

OCEAN AND WATTLE GROVE PRECINCT (HO305)

Introduction

The following design guidelines assist in the understanding of the unique built form characteristics of the **Ocean and Wattle Groves 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

The Ocean and Wattle Grove Precinct is located approximately 1.25 kilometres south-west of the centre of Warrnambool between Nicholson Street to the north and Merri Street to the south with Bryant Street linking Wattle Grove to Merri Street. The precinct boundary is defined by the sites developed by the Housing Commission of Victoria in four phases between 1941 and 1969. It dates from 1941 when an initial plan for 40 single-storey housing units (twenty duplexes) was proposed. This was followed by eight Low Rental Units in 1960, eleven individual houses in 1961 and eleven Lone Person Units in 1969.

The estate was laid out along 'Garden Suburb' lines and appears to have been influenced by its topography and seaside situation. The Housing Commission of Victoria had been established just three years before in 1938 and this estate in Warrnambool was one of the first in rural Victoria. Importantly, Walter Oswald Burt (1893-1969), one of the most influential figures behind the *Report of the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board*, 1938, the Housing (Standard of Habitation) Regulations 1938 and a member of the Commission until 1948 was born and educated in Warrnambool. He was also an early and influential building conservationist.

The two standard designs for the 1941 duplexes were prepared by T. J. Buchan of the leading Geelong architectural firm, Buchan Laird and Buchan. The duplexes were built by P. J. Hatwell and Sons and were highly regarded at the time for the quality of their design and construction.

The first single-storey duplexes were built in brick veneer, with terracotta tiled gable roofs and timber windows and porches. Their small garden landscaping was simple and standardised although this was supported by street planting in grass 'nature-strips' and the central reserve, along with concrete paths, cross-overs and gutters. Effectively, the first dwellings were only available for rental. Not all of the estate as subdivided was built on and, because it was so small, other amenities such as shops and a primary school were not provided. However, a bus route was commenced and still passes through the estate.



Semi-detached dwellings - 1941

Development on the estate seems to have been suspended until the later 1950s while other larger areas of Warrnambool, particularly West Warrnambool were developed by the Commission. In 1960, second phase began at the Ocean and Wattle Groves Precinct reflecting different social conditions.

Why is the Ocean and Wattle Groves Precinct significant?

The Ocean and Wattle Groves Precinct, Warrnambool is of historical significance as one of the earliest rural Housing Commission estates in Victoria. It is an intact, representative example of mid-twentieth century public housing in Victoria. It is of special historical significance for the Commission's connection with the Warrnambool-born Walter Oswald Burt, one of the two key figures behind the slum-abolition movement and a founder of the building conservation movement.

The four key phases of construction demonstrate different accommodation types provided by Housing Commission Victoria over a 30 year period and changing attitudes to housing. It is of social significance for reflecting the State government's direct action to alleviate the housing conditions of the poor especially as a result of the Depression and, subsequently, to provide housing during the post-World War 2 economic boom.

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The Precinct is of aesthetic significance for the use of standard designs, firstly those prepared by private Geelong architects, Buchan Laird and Buchan and secondly by the Commission's own architects.

Both major phases of development are significant for providing evidence of each period's challenges and solutions and for the contrast they provide, one to the other.

The semi-detached 1941 dwellings reflect the early design ideals of Housing Commission Victoria low-cost public housing – as stated in Commissioner reports of the day. Dwellings are simple in plan, but well-detailed and reflect common architectural styles of the period. Houses are sited to reflect the crescent form of streets, enhancing the streetscape character of the estate. The later 1960-69 detached dwellings and units are typical in design for public and private housing of the period and were designed over twenty years after the establishment of Housing Commission Victoria.



Note – timber windows replaced with aluminium frames



Later HC dwelling – part of heritage value

What is significant?

The distinctive crescent shaped urban form of Ocean and Wattle Groves, with dwellings sited to suit the radius of each crescent, accentuating the unique 'garden suburb' street layout. The central park facing Nicholson Street forms an open, garden focus for the subdivision.

1941 single storey, semi-detached face red brick dwellings, with timber framed windows, tile roofs and porches – along Wattle Grove and parts of Ocean Grove

Later single storey, face brick HC dwellings identified as Contributory within the precinct.

Many dwellings have complementary garages behind the dwelling – of similar brick construction.

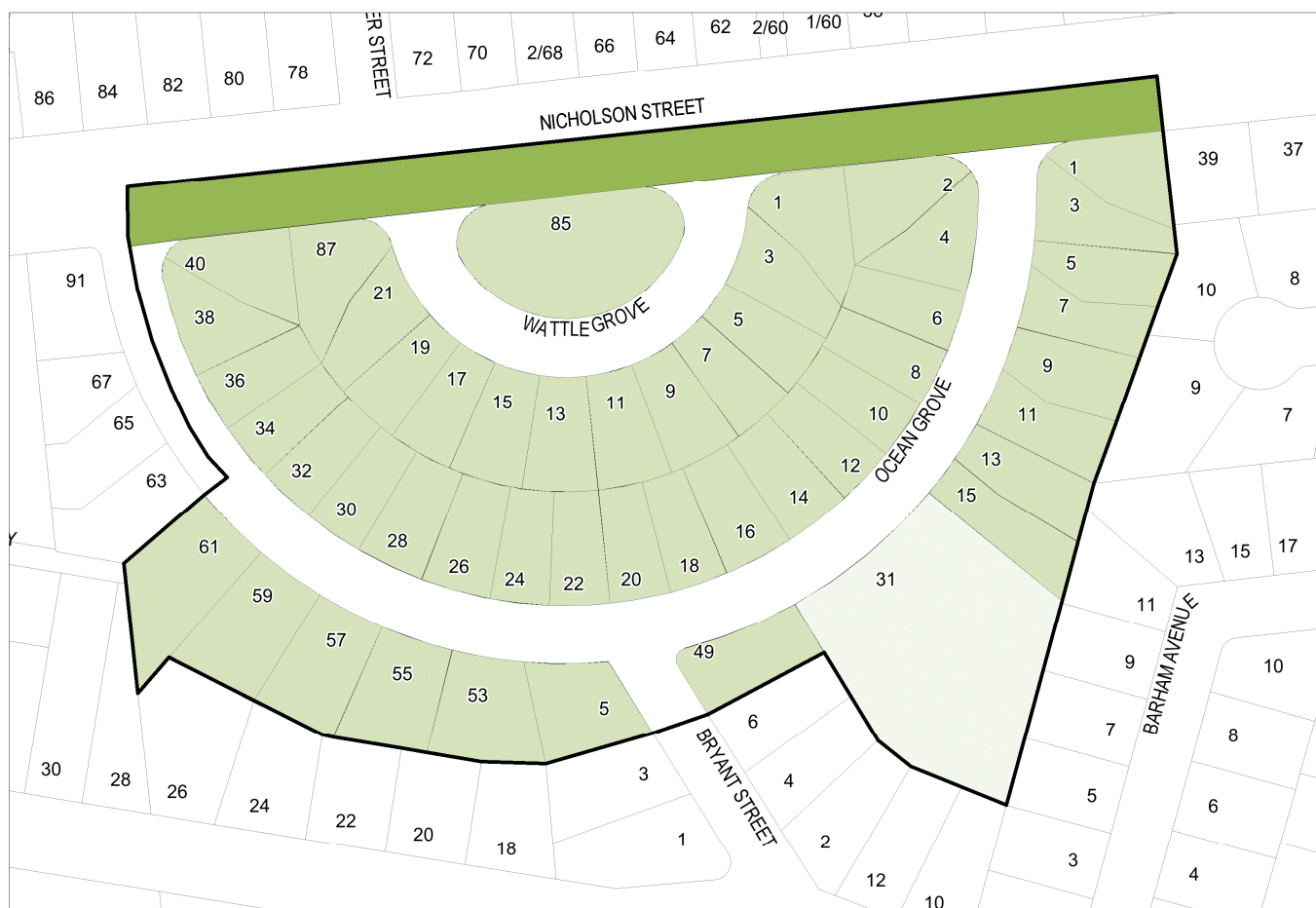
Concrete footpaths, low, post and wire front/ side fencing.



Aerial photo 1960 Source: SLV

OCEAN AND WATTLE GROVES PRECINCT (HO305)

HO305 - Ocean and Wattle Groves Precinct Map



Contributory Non-Contributory Individually Significant

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

Ocean Grove

1 Ocean Grove - dwelling
3 Ocean Grove - dwelling
4 Ocean Grove - dwelling
5 Ocean Grove - dwelling
6 Ocean Grove - dwelling
7 Ocean Grove - dwelling
8 Ocean Grove - dwelling
9 Ocean Grove - dwelling
10 Ocean Grove - dwelling
11 Ocean Grove - dwelling
12 Ocean Grove - dwelling
13 Ocean Grove - dwelling
14 Ocean Grove - dwelling
15 Ocean Grove - dwelling
16 Ocean Grove - dwelling
18 Ocean Grove - dwelling
20 Ocean Grove - dwelling
22 Ocean Grove - dwelling
24 Ocean Grove - dwelling
26 Ocean Grove - dwelling

36 Ocean Grove - dwelling
38 Ocean Grove - dwelling
40 Ocean Grove - dwelling
49 Ocean Grove - dwelling
53 Ocean Grove - dwelling
55 Ocean Grove - dwelling
57 Ocean Grove - dwelling
59 Ocean Grove - dwelling
61 Ocean Grove - dwelling

Nicholson Street

85 Nicholson Street - road reserve
87 Nicholson Street - dwelling
Nicholson Street road reserve

Wattle Grove

1 Wattle Grove - dwelling
3 Wattle Grove - dwelling
5 Wattle Grove - dwelling
7 Wattle Grove - dwelling

15 Wattle Grove - dwelling
19 Wattle Grove - dwelling
21 Wattle Grove - dwelling

Bryant Street

5 Bryant Street - dwelling

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28 Ocean Grove - dwelling
30 Ocean Grove - dwelling
32 Ocean Grove - dwelling
34 Ocean Grove - dwelling

9 Wattle Grove - dwelling
11 Wattle Grove - dwelling
13 Wattle Grove - dwelling
17 Wattle Grove - dwelling

Design Guidelines - basis

Suggested Approach

Subdivision

The distinctive layout of the estate is of heritage value. Allotments radiate along the crescent shaped streets of Wattle Grove and Ocean Grove. The actual shape of allotments and the alignment of side boundaries reflect the non-linear nature of 'garden suburb' urban design ideals.

Dwellings are sited to face the Groves and are set back in a consistent line, further emphasising the sweep of each roadway.

Allotment widths are consistent, reinforcing the spatial character and consistent rhythm of built form along the Groves – small single or semi-detached houses regularly spaced, with garden space between, marking the design intentions and aspirations of the Housing Commission 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 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 if the place may be considered by Council.

Removal of original timber sash windows or changes in window opening proportions 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 single storey in scale and simple in design, with austere finishes and architectural details. Floor plans are small in footprint, walls face red or crème brick and roofs steep in pitch (30 degrees) clad with cement/ terracotta tiles. Front porches are a key feature, usually formed under an extension of the main roof pitch. Semi-detached dwellings are the most important building type in the Precinct – with floor plans and elevations mirrored each side of party walls. Original double hung timber windows still feature on some dwellings.

New development should respect the established spatial/ built form pattern of the streetscape of Wattle and Ocean Groves. New buildings should continue the scale/ proportion of built form/ open space common to the Grove.

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 footprint development on allotments is not supported.

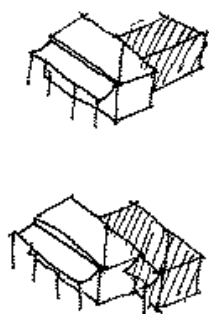
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Design Guidelines - basis

Suggested Approach

External Alterations and Additions

Ocean and Wattle Grove dwellings of significance are small in footprint and single storey in scale – reflecting the economic planning of the estate as low-cost assisted housing in the 1940s period. Houses typically contain two or three bedrooms and principal living spaces face the streets, not the substantial (and increasingly desirable) views across Lady Bay below. 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 streetscape setting of places within the estate. Upper floor additions may only be appropriate if to the rear of a property on the downside of Ocean Grove and stepped so that new ridge lines are still similar in height to 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 (especially semi-detached dwellings) are not encouraged, as additions will alter the original scale of dwellings when viewed from the street.

Roof decks (for views) are discouraged, as associated screening and balustrading will result in a building of two storey scale – not typical to the built form character of the precinct. Platforms could be considered on top of flat roof garaging to the rear of properties, but upper deck structures are problematic as noted above.

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.

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

Materials, Colours and Finishes

The Wattle and Ocean Grove dwellings are austere in design, but of architectural merit as a small scale, modern Housing Commission dwelling of the period. Bricks are red (pressed) or crème in colour – the common colours available during the World War 1 and post-war period. Roof tiles are cement/ terracotta tile, of 30 degree pitch and simple in gable or hip form. Paint colours for timberwork typical to the period include white and crème colours. Occasionally, timber lattice frames also featured on front facades

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

Tile roofs should also remain and be repaired to match with single colour, non-glossy terracotta or cement roof tiles.

Timberwork – gloss finishes in whites and crèmes recommended. Potential for accent colours to be used on front doors.

Roller shutters and obvious window film tints are discouraged.

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Design Guidelines - basis

Suggested Approach

Fencing

Fencing associated with Wattle and Ocean Grove housing of significance 1941-1960s was erected at the time of construction and typically comprised low steel post/ wire mesh fencing forward of houses and timber plank or corrugated iron sheet fencing in rear yards. This fencing is constant throughout the streetscape, reflecting HC landscaping styling of the period.



Early semi-detached dwelling – note original timber windows

Low steel post/ rail/ wire and low timber post/ rail fences to the front of properties should be retained and repaired. High fencing, picket fencing or solid masonry fencing is not permitted, as this is contrary to the streetscape character of the locale. Low hedging (under 1m), post/ wire and simple timber rail fencing is also appropriate. Timber picket fencing is not appropriate to the period of significance of the Precinct.

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

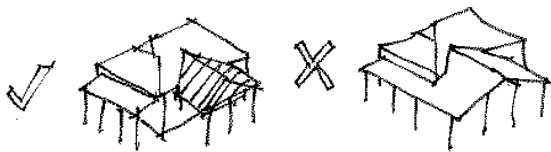


Wire fence, with hedging – appropriate to streetscape

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

Most extant garages are basic in construction and replacement is expected and supported. New garages should be sited to the rear of each property, so the traditional scale and siting of the dwelling remains extant. Materials should reflect those of each house – matching face brick, painted render or timber/ corrugated clad structures are appropriate. Roofing should be flat, continuing the established built form character of garages in the locale.

New carports should also be ideally sighted behind dwellings, to maintain the setting of the place within the streetscape. If space does not permit, new carports should be sited to the side of the dwelling and be freestanding, so the scale of the dwelling is not altered. Flat roof or pitched roof styles may be appropriate, but enclosure of carports forward of the rear wall of a dwelling is not supported, as they will appear 'solid' and may adversely impact on the spatial/ built form character of the streetscape.