

Borough of Queenscliffe

Urban Character Study

Guideline Pack No.1
Building Siting & Design Guidelines for
Queenscliff Urban Areas.



Part 1 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 Borough'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 Borough 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 Queenscliffe's 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 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.1: Queenscliff Urban 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 Queenscliff's urban 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 of the Queenscliff Urban Areas within the Borough of Queenscliffe as identified on the figure below as Future Character Management Areas:

- Queenscliff Urban Heritage Areas
- Queenscliff Urban Contributory Areas

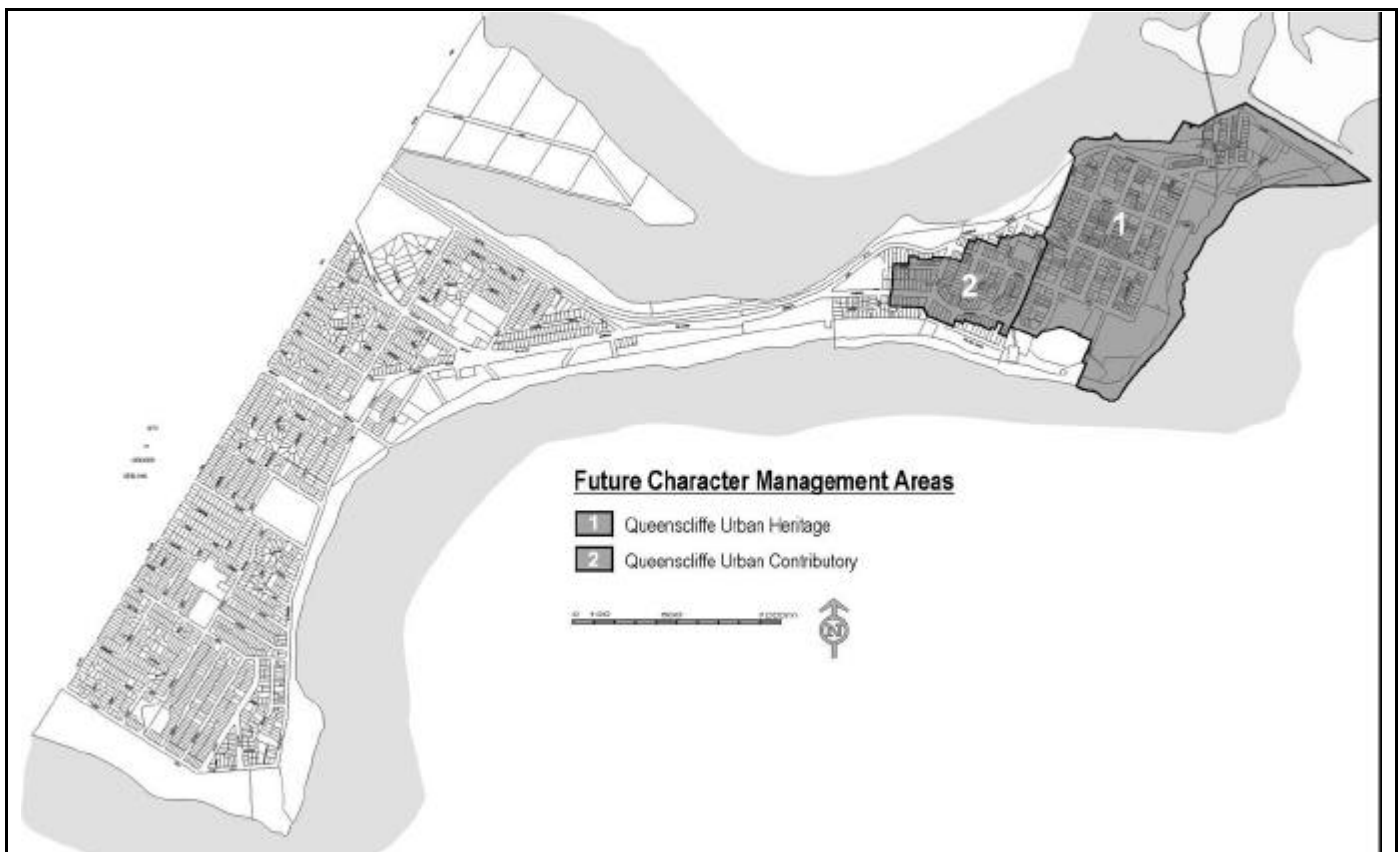
How to Use the Guidelines:

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 policies 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.1: Queenscliff Urban Areas: Character Statement

The Character of Queenscliff's Urban Areas:

The urban character of Queenscliff relies on the combined significance of its individual historic buildings, its broad formal streetscapes, its established exotic landscape and its relationships to the coast. 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 urban areas, and underlies the more specific considerations listed in the remainder of these guidelines.

The urban areas of Queenscliff, in particular the historic core dominates the arrival experience from both land and sea. The variable topography of the area and strategically located landmark buildings, (as well as general historic building stock) has formed a unique and highly valued townscape skyline that must not be interrupted. The sensitivity of views towards proposed buildings/ additions should be carefully considered in the design process, as should any potential for overlooking of adjoining areas.

Key Attributes

Other key attributes to be considered are the urban area's:

- substantial groupings of intact historic 1 and 2 storey Victorian and Edwardian buildings (attached and detached) that reflects the relatively high density of development.
- unique mixture of historic building scales and types varying from grand freestanding hotels to intimate workers cottages (in defined precincts) that celebrate building diversity.
- informality of streetscape materials/ finishes and front fencing that are reminiscent of an intimate and historic seaside village.
- broad straight streets with buildings abutting the street frontage (or marginally setback) that create a significant and distinctive 'urban' feel.
- undulating topography (due to its coastal dune or cliff proximity) which provides opportunity for long views towards Swan Bay or Port Phillip Bay, and shorter view to intact historic buildings and streetscapes.
- established exotic street tree planting and private gardens that frame views to building facades and reinforce the formality and historic appearance of the township



Townscape silhouette



Informal streetscape



Built form variation



Street tree planting

Design Guidelines

Guideline Pack No.1: Queenscliff Urban Areas: Site Layout

Design Objectives:

1. A layout of buildings or additions which has respect for, and minimal impact on the visual sensitivity, scale and proportion of the street and townscape skyline.
2. A layout of buildings or additions which is consistent in terms of location and relationships to any existing buildings on site or associated adjacent buildings.
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 provides opportunity, in particular instances for frontage landscaped areas to be planted with exotic vegetation that contributes and reinforces the formality of the formal grid streetscape.

Ensure the protection of existing trees on site, in particular those which are visible from or contribute to the streetscape.

Provide north facing indoors and outdoor living areas where possible to maximise solar access.

Provide timber verandahs to the street frontage and where appropriate to the side of the buildings.

Identify locations which minimise the need for cutting and/or excavation of the land

Provide for appropriate outdoors living areas, preferably with direct access to indoor living areas with northern orientation.

Provide for new landscaping on the site to complement existing vegetation and improve the relationship to the street.

A landscape plan is to be prepared for any site redevelopment showing existing and proposed vegetation

Identify the need for any future extensions to the building, or the integration of garages

Have regard for the location of houses on adjoining properties in terms of street and boundary setbacks.

Subdivision of lots < 500sq.m must be accompanied by a development plan.

Have regards to sea or townscape views from the site or across the site from other properties when siting buildings

Design Guidelines

Guideline Pack No.1: Queenscliff Urban Areas: Building Design

Design Objectives:

1. New buildings and extensions which respect and blend in with the existing historic character of the streetscape and townscape (skyline) and are consistent in terms of traditional building massing, scale, proportion and matching of materials and angles.
2. Buildings designs or extensions which take into account the features of a site, coastal conditions, sensitivities within the streetscape, and 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 without compromising the historic streetscape.
4. New buildings or additions that respect the character of any primary existing building on the site, and minimise the visual impact of change to the principle street or side facades.
5. New buildings or additions which sensitively and coherently interpret the variety of building types and styles which represent local development over the last one hundred years.

Interpret traditional building designs which include single and double frontages, pitched hipped and gable roofs, vertical rectangular window openings and verandahs.

Use traditional building materials which include horizontal weatherboard cladding, rendered brickwork, corrugated iron or slate roofs, brick chimneys, timber verandahs, and door and window joinery and painted finishes.

Have regard to the design, materials and form of other houses in the streetscape and neighbourhood

Adopt building design techniques and materials that reduce energy use and are responsive to the harsh coastal conditions



Retain the general uniformity in scale and massing of buildings within the street and avoid buildings which are visually dominant when viewed from public spaces due to height, bulk, colour, material, scale or proportions.

Incorporate corrugated iron or slate pitched roofs in recessive or non reflective colours. Verandahs should read as part of the roof form and match the scale, pitch and materials of the main roof form

Extensions to existing buildings are permitted to the rear provided they are of an appropriate style in relation to existing buildings and do not exceed the building or ridge lines established by the main existing building on the site.

Where a site has a greater width than adjoining properties, the building design shall reflect traditional widths and proportion of adjoining buildings in the division and articulation of the façade

Queenscliff Urban Areas: How to Achieve the Building Design Objectives

Guideline Pack No.1: Queenscliff Urban Areas: Building Heights & Setbacks

Design Objectives:

1. Building heights and setbacks which retain the existing prevailing streetscape rhythm, scale and setback.
2. Building heights and setbacks which ensure that no individual building or extension dominates the streetscape, or townscape skyline.
3. Buildings heights and setbacks which support an appropriate relationship between buildings on the site and site boundaries, as well as adjoining buildings.
4. Building heights and setbacks which ensure adequate daylight to all habitable rooms and private open spaces on the development site.
5. Building heights and setbacks that do not cause any adverse amenity impacts to adjacent dwellings or land.
6. Building heights and setbacks that, where appropriate, provide the opportunity for the foundation of established gardens in front setbacks to contribute to the streetscape setting.

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

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

The street elevation façade height of infill development should be no higher than the lower of the façade heights of the adjacent buildings

Infill development or buildings additions should not exceed 2 storeys in height (with a maximum height of 8.5m) and should generally conform to the height of adjoining buildings so that



Building boundary to boundary on the ground floor is generally not permitted unless where the street is dominated by attached buildings

Side and rear setbacks depend on the height of the building but is generally:

- 1m for a single storey building (up to 3.6m height) and
- 1.72m for a double storey building (with a 6.0m high wall)
- or equal to the side and rear setbacks of buildings on adjoining sites

Guideline Pack No.1: Queenscliff Urban Areas: Fencing, Driveways & Landscape

Design Objectives:

1. Fencing which clearly 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 relates to the design concept for the whole building and complements the character of the building facade, the streetscape and any landscape frontages.
3. Fencing, particularly at the front of the site which takes into account the height, configuration and visual transparency of adjoining fences.
4. Fences and gates associated with driveways that are indistinguishable from fencing to the front of the site.
5. Driveways and paths which are attractive, provide adequate access and minimise surface drainage run-off.
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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. Formation of landscapes within private gardens areas as appropriate shade elements and environmental barriers to any severe coastal conditions.

Garages or carports should be designed in keeping with the main building and be located and aligned to the side or rear of the main existing building (and not abutting street frontages).

The layout of gardens should enhance the scale, form and geometry of the building design. Species should relate to the existing vegetation and blend with the existing formal or exotic planting of the area

Retain existing 'contributory' vegetation on site that is visible from the street, other public areas or adjoining properties wherever possible

Front fences should be low, transparent and constructed of traditional timber picket materials. They should be no higher than 1300mm to the frontage or 2000mm (paling fences to side and rear boundaries).



Have regard to the effect of mature vegetation overshadowing or visually screening parts of the site. Select materials that will admit sunlight to outdoor areas in winter and provide shade in summer.

Continue the pattern of formal grid streets and unmade verges into private driveways. Straight, narrow gravel driveways leading to garages or the side of buildings are preferred.

Retain any existing or remnant bluestone kerb and guttering or open channel drains where they exist

Generally, the area of soft landscaping should be 50% of the required private open space, and handstand areas should consist of porous surfaces