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C205**HEATHCOTE TOWNSHIP RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER POLICY**

This policy applies to development, (including subdivision) and works in the General Residential Zone and Low Density Residential Zone in Heathcote, as shown on Map 1 forming part of this Clause.

Policy basis

Heathcote township contains four precincts that display differing qualities. The core of the township contains its links with the original settlement, and therefore provides an important historical context to the character of the town. The other areas retain a spaciousness that reflects the country setting and varying qualities of vegetation. Retaining and enhancing a cohesiveness to the township is an important focus of the character guidelines.

This policy assists in achieving the objectives of the State Planning Policy Framework, particularly in relation to responding to neighbourhood character and urban design principles. The policy implements the objectives and strategies contained in Clause 21.05 by ensuring that development enhances the character of urban areas, and achieve high standards of urban design and amenity.

The policy implements the findings of the *City of Greater Bendigo Residential Character Study 2001* that identifies the key existing characteristics and desired future character of the residential areas of Heathcote. Development in residential areas needs to respond to the particular built form and natural environment elements that achieve the desired future neighbourhood character of the area in which it is located. These elements include building form, scale, siting, materials, front fencing and vegetation density. The *Residential Character Study* defines character precincts based on the delineation of areas of similar character elements (as shown on Map 1 forming part of this Clause).

Objectives

To ensure that development is responsive to the desired future character of the area in which it is located.

To retain and enhance the identified elements that contribute to the character of the area.

To implement the recommendations of the City of Greater Bendigo Residential Character Study 2001.

Heathcote Township Policy

In the Heathcote Character Precincts it is policy that the following township vision, character descriptions, statement of desired future character, objectives and design responses are taken into account when considering any application to develop or subdivide land. Proposals that meet the design responses are also considered to meet the related objectives.

Heathcote Township Vision

The identity of Heathcote as a country township surrounded by rural bushland, will be strengthened and maintained and its diversity will be unified by:

- Encouraging the retention of buildings that reflect the early settlement of the town
- Encouraging the use of appropriate building materials.
- Ensuring the siting of buildings to reflect spacing patterns.
- Ensuring building form and scale reflects predominant patterns.
- Encouraging the use of appropriate vegetation in public and private planting schemes.
- Encouraging open front boundary treatments.

Heathcote Township Precinct 1 (HC1)

Character description

This precinct is distinctive as it incorporates the core of the township including the older style dwellings that reflect the history of settlement of the township. The area has an informal and spacious feel due to the frequent lack of formal kerbing and footpath, the open style front fencing and the variety of building materials. The use of weatherboard also adds a lightness to the streetscapes, which counteracts the generally smaller than average setbacks.

Statement of desired future character

The rural township character and openness of the streetscapes will be retained and enhanced.

Objectives and design responses

The desired future character is to be achieved by the following objectives and design responses:

Objectives	Design responses
To retain buildings that contribute to the valued character of the area.	Retain and restore wherever possible, intact Victorian, Edwardian, Federation and Californian Bungalow era dwellings. Alterations and extensions should be appropriate to the dwelling era.
To strengthen the rural township character of the area by planting appropriate trees and other vegetation.	Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all development proposals that preferably includes some indigenous species.
To maintain the consistency, where present, of building front setbacks.	The front setback should be not less than the average setback of the adjoining two dwellings.
To reflect the rhythm of existing dwelling spacing.	Buildings should be setback from at least one side boundary, and preferably both.
To minimise the dominance of car storage facilities.	Locate garages and carports behind the line of the dwelling. Use rear access where available.
To ensure that new buildings and extensions do not dominate the streetscape.	Respect the predominant building height in the street and nearby properties.
To use building materials and finishes that complement the dominant pattern within the streetscape.	In streetscapes where weatherboard predominates, use timber or other non- masonry cladding materials, where possible, and render, bag or paint brick surfaces.
To ensure front fences are appropriate to the era of the dwellings and maintain an openness to the streetscape.	Provide low, open style front fencing up to a maximum of 1.2 metres.

Heathcote Township Precinct 2 (HC2)

Character description

The character of the precinct is created by the mixture of low level building styles within spacious garden settings. The mixture of building materials provides an informality and lightness to the streetscape that is aided by the lack of formal kerbing and footpaths, the low pitched roof styles and the predominantly low, open style front fencing.

Statement of desired future character

The informal rural township feel and spacious garden settings of the dwellings will be maintained and enhanced.

Objectives and design responses

The desired future character is to be achieved by the following objectives and design responses:

Objectives	Design responses
To strengthen the township character of the area by planting of appropriate indigenous species.	Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all development proposals that utilises appropriate species.
To maintain the consistency, where present, of building front setbacks.	The front setback should be not less than the average setback of the adjoining two dwellings.
To reflect the rhythm of existing dwelling spacing.	Buildings should be setback from both side boundaries
To ensure that new buildings and extensions do not dominate the streetscape.	Respect the predominant building height in the street and nearby properties. Use low pitched roof forms.
To use building materials and finishes that complement the dominant pattern within the streetscape.	In streetscapes where weatherboard predominates, use timber or other non masonry cladding materials, where possible, and render, bag or paint surfaces.
To maintain and enhance the continuous flow of the garden settings and the openness of the streetscape.	Provide low, open style front fencing.

Heathcote Township Precinct 3 (HC3)

Character description

This precinct has a spacious semi-rural open bushland character created by the rural style houses in a spacious, low-density residential setting with generally low level native gardens, set amongst remnant native trees. Dwellings are average in size, are usually low scale and horizontal in form, and are usually offset large distances from all boundaries. The semi-rural appearance is assisted by the frequent lack of front fencing or use of farm style fencing, the use of a mixture of building materials, the sometimes informal placing of buildings on the site and the unmade street treatments and informal remnant street trees.

Statement of desired future character

The semi-rural open bushland environment and spaciousness of the area will be retained and enhanced.

Objectives and design responses

The desired future character is to be achieved by the following objectives and design responses:

Objectives	Design responses
To retain the semi-rural open bushland township character of the area by maintaining and strengthening the native and indigenous vegetation dominated streetscapes.	<p>Retain established, indigenous tree and understorey species.</p> <p>Replace any indigenous trees lost due to the development with similar species and size trees.</p> <p>Buildings should be sited and designed to incorporate space for the planting of substantial vegetation. (Locate footings outside root zone).</p> <p>Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all development proposals.</p>
To maintain the semi-rural bushland setting of the dwellings.	<p>Buildings should be set back substantial distances from front and side boundaries.</p>
To ensure that adequate space is available on private land for the retention and planting of vegetation.	<p>The total hard surface site coverage (including outbuildings, swimming pools, tennis courts, driveways and all non-permeable surfaces) should not exceed 40%.</p> <p>Proposals that exceed the specified site coverage maximums must demonstrate that the site coverage objective and all remaining objectives and design responses have been met.</p>
To ensure that buildings and extensions do not dominate the streetscape and wider landscape setting.	<p>Buildings should not protrude above the predominant tree canopy height.</p>
To use materials and finishes that harmonise with the landscape setting.	<p>Use earthy toned building materials, finishes or colours.</p>
To maintain and enhance the continuous flow of vegetation across the landscape.	<p>Provide no fencing or post and wire style only to the front, sides and rear.</p>

Heathcote Township Precinct 4 (HC4)

Character description

This precinct includes isolated pockets of newer styles of development, set within a semi-rural landscape. The areas are distinctive due to the predominantly brick materials, the formal street treatments with kerbing, the standard setbacks and the establishing gardens. Cohesiveness of these areas with the remainder of the township is assisted by the remnant street tree vegetation and the openness of the streetscapes created by the lack of front fencing.

Statement of desired future character

The visual cohesiveness of the areas within this precinct with the remainder of the township will be enhanced.

Objectives and design responses

The desired future character is to be achieved by the following objectives and design responses:

GREATER BENDIGO PLANNING SCHEME

Objectives	Design responses
To retain the semi-rural landscape township character of the area by maintaining and strengthening the native and indigenous vegetation dominated streetscapes.	Retain existing high canopy trees and understorey wherever possible. Replace any trees lost due to development with similar size indigenous or native trees.
To minimise site disturbance and impact of the building on the landscape.	Buildings should be designed to follow the contours of the site or step down the site.
To maintain the consistency, where present, of building front setbacks.	The front setback should be not less than the average setback of the adjoining two dwellings.
To maintain the continuity of vegetation in front of and between dwellings.	Buildings should be setback from the side and rear boundaries sufficient distance to ensure substantial tree and understorey vegetation can be provided.
To ensure that new buildings and extensions do not dominate the streetscape and wider landscape setting.	Respect the predominant building height in the street and nearby properties. Where that is a dominance of single storey, the height at the front of the dwelling should match the typical single storey wall height. Buildings should not protrude above the predominant tree canopy height.
To use materials and finishes that harmonise with the bushland setting.	Use earthy toned building materials, finishes or colours.
To maintain and enhance the continuous flow of the vegetation across the landscape.	Provide no fencing or post and wire style only to the front, sides and rear.

Reference document

Planisphere, John Curtis Pty Ltd and City of Greater Bendigo, *City of Greater Bendigo Residential Character Study*, 2001.

Map 1. - The Heathcote Township Residential Character Precincts

