



# Fishermans Bend Estate Guidelines

Revised Feb 2021



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*Source: Nearmap (Aerial photo taken April 2019).*

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## Purpose

The Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) Fishermans Bend Estate is a significant heritage place. It is essential that the City of Port Phillip and its residents maintain and enhance its unique character. It is also important that the needs of individual property owners are recognised. These guidelines aim to balance these objectives. They describe the features that make the Fishermans Bend Estate significant and offer suggestions to help owners maintain its significance, whilst allowing for renovations and development to occur.

The guidelines were initially prepared in 1997 and updated in 2010 and 2020. This version has been prepared to ensure alignment with updated heritage policy at Clause 15.03-1L of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme and the City of Port Phillip Heritage Design Guidelines (Background Document listed at clause 72.08 of the scheme).

## Application

The guidelines apply to the HCV Fishermans Bend Estate, which is in two parts (refer to Figure 1). The main part containing 376 dwellings comprises all the land bounded by The Boulevard to the south, Todd Road to the west, Howe Parade and Williamstown Road to the north and Barak Avenue to the east. The other part is 444-478 Williamstown Road, which contains 36 flats in nine two-storey blocks, known as the 'Quartets'.

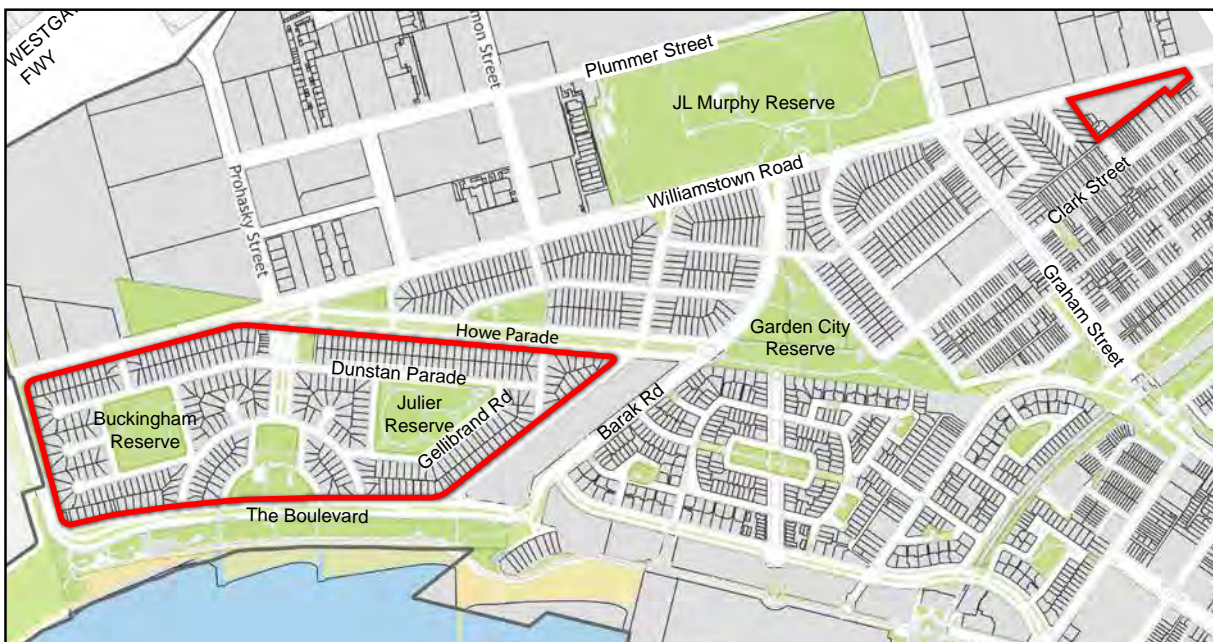


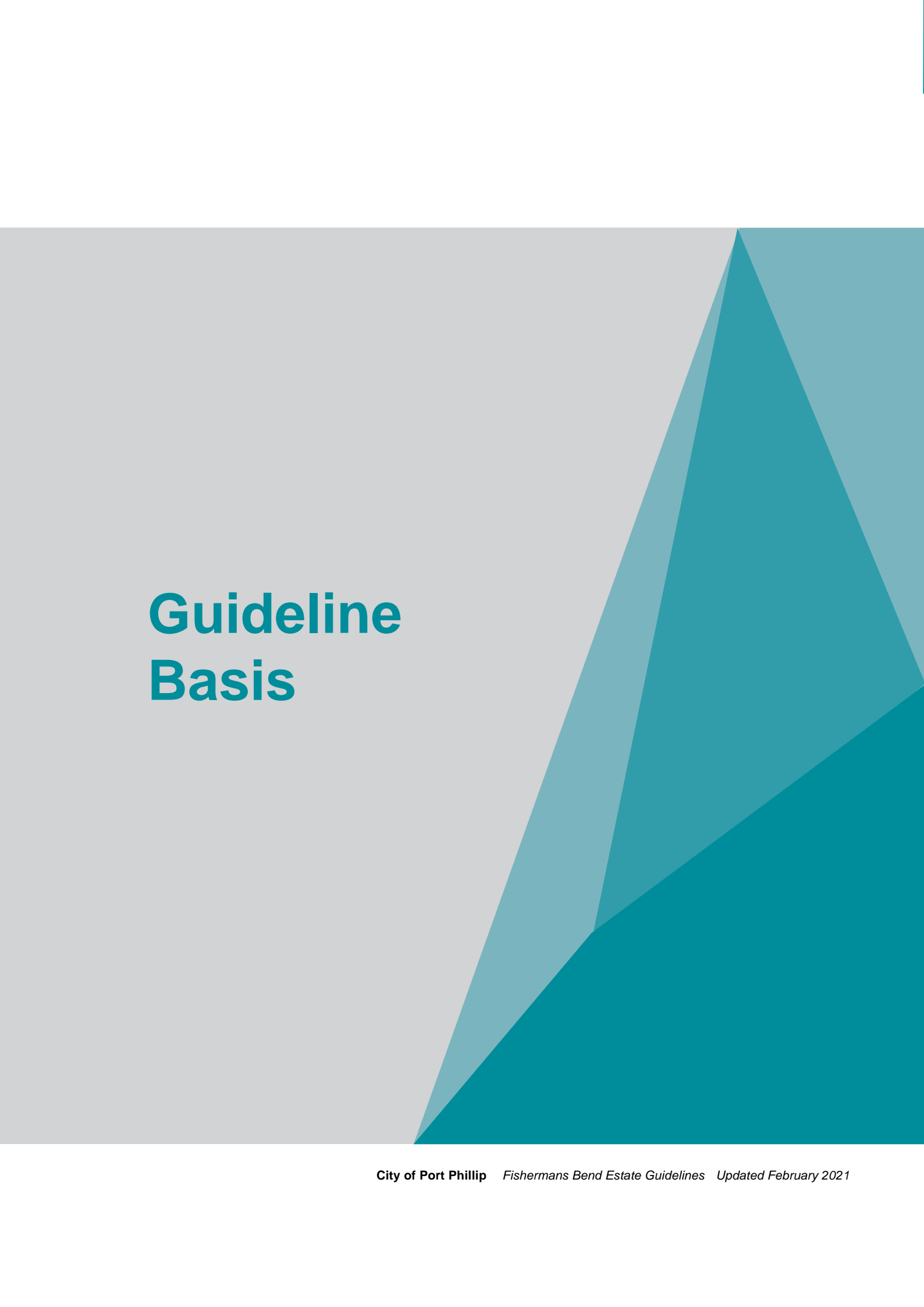
Figure 1: The boundaries of the Fishermans Bend Estate (at left) and the 'Quartets' (top right) shown in red

## How to use the Guidelines

The guidelines explain what Council will take into consideration when assessing a planning permit application for development or subdivision of land in accordance with Clause 43.01 Heritage Overlay of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme.

The guidelines should be considered in conjunction with State and local heritage policy at Clause 15.03 of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme, and the City of Port Phillip Heritage Design Guidelines.

In the event of any inconsistency between the guidelines and the City of Port Phillip Heritage Design Guidelines, these guidelines should be used for applications within the Fishermans Bend Estate.



# Guideline Basis

## History

The HCV Fishermans Bend Estate was built between 1939 and 1942, by the newly formed Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) as the first in the series of estates constructed by the HCV which played a critical role in addressing housing shortages after World War II.

Fishermans Bend Estate followed the only two substantial initiatives in the field of assisted and public housing to that time, both also in Port Melbourne. The first was the State Bank Estate (known as Garden City Estate), started in 1926 and the second, the small Dunstan Estate at the corner of Williamstown Road and Graham Street, built by the Public Works Department for then Premier Albert Dunstan's Government in 1936. Thus the area south of Williamstown Road contains the physical expression of the genesis of assisted and public housing in the State of Victoria. Consequently, the area has historic and social significance to the municipality.

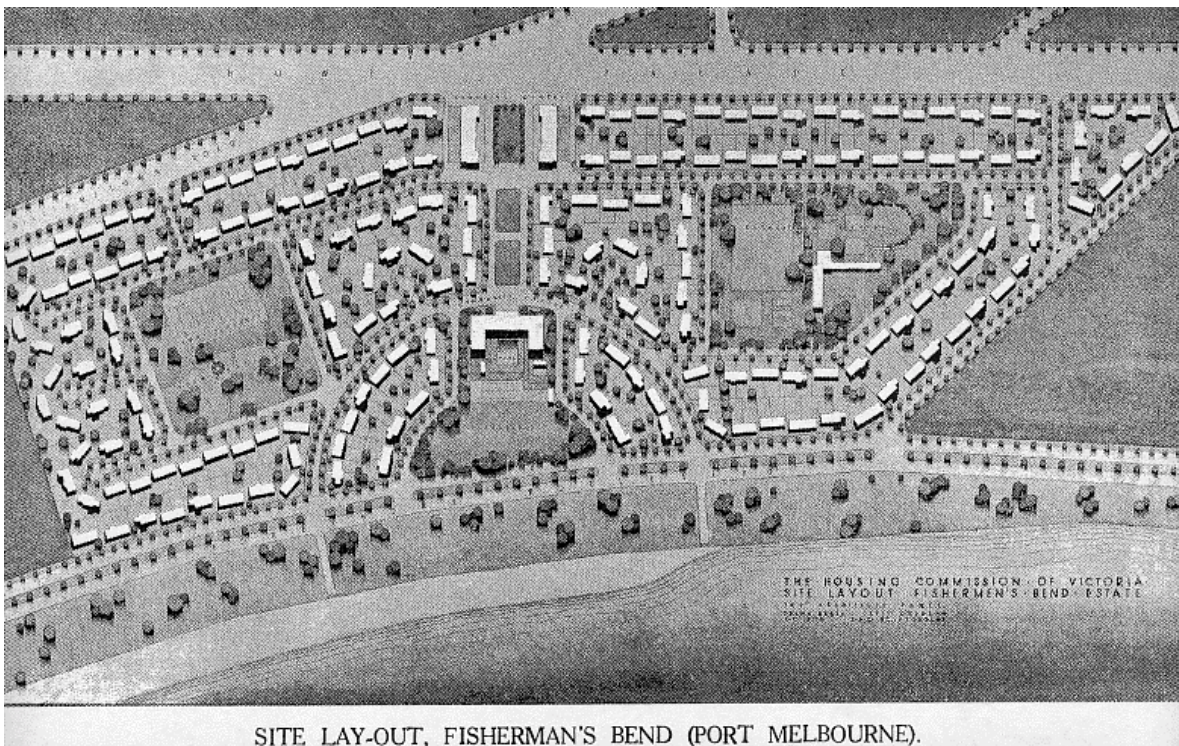


Figure 2. The original layout plan of Fishermans Bend Estate (Source: Second Report of the Housing Commission of Victoria, 1940.).

Note the central spine with the shopping centre at the north and the proposed community centre at the south, the organised layout of the reserves and the proposed regular street tree planting.

The HCV Fishermans Bend Estate represents the State's answer to the interwar and postwar housing crises and demonstrates the power of the social reformers, most particularly the indefatigable Oswald Barnett, to influence government policy.

Its physical expression, incorporating Garden City concepts from England and the latest American ideas in estate layout, is considered to be the finest example of a housing estate ever built by the HCV and provided a model for estates that followed. It was designed to incorporate all of the facilities a neighbourhood community could require - shops, community centre, recreation space and a kindergarten. Its original intent, with fully integrated shopping, sporting and recreational facilities and street tree planting was never fully realised; however, the overall structure and housing types remains in accordance with the original plan.



It is also important as the cradle of the HCV's concrete house project, employing the techniques of TW Fowler, which formed the basis of the massive housing program to follow after the war. The first experimental concrete dwellings (at 324-326 Howe Parade) still remain and are included on the Victorian Heritage Register (see Figure 4). These experimental concrete dwellings were the prototype for the concrete dwellings built in the estate and the HCV estates that followed (see Figure 5).



*Figure 4 The first experimental dwellings using the TW Fowler system of concrete prefabrication, 324-326 Howe Parade, Fishermans Bend Estate.*



*Figure 5. One of the most intact early concrete dwellings, 350 Howe Parade, Fishermans Bend Estate.*

*Note the splayed roof verge and gutter, the small concrete entry canopy carried on slender steel posts, the timber sliding sashes with horizontal glazing bars and the pipe and wire mesh fence.*



## Significance of Fishermans Bend Estate

The HCV Fishermans Bend Estate is of local heritage significance and is included within the heritage overlay of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme as part of HO2 The Garden City Housing Estates heritage precinct. The HO2 precinct comprises the three garden city estates, including Fishermans Bend Estate (apart from the first experimental concrete dwellings at 324-326 Howe Parade which are on the Victorian Heritage Register and have an individual heritage overlay, HO158), the Garden City (Bank House) Estate and the Dunstan Estate.

The main basis of the Fishermans Bend Estates' significance are as follows

- It is the first experiment in public housing for rental by a State Government instrumentality in Australia, the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV), and formed the baseline of their massive housing program to follow. It was the first step in the dominant pattern of social engineering employed by the HCV until the 1970's.
- It is the first and only estate by a government instrumentality derived from a design competition.
- It contains the first experimental concrete dwellings and the first group of concrete dwellings built in Victoria, using the TW Fowler system of prefabrication, that was to form the basis of much of the HCV's later program and which led to the mass production facilities at Holmesglen and ultimately to the HCV high rise construction program.
- It employs a combination of the most up to date ideas in planning and urban design from England and America, such as its geometry, curved streets, the use of residential courts and creation of neighbourhoods.
- Its proposed social and physical integration of community facilities is to a degree not seen again in estate planning in Australia.
- It is the finest example of a HCV estate in both architectural and urban design terms.
- In spite of some change, it is substantially intact and still clearly expresses its original intent.

Fishermans Bend Estates owes its special character to the vision of its social and physical planners, expressed in the clarity and ordered variety of its design, with strategically placed two storey elements in the single storey context, its unique layout and infrastructure, with open space defining its two precincts. The consistent use of attached dwellings built form and materials enhance its individuality.

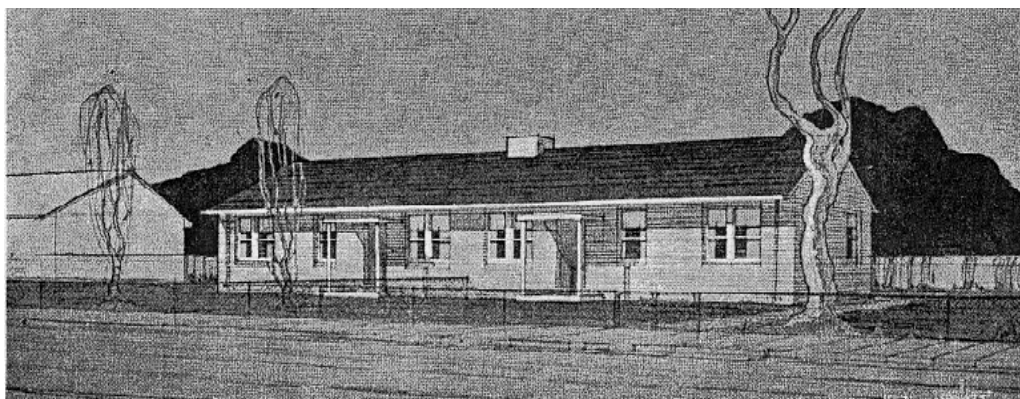
It is a unique demonstration of the concepts of planners of the time, not so comprehensively expressed anywhere else in Australia.

## Contributory features

The layout, original buildings (including the dwellings), the communal open spaces and the shopping centre contribute to the special character of the place as a whole; for it is the whole place that is important. The individual elements each help establish and reinforce the consistency of the overall character in their variations of repeating forms, materials and construction details.

The contributory features are:

1. The scale of the buildings. The area was designed as a lower “working class” estate and thus its origins are expressed in its housing stock of small dwellings on small sites, devised in accordance with the social philosophies and economic constraints of the time. This is the core of its cultural significance and is fundamental to any consideration of the fabric of the place.
2. The overall street layout and the specifics of its design, including the curvilinear streets, which produced ordered variety in the orientations of the dwellings.
3. The symmetrical placement of facilities in the central spine between the foreshore and Williamstown Road.
4. The open space areas, which balance the composition, define two distinct precincts, and which allow the long views that add to and reveal the special character of the area.
5. The designs of the individual dwellings as pairs and their consistent repetition of elements and massing, which add to the strong identity of the area.



*Figure 6. Design perspective of the pair of six-bed houses*

6. The consistent use of similar materials, relieved by sections with concrete, rather than brick dwellings, and the subtle variations in the bricks used, ranging from over-burnt (clinker) to pink.
7. The siting of the two storey dwellings at strategic locations, generally on street corners, but also breaking up long sweeps of single storey buildings.
8. The varied setbacks of the pairs, which relieve the potential monotony of their similar designs and the diagonal siting of corner dwellings.
9. The consistent detailing of the individual pairs including their roofs, roof drainage, gable ends, walls, windows and doors, chimneys and porches.
10. The consistent design of front fences of low height, particularly the early galvanised pipe and chain wire mesh examples with high paling fences used only behind the fronts of the dwellings.
11. The alterations to the porches and windows which have been made by the HCV since the original construction of the estate.
12. The stepped frontage of shops to Central Avenue.
13. The form and function of the Community Centre on Central Avenue.





Figure 7. Typical strategic corner location of a two storey pair of dwellings.



Figure 8. A streetscape showing the contrasting two storey pair, the varied setbacks and the consistently low pipe and wire mesh fences.



Figure 9. The two storey pairs of dwellings at the corners of Dunstan Parade and Centre Avenue frame the vista of the street. The vista was originally intended to be closed by the community centre.



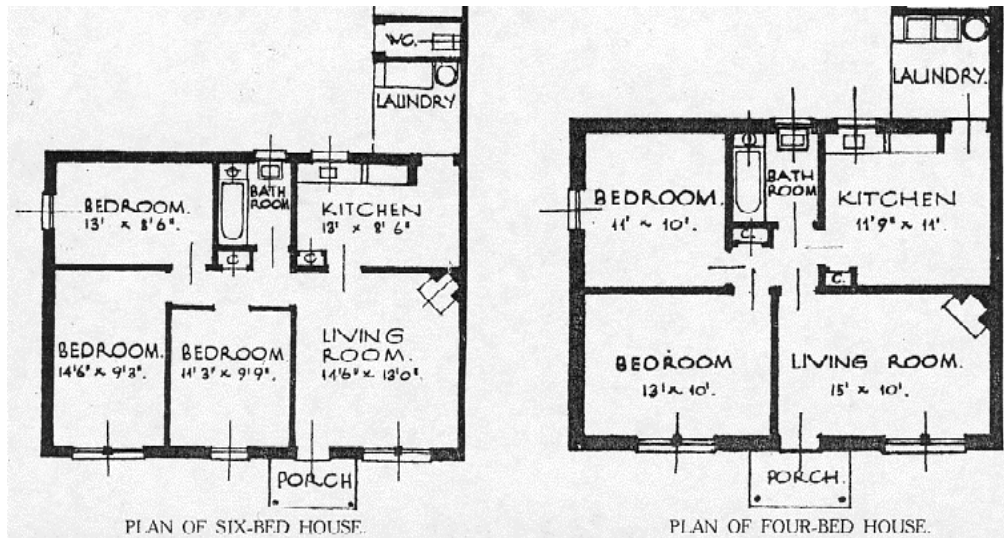


Figure 10. Typical plans of the medium size dwellings. Source: Second Report of the HCV, 1940.

## The ‘Quartets’

The “Quartets” (see Figure 11), nine two storey blocks, each of four small flats, at 444-478 Williamstown Road, are designed with similar guidelines in mind. Although repetitive in form, their staggered layout responds to the triangular site and creates a forecourt area, giving a strong sense of identity. These features make Fishermans Bend Estate a unique environment far removed from the popular idea of a characterless HCV estate.

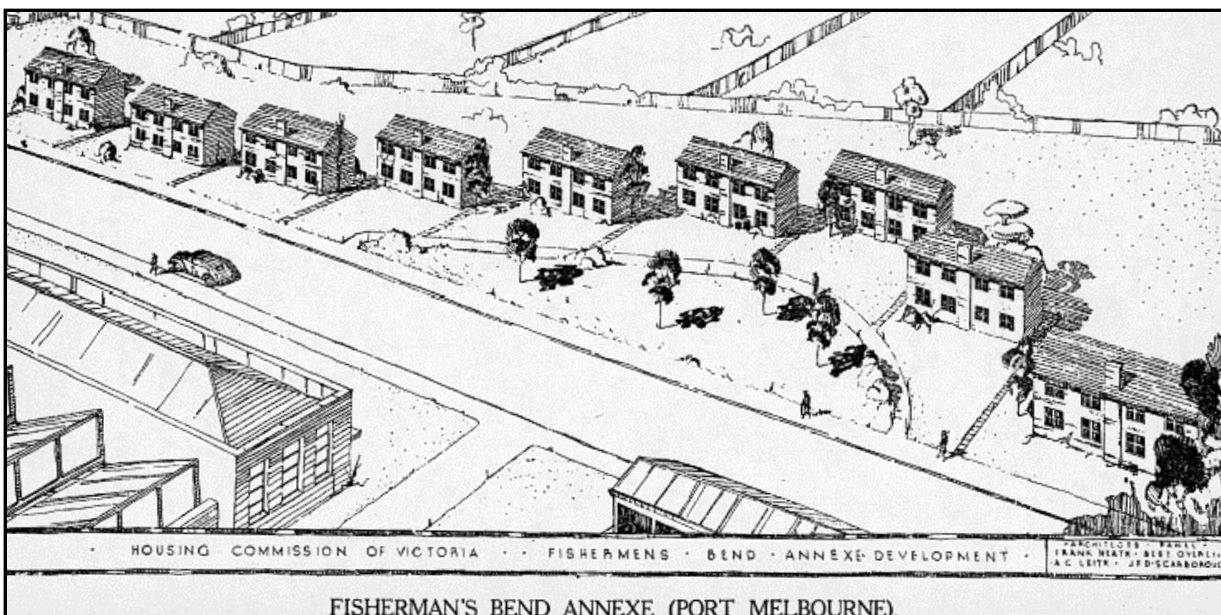
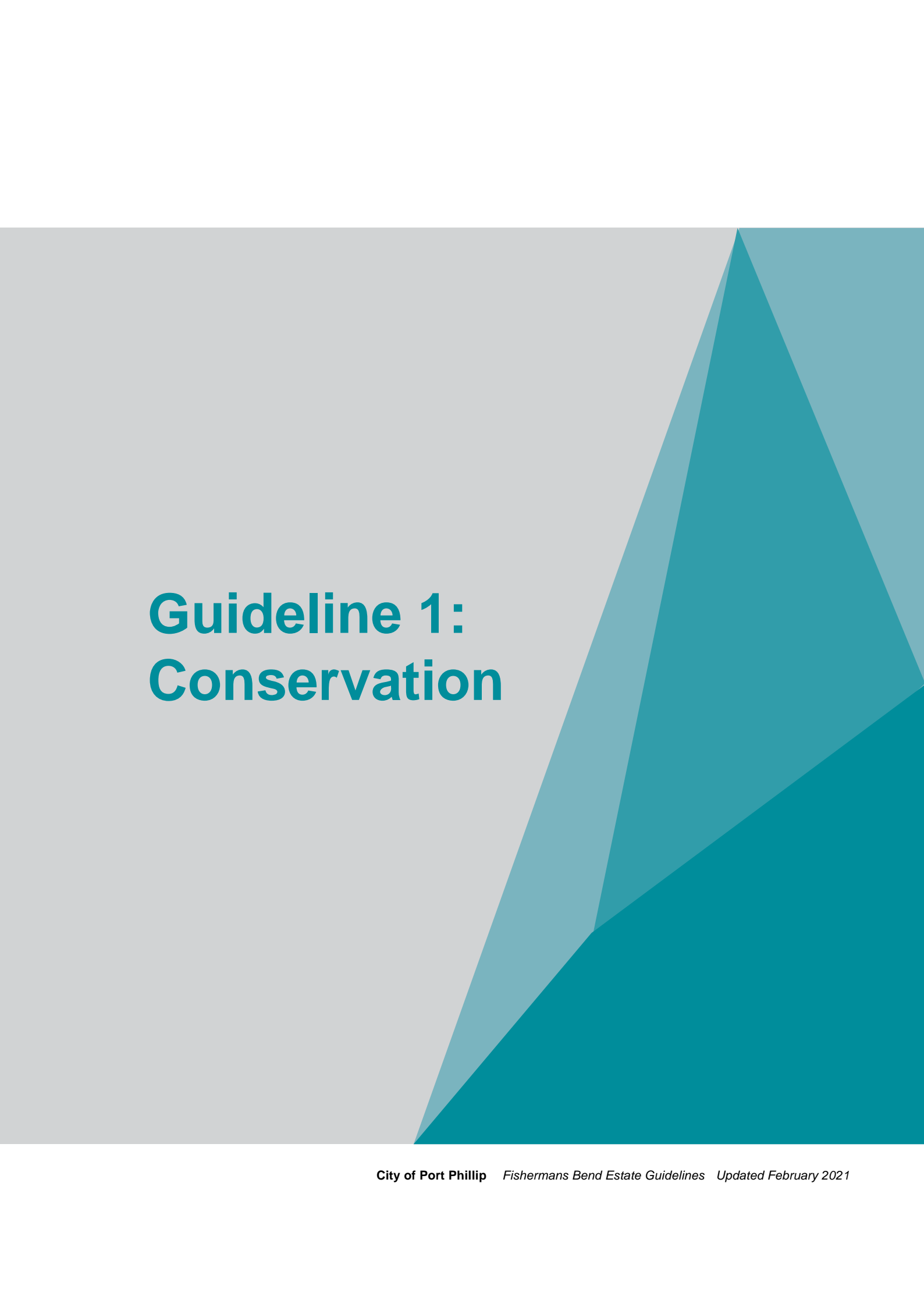


Figure 11. The “Quartets” on the two acre site at 444-478 Williamstown Road.

The background features a large, abstract geometric composition. On the right side, there are several overlapping triangles in various shades of teal and blue, pointing towards the top right. The left side of the page is a solid, light grey color. The text 'Guideline 1: Conservation' is centered on the grey area.

# Guideline 1: Conservation

## Guideline basis

The original construction details and the materials play an important role in establishing the historic character of the estate.

In order to minimise maintenance, the only painted surfaces in the original dwellings were exposed timber and metal. All other surfaces were natural, including the precast concrete walls. All of the concrete walls have now been painted, presumably initially by the HCV, but most brickwork remains natural. Types of brick used vary from over-burnt (clinker) to pink and cream.

The decoration of the visible external fabric of a dwelling should be consistent with the original palette of materials and finishes used in Fishermans Bend Estate.

## General guidelines

- The restoration of original features of dwellings is encouraged.

## Roofs guidelines

- The original glazed terracotta tiles on houses should be retained
- The original hipped (concrete dwellings) or gabled (brick dwellings) roofs should be retained

### Chimneys

- Retain chimneys where they are visible from the public realm

### Gutters, verges and downpipes

- The roof gutters of the concrete dwellings are of a special splayed type. Their downpipes exit from the backs of the gutters with the horizontal arm concealed above the eaves lining. Retention and accurate replacement is encouraged, however, they are no longer commercially available and would need to be fabricated by a sheet metal shop.
- The gutters on gable roofed dwellings appear to have originally been bull-nosed with exposed cranked circular downpipes. This is the pattern that should preferably be used in replacements.
- The eaves of the concrete dwellings are boxed with a splayed fascia, while the eaves of the gabled brick dwellings are raked and projecting with a vertical gutter board. This distinction should be maintained in new works.

## Walls and gable ends guidelines

- The gable ends of the single storey dwellings are in continuous brick, while those of the two storey dwellings are sheathed in vertical sawn boards.
- The gable ends of the later porches are sheathed in fibro-cement with a pattern of exposed battens.



## Porches guidelines

- Retain original flat-roofed porches or later hipped or gabled porches erected by the HCV.
- Porches similar to those on original dwellings could be reinstated.



*Figure 25. The original details of a concrete dwelling. Note the splayed eaves verge and splayed gutter, the eaves boxing, the partially concealed downpipe and the sliding timber windows with horizontal glazing bars set directly in the projecting concrete architrave in which the tracks are located.*



*Figure 26. Later rendered brick porches on concrete dwellings.*

## Windows and doors guidelines

- Original windows and doors should be retained and, where possible, the reinstatement of windows and doors in the original form is encouraged.
- If original or later sliding windows are visible from the street and are to be replaced, they should be in a simple form with a pair of sashes reflecting the pattern of the original, either sliding or side hung casement, and with two horizontal glazing bars.
- Timber double hung windows, mostly paired, in many of the brick dwellings, should be retained if possible and/or replaced in similar form, if visible from the street.
- Front doors were simple framed vertical board doors without sidelights or highlights. This pattern should preferably be maintained.



*Figure 11. The dwelling to the left of the pair has an HCV porch and aluminium windows. That to the right has its original timber double hung windows and porch (now built in).*

## Painting guidelines

- Unpainted brickwork should not be painted.
- Neighbours in pairs are encouraged to agree on the same or similar colour schemes for painted surfaces.
- Concrete surfaces should preferably be repainted in pale grey or stone colours, using a matt or slightly textured acrylic paint.
- As a general guide, colours should be kept simple, using only two colours - a dark colour for metal trim including roof gutters and a light colour for timber trim, including windows.
- The gable end vertical boards of the two storey dwellings were probably originally creosote stained. A similar finish should be maintained. Suggestions include modern timber finishes such as fence-coat or deep brown matt acrylic paint.

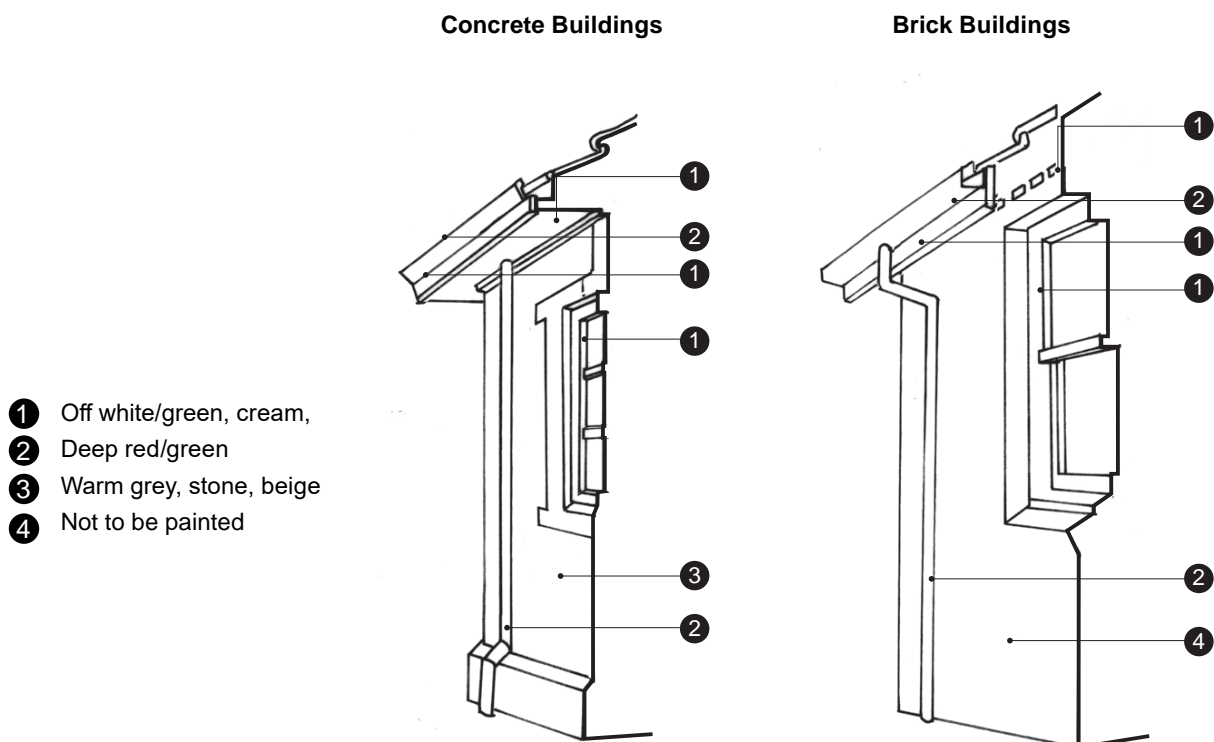
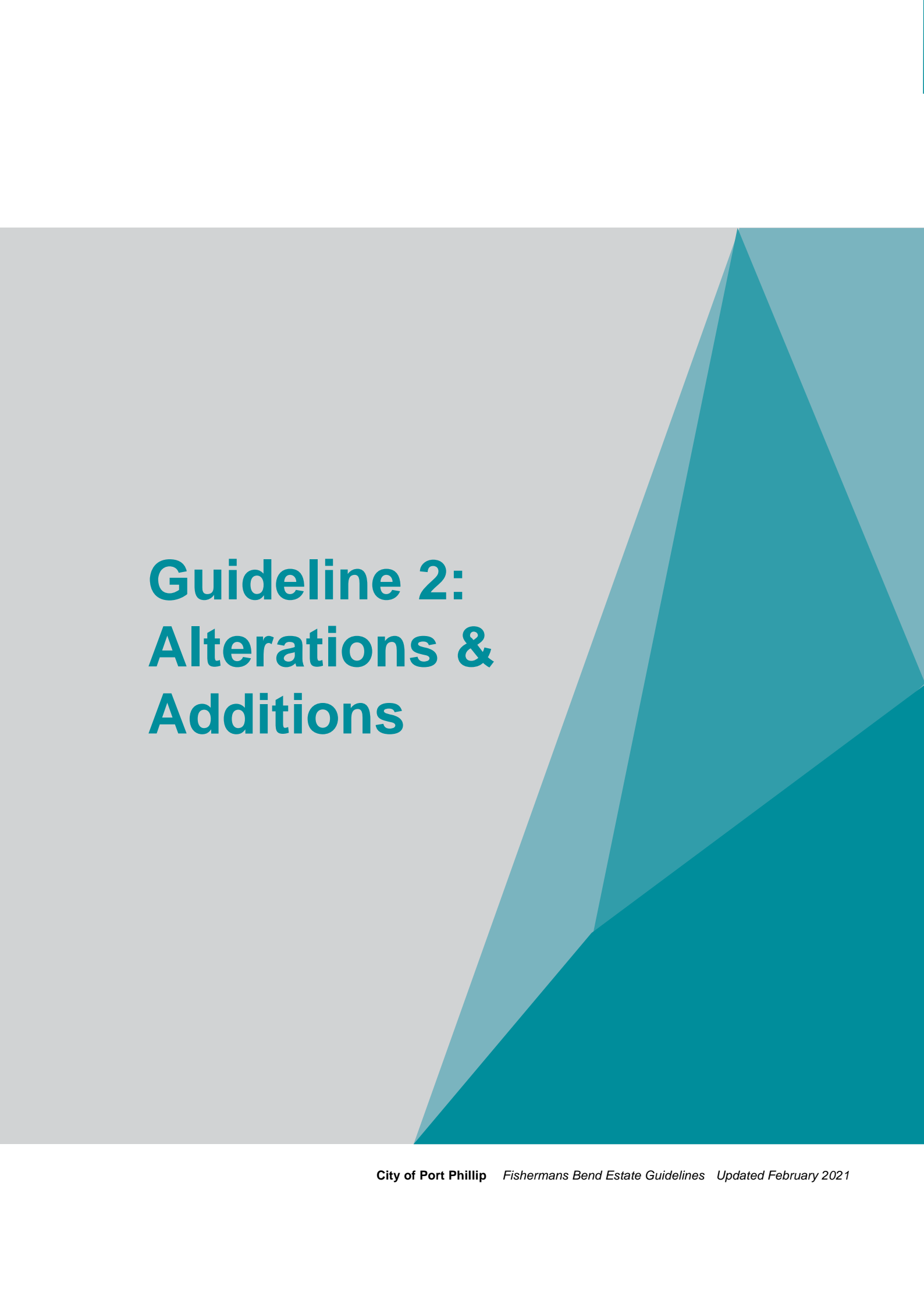


Figure 27. Examples of external decoration surfaces



The background features a light grey gradient on the left side, transitioning into a large, abstract teal shape on the right. This teal shape is composed of several overlapping triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, modern look. The text is positioned on the left side, within the grey gradient area.

# **Guideline 2: Alterations & Additions**

## Guideline basis

The focus of these guidelines is upon alterations and additions that would be visible from the public domain. For the purposes of these guidelines, the public domain is defined as any place within the public areas of Fishermans Bend Estate or the areas around its boundary. The principal views of Fishermans Bend Estate are not generally confined to street widths (as in a typical Port Phillip streetscape setting), but are long views further away, for example, those across the reserves.

The original mix of one and two storey dwellings is considered a key aspect of the significance of the Fishermans Bend Estate. The number and variety of single storey dwellings are also of significance, as is the technology of single storey concrete dwellings. It is desirable that these aspects of significance are protected.

It is of note that Fishermans Bend Estate is as much as four times as dense in composition as typical inter war estates, in that dwellings are roughly only half as wide and allotments only half as deep as in other inter war subdivisions.

In this context, and having regard to the desire of many owners to improve the amenity of the dwellings, it is recognised by Council that second storey additions to single storey dwellings may be appropriate if they are carefully designed in accordance with these guidelines.

## General guidelines

Visible alterations and additions to a dwelling should maintain the character of the area and be harmonious with the existing dominant character of the area.

### Building form, materials and details

- Visible additions should generally employ similar design forms, materials and details of the original dwellings, but recognisable as a new element.
- For visible additions to concrete dwellings, the suggest wall material is rendered brick or cement sheet, either plain or with an applied sand finished surface.
- The introduction of visually intrusive new elements (for example exposed air conditioners) is discouraged.
- Use materials sympathetic to the existing dwelling.

### Scale and siting

- Additions in front of existing dwelling are discouraged.
- Single storey additions to single storey dwellings are encouraged ahead of two storey additions.
- Two storey additions to single storey dwellings should be designed in a manner which allows the character of the original single storey dwelling to remain dominant and legible.
- Two storey additions should be located at the rear of the existing dwelling and not higher than any original two storey dwelling in the Fishermans Bend Estate area.
- Encourage, if possible, where there is a pair of matching dwellings, that both dwellings be extended at the same time and in the same form, to retain visual rhythm and symmetry, particularly when a two storey addition is proposed.

## **Windows and doors**

- Window openings of additions, if visible from the street, should be of similar proportions to those of the existing dwelling.
- New or enlarged window openings in the existing dwelling should be avoided.
- The conversion of original windows to bay windows or doors is discouraged, where visible from the street.

## **Air conditioners and equipments**

- Roof mounted services and equipments should be located where it cannot be seen from the principal street frontage(s).
- Air conditioner and associated equipment should not be visible from the principal street frontages including side streets when on corner sites.

## **Blinds and awnings**

- Fixed awnings or other permanent attachments for sun control should be suitable to the architectural style of the dwelling and designed to be as unobtrusive as possible.



## Single storey additions guidelines

Single storey additions to a dwelling should:

- Preferably be at the rear of the dwelling and should not be visible from the street (Refer to Figure 15a).
- If at the sides of a dwelling, be set back at least 1.5 metres from the front wall of the dwelling and the roof should be of noticeably lesser height than that of the dwelling (Refer to Figure 14&15b). In the case of the existing dwelling being two storeys, a single-storey addition at the side also should be noticeably lower than the main roof of the adjacent single storey dwelling.
- Where visible from the public domain (for example, corner sites), have roof form, pitch and materials that is similar to the existing dwelling. Other options, such as a separate roof concealed by a parapet, may also be considered.



Figure 14. A simple gable side addition, possible where there can be a boundary setback.

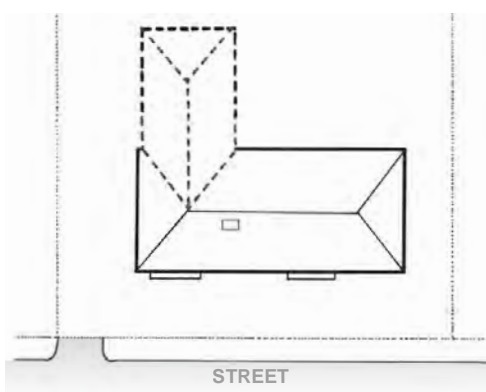


Figure 15a. Preferred location of addition behind existing dwelling

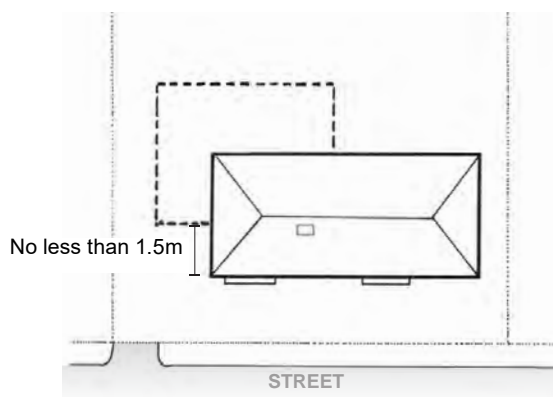


Figure 15b. Alternative location of addition at side of existing dwelling

## Two storey additions to two storey dwellings guidelines

As shown in Figures 16 and 17, two storey additions to two storey dwellings should:

- Have walls that do not exceed the height of those of the existing dwelling.
- Have a roof of lesser noticeably and lesser height than the existing dwelling.
- Where visible from the public domain (for example, corner sites), the roof form, pitch and materials of an addition should be similar to the existing dwelling.

- 1 Existing building
- 2 Original chimney
- 3 Primary ridge line
- 4 Possible new building envelope (lower than existing)
- 5 Eaves

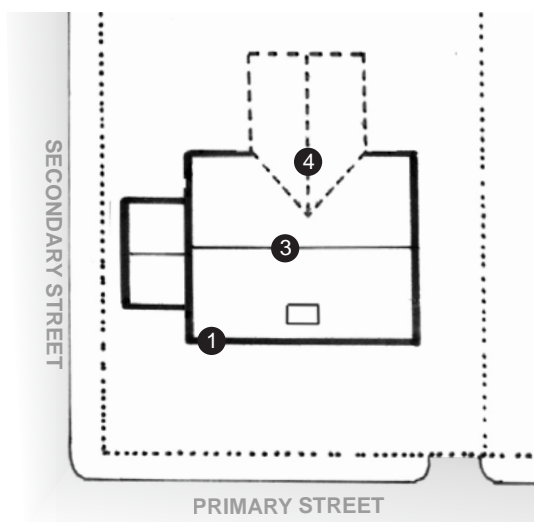


Figure 16. Plan showing two storey rear addition

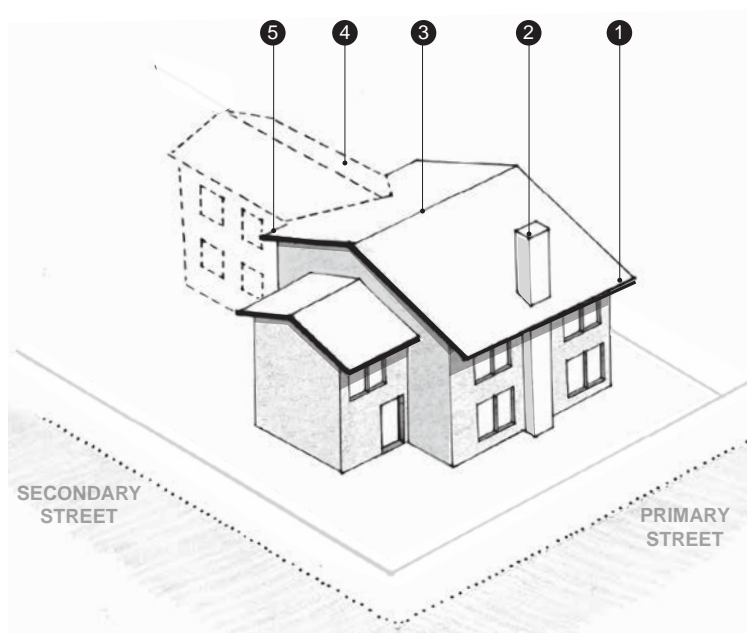


Figure 17. A rear gable addition. This could incorporate a hip roof, if height reduction at the rear was necessary.

## Two storey additions to single storey dwellings guidelines

- Small second storey additions, visible from the street, may be supported. The front roof plane shared by the pair should be retained, ie the addition should be sited behind the existing roof ridge line.
- Sheer, two storey high walls on street elevations, or in front of a vertical line taken from the original ridge point on the side wall, are discouraged.
- The height of the visible roof of an addition should be less than the height of the existing roof.
- The sense of the original single storey end gable on any side wall should be retained, for example retain existing eaves or eaves line.

Some suggested two storey additions to middle block single storey dwellings are shown in Figure 18 & 19. These suggestions may not be suitable for corner site buildings.

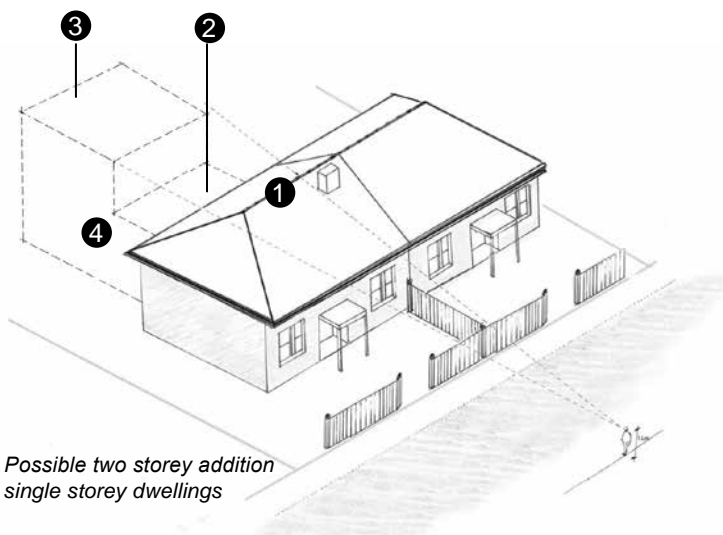


Figure 18. Possible two storey addition to hip roof single storey dwellings

- 1 Existing ridgeline
- 2 Recess the building form to retain the original roof
- 3 Contain building envelope within the sightline from street
- 4 Recess the building form to retain hip roof profile

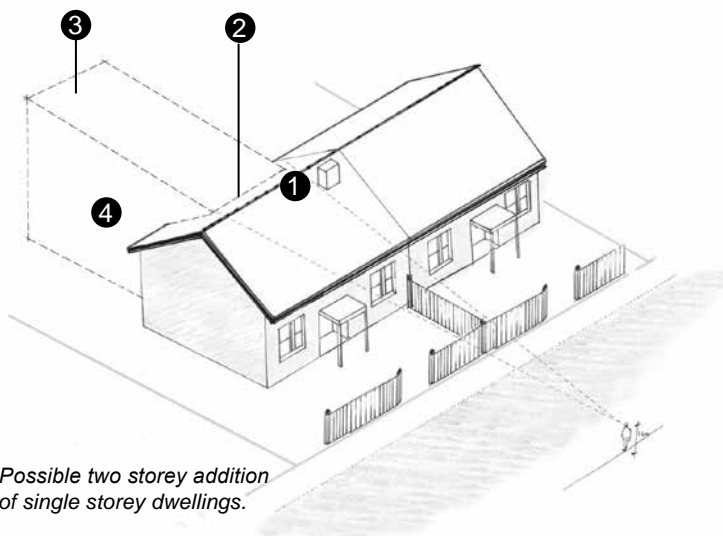


Figure 19. Possible two storey addition to gable roof single storey dwellings.

- 1 Existing ridgeline
- 2 Joining building envelope sitting behind and below the original ridge line
- 3 Contain building envelope within the sightline from street
- 4 Recess the building form to retain gable roof profile



The background features a large, abstract geometric composition. On the right side, there are several overlapping triangular shapes in various shades of teal and blue, pointing towards the top right. The left side of the page is a solid, light grey color. The text is positioned on the left side, overlapping the grey area.

# **Guideline 3: Car Parking**

## Guideline basis

The layout of Fishermans Bend Estate was not designed to accommodate a car on every allotment and garages and carports were generally not provided by the HCV. The later construction of carports and parking areas within front setback areas has impacted upon the garden city character of the area.

## Guidelines

- The space in front of a dwelling should be retained as lawn or garden and not used as a space to park vehicles.
- Garages or carports should be sited behind the adjacent front wall of the existing dwelling.
- Carports should be set back 500mm from the front wall of the existing dwelling and should be constructed of the visually lightest framing possible, either in timber or steel.
- Garages, because of their opaque form, should be set back from the front wall of the existing dwelling at least 500mm as shown in Figure 20. Roller shutter doors should be avoided as they add extra height.

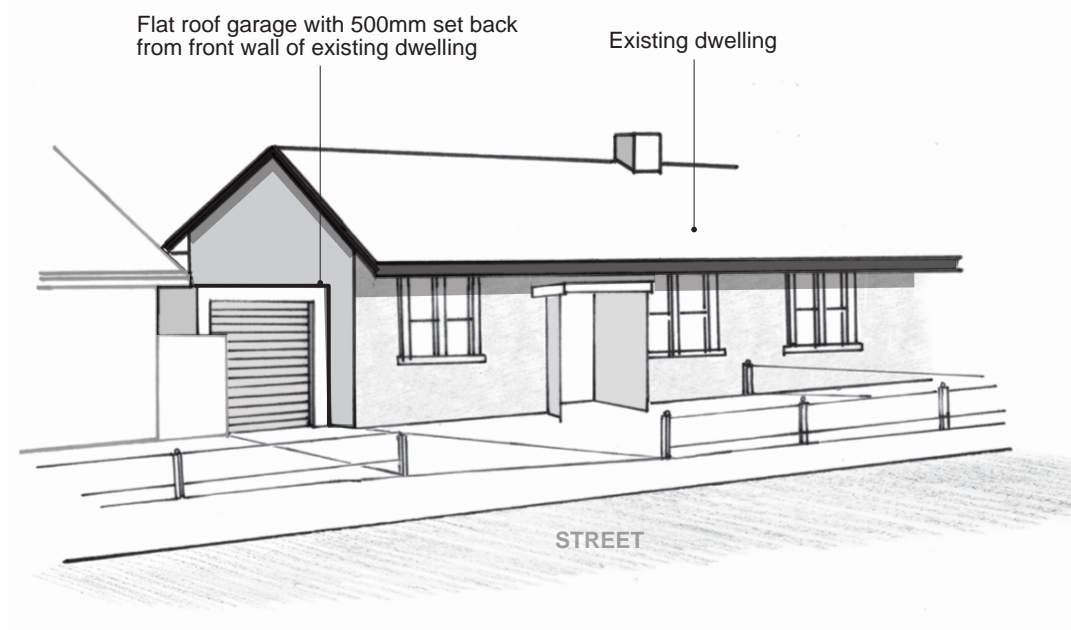


Figure 20. Preferred garage location and design

The background features a large, abstract geometric design. On the right side, there is a large teal triangle pointing upwards, which overlaps with a lighter teal triangle. The left side of the page is a solid light grey color.

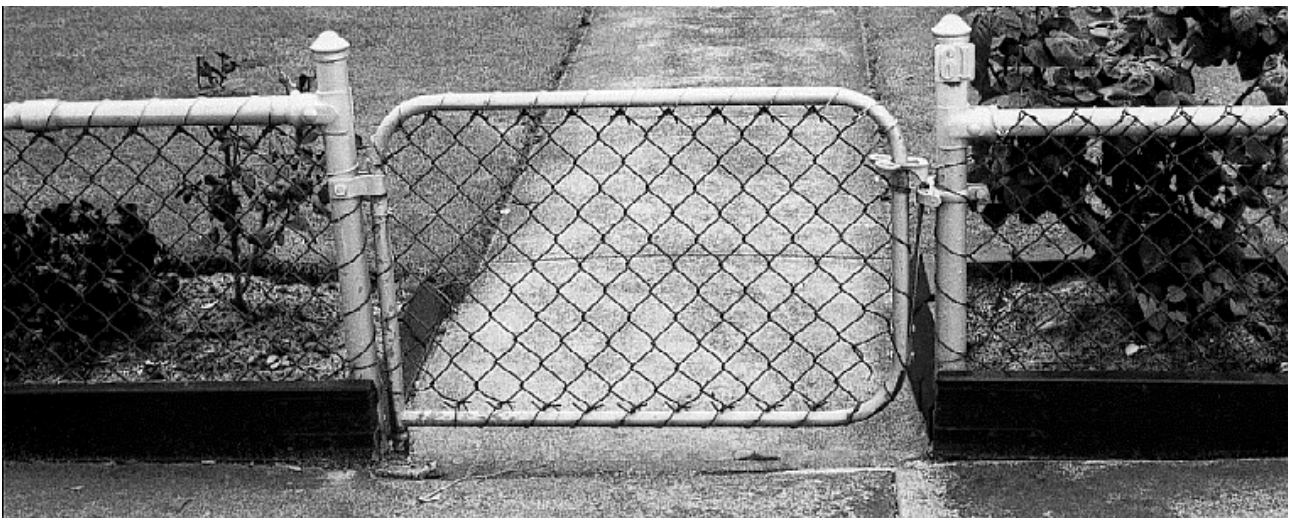
# Guideline 4: Fencing



## Guideline basis

The Fishermans Bend Estate area originally had common fence types for all properties. Those at the front of the dwellings were the low galvanised pipe and chain wire mesh fences (see Figures 21 & 22) that are still quite common.

Most replacement fences are relatively low and are of various combinations of materials, with brick and wrought iron predominant.



*Figure 21. Portion of an original front fence. All fences were constructed like this, although some were higher (for example Howe Parade where the first experimental dwellings were built).*



*Figure 22. The existing variety of fences, some original, is mostly low.*

## General guidelines

- Retention of original fences is encouraged.
- Front fences should remain low to maintain the character of the area.

- ① Low front fence (no higher than 1m)
- ② Front fence to match architectural style
- ③ Side fence (no higher than 2m)
- ④ Avoid high, solid front fence

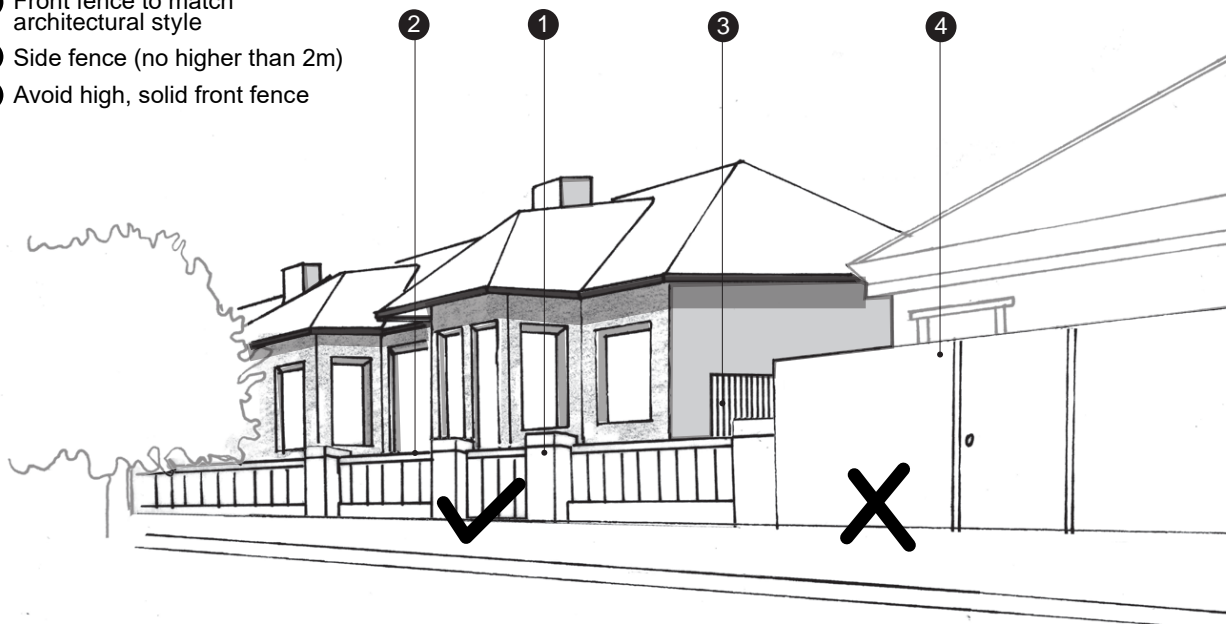


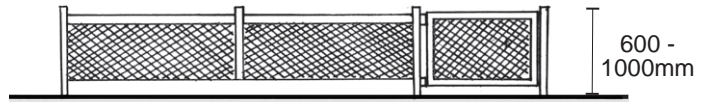
Figure 23. Appropriate and inappropriate front fences

## New fence guidelines

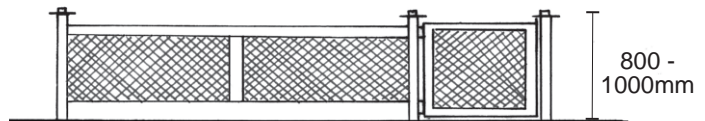
- Fences at the front of properties, back to the line of the adjacent front wall, or the front wall of the adjacent property if it is closer to the street, should generally be no higher than 1 metre to the top of the fence panels. Posts could be higher.
- Fences should be of a style that is reasonably appropriate to the period of the estate, ie. Inter-war and immediate post war styles. Some appropriate fence examples are shown in Figure 24.
- Apart from posts or masonry piers, fences should have a straight top.
- For side and rear fences behind the front wall of the dwelling, and from the side boundary to the building, should not exceed 2 metres in height and preferably be of palings.
- The materials of fences should match the materials of the dwelling.

# Fencing

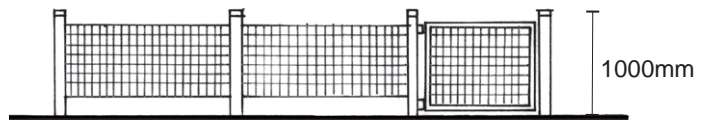
1. The low pipe and chain wire mesh fence used originally on the estate. From 600mm - 1000mm high.



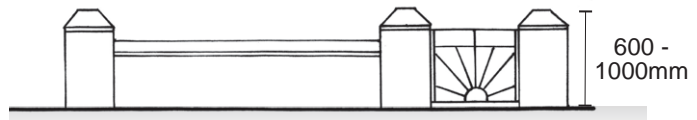
2. Chain wire mesh fixed to a wooden frame. From 800mm - 1000mm high.



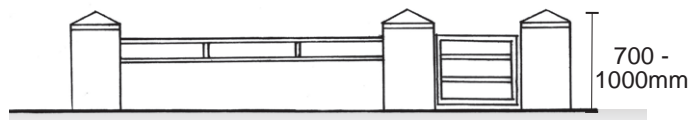
3. Modern weld-mesh fixed to either a galvanised steel or timber frame. 1000mm high.



4. A simple brick fence with a chamfered capping brick and wrought iron gate. 600mm - 1000mm high.



5. A brick fence with a steel pipe rail. 700mm - 1000mm high.



6. A brick fence with a wrought iron top section. Proportion of plinth to height of iron can vary. 700mm - 1000mm high.

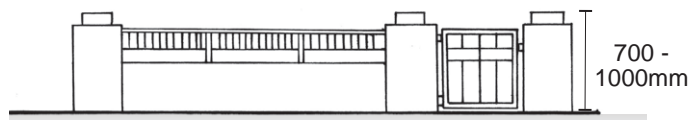


Figure 24. Suggested fence types

The background features a large, abstract geometric design. On the right side, there is a large teal triangle pointing upwards, which overlaps with a lighter teal triangle. The left side of the page is a solid light grey. The text is positioned on the grey area.

# **Guideline 5: Front Garden**



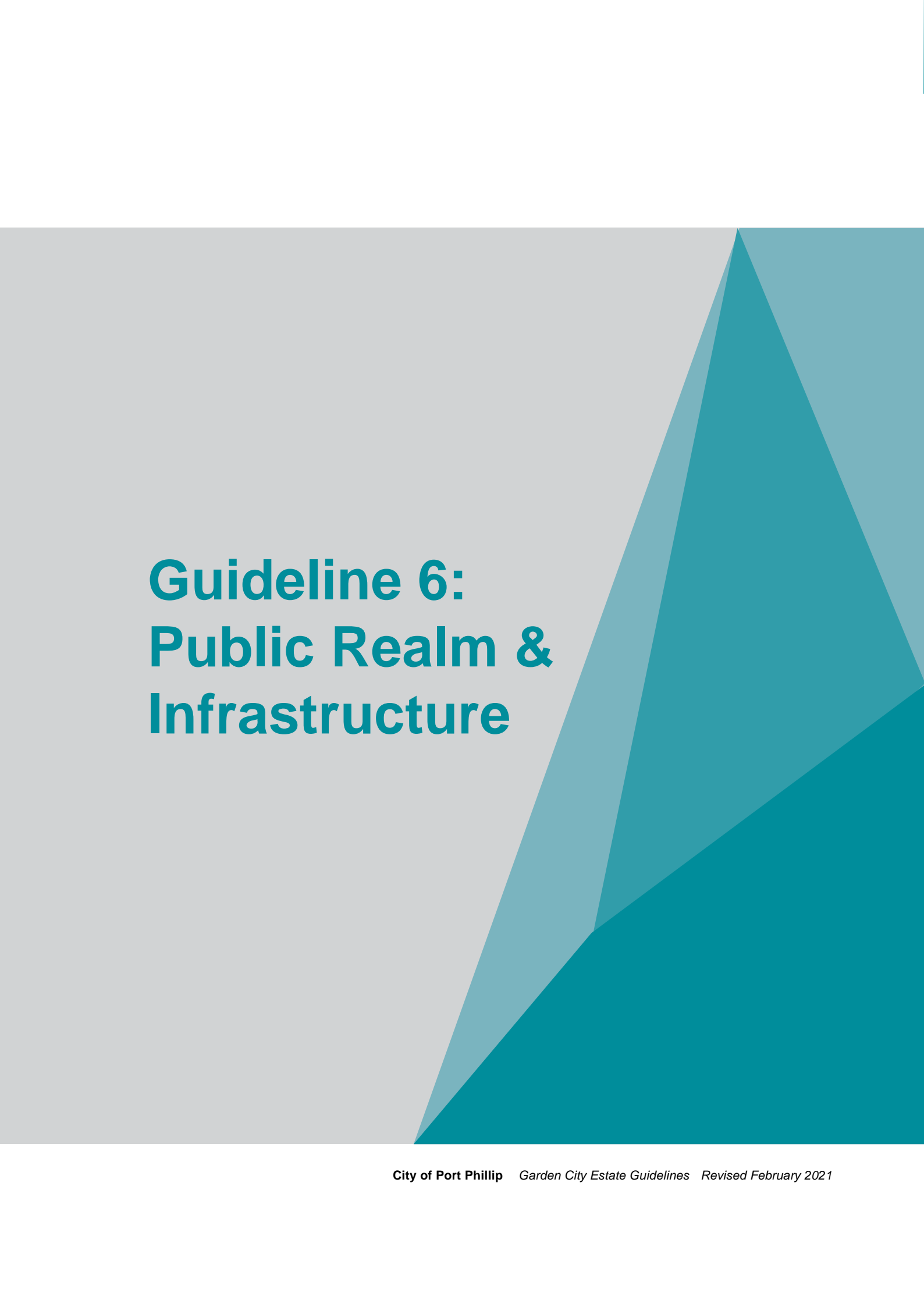
## Guideline basis

The open front gardens are an important feature of the Fishermans Bend Estate that contribute to its 'garden suburb' character. Typical characteristics include:

- Simple and formal layout;
- Lawns contained in border planting;
- Central features and specimen trees;
- Minimal hard paved areas;
- No structures (such as pergolas); and
- Low, transparent front fences.

## Guidelines

- Select drought tolerant trees and planting, and to utilise water sensitive urban design measures where possible.
- Avoid replacement of lawn and garden beds with hard paved areas, particularly for car parking.
- Refer to Guideline 4 for fencing.

The background features a large, abstract geometric design. On the right side, there is a large teal triangle pointing upwards, which overlaps with a lighter teal triangle. The left side of the page is a solid light grey. The text is positioned on the grey area.

# **Guideline 6: Public Realm & Infrastructure**

## Application

This applies to roads and road surfaces, kerbs and channels, footpaths, crossovers, nature strips and public open spaces.

## Guideline basis

Council, as the responsible authority for the infrastructure of Fishermans Bend Estate, plays its part in the conservation and enhancement of the areas' overall character.

Works within the public areas of Fishermans Bend Estate, including to roads and the public reserves, should be consistent with the forms and materials of the original works, with the minimum modification required to the original layout in order to meet current requirements and standards.

## Guidelines

- Any new works that are not part of the original design (such as kerb extensions and parking bays) and repairs should match the form and materials of the original parts.
- Speed humps, if necessary, should be of asphalt.
- Roundabouts, if necessary, should be of minimal size and not significantly alter the original kerb lines.
- Tree planting informed by the original layout should be introduced. Consideration could be given to using species that might have been planted at the time of construction of the estate and that are suitable to the local environment.
- Development of the three major open spaces, Buckingham Reserve, Julier Reserve and the reserve on the Boulevard, should be undertaken to satisfy current and future resident needs and using the original plan as a basis.
- Any new landscaping should achieve environmental outcomes, including water conservation, the inclusion of water sensitive urban design and the provision of fauna habitat.



Figure 13. The existing playground area of Buckingham Reserve (2010).



# Guideline 7: Subdivision



## **Guideline basis**

The consistent rhythm of pairs of attached dwellings, subdivision pattern and site layouts is critical to the character of Fishermans Bend Estate and should be retained.

Subdivision or consolidation of individual sites into larger lots will threaten the significant rhythm of the subdivision pattern and site layouts.

## **Guidelines**

- Subdivision and consolidation of land is discouraged.