and its relationship to the topography and coast.
- Broad array of intact heritage and coastal architectural and landscape forms.

Within this context Queenscliffe's total built and natural environment reflects various stages of coastal resort development evolution through the 19th and 20th centuries. Within the Borough, there are intact streetscapes of early Victorian resort dwellings with a distinctly 'urban' presence, examples of less formal Edwardian and Californian Bungalow precincts and consolidated areas of 1930s and 1960s holiday dwellings set amongst coastal tea-tree and moonah. There are also some excellent contemporary infill developments that respond to the Australian coastal ethos.

With the above factors in mind, the Municipal objective is to achieve a future urban character which:

- retains the memorable and sensitive view lines to the sea, coastal dune environments and the townscape skyline,
- retains the unique and intact building, landscape heritage and natural foreshore qualities of the Borough,
- retains the cohesive intimacy of the Borough in its low scale and recessive built forms,
- retains the distinctive identities of the Borough's urban heritage and natural coastal settings,
- sensitively integrates contributing design excellence

The main objective of these documents is to retain the existing significant urban and natural fabric of the Borough, which is mostly of a traditional form. There is however an important objective to encourage 'contributing' design that will allow the Borough to grow and adapt to change in order to evolve. Where contemporary design is permitted, it must contribute to the salient historic or natural fabric of the area. It is not the objective to produce avante-garde, fashionable design that ignores context. Good contemporary design must reflect that infill development will participate in the fabric of the Borough for a long period of time.

One of the fundamental principles of good design is honesty. In the context of the Borough this means avoidance of replica buildings, pastiche and historical cliché. Good design will reflect its own era, within the scale, structure and proportion of its built form and environmental context

Within the context of the above objectives, the following guidelines focus on the consolidating the salient qualities of each of Queenscliffe's unique :

- Urban Heritage areas (Queenscliff)
- Natural Coastal areas (Point Lonsdale), and
- Foreshore areas (Queenscliff, Pt Lonsdale & Narrows).

Design Guidelines

Guideline Pack No.2 Point Lonsdale Natural Coastal Areas: General

The Purpose of these Guidelines:

Is to outline the important building siting and design matters that should be taken into account when:

- constructing a new building; or
- extending an existing building.

to ensure that future development is responsive to Point Lonsdale's urban and natural coastal character.

These guidelines outline the matters that Council will consider in the assessment of development proposals in order to 'achieve high quality urban design and architecture' which 'reflects the particular characteristics, aspiration, and cultural identity of the community....and promotes the unique qualities of the township within a strategic context'.

Where these Guidelines Apply:

In all Natural Coastal Areas within the Borough of Queenscliffe as identified on the figure below as Future Character Management Areas:

- Point Lonsdale Coastal Natural Areas
- Point Lonsdale Coastal Contributory Areas

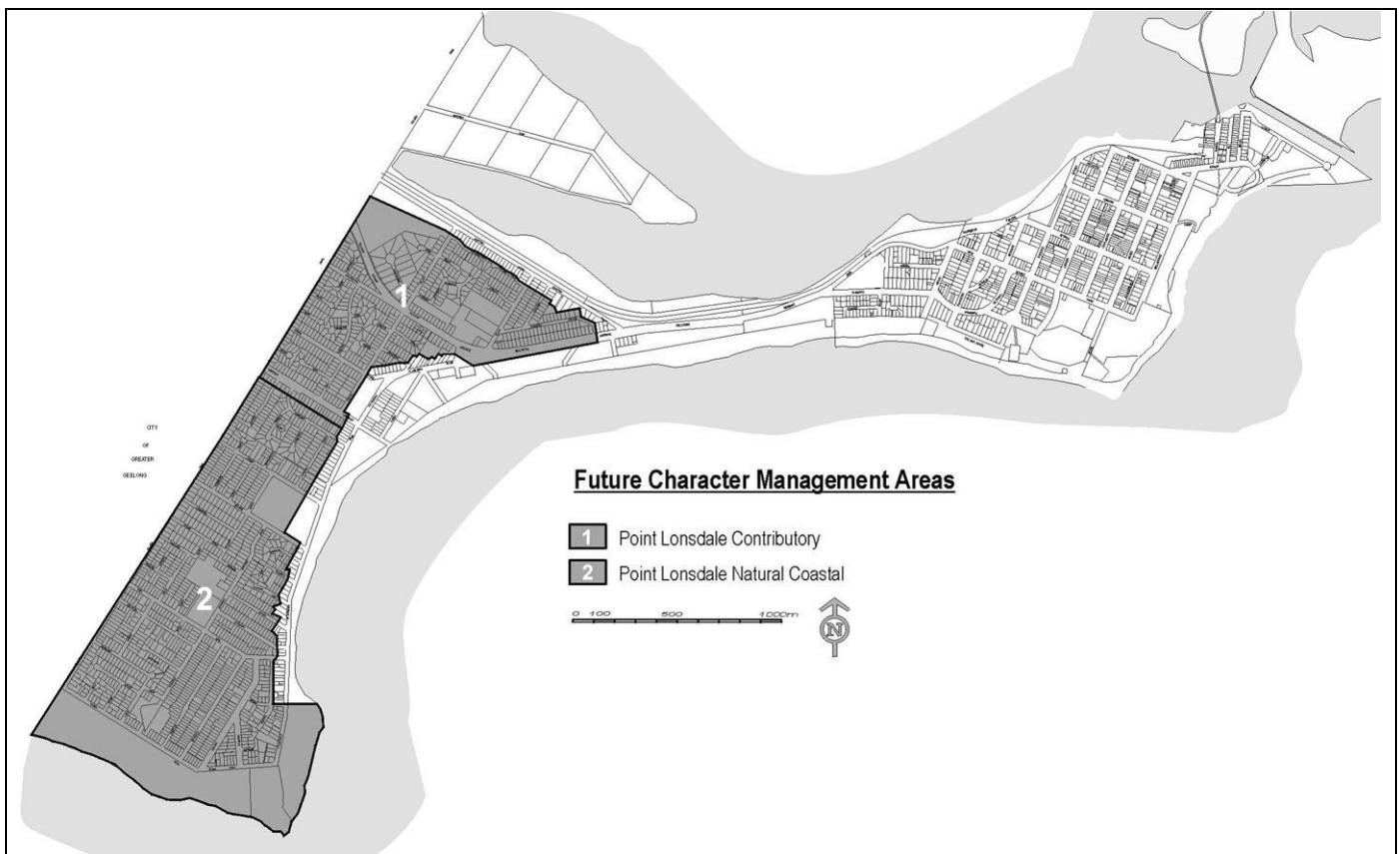
How to Use the Guidelines:

Proposals should aim to meet the design objectives and suggestions set out in these guidelines. These reflect detailed controls outlined in Queenscliffe's Planning Scheme. Applicants should:

- Establish the site location and identify the level of Control on the property.
- Establish whether the site is subject to any other existing policy or controls including zoning or overlay controls.
- Use these guidelines as tools in preparation of the development proposal and in considering the suitability of the proposal in the context of neighbourhood character.
- Councils Town Planners are available to discuss proposals and explain how to use the guidelines. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ascertain Council requirements.

Is a Planning Permit Required:

The provisions of the Queenscliffe Planning Scheme should be checked with Council's Planning department.



Areas to which these Guidelines Apply:

While the guidelines contained in this document apply to all the areas shown above, they have essentially been prepared for residential development on conventional lots. In relation to non-residential development or development on large sites, only the objectives that are relevant need be addressed.

Design Guidelines

Guideline Pack No.2 Point Lonsdale Natural Coastal Areas: Character Statement

Character of Pt Lonsdale Natural Coastal Areas:

It is the distinctive character of the natural coastal and dune areas of Point Lonsdale which makes them such an attractive place to live and holiday. The main features which contribute to this character are described below, so that people developing in the area understand the attributes Council is seeking to preserve and enhance through these guidelines. The retention and enhancement of these features is the key consideration to take into account when siting and designing buildings or additions in these areas, and underlies the more specific considerations listed in the remainder of these guidelines.

The urban character of Point Lonsdale, in particular the core of Old Lonsdale is dominated by the undulating dune topography and the dense coastal native tea tree and moonah vegetation, creating a sense of village enclosure and coastal seclusion. The extensive dense vegetative cover over private and public lands within this area in conjunction with the predominantly low density residential stock and informal roadways has formed a unique and highly valued coastal village (and sub-urban) quality that must not be disturbed. The visual sensitivity of this setting is extreme and key issues of building height and vegetation protection are to be carefully considered in the design process.

Key Attributes

Other valued attributes to be considered are the Point Lonsdale natural coastal area's:

- prevailing low scale (single storey) detached early 20th century residential buildings that recede within the vegetated coastal environment.
- unique mix of intact historic holiday town building types varying from Californian, Art Deco, Post War, 1960s and contemporary design that celebrates building diversity.
- substantial estate properties with large dwellings set within major bodies of vegetation which significantly contribute to the native coastal sense of place.
- road network informality with limited use of kerb and channel, and predominantly grassed road shoulders.
- predominantly broad and densely vegetated road reserves and relatively indistinguishable front boundaries reminiscent of a intimate coastal village.
- gently undulating topography (due to its coastal dune proximity) which provides opportunity for excellent views towards Port Philip Bay, and shorter corridor views to well vegetated dunes.
- established native tea tree and moonah planting located within private gardens, road verges and coastal public areas, reinforcing the informal coastal appearance of the precinct .



Informal unmade streets



Recessed buildings



Coastal vegetation dominant



Older single storey buildings

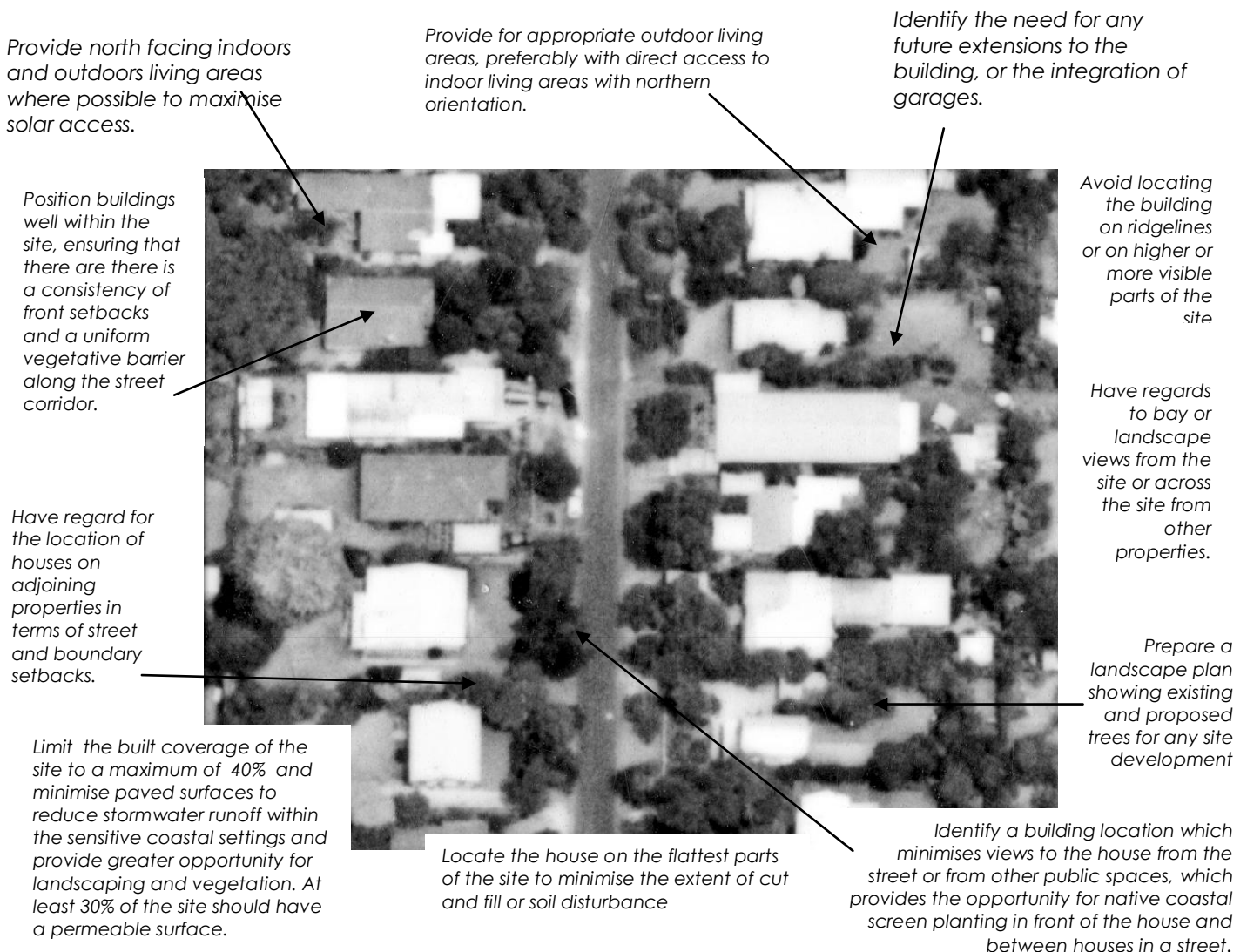
Point Lonsdale Natural Areas: Key Attributes

Design Guidelines

Guideline Pack No.2 Point Lonsdale Natural Coastal Areas: Site Layout

Design Objectives:

1. A layout which endeavours to minimise the visual intrusion of buildings or any other elements into the natural coastal appearance of the area.
2. On sites where vegetative screens are insubstantial, a layout which provides the opportunity for landscaped areas in appropriate locations to be planted with tea-tree and moonah to screen buildings from view, extend the roadside vegetation corridor, and reinstate the natural environment.
3. A layout of building or additions, paved areas, and driveways, car parking, active outdoor living areas and landscape areas that suits the site having regard to its physical, historic and environmental features and the location of buildings on adjacent land.
4. A layout which provides a high quality of living for occupants of the site and which maintains an appropriate standard of amenity for the occupants of adjoining dwellings.
5. A layout which carefully considered the need for future extensions or additions on the site (ie total site planning).
6. A layout which minimises the removal of any existing native coastal trees that contribute to the total natural vegetated presence of the area.
7. A layout which locates buildings on the flattest portion of the site so as to minimise the need for site excavation and major earth disturbance.



Point Lonsdale Natural Areas: How to Achieve the Site layout Objectives

Design Guidelines

Guideline Pack No.2 Point Lonsdale Natural Coastal Areas: Building Design

Design Objectives:

1. New buildings and extensions which respect and blend in with the existing natural coastal character of the area and express a contemporary coastal design that interprets the traditional resort/ holiday building massing, scale, proportion and material palette.
2. Buildings designs or extensions which take into account the features of a site, coastal conditions, sensitivities within vegetated streetscape, and any view corridors from the streets, public spaces and surrounding properties.
3. Buildings designs which make efficient use of sites and apply the principles of environmentally sustainable design and solar energy efficiency in an innovative way without compromising the natural quality of the area.
4. New buildings or additions which sensitively and coherently interpret the variety of holiday building types and styles that have developed in Point Lonsdale through the 20th century.

Avoid direct overlooking into neighbouring properties and minimise the loss of longer distance views across the site from neighbouring properties

Adopt contemporary interpretations of traditional coastal building designs pitched hipped and gable roofs, vertical rectangular window openings and verandahs.

Use verandahs to shade indoor living areas and ensure that verandahs read as part of the roof form as match the scale, pitch and materials of the main roof form

Use split level floors within buildings to reduce the height of the building above ground level on sloping sites and to reduce the need for excavation

Emphasise the horizontal rather than vertical form of buildings to reduce the perception of height.

Choose building materials which are non reflective and which are of natural and muted colours



Keep the height of buildings generally within the tree canopy and retain as much existing vegetation as possible

Utilise traditional building materials in an innovative manner, including the sensitive use of horizontal weatherboard cladding, light tone rendered brickwork, corrugated iron roofs, timber verandahs, and door and window joinery and painted finishes.

Adopt innovative building design techniques and materials that reduce energy use and are responsive to the harsh coastal conditions (withstanding wind and salt attack)

Use staggered and varied roof lines and pitches and vary the setback of walls to reduce the visual bulk and impact of buildings in natural surrounding

Design Guidelines

Guideline Pack No.2 Point Lonsdale Natural Coastal Areas: Building Height & Setback

Design Objectives:

1. Building heights and setbacks which retain the existing prevailing street rhythm, scale and setback.
2. Building heights and setbacks which ensure that no individual building or extension dominates the streetscape or coastal setting.
3. Building heights and setbacks which support an appropriate relationship between buildings on the site and site boundaries, as well as adjoining buildings.
4. Buildings of a height which generally do not extend above the tree canopy, particularly on elevated or highly visible sites.
5. Building setbacks which avoid the need to remove existing vegetation on a site and provide opportunity for the foundation of established native coastal gardens in front setbacks to contribute to the vegetated verge.
6. Building heights and setbacks which ensure adequate daylight to all habitable rooms and private open spaces on the development site.
7. Building heights and setbacks that do not cause any adverse amenity impacts to adjacent dwellings or land.

*Front setbacks should be the same as the setbacks of adjacent buildings or if these are different the setback may be between the setbacks of adjacent buildings.
(Natural Coastal Areas only)*

The highest point of roofs should not be greater than the highest point of any adjacent buildings or the prevailing height of buildings in the street, or whichever is the less of the two.

Building boundary to boundary on the ground floor is generally not permitted



Buildings and additions should not exceed 2 storeys in height (with a maximum height of 8.5 metres) and should generally conform to the height of adjoining buildings so that significant projection above the tree canopy does not occur.

Outbuildings may be sited on the side and rear boundaries, provided the height on the boundary does not exceed a maximum height of 3.6 metres with an average of 3 metres and a total length of 10m.

side and rear setbacks depend on the height of the building as set out in the diagram, but is generally:

- 1.2m for a single storey building (up to 3.6m height) and
- 1.92m for a double storey building (with a 6m high wall))
- or equal to the side and rear setbacks of buildings on adjoining sites

(Natural Coastal Areas only).

Design Guidelines

Guideline Pack No.2 Pt Lonsdale Natural Coastal Areas: Fencing, Drives & Landscape

Design Objectives:

1. Fencing which subtly defines the boundary of the property and provides adequate security and privacy for the building and associated private open spaces.
2. Fencing, particularly at the front of the site, which complements the character of the property facade, the landscaped areas of the site and the streetscape.
3. Fencing, particularly at the front of the site which takes into account the height, configuration and visual transparency of adjoining fences.
4. Driveways and paths which are attractive, provide adequate access and minimise surface drainage.
5. Driveways and parking areas that are not visually dominant at the street or from public spaces or are screened by appropriate frontage landscaping.
6. Carports and garages designed in sympathy to the side or rear of existing buildings in particular with regard to roof shape, wall and roofing materials.
7. Retention and conservation of existing 'contributory' vegetation that is visible from the streetscape or foreshore.
8. Creation of an attractive environment which requires low maintenance and assists with energy conservation.
9. Complement existing plantings on site with appropriate new planting to assist in blending-in of the buildings or extensions into the character of the area.
10. Creation of landscaped setbacks to side boundaries to minimise the potential for overlooking, whilst providing an important landscape link to rear garden and private open space areas.
11. Formation of landscapes within private gardens areas as appropriate shade elements and environmental barriers to any severe coastal conditions.

