

## MERRI CRESCENT PRECINCT (HO303)

### Introduction

The following design guidelines assist in the understanding of the unique built form characteristics of the **Merri Crescent Heritage Precinct**, Warrnambool.

Warrnambool has 26 heritage precincts which recognise the distinctive heritage character of Warrnambool. Each heritage precinct is now incorporated in the Warrnambool Planning Scheme. The Heritage Overlay within the Warrnambool Planning Scheme lists the types of works to buildings which trigger the need for a planning permit.

If you are considering any works to a property within a heritage precinct, we suggest you contact Council to confirm if a planning permit is required. Council also provides a complimentary Heritage Advisory Service for owners of properties within heritage precincts. Conservation and design advice is readily available by appointment (telephone (03) 5559 4800).

This guideline is intended to encourage and support the retention and enhancement of the historic character of the area. A series of guiding design principles are provided to encourage compatible new development and appropriate minor works or alterations and additions to existing properties.

Historical Background and Significance Statements are referenced from *Warrnambool City Council Heritage Guidelines 2012*.

### Historical Background

Merri Crescent is a later part of the subdivision of Warrnambool, dating from 1890 and approximately 1 kilometre west of the centre of Warrnambool, which adopts a town planning device first used in the eighteenth century and based on Georgian aesthetic sensibilities.

While not developed quickly, the street was considered prestigious and salubrious and the allotments enjoyed some of the best views in Warrnambool. The radial allotments were smaller than those which had been subdivided in the land sales north of Raglan Parade. Still, many successful and distinguished citizens bought land there including the Mayor, Cr. John Hyland and the local member of parliament and later Premier of Victoria, John Murray. Merri Crescent was amongst the first streets to be beautified by the planting of street trees. Some houses were built in the Edwardian period with more built in the Interwar period, showing a range of typical styles. The conversion of the single storey stone cottage at 258 Merri Crescent into a two-storey bungalow called The Brae, complete with its bijou window is of interest. Little was built after World War 2. Notwithstanding their diversity of period and style, the dwellings have a consistent height, scale, and setbacks. Some are excellent architecturally.

The street remains significantly intact and is still dominated by the row of Norfolk Island Pines planted as street trees. Few houses have been altered inappropriately and even fewer have been lost.

### Why is the Merri Crescent Precinct significant?

Merri Crescent is of historical significance to the City of Warrnambool as it represents the optimism in Warrnambool immediately after the arrival of the railway and before the Depression of the 1890s. Of further historical significance are the associations with many successful citizens who bought land and eventually lived there. The street is of aesthetic significance for drawing on town-planning practice of the previous centuries and for demonstrating an appreciation of the picturesque.

Of architectural significance is the range of dwellings which, while diverse, are united by the strong sense of place created by the topography, the curving street and the row of Norfolk Island Pines. The detached dwellings represent an important sequence of development across several periods and through several styles.

### What is significant?

The precinct contains a series of intact dwellings from the initial 1890s subdivision, along with a mix of Federation era through to interwar period dwellings - most set in established gardens.

Dwellings are consistently single storey in scale, with pitched (typically 25-30 degree) hipped or gable corrugated galvanised iron or tile clad roofs. Walls are typically masonry, or clad in weatherboard or conite finished.

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early century dwellings are typically asymmetrical villas in style, with projecting gable fronts and bullnose verandahs supported by timber posts dressed with cast iron lacework, or timber fret (sometimes wrap-around) to the street.

Interwar 'bungalow', cottage and Spanish influenced style dwellings feature projecting gable or bay window forms; deep front or side verandahs supported on a variety of masonry pillar styles; timber batten/ shingle detailing to gable fronts; architecturally detailed timber windows and doorways, decorative timber eaves and weatherboard or stucco clad walls. Most dwellings also feature brick chimneys to main rooms.

All 1890-1930s dwellings are consistent in front and side setback and are radially sited to face the crescent shaped street. Many properties have reasonably wide side setbacks. Fencing is low to front boundaries.

Some dwellings feature later period garages near dwellings where allotment width permits. Others have rear access from the lane behind.

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Early 20<sup>th</sup> century dwelling – note steep roof with rooms in attic, decorative bay window and front verandah. Front fence also integral in design and material



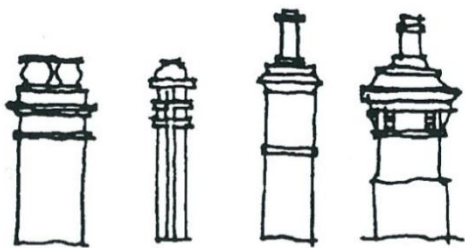
Note masonry fence to front, timber weatherboard cladding to dwelling and masonry chimneys - late 19<sup>th</sup> century villa typical to precinct



C 1880-1910 villa, with return bull nose verandah and projecting bay window centred on gable. Note chimneys and use of corrugated roofing – green colour not typical to precinct - commonly galvanised, or painted red late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.



Unique 'Inter-war' Spanish influenced style dwelling – note vertically proportioned windows - a common feature of the precinct



Retention of period chimneys add distinction to a streetscape

# MERRI CRESCENT PRECINCT (HO303)

## HO303 - Merri Crescent Precinct Map



Contributory

Non-Contributory

Individually Significant

List of places which contribute to the heritage values of the precinct:

### Merri Crescent

- 254 Merri Crescent - dwelling
- 258 Merri Crescent - dwelling
- 260 Merri Crescent - dwelling
- 262 Merri Crescent - dwelling
- 264-266 Merri Crescent - dwelling
- 268 Merri Crescent - dwelling
- 270 Merri Crescent - dwelling
- 274 Merri Crescent - dwelling
- 278-280 Merri Crescent - dwelling
- 286 Merri Crescent - dwelling
- 296 Merri Crescent - dwelling
- 300 Merri Crescent - dwelling



# MERRI CRESCENT PRECINCT (H0303)

## Design Guidelines - basis

## Suggested Approach

### Subdivision

The regular, radial layout of the precinct is of heritage value. Allotments line the radius of the street and are generally equal in size, leading to a regular pattern of built form in the streetscape

Dwellings of significance are sited to face the street and are set back in a consistent line, facing the curve of the street, further emphasising the collective development of the streetscape

Allotment widths are consistent, reinforcing the spatial character and consistent rhythm of built form along Merri Crescent– single houses regularly spaced, with garden space between, marking the type of suburb layout of the period.

Further subdivision of allotments within the precinct is not encouraged, as the spatial/ built form character of the locale will be compromised.

Secondary development in rear yards is possible, but may be limited due to allotment size. The built form character of the streetscape should be maintained (dwellings, with open space between) if rear allotment development is considered.

Future subdivision of non-contributory allotments should continue the established spatial character of development in the streetscape – in scale, width and pattern.

### Demolition

Demolition of a contributory place is not typically supported within the precinct. Demolition of the whole of a building which is a Contributory Element generally has an adverse effect on the significance of a Heritage Place.

Demolition of parts of a Contributory Place visible from the public domain has the potential to adversely affect the significance of the precinct.

Demolition of parts of a place which do not contribute to the significance or the setting of a place may be considered, if removal does not adversely affect the fabric and significant views (setting) of the affected Contributory place within a precinct.

Demolition of Contributory Place dwellings is not supported, as this would result in a loss of heritage fabric.

Removal of later garages, rear additions or fences not in character with those typical to the era of significance of the place may be considered by Council.

Removal of original timber sash windows or changes in window opening proportions to Contributory places is not supported, where windows can be seen from the streetscape.

### New Buildings

Replacement of non-contributory buildings with new development should be contemporary, but also compatible in design. Compatibility is achieved by considering the key design attributes which comprise the significance of the locale - e.g. setback, scale, roof pitch and line, wall materials, window proportions, fencing and use of verandahs.

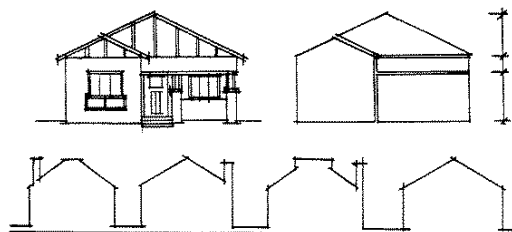
Dwellings in this Precinct are typically single storey, with pitched (typically 25-30 degree) hipped or gable corrugated galvanised iron or tile clad roofs. Walls are typically masonry, or clad in weatherboard or conite finished.

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early century dwellings are typically asymmetrical villas in style, with projecting gable fronts and bullnose verandahs supported by timber posts dressed with cast iron lacework, or timber fret (sometimes wrap-around) to the street.

Interwar 'bungalow' and cottage/ spanish style dwellings feature projecting gable or bay window forms; featuring deep front or side verandahs supported on a variety of masonry pillar styles; timber batten/ shingle detailing to gable fronts; architecturally detailed timber windows and doorways, decorative timber eaves and weatherboard or stucco clad walls. Most dwellings also feature brick chimneys to main rooms.

New development should respect the differing, but established spatial/ built form pattern of the streetscapes of Merri Crescent. New buildings should continue the scale/ proportion of built form/ open space common to the locale and be oriented to face the curve of the Crescent.

The scale, roof pitch and use of materials similar to those common to the area is encouraged. Flat or low pitch roofs, two storey structures and large, wide footprint development on allotments is not supported.



Scale, spatial pattern and proportion is important

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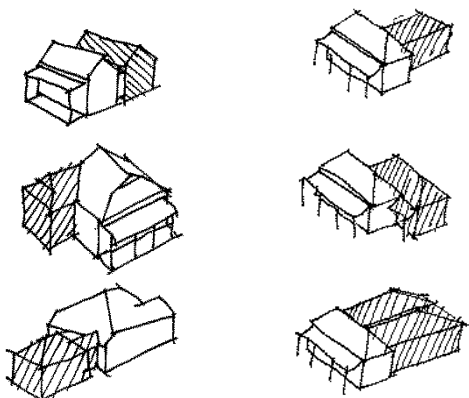
## Design Guidelines - basis

## Suggested Approach

### External Alterations and Additions

Merri Crescent dwellings of significance are a mix of modest and large footprint buildings, but are typically single storey in scale – reflecting the type of dwelling erected for middle income/ professionals during the 1890-1930s period in Warrnambool.

Houses typically contain two or three bedrooms and principal living spaces face the street. Future additions and alterations to these dwellings are possible to suit modern needs, but heritage values - embodied in the external appearance - also need to be considered.



*Additions should maintain the historic form and scale of the dwelling, when viewed from the streetscape*

Upper floor additions are generally not appropriate, as they will alter the scale of the dwelling – and hence compromise the suburban setting of places within the streetscape. Upper floor additions may only be appropriate if sited to the rear of a property and stepped so that new ridge lines do not dominate streetscape views of existing dwellings.

Any proposed additions should be to the rear of existing dwellings, to minimise adverse visual impact on the streetscape. Additions to the side of dwellings are not encouraged, as additions will alter the original scale (width) of dwellings when viewed from the street. Further, construction of additions on to the side boundary are not appropriate if seen from the street, as this alters the spatial/ built form character of the streetscape.

Original timber framed windows facing the streetscape should be retained and repaired where possible. Replacement of later aluminium framed windows with replica original timber windows is encouraged, to improve the historic integrity of dwellings. Original verandahs should also remain and be maintained, based on original evidence or on similar examples found elsewhere in the street (based upon the period of construction of the dwelling).

Alterations to interior finishes and rooms will not impact on the values of the precinct.

# MERRI CRESCENT PRECINCT (H0303)

## Materials, Colours and Finishes

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Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early century dwellings are typically asymmetrical villas in style, with projecting gable front sections facing the street. Walls are clad in weatherboards, or in some cases are stucco finished masonry or even face stone. Bullnose verandahs (sometimes wrap-around) are also common to the front, supported by timber posts dressed with cast iron lacework, or timber fret to the street.

California bungalows and cottage styles generally have weatherboard cladding (square or curved edge), with details in pebbledash stucco. Walls of many bungalows and cottages of the period in Warrnambool have since been finished in Conite. Most bungalow roof and verandah gables are half-timbered, often infilled with pebbledash stucco, pressed metal sheeting simulating same, timber shingles, or fibro-cement sheeting. Front verandahs dominate front facades, are deep in plan and feature substantial gable fronts. Cottage verandahs are less dominant, being a flat porch roof or an extension of the main roof in form. Masonry verandah pillars – face brick, stucco, or combinations of pillars, precast columns or timber posts – support verandahs to both dwelling styles.

Early paint finishes to stucco would have been limewash in type.

Roofs were clad in galvanised corrugated iron or terracotta Marseille tiles and are of gable/ hip form and 30 degree in pitch. Red painted corrugated galvanised iron roofing was a common practice mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when roof rust was painted out in colours to match the more expensive terracotta tiling.

Paint colours for timberwork typical to the period include

- Light ochre colours (19<sup>th</sup> century); crème, pale green and mid ochres (20<sup>th</sup> century interwar) to walls.
- dark brown, green and Indian red (19<sup>th</sup> century) and lighter crèmes, green or red through to dark brown, red and green (20<sup>th</sup> century interwar) to timber details.

Stone and face brick wall finishes should be retained and not be rendered or painted.

Conite clad buildings should ideally be refurbished as timber clad dwellings when Conite is removed in the future.

Tile roofs should also remain and be repaired to match, or re-clad as historically appropriate with similar deep profile corrugated, galvanised or mid grey colorbond roof sheeting.

Original stained finish timber shingles to 'bungalow' style gable faces should be oiled, not painted in finish.

Early stucco finishes should be painted using matt or low gloss finish paint, to simulate earlier gloss levels and also hide past patching work in stucco.

Replacement gutters should reflect profiles common to the era of construction of the dwelling – 19<sup>th</sup> century = 'ogee' profile, 20<sup>th</sup> century = ½ round and quad profile preferable. Round metal downpipes are recommended – UPVC types have jointing systems which are visually inappropriate to the era of the dwelling.

Timberwork – matt finishes to wall planking. Gloss finishes to fascias, barges and joinery in colours suggested recommended.

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### Fencing

Federation/Edwardian era dwellings: Most fences were timber pickets, sometimes with a timber capping. Twisted wire suspended between rounded timbers posts also began to emerge as a mass produced product at this time. Some examples of elaborate patterned cast iron balusters fixed to bluestone plinth. Occasional corrugated iron on timber framing. Where red brick traditional style Federation houses exist, the occasional red brick masonry fence, sometimes with white render.

Some fencing in the locale is stone in construction – sandstone or limestone – and typically low in height, dressed with an overhanging coping stone.

Fencing associated with California Bungalow/ cottage style dwellings was typically either crimped wire with looped tops or low masonry fences rendered to match verandah balustrades. Low hedges or vertical timber plank fences were also common. Fencing was almost always no higher than 1 metre. Timber plank or corrugated iron sheet fencing was common to side or rear yards. Timber picket fences were less commonly used for this style of dwelling.

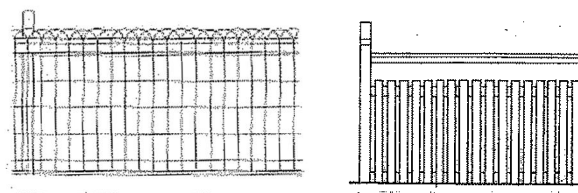
New fences should repeat design features of fencing typical to the era of dwellings in the streetscape – including face stone, timber picket, cast iron palisade, face stone masonry, crimped woven wire with looped tops, hedging, vertical timber plank, or masonry with low pillars to match the dwelling. All new front boundary fencing should be limited to 1.2 metre high maximum.

High picket or solid masonry fencing is not permitted, as this is contrary to the streetscape character of the locale.

Rear fencing can be replaced to suit where out of view of the streetscape. Corrugated profile sheet or timber plank fences are preferred.



*Low corrugated, galvanised steel sheet panels framed in timber posts/ rails compatible with era of the precinct*

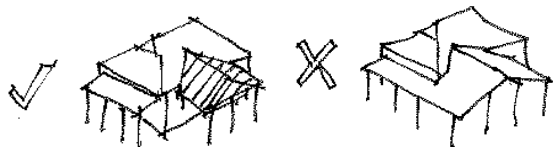


*Woven crimp wire and timber paling fences typical to the period of the precinct*

### Carparking/ Garaging

Most houses in the street were erected without driveways or garages. Rear laneways provide limited access to the rear of properties. Garages are uncommon to the front yards of dwellings within the Precinct.

Some dwellings feature driveways, sweeping past residences.



*Location of carport maintains scale of dwelling*

New garages or carports are not permitted forward of dwellings.

New garages should be sited towards the rear of each property, so the traditional scale and siting of the dwelling remains extant. Materials should reflect those of each dwelling – matching face brick, painted render or timber/ corrugated clad structures are appropriate. Roofing should match that of each dwelling, continuing the established built form character of dwellings in the locale.

New garages/ carports should also be sighted out of view of the streetscape, to maintain the setting of the place from within the streetscape.

Any carport/ garage proposed in new development should be set back from the front facade of such development by at least the width of the garage. Garages/ carports should not be built on side boundaries of allotments, as this disrupts the established spatial/ built character of the streetscape. Any roller/ panel door to garages/ carports should be painted to match the surrounding wall colour, to reduce visual dominance within the streetscape.