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Maryborough
Demolition Control Area Audit

FOR Fraser Coast Regional Council

Final July 2021

Converge Heritage + Community

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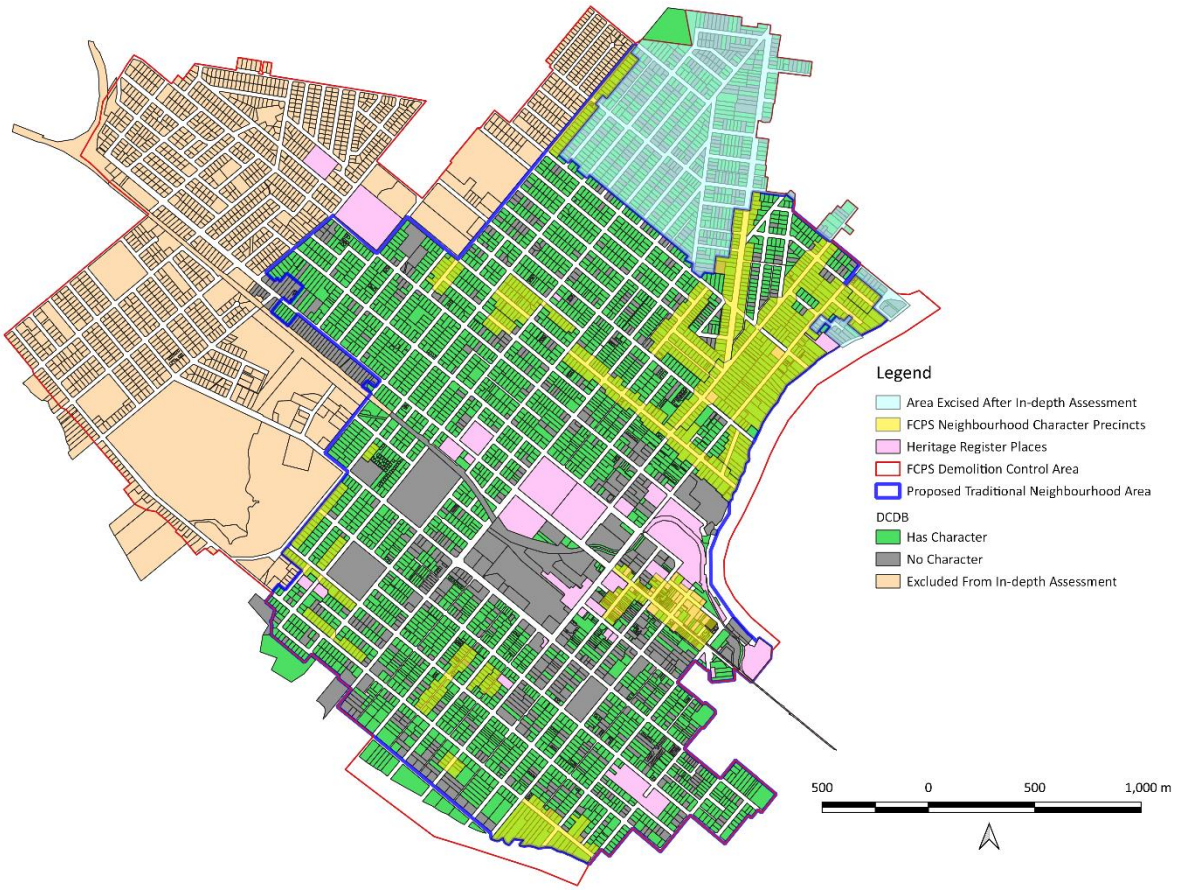
Executive Summary

The Fraser Coast Regional Council (hereafter 'Council') is currently undertaking a review of the Fraser Coast planning scheme. Council commissioned Converge Heritage + Community (Converge) to carry out an audit of the Maryborough Demolition Control Area (DCA) as part of the planning scheme review and provide advice regarding potential improvements to the management of the DCA in the planning scheme.

To carry out the audit, Converge developed criteria for a 'traditional neighbourhood area' in Maryborough. The criteria consisted of:

- A predominance of pre-World War II housing (as currently defined in the planning scheme).
- Grid pattern streets laid out according to the original survey of Maryborough in 1850.
- Concentration of historic commercial and social infrastructure such as corner shops and churches.

Following the audit, Converge determined that the size of the DCA can be reduced. The figure below indicates the extent of the current DCA. The area bordered in blue represents the recommended revised boundary.



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Converge proposes a series of recommendations to improve the management of the DCA in Maryborough:

Recommendation 1 – Reduce the size of the DCA

The size of the DCA can be reduced on the basis of the analysis carried out for this report. The map in Chapter 3 (and mapping data supplied separately) should form the basis for the new boundary.

Recommendation 2 – Make the DCA a Traditional Neighbourhood Area.

Make the DCA a Traditional Neighbourhood Area in the planning scheme. Adopt the criteria developed for this study as the basis for the Traditional Neighbourhood Area:

- A predominance of pre-World War II housing (as currently defined in the planning scheme).
- Grid pattern streets laid out according to the original survey of Maryborough in 1850.
- Concentration of historic commercial and social infrastructure such as corner shops and churches.

The Traditional Neighbourhood Area should include these elements and the planning scheme should acknowledge that the interrelationship between these elements constitutes a traditional neighbourhood.

Recommendation 3 – Develop Planning Scheme Provisions to manage Infill

Prepare overlay provisions that manage infill development in the Traditional Neighbourhood Area. The provisions used by Brisbane and Toowoomba councils can serve as examples.

Recommendation 4 – Prepare Traditional Neighbourhood Area guidelines.

Council should prepare a guideline similar to Brisbane's *Traditional Housing: Alterations and Extensions Design Guide* to support management of the Traditional Neighbourhood Area. The guideline should be developed in consultation with the community, including property owners, to ensure it is a functional document that clearly states what the relevant planning schemes provisions are relating to the Traditional Neighbourhood Area, and practical information for planners and property owners to guide future development of properties in a manner consistent with the planning scheme.

Recommendation 5 – Future Reviews.

The nature and extent of Traditional Neighbourhood Areas of Maryborough (and the Fraser Coast more generally) should be reviewed on a regular basis (e.g., every 10 years, or during a planning scheme review, whichever comes first).

The definition of the Traditional Neighbourhood Area should be reconsidered during each review. Historical aerial imagery can support this review, as it is consistent from 1958 onward. Consideration should also be given to the inclusion of later housing styles, such as post-war austerity housing, and other house styles immediately following the lifting of rationing on materials from around 1952. Equally, such reviews should consider the inclusion of further neighbourhood character types in addition to traditional, such as a mid-century or transitional Neighbourhood Area that sits historically between the pre-war 'traditional' neighbourhood and contemporary neighbourhood areas that begin to appear from the 1970s.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Fraser Coast Regional Council (hereafter 'Council') is currently undertaking a review of the Fraser Coast planning scheme. Council commissioned Converge Heritage + Community (Converge) to carry out an audit of the Maryborough Demolition Control Area (DCA) as part of the planning scheme review and provide advice regarding potential improvements to the management of the DCA in the planning scheme.

1.2 Project Methodology

Converge developed the following methodology to address the Scope of Works:

- Survey and analysis of the DCA and surrounding areas in the context of Maryborough's historical urban development and growth.
- A review of measures for the protection of 'character' in select Queensland local government planning schemes.
- Development of recommendations for the DCA and related management in the Fraser Coast planning scheme.

The report is organised according to this methodology.

1.3 Limitations

This report constitutes a high-level analysis. The study should be viewed as a review document that will help frame discussion of this important matter as part of the broader Fraser Coast planning scheme review.

1.4 Project Dates and Personnel

The audit was carried out in May and June 2021. The draft report was first presented to Council in early June, and the final draft version of the report for approval by Council was produced in late June. This final version was issued in early July after approval by Council.

The audit was undertaken by the following Converge staff: Samantha Negoita, Ulrike Oppermann, Dr Craig Barrett, Simon Gall, and Jo Nelson.

2 Audit Methodology

Converge developed a methodology for the DCA audit. The methodology was intended to provide a logical approach to assessing the study area that is easy to understand and consistent with the data. This chapter describes the methodology Converge used to audit the DCA.

2.1 The Methodology

The following table provides an overview of the methodology employed by Converge for the audit. The remainder of the chapter is focused on refining the definition of character underpinning the audit.

Table 1: Audit methodology.

Methodology	Description
Definition of 'character'	Converge reviewed the existing definition of character used to define the DCA in the planning scheme. It was determined that the definition was too narrow and that, rather than be limited to an architectural focus on the age and style of houses alone, that it should rather be defined by a broader range of characteristics which form what came to be defined as 'traditional neighbourhood area', including but not limited to housing style and materials, setting, street layout, and presence of other community and commercial buildings. This definition is explained in detail below.
Analysis of historical aerial imagery and maps	The earliest available aerial imagery for Maryborough is from 1958. Converge was unable to locate an earlier set of historic aerial images, e.g., Brisbane's 1946 collection. Nonetheless, given the rate of urban growth in Maryborough was not rapid and occurred over a relatively small area, the imagery enabled Converge to identify areas that did not have housing in 1958, but which are currently included in the DCA. Converge used historic mapping to a lesser extent. A 1941 parish map of Maryborough provided some insight, especially areas that were not yet developed by that time (but currently part of the DCA). The original survey of Maryborough completed in 1850 was also useful to establish the original design of the city and its projected urban core, all useful insights when used to audit the current boundary of the DCA.
Analysis of historical newspaper articles and historic photographs	Converge tested the assumption about new housing development in the immediate postwar period with limited newspaper research.
Vehicular survey	Converge undertook a vehicular survey of the DCA and the surrounding areas. The purpose of the vehicular survey was to form a general impression about the relative density and integrity of the DCA and whether areas outside the DCA might warrant further analysis due to the presence of character.
Systematic street-by-street analysis	A systematic house-by house, street-by-street analysis of the DCA was carried out using Google Streetview. While the majority of the dataset for Streetview dates from 2014, there was also some more recent data from 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2020. In terms of a large-scale survey for this project, this data was considered recent enough that it would not result in substantial assessment anomalies (e.g., new housing etc.). Streetview enabled a more rapid and efficient analysis than by car or foot, which was advantageous given the project timeframe and budget. The accuracy of these results was further vetted by an analysis of current satellite imagery, which assisted in identifying changes post 2014.
Analysis of mapping results	Converge analysed the data produced by the street-by-street and historical analysis to produce a map illustrating places of non-character so that we could determine a more appropriate 'character area'.

2.2 Character and the Traditional Neighbourhood.

The *Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014* includes a document titled 'Character Guidelines' that defines the significant character of Maryborough (and Howard). The definition of character is exclusively architectural and is embodied in houses that were built in the so-called Victorian, Federation, Edwardian, and Interwar eras or periods. These periods roughly stretch from the nineteenth century up until World War II.

The 'Character Guidelines' provides further explanation for character in the DCA. It states:

> The Demolition Control Area intends to maintain the Queenslander character that is predominant in the city and ensure that good examples of the character era style dwelling houses are preserved to maintain the character amenity of the Maryborough City and in particular the residential areas.

This is a relatively clear explanation of the DCA. In simple terms, the DCA exists to protect 'Queenslander' or 'Traditional' style houses where this style predominates. The guideline also provides a rough definition of the Queenslander:

> The unique Queenslander building style was a response to the sub-tropical climate and has come to be one of the defining elements of the character of Maryborough and Howard.
>
> In Maryborough, the Queenslander style spans across different eras … however it is in the Victorian, Edwardian/Federation, and Interwar eras that the Queenslander style is most distinctive and recognisable.

The 'Character Guidelines' in the scheme provide details of key elements for the housing styles in the DCA that Council is seeking to protect, including sketches and photos of indicative examples.



Figure 1: Example of Queenslander styles from the guideline, illustrating the diversity in design.

2.3 Traditional Neighbourhood Area

The focus on building eras and styles is the typical approach in planning schemes.[1] However, a narrow focus on houses can detract from an understanding of the streetscape and overall neighbourhood 'character' in a given area.

Converge proposes an alternative term to 'character': Traditional Neighbourhood Area. The Traditional Neighbourhood Area captures the various elements by identifying their aesthetic, spatial, and historic relationships. It is only in combination that these elements create 'character'; remove one or more of them and it is harder to appreciate precisely what it is that the community should protect.

In Maryborough, traditional neighbourhood areas generally exhibit the following characteristics:

- A predominance of pre-World War II housing (as currently defined in the planning scheme).
- Grid pattern streets laid out according to the original survey of Maryborough in 1850.
- Concentration of historic commercial and social infrastructure such as corner shops and churches.

These elements taken together constitute the traditional neighbourhood area.

The grid pattern is particularly important to the historic character of Maryborough. Maryborough was surveyed by Hugh Roland Labatt in the early 1850s. Labatt surveyed a grid pattern, following the instructions laid down by Governor Ralph Darling in 1829.[2] Colonial Australian cities were typically laid out in a grid pattern: prominent examples include Melbourne (1837) and Brisbane (1840). The grid pattern is therefore a prominent indicator of Maryborough's historic urban and suburban footprint.

The grid pattern, characterised by a rectilinear block design, was useful for laying out new towns and cities as it is easy to apply and can be readily expanded.[3] Grid patterns also conferred other benefits. For example, it allows 'easy application of railways, roads, telecommunications, sewerage and drainage and water infrastructure.'[4] Robert Hoddle, who surveyed Melbourne, also drew attention to the health benefits of the grid pattern.[5]

The suburban development of Maryborough in the pre-war period remained concentrated on the area surveyed by Labatt. Cities like Maryborough that developed before the advent of mass car ownership needed to be compact to facilitate access to commercial and social infrastructure. For example, in 1951 only one out of every three Australian households owned a car.[6] Suburban growth was thus largely concentrated within a walkable distance to shops and churches, or along public transport corridors such as railway lines. Car ownership rose dramatically in the postwar period and this shift had the effect of detaching suburban growth from its historic limits.

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[1] See the analysis of Brisbane and Toowoomba in the following chapter.

[2] Akihiro Kinda, 'Rectangular Land Survey and Town Planning in the Australian Colonies', Department of Geography at Kyoto University, Kyoto, http://repo.komazawa-u.ac.jp/opac/repository/all/16581/kci004-01-kindaakihiro.pdf.

[3] See, for example, Ann Maudsley, 'Grid Planning and Sustainability,' paper presented at the The Sustainability of Australia's Country Towns: Third National Country Towns Conference, Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities, The Faculty of Law and Management, La Trobe University, Bendigo Campus,29-30 September 2010, https://www.academia.edu/4400937/Grid_Planning_and_Sustainability.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Gallup Poll no 746 (March 1951), quoted in Graeme Davison with Sheryl Yelland, *Car wars : how the car won our hearts and conquered our cities*, Crows Nest, Allen & Unwin, 2004.

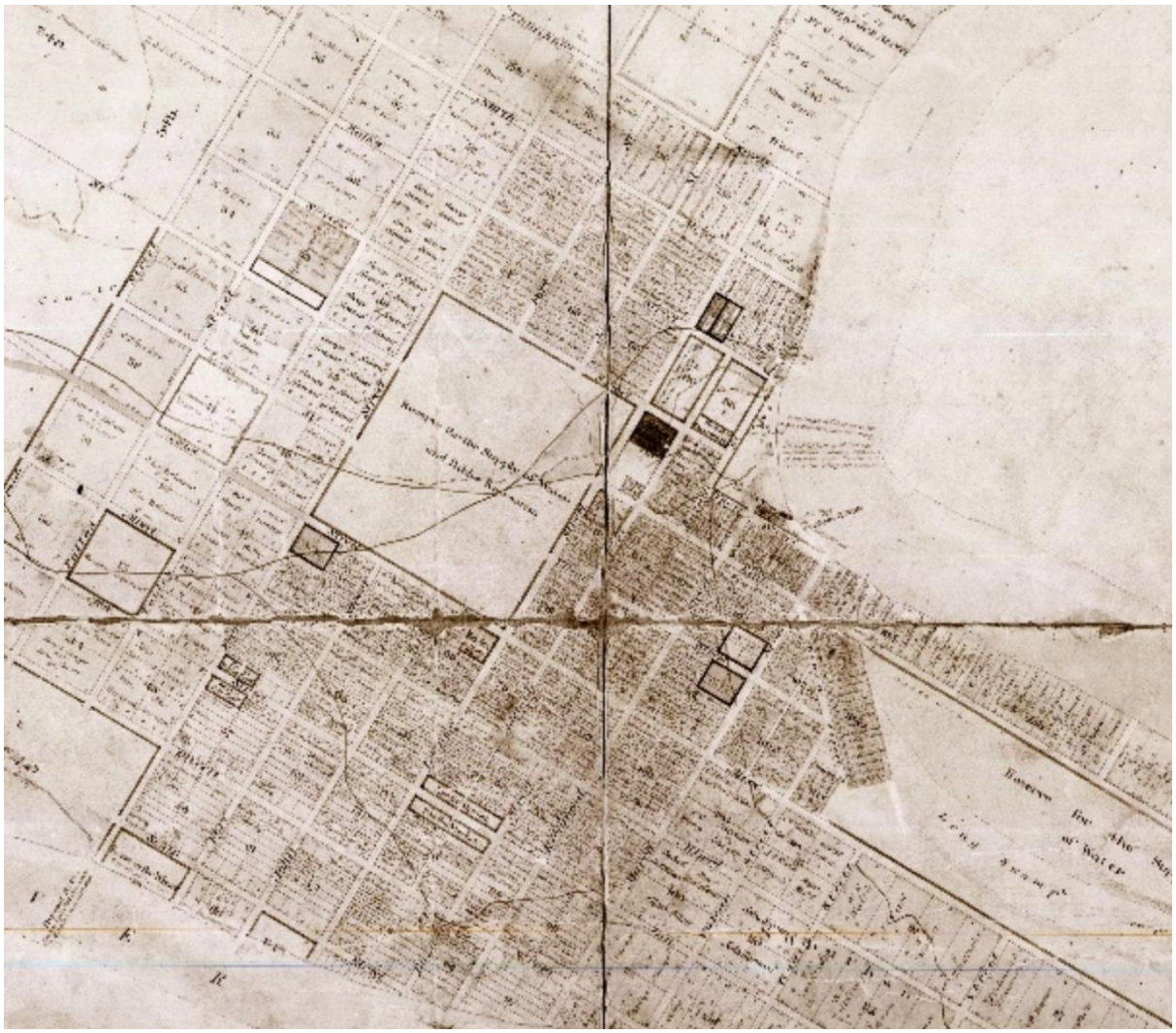


Figure 2: Section of the 1850 survey plan of Maryborough. Note the grid pattern design.

The grid pattern was displaced by other designs in the latter twentieth century, most prominently the Garden City design that consisted of curvilinear streets rather than rectilinear blocks. In Queensland, the change in neighbourhood design is most obvious from the 1970s onwards, when neighbourhood design was dominated by curved streets and cul-de-sacs. Thus, changes in street design in Maryborough provide an additional marker of the limits of Maryborough's historic suburban growth.

Contemporary planning has now returned to the idea of the grid pattern due to its positive effects on active travel and public transport. The grid pattern has been found to be ideal for active travel and public transport.[7] The recent planning regulation amendment by the Queensland government mandates a return to the grid pattern for residential development, especially to promote walkable neighbourhoods.[8] This approach is supported by the '20-minute neighbourhood' concept, in which services are found within a 20-minute walk, bike ride, or public transport trip.[9]

[7] Maudsley, 'Grid Planning and Sustainability'.
[8] Planning (Walkable Neighbourhoods) Amendment Regulation 2020.
[9] See, for example, https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/planning-for-melbourne/plan-melbourne/20-minute-neighbourhoods.

2.4 Non-Traditional House Design

The concept of the Traditional Neighbourhood Area still relies on identifying era-appropriate housing. That is, community expectations of 'character' that underpin traditional neighbourhoods remain tethered to particular housing types broadly defined as the 'Queenslander.' However, housing styles consistent with the period covered in the planning scheme do not always neatly fit this description. Moreover, housing that appeared immediately in the Second World War and immediate post-war period carried over earlier style elements that can sometimes make it difficult to determine character housing with precision.

For example, the 'Interwar' style includes housing types such as Californian Bungalow and Spanish Mission that are often constructed in brick. These types of houses are relatively rare in Maryborough, but some are nonetheless prominent. For example, the house named *Carinya* located on the corner of Lennox and Woodstock streets, designed by the prominent Maryborough architect, POE Hawkes, is listed in the local heritage register. However, it is a low-set masonry building which contrasts with the typical 'Queenslander' style protected by the planning scheme. These types of houses were therefore included in the survey as 'traditional' housing, despite the fact that they do not neatly fit with the definition of the Queenslander.



Figure 3: Potential 1930s and 1940s lowset masonry styles in Maryborough.

The postwar period is a little more difficult. The earliest historical aerial imagery Converge sourced for Maryborough dates to 1958. In the absence of other data such as sewerage plans or other detailed maps that indicate the presence of housing in residential areas, it is difficult to precisely identify pre-war (or pre-1946) housing as Brisbane has done. That means that the cut-off date for traditional character housing is less straight-forward.

For example, earlier housing styles continued to be built in the immediate postwar period, and the austerity measures induced by World War II meant that timber and tin (and fibro in other places) remained popular building materials until the early 1950s. Cheap housing in the 1950s and 1960s also continued the use of timber and tin, although the lowset brick house grew in popularity from this time, eventually becoming the dominant housing style by the 1970s.

The conventional hip-roofed house was a popular style in the southern Australian states and its increasing prominence in Queensland (and impact even on timber and tin housing designs) marks the most decisive break with earlier, 'traditional' architectural styles and therefore represents the best (although far from perfect) cut-off point to define historic character at this time. The use of brick and tile also appears to increase from 1952. Converge thus treated the conventional hip-roofed house as 'non-traditional'.



Figure 4: Selection of hip-roofed houses in Maryborough.

In the future, it may be necessary to revise the definition of neighbourhood character based on community expectations. It is possible that the next planning scheme review may find that the conventional hip-roofed house (and new gable-roofed and skillion or single pitched styles that appeared in the 1950s and 60s) may be deemed traditional. The presence of historic aerial imagery in the second half of the twentieth century will make this task easier.

It should be noted that inclusion of such places as traditional buildings in areas falling outside that area identified as the Traditional Neighbourhood Area, may require consideration of an additional category of neighbourhood area, e.g., a mid-century or transitional Neighbourhood Area that sits historically between the pre-war traditional neighbourhood and contemporary neighbourhood areas that begin to appear from the 1970s.

However, for this study, the focus on Traditional Neighbourhood Areas renders the difficulties with identifying era styles less problematic. The emphasis on the 1850 town survey and historic commercial and social infrastructure means that postwar development is unlikely to be found in any concentration in the 'traditional' suburbs of Maryborough. In other words, the audit should find a relative concentration of postwar housing in areas *outside* the historic suburban footprint of Maryborough established in Labatt's survey. This is precisely what was found in the audit.

3 Demolition Control Area Analysis

The following analysis demonstrates the results of the DCA audit.

3.1 The 1958 Aerial Photography

As noted in the methodology, the earliest historical aerial imagery locatable for Maryborough was dated to 1958 and takes in the whole of the area currently occupied by the DCA, as well as higher resolution images that show sections of Maryborough. This aerial photograph was overlaid on current aerial imagery and included the DCA boundary:



Figure 5: Part of the 1958 series of historical aerial imagery for Maryborough (Source: QImagery). The red outline is the current DCA.

It was immediately apparent that the current DCA boundary includes areas that did not have any residential development 1958, or at most very little. This is a problem because the current definition of traditional housing excludes post-war designs.

The following example is the block bordered by Woodstock Street, Thurecht Street, Victory Street, and Ariadne Street. It appears to have been offered for sale in 1882 as the Mannheim Estate by Mr. N Thurecht (hence Thurecht Street), but it must not have attracted any interest at the time.[10] The image below demonstrates that there was no housing estate in 1958.

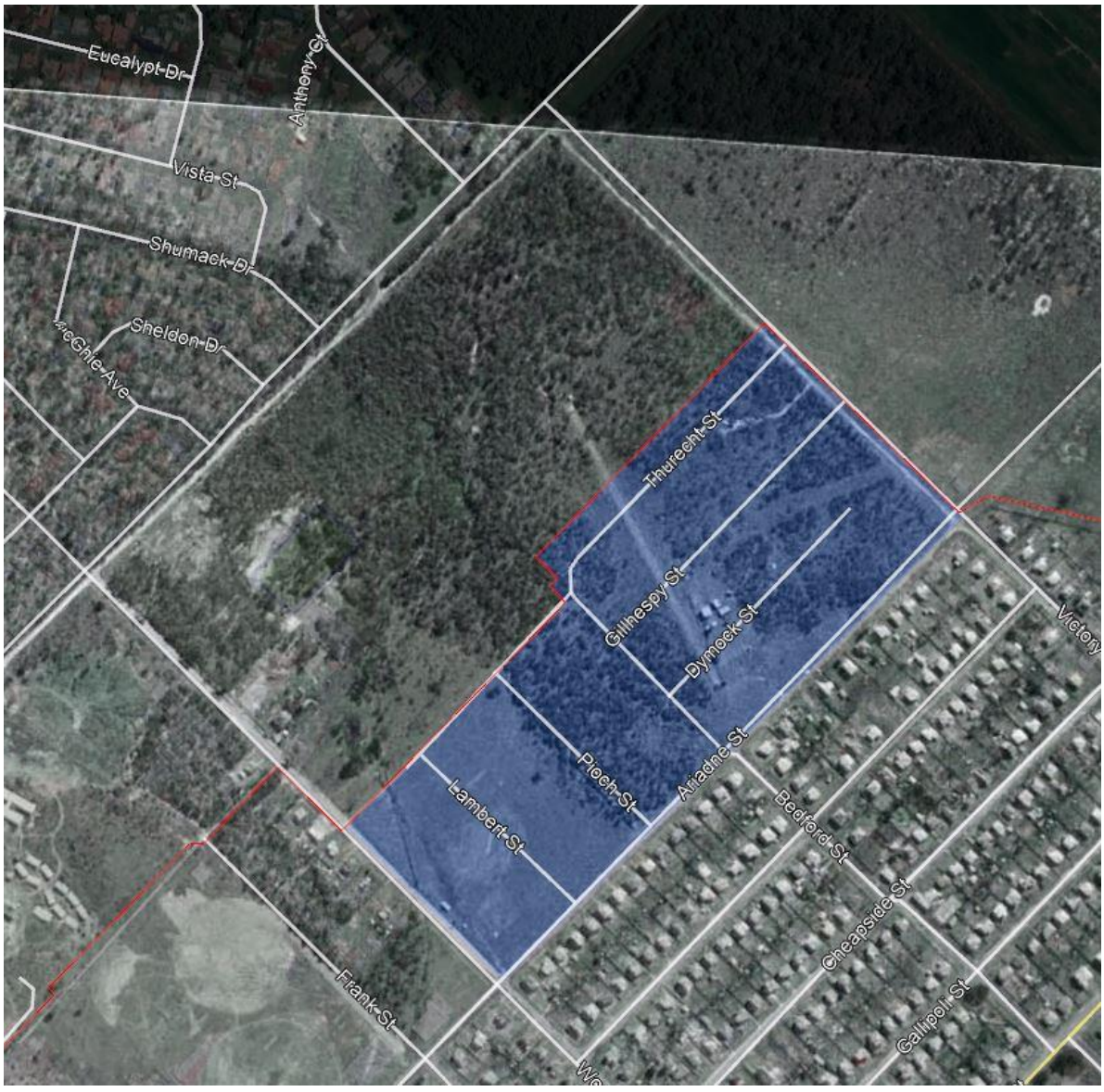


Figure 6: There is no housing estate here in 1958 (Source: QImagery and Google Earth).

[10] See the *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, 4 October 1882, 3.

Compare and contrast the above image with the same area today. The housing in this estate dates to the 1960s and later. This area is therefore not consistent with the DCA or the definition of Traditional Neighbourhood Area.



Figure 7: The housing estate today (Source: QImagery and Google Earth).

There are also areas of residential housing in the 1958 aerial that are readily identifiable as postwar development. The following example is based around Christensen Crescent.



One of the criteria that made the Christensen Crescent example stand out was the street design. It is clearly not a conventional grid pattern like the original Maryborough survey in 1850. Converge inspected the street, and it was clear the houses are of postwar design. This supposition was supported by historical research. For example, some of the houses were built by the Queensland Housing Commission in the 1950s.

Combined with the vehicular survey, Converge was able to determine on the basis of analysis that a large section of the DCA to the northwest could be significantly revised from the outset of the project as there were no houses in 1958 or the housing was predominantly 1950s (i.e., postwar). This enabled a smaller, refined area to undertake the street-to-street analysis.



Figure 8: Postwar housing in Christensen Crescent (Source: Google Maps).



Maryborough Homes

BRISBANE, Nov. 29.—Executive approval was given the Queensland Housing Commission to-day for the acceptance of tenders for the erection of five dwellings at Christensen and Jupiter-streets, Maryborough — £9916; three dwellings at Christensen-street, Maryborough, £5,536, and three dwellings at Christensen-street, Maryborough — £5477.

Figure 9: Newspaper reference to houses to be built in Christensen Street, 10 November 1951.



Figure 10: Area in blue excised from the DCA early in the study (Source: QImagery and Google Earth).

3.2 Concentration of non-Traditional Housing in the remaining DCA

At this point, Converge engaged in the street-by-street analysis. Using Google Streetview, Converge staff travelled each street 'virtually' and identified buildings that were deemed to be non-traditional. This data was then used to produce a map of the DCA with a revised boundary.

The current DCA boundary was further reduced in its northeastern section. This area was not surveyed by Labatt. Based on newspaper research, it was determined this area was predominantly developed in the immediate postwar period. This finding correlated with the relative higher concentration of non-traditional housing in this area (indicated in grey in the image below). The design of the streets was also different to the strict grid pattern followed by Labatt. The blocks are still largely rectilinear, but the block size is much larger. This combination of factors indicated that this area did not conform to the traditional neighbourhood criteria. The results confirmed the validity of the methodology developed for the audit.



The map over the page illustrates the results of the audit with the recommended revised boundary for the DCA. The new boundary largely corresponds with Labatt's survey, a finding anticipated by the methodology developed for the audit.

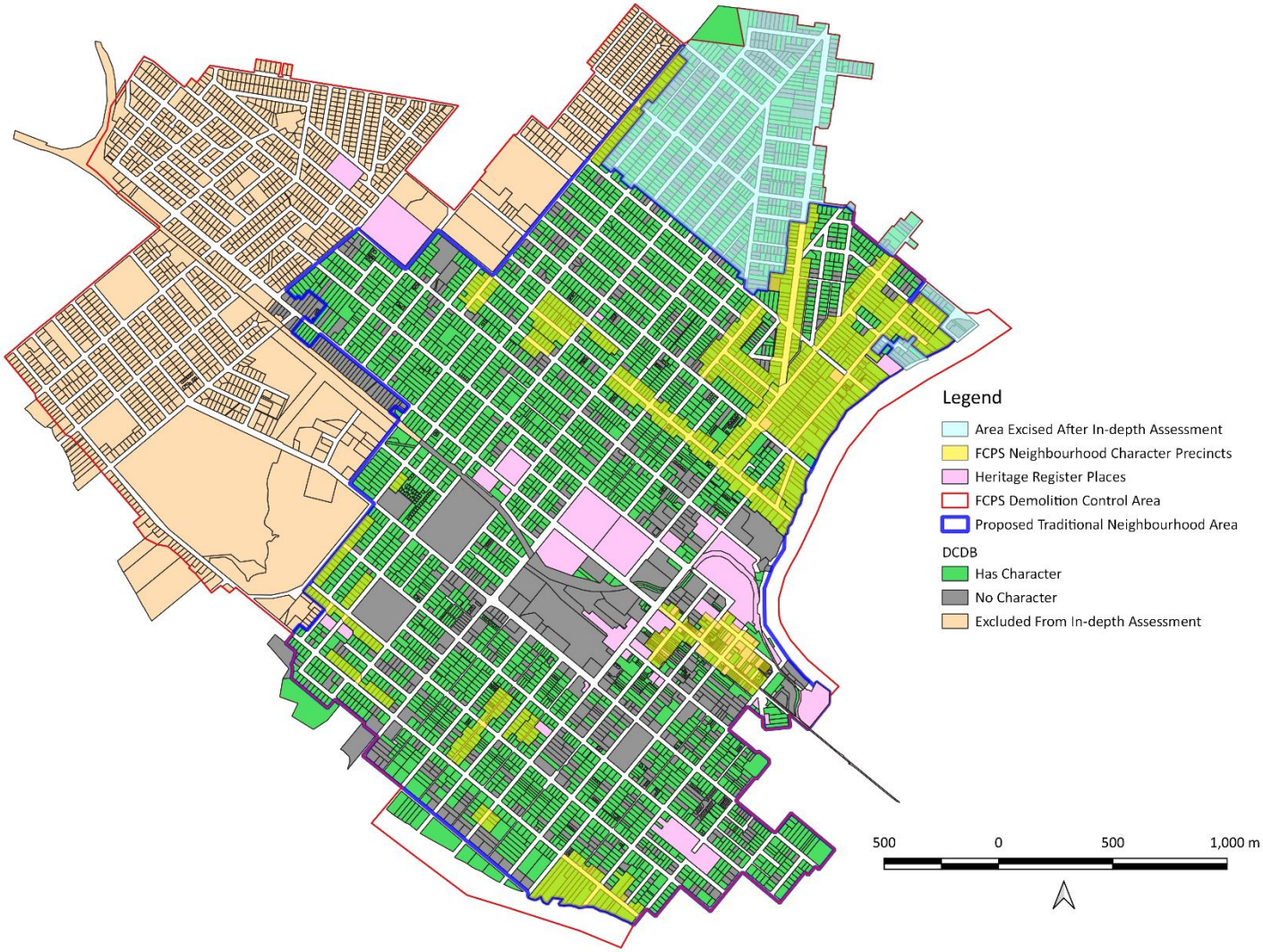


Figure 11: Map showing the revised DCA area. Character precincts in yellow and heritage-listed place in pink. The blue line indicates the revised boundary. The large areas of grey near the CBD are primarily commercial properties, such as Station Square.

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3.3 Commercial and Social Infrastructure

The results of the survey also confirmed the relative concentration of historic commercial and social infrastructure within areas conforming with the traditional neighbourhood criteria. Converge selected the historic suburb of Newtown to test the criteria developed for the audit. We selected the intersection of Pallas and Churchill Streets as a starting point, as it has two historic corner shops and the St Thomas Church (and adjacent hall) nearby.

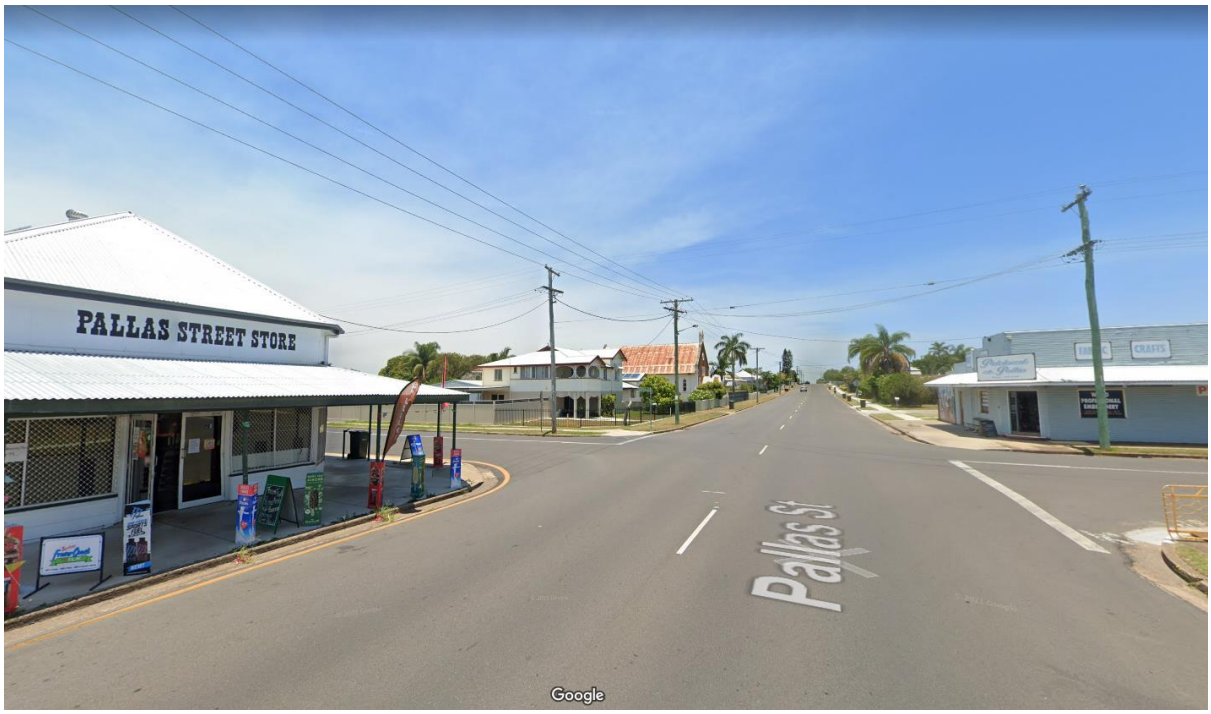


Figure 12: The intersection of Pallas and Churchill streets (Source: Google Maps). The former St Thomas Church is in the background, indicated by the reddish (rusted) roof.

We then drew a 1600m diameter circle around the intersection. The distance from the edge to the centre is approximately 800m, which would take roughly 10 minutes to walk, consistent with the '20-minute neighbourhood' (i.e., 10 minutes each way). We identified the following historic commercial and social infrastructure within this area:

- 4 (former) churches.
- 2 (former) hotels.
- 9 shops.
- Post office.
- School.
- Sports grounds.

This is a high concentration, conforming with the expected results following application of the traditional neighbourhood criteria. This finding further confirmed that the revised boundary appropriately captured the traditional neighbourhood 'character' of Maryborough. Buildings reflecting these criteria were treated as traditional building stock and therefore left 'green' in the mapping.



Figure 13: The historic '20-minute neighbourhood', Newtown (Source: Google Earth).

3.4 Areas outside the current DCA

There are areas outside of the DCA (current and revised) that contain varying degrees of traditional housing and related commercial and social infrastructure. Areas include:

- The Pocket.
- Aubinville.
- Granville.
- Tinana.

Converge did not map these areas systematically. Nonetheless, these areas were established pre-war, and each contains historic civic and commercial precincts (with the exception of the Pocket) that do not vary substantially from the suburbs of Maryborough. Superficially, it is unlikely that these areas would qualify as a Traditional Neighbourhood Area due to the preponderance of non-traditional housing. Nonetheless, the areas may warrant some further consideration in the future.

3.5 Conclusions

The audit of the DCA has found that the boundary can be substantially reduced in size. Based on the application of the methodology developed for the audit, Converge has found that the remaining area strongly reflects Maryborough's traditional neighbourhood character. The audit therefore strengthens the argument for character protection in Maryborough, but on a reduced scale that more closely aligns with the physical evidence for its historic development and, likewise, does not focus on the architecture alone.

4 Analysis of Local Government Approaches to Character

The following analysis provides a comparison of other local government planning provisions for character and demolition control in Southeast Queensland. Converge selected Councils with established mechanisms addressing character analogous to Maryborough.

The analysis includes examination of relevant overlay codes, planning scheme policies, schedules, and other provisions from the planning schemes of Brisbane City Council (BCC) and Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC). These planning schemes are:

- *Brisbane City Plan 2014.*
- *Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme 2021.*

The list of relevant local governments is not exhaustive. It is only intended to provide a sample for comparison with Fraser Coast. A more comprehensive survey of Queensland local government approaches to character may yield additional insights.

Ipswich City Council was originally included in the review. As we proceeded, we quickly identified that the Ipswich provisions were dated – the planning scheme is 15 years old – and in the process of being revised. In many respects, the scheme was similar to Brisbane; however, Brisbane's is much more up to date. For these reasons, we determined that a detailed analysis of Ipswich was unnecessary for this review.

As the purpose of this analysis is to assist with the provision of advice regarding the current approach to the DCA in Maryborough, we also consider the current planning mechanisms for character under the *Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014* and assesses the similarities and differences across the three planning schemes noted above. The review also includes reference to associated guidelines (including fact sheets and technical notes), and where relevant, the character studies prepared by Councils to inform their planning schemes.

The following analysis is not comprehensive. It was carried out only to provide a high-level understanding of the similarities and differences between the various planning schemes in order to highlight potential options for Council to consider when reviewing the efficacy of character provisions in the planning scheme.

4.1 Planning Mechanisms and Resources

The following codes, policies and guidelines were reviewed for the comparative assessment. Specific overlays are not currently noted as they are inferred by the respective Overlay Code.

Fraser Coast

Overlay Codes	8.2.9 – Heritage & Neighbourhood Character Overlay Code
Policies	SC6.2 – Planning Scheme Policy for the Heritage and Neighbourhood Character Overlay Code
Guidelines	Appendix SC6.2A: Character Guidelines
	Demolishing a House in Maryborough and Neighbourhood Character Precincts

Brisbane

Zone Codes	6.2.1.5 Character Residential Zone Code
Overlay Codes	8.2.8 Commercial Character Building (Demolition) Overlay Code
	8.2.7 Commercial Character Building (Activities) Overlay Code
	8.2.16 Pre-1911 Building Overlay Code
	8.2.21 Traditional Building Character (Demolition) Overlay Code
	8.2.22 Traditional Building Character (Design) Overlay Code
Policies[11]	SC6.6 Commercial Character Building Planning Scheme Policy
	SC6.30 Traditional Building Character Planning Scheme Policy
Guideline	Traditional Housing: Alterations and Extensions Design Guide

Toowoomba

Overlay Codes	8.3.2 Neighbourhood Character Overlay Code
Policies[12]	PSP No. 1 – Development Application Requirements: Appendix 2 – Neighbourhood Character Assessment
	PSP No. 7 – Neighbourhood Character Places
Character Study	Toowoomba Regional Heritage and Urban Character Study (Brannock and Associates 2010)
Guideline	The Toowoomba House, Styles and History (Ballard and Roessler Pty. Ltd. 2000)
	Technical Sheet 1: Design Issues
	Technical Sheet 2: Design Principles
	Technical Sheet 3: Development Scenarios
	Technical Sheet 4: Design Guidelines
	Technical Sheet 5: Medium Density Infill in Neighbourhood Character Areas

[11] The *Brisbane City Plan 2014* does not include a planning scheme policy for Pre-1911 buildings.
[12] The *Brisbane City Plan 2014* does not include a planning scheme policy for Pre-1911 buildings.

4.2 Definitions of Character

The ways in which each Council currently identifies 'character'' has implications for its management under the planning scheme. Generally, each definition focuses on an historical period or a style of typical architecture, and the attractiveness of a streetscape.

Converge analysed the guidelines pertaining to the DCA in Chapter 2 and presented a methodology for the identification of 'Traditional Neighbourhood Areas' rather than 'character'. The remainder of this chapter refers to 'character' as this is the term currently used in the planning schemes reviewed for this report.

4.2.1 Fraser Coast Character Definitions

As noted in Chapter 2, The *Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014* uses the term 'character', which it defines in the *Character Guidelines* (Guidelines) as demonstrating Victorian, Federation, Edwardian, and Interwar architecture. The Guidelines identifies character in precincts in addition to the DCA. The Guidelines provides details of key character elements (including architectural style etc.), a preferred character statement and design guidelines for each identified precinct. The information for the precincts is much more detailed than for the DCA, as the function of the DCA is merely to prevent demolition of particular housing types, whereas the precincts are conceived to protect streetscapes in addition to character housing.

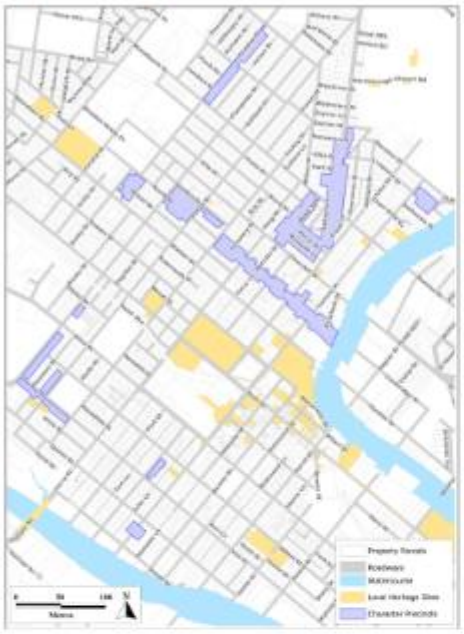
Precincts include:

- Victorian and Federation Dominated Precincts: The architectural style for these precincts refers to Victorian and Federation era buildings with occasional Interwar and contemporary infill. Gardens are described as a mix of native and exotic planting and well established formal gardens with front lawn areas and garden beds.
- Garden Dominated Precincts (Maryborough and Howard): Refers to Victorian and Federation era timber buildings with mixed infill. Gardens are described as a mix of native and exotic planting and well established formal gardens with front lawn areas and garden beds.
- Laneway Precincts: Refers to Victorian and Federation era timber buildings with Interwar and Post-war infill.
- Kent Street Commercial Precinct: Refers to Victorian and Federation buildings within streetscape comprising a number of heritage protected buildings, with mixed infill.
- William Street Commercial Area (Howard): Refers to Victorian and Federation buildings with mixed infill.
- Milton Street Duplex: Refers to Federation/Edwardian/Interwar transitional-style timber, high set duplexes.
- Elizabeth Street Garden Dominated: Refers to Victorian and Federation era timber buildings with Interwar and some contemporary infill. Gardens are described as a mix of native and exotic planting and well established formal gardens with front lawn areas and garden beds.
- Demolition Control Precinct: The Demolition Control Precinct (including the above listed precincts in Maryborough) intends to maintain the Queenslander character that is predominant in Maryborough City and residential areas. In particular, the following architectural styles are identified:
    - Victorian Styles (1840 – early 1900s).
    - Edwardian/Federation Styles (1895 – 1920).
    - Interwar Styles (1920s – 1930s).

The guidelines assist owners and planners identify what a typical style and its elements look like for the purposes of planning and assessment.

VICTORIAN AND FEDERATION DOMINATED PRECINCTS

PRECINCT MAP



KEY CHARACTER ELEMENTS

Key character elements	Descriptions
Architectural style	Victorian and Federation era buildings with occasional Interwar and contemporary infill
Building materials	Predominantly constructed of timber with steel or iron rooftops
Building form and layout	High set buildings accessed by timber stairs from the front setback Return verandahs with timber detailing High stump construction with timber balustrades and sometimes timber battens to the ground floor section
Roof style	Gabled, pyramidal or hipped roof styles with eaves, and constructed of lightweight materials (generally corrugated iron or steel)
Setbacks	Generally moderate front setbacks from 4 to 6m. Narrow to moderate side setbacks from 1 to 6m
Building height	1 and a half storeys (typical of high-set Queenslander buildings) with some low set buildings

Key character elements	Descriptions
Orientation to the street	Parallel to the street
Car parking / vehicle storage	Single crossover with informal driveways to the side of the property - unpaved
Garden style	Mix of native and exotic planting Well established formal gardens with front lawn areas and garden beds
Front boundary treatment	Low and permeable front fencing, constructed of steel and wire mesh or timber

PREFERRED CHARACTER STATEMENT

The open and spacious garden character of this precinct with views of buildings from the street will be enhanced. Buildings from the Victorian, Federation and Interwar eras will be complemented by newer development that is distinguishable from the older building stock, but respectful of their defining characteristics.

Buildings will generally not exceed two storeys in height, be oriented parallel with the street, and setback from the front boundary a distance similar to those on adjoining properties. Building front façade design will include recesses and articulation to complement the pattern of verandah and undercroft areas of traditional buildings in the area.

The use of timber or light colour finishes will maintain the lighter appearance of buildings in the streetscape. Front and side setbacks will allow space for landscaping, while low or permeable front fences will retain the openness of the streetscape.



Figure 14: Example of a precinct description. The description includes several more pages, providing substantially more detail.

4.2.2 Brisbane Character Definitions

The *Brisbane City Plan 2014* provides mechanisms to protect character places defined as a 'Pre-1911 Building', 'Traditional Building Character' (pre-1946 residential), and 'Commercial Character Building' (pre-1946 commercial) and provides blanket requirements for buildings within the 'Character Residential Zone' (also called the Dwelling House Character Zone). An overview of the terms referring to character in Brisbane are as follows:

- Pre-1911 Building: The *Pre-1911 Building Overlay Code* simply refers to this type of character place as 'buildings constructed prior to 1911'. No further definition or description is provided.
- Traditional Building Character: The Traditional Building Character refers to houses constructed in 1946 or earlier, often referred to as the 'Queensland vernacular' in the *Traditional Building Character Planning Policy.* The policy also identifies inter-war architectural styles that contribute to Brisbane's traditional character, such as Spanish Mission, Art Deco, the Californian Bungalow and Georgian. The policy provides detailed descriptions of traditional building forms and roof styles; traditional elements, detailing and materials; traditional scale; and traditional setting as well as diagrams to illustrate typical housing styles.
- Commercial Character Building: Refers to commercial buildings that were constructed in 1946 or earlier. The *Commercial Character Planning Scheme Policy* provides distinction of this type of character place as generally exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics: small scale; built to the front of the boundary; including an awning over the footpath; and/or with residential setbacks.

As noted above, both the Traditional Building Character and the Commercial Character Building definitions refer to buildings that were constructed on, or before, 1946. The year 1946 is important because this was the year that the first large-scale aerial photographs of Brisbane were recorded. Brisbane's character definition therefore only loosely aligns with 'periods' and 'styles' and simply includes all structures (residential and commercial) built before 1946. Nonetheless, the types of houses deemed traditional character in Brisbane are very similar to those in Maryborough.

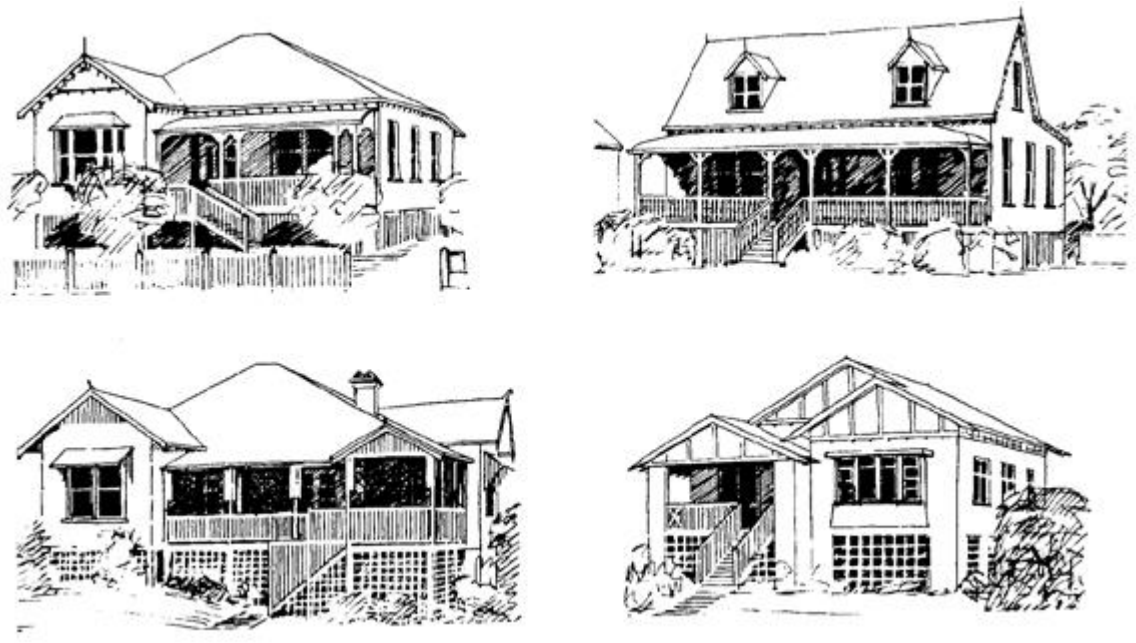


Figure 15: Examples of traditional housing styles in Brisbane from the Traditional Character Planning Scheme Policy.

4.2.3 Toowoomba Character Definitions

The *Neighbourhood Character Overlay Code* of the *Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme 2021* provides the following descriptions of character values in the region:

- Buildings and features which contribute to the established local streetscape:
    - In residential areas, local character values vary between areas included in the overlay, but may include the predominantly low set, generally pre-World War II detached timber housing, mature street trees and trees and garden settings within lots, bluestone kerbing and grid street pattern.
    - In town character areas important local character values may include street alignment, awnings, masonry or timber construction, parapets, and the like.
- Other characteristics which contribute to the local character: such features may include, but are not limited to, lot sizes, topography, views, vegetation and landscaping and street formation and pattern.

Toowoomba Regional Council produced a guide outlining the typical character house styles in Toowoomba. Because of the prominence of masonry buildings in Toowoomba, the definition of character is broader than Fraser Coast and more explicit than Brisbane. It is interesting to note that character also includes the grid street pattern, a point raised later in this report.



Figure 16: From *The Toowoomba House: Styles and History*.

4.3 Managing Traditional Character

This Section provides a summary of the various approaches to character management under the different planning schemes, including infill, development, and demolition control.

4.3.1 Fraser Coast Character Management

Character in the Fraser Coast is divided into character precincts and the DCA. In the Fraser Coast, all of the character precincts, with the exception of two precincts in Howard, are located in Maryborough and within the DCA boundary, but the planning controls are different.

The character precincts have a well-defined statement of character specific to the precinct, whereas the DCA is more general, existing to 'maintain the Queenslander character that is predominant in the city and ensure that good examples of the character era style dwelling houses are preserved to maintain the character amenity of the Maryborough City and in particular the residential areas.'

Demolition:
Identified neighbourhood character areas (the precincts listed in Section 2.2.1) are protected by the *Heritage and Neighbourhood Character Overlay Code*. Demolition of buildings in these precincts is prohibited unless it is not a Victorian, Federation and Interwar building; it does not contribute to the character of the precinct; is incapable of structural repair; or is unfeasible to repair.

Protection is further afforded to Victorian, Federation and Interwar buildings which are not in a Precincts but are located within the Demolition Control Area. These houses are not to be demolished (wholly or partially) or removed unless the building is incapable of structural repair, or if it can be demonstrated that the building does not contribute to the character of the area.

Infill development:
Under the *Heritage and Neighbourhood Character Overlay Code*, infill development (including on vacant sites) in neighbourhood character precincts must be compatible with the surrounding character of the precinct and the streetscape. The *Demolition Control Area Overlay Code* does not provide any provisions regarding infill development in the broader DCA.

Overlay Mapping:

The character precincts are provided with a defined boundary, but individual places of character are not noted within them. The DCA is merely a boundary around most of Maryborough.

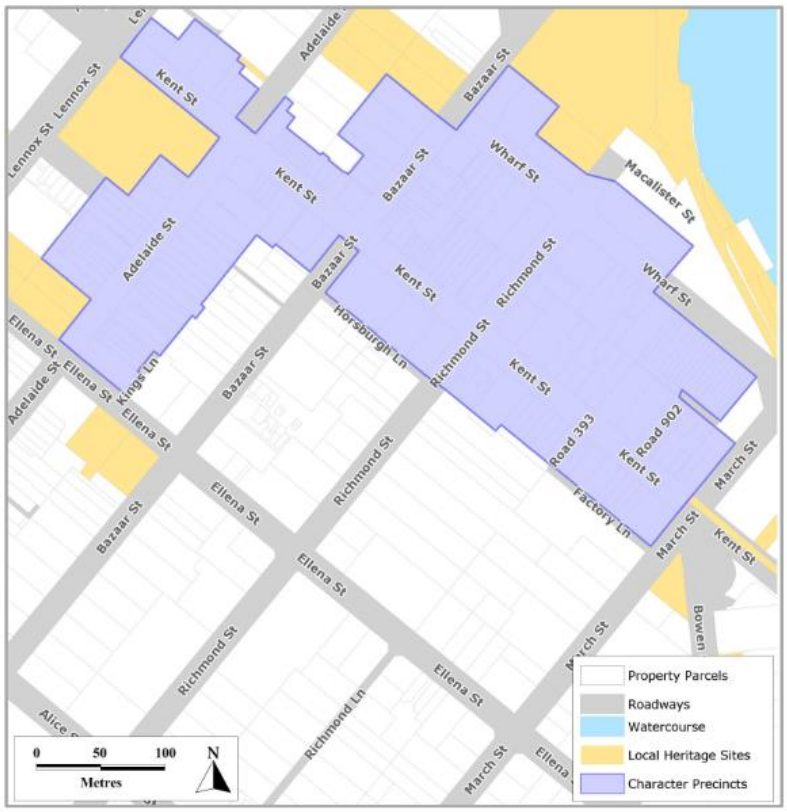


Figure 17: Example of how a character precinct is mapped in the Fraser Coast planning scheme.

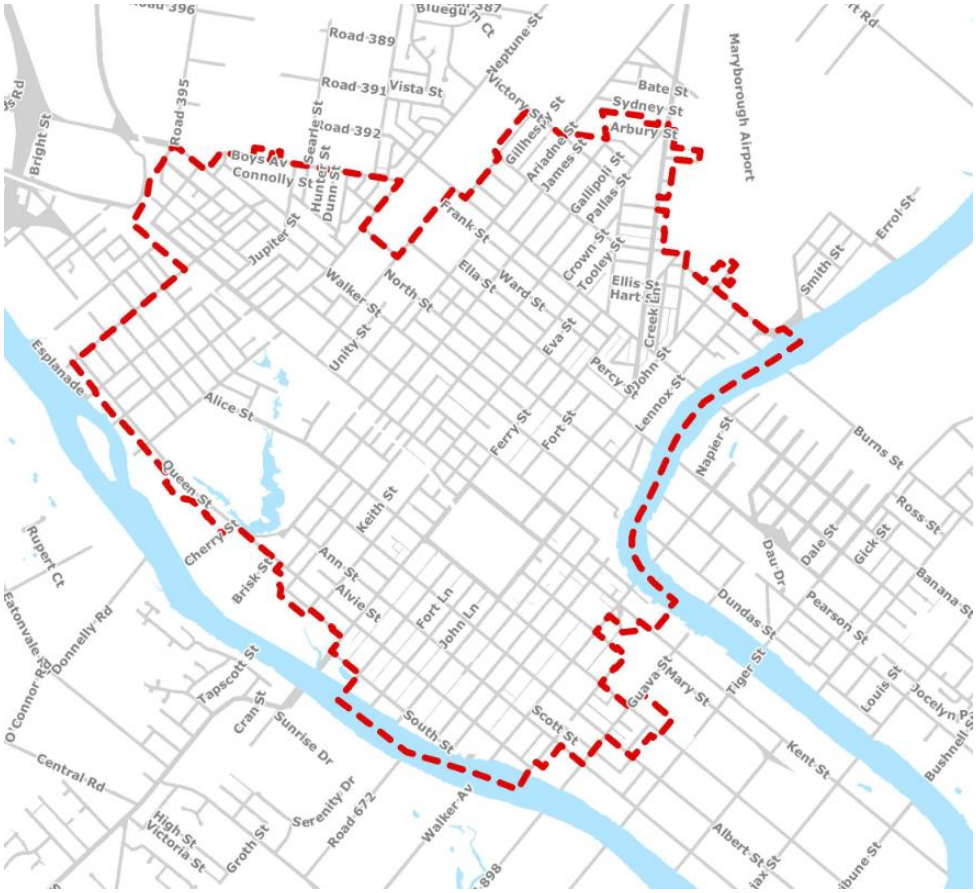


Figure 18: The Demolition Control Area in red.

4.3.2 Brisbane Character Management

As stated above, Brisbane's character falls into three broad categories. These are pre-1946 residential, pre-1946 commercial, and pre-1911 residential.

Houses built in or before 1946 are to be retained and any extensions or alterations are to complement the traditional building style. New houses (infill development) are to be designed to fit in with the character of the street. Commercial character buildings must be retained, and any extensions or alterations are to complement the traditional building style. Houses that are built before 1911 must be retained and any extensions should not alter the original parts of the house. The planning scheme offers some provision to relocate pre-1911 houses, but they can only be relocated to another house lot that is in the Traditional building character overlay (BCC 2020).

An overview of the rules relating to infill, development and demolition are as follows:

Demolition:
The *Commercial Character Building (Demolition) Overlay Code* applies to individual character buildings identified on the *Commercial Character Building Overlay* (i.e., being traditional character and constructed pre-1946). The code prohibits removal or demolition of character buildings which are capable of structural repair. Part demolition must retain integral character components (including traditional proportions, location, style, and key elements such as awnings).

The *Traditional Building Character (Demolition) Overlay Code* prohibits removal or demolition of residential character buildings unless they are structurally unsound or have been substantially altered and no longer retain character elements. Demolition must not diminish the surrounding street character. Part demolition of character buildings must retain existing integral character components.

The *Pre-1911 Building Overlay Code* applies to individual buildings identified as having been constructed prior to 1911. Demolition is prohibited unless it can be demonstrated that the building is incapable of structural repair, and part demolition must retain pre-1911 features. In some zones (certain neighbourhood zones and residential zones), relocation/removal of these buildings is not allowed at all, but in zones that do allow relocation of the pre-1911 building, they can only be relocated to other zones that will ensure legislative protection of the pre-1911 building (i.e., to other character protected zones).

Development and infill:
The *Traditional Building Character (Design) Overlay Code* provides measures to ensure that any changes to identified traditional character buildings respect the character of the building and are consistent with the character of the street (setbacks, height, scale, materials, setting etc).

In addition to the character overlay codes above, the *Character Residential Zone Code* includes provisions for the type of accepted developments within identified character zones. Its purpose is to ensure that developments within these zones are of compatible height, bulk, scale and form, materials and detailing with the traditional building character of the *Character Residential Zone.*

Certain areas of Brisbane are also subject to Neighbourhood Plans. Some of these plans provide more fine-grained provisions for character protection, which are specific to the character of the neighbourhood. For example, the *Spring Hill Neighbourhood Plan Code* identifies the historic characteristics of the suburb 'as one of the earliest suburbs settled in Brisbane, with large areas of traditional residential dwellings built before 1885 on small allotments within a network of narrow streets and laneways.'

Certain developments made under this Neighbourhood Plan require the preparation of an Urban Context Report, which is required to demonstrate how the development successfully responds to surrounding heritage, character, and streetscape qualities. The *Fortitude Valley Neighbourhood Plan Code* requires developments in some areas to prepare a Character Streetscape Analysis. In addition to the general character provisions under the planning scheme, this code has a requirement for developments in the Valley Heart to consider, amongst other things, the material palette and character of the existing built fabric, with new finishes to also demonstrate 'a rougher and grittier aspect to the architecture in contrast with that of the CBD'.

Overlay Mapping:
BCC has overlay mapping for the overlays noted above. The Traditional Building Character Overlay is further divided into 'Neighbourhood character' and 'Local character significance.' 'Neighbourhood character is the general category that captures houses built in or before 1946. 'Local character significance' appears to only apply to one area (including the suburbs of Morningside, Balmoral, Hawthorn etc.) and appears to be the closest BCC comes to a 'precinct' in the sense FCRC has. A key distinction between BCC and FCRC is that BCC has only mapped identified character houses in its overlay.



Figure 19: Snapshot of the Traditional character-building overlay. Character places are indicated by the purple hash.

4.3.3 Toowoomba Character Management

TRC maintains a list of individually identified neighbourhood character places set within the *Neighbourhood Character Overlay*. The *Neighbourhood Character Overlay Code* covers character and non-character properties in the overlay.

Demolition:
Under the *Neighbourhood Character Overlay Code,* individually listed neighbourhood character places are not to be demolished or removed unless it is structurally unsound and uneconomically repairable. It must also be demonstrated that the building proposed to be demolished or removed will not diminish the appearance of the streetscape or the overall character of an area, and that any new development will make an equal or greater contribution to the streetscape.

Infill development:
In terms of new development (infill or replacement buildings), the *Neighbourhood Character Overlay Code* requires that the form, scale, and design of the new development within the mapped areas are to be consistent with, and sympathetic to the local streetscape and character of the surrounding area.

Given the TRC planning scheme individually lists character places (see below), if a building is not on the list, then demolition is considered acceptable development. The purpose of the overlay regarding non-character buildings within the overlay, is broadly to manage infill developments and extensions to existing buildings – to ensure that such developments compliment the neighbouring character and streetscape.

Overlay Mapping:
As noted above, character places in the Toowoomba region are individually listed in *SC6.7.1 of the PSP No. 7 – Neighbourhood Character Places*. The overlay mapping for Toowoomba is different to Fraser Coast as it does not rely on a boundary like the DCA.

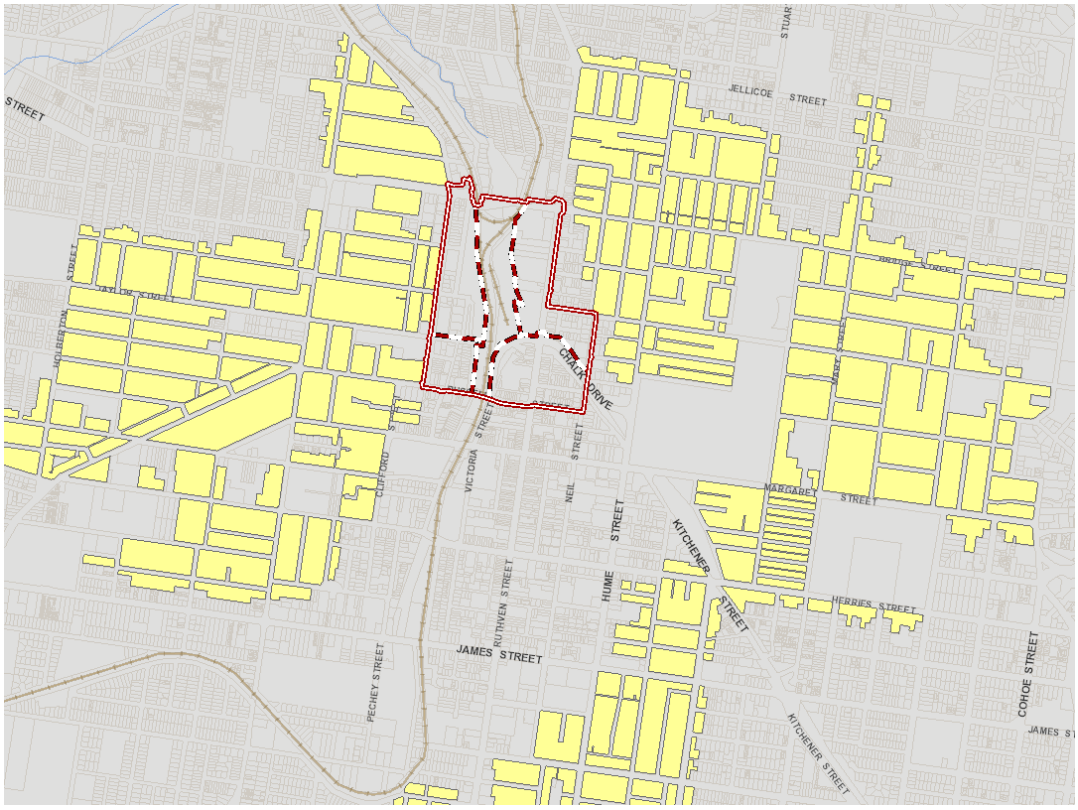


Figure 20: Snapshot of the Toowoomba overlay. The area in red is the city centre.

4.4 Guidelines

Brisbane and Toowoomba provide extensive guidelines. The Brisbane guide, *Traditional Housing: Alterations and Extensions Design Guide*, is a detailed and easy-to-read document that provides practical advice on managing a character home, but also demonstrates that character housing can accommodate new uses and changes without sacrificing those elements that contribute to the house's character. It also focuses on the traditional 'Queenslander' style house, which is ideal for Maryborough. For these reasons, the Brisbane guide is considered the best example of the type of document on which to base similar guidelines for character housing in Maryborough.

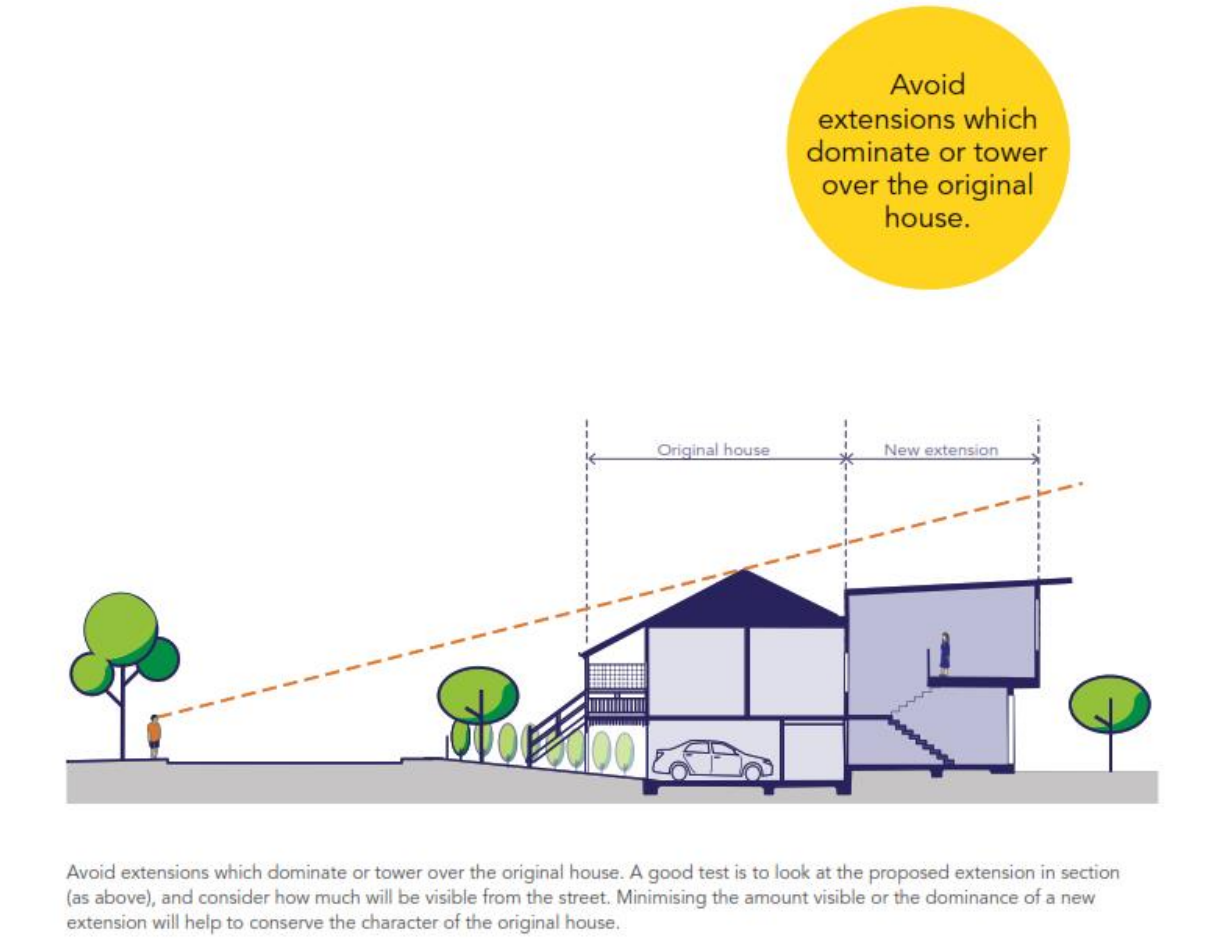


Figure 21: Page from the Brisbane guide, illustrating how to sympathetically extend traditional housing.

4.5 Conclusions

Council currently has provisions in its planning scheme that protect traditional housing (or 'character') in Maryborough and Howard. Nonetheless, a key conclusion of the analysis of the LGA provisions is that Fraser Coast can refine and strengthen the provisions relating to the DCA so that they are more consistent with other LGAs and easier to understand for property owners.

The planning schemes all have similar approaches. For example:

- Each council acknowledges the importance of character to the identity and amenity of the city via planning mechanisms that protect character and guidelines that provide support to building owners.
- All of the schemes accept pre-war (usually defined as in or before 1946) as the period in which character housing was designed and built.

The quality of the guidelines and advice provided by both councils demonstrate the accepted importance of historic character to the identity and vibrancy of the local government areas.

The other councils do not have a 'demolition control area' mechanism like the Fraser Coast. Rather, they utilise a neighbourhood character area or a similar designation (with the possible exception of the pre-1911 overlay). In the case of Brisbane, the character overlay works in conjunction with Neighbourhood Plans and other relevant zone codes to protect character housing and regulate infill development to ensure the overall character of the area is retained. The Neighbourhood Plans are an excellent resource, as each plan contains information relating specifically to the particular neighbourhood, providing a fine-grained level of analysis of character (historic and non-historic) for that place.

The character area in Toowoomba is simpler as Toowoomba does not have Neighbourhood Plans like Brisbane. The character overlay code contains demolition controls, but also includes mechanisms to regulate infill development. The neighbourhood character area is separate from the historic town centre, which has its own planning mechanisms.

It is notable that Brisbane and Toowoomba regulate infill development over a wider area than specific precincts. This is one of the important contrasts between the Fraser Coast, and Brisbane and Toowoomba.

The other key finding is that both Brisbane and Toowoomba list individual properties identified as traditional buildings. In the case of Brisbane, the individual properties are mapped, whereas in Toowoomba, an area is established that includes character and non-character places. The listing of individual places provides a greater level of certainty to homeowners, and it would make initial assessment whether a place is character simpler for Council planners. This project forms the basis for a similar approach in the Fraser Coast, with the identification of non-traditional places within the DCA.

Regarding commercial character, Brisbane maintains a separate overlay. It is unclear in Toowoomba, but it appears the majority of the commercial buildings are located in the city centre, which has its own plan.

Based on the above conclusions, there are three matters that stand out for the Fraser Coast.

4.5.1 Infill

Both Brisbane and Toowoomba maintain character overlays that control for demolition *and* infill development. Fraser Coast does not have this mechanism in place in the DCA. The lack of provisions addressing infill can mean that the traditional character of neighbourhoods, including the streetscape, can be negatively affected by unsympathetic building design. Infill provisions are therefore important to maintain traditional neighbourhood areas.

Appropriate infill design can maintain the traditional neighbourhood area without sacrificing development potential. One such example is 30 Bazaar Street. The development is a set of units/townhouses that extend towards the back of the allotment. The façade of the building reflects traditional design features, including general scale, set back and bulk such that it superficially appears like an older house type. Nonetheless, the building materials readily identify it as a modern development. This development strikes an appropriate balance that allows new development (at a higher density) without significantly impacting on the traditional character of the streetscape.



Figure 22: The unit development at 30 Bazaar Street. The facade design evokes Federation and Interwar influences but is nonetheless readily identifiable as new development.

Infill development is important in relation to places identified as 'non-character'. While demolition of non-character places should not trigger assessment under the planning scheme, infill development should. There are non-character places identified in the revised DCA and it is important that, if these places are demolished, what is put in its place does unduly detract from the streetscape. The same can be said for traditional housing stock that is damaged or destroyed by fire or is otherwise demonstrated to be impractical to retain due to factors such as irreparable condition issues.

4.5.2 'Traditional'

Brisbane's use of 'traditional' in its designation of character was a strong influence on Converge when developing its audit methodology. The term clearly evokes a historic period distinct from our own. While Brisbane has multiple mechanisms to protect traditional character – residential and commercial overlays and neighbourhood plans – Fraser Coast is more limited in its options.

This is an argument for the conversion of the DCA into a Traditional Neighbourhood Area, reflecting the methodology used to audit the current DCA. By including the street layout and historic commercial and social infrastructure, in addition to traditional housing stock, Council has a better opportunity to protect traditional neighbourhoods in their totality, rather than piecemeal protection of individual houses through demolition control only. This approach provides a better justification for planning scheme protection, as it covers the character of the neighbourhood, not just individual properties.

4.5.3 The importance of guidelines

The final matter is the development of guidelines. Properly made guidelines like Brisbane's provide advice about changes to properties that meet the relevant overlay codes, but also illustrate the wider benefits of character protection.

The guideline should be clear about the changes that are possible in properties within the overlay. The example provided in the previous section from the Brisbane guidelines is helpful because it demonstrates how a major extension to a property can be accommodated in a traditional house. This can assure property owners that additions and extensions are possible and provide guidance as to how additions and extensions can be accommodated in a way sympathetic to the traditional neighbourhood character. Moreover, the guidelines illustrate how appropriate changes to traditional housing can support contemporary demands, such as designs suitable for a sub-tropical climate.

The guidelines can also identify work that is not covered by the respective overlay code, but nonetheless contributes to the maintenance of a traditional neighbourhood area. Examples can include elements such as fences and windows. The guideline can provide property owners with clear information about what they need approval for and the things that they do not, while still offering tangible assistance to those who wish to maintain the historic character of their properties beyond the planning scheme requirements.



Figure 23: Summary of approaches to maintaining 'traditional' character in a neighbourly manner while adopting new technology and design requirements in Brisbane's guideline.

5 Recommendations

This chapter provides a series of recommendations based on the review of the select planning schemes, the DCA, and the current planning scheme mechanisms.

Recommendation 1 – Reduce the size of the DCA

The size of the DCA can be reduced on the basis of the analysis carried out for this report. The map in Chapter 3 (and mapping data supplied separately) should form the basis for the new boundary.

Recommendation 2 – Make the DCA a Traditional Neighbourhood Area.

Convert the DCA into a Traditional Neighbourhood Area in the planning scheme. Adopt the criteria developed for this study as the basis for the Traditional Neighbourhood Area:

- A predominance of pre-World War II housing (as currently defined in the planning scheme).
- Grid pattern streets laid out according to or consistent with the original survey of Maryborough in 1850.
- Concentration of historic commercial and social infrastructure such as corner shops and churches.

The Traditional Neighbourhood Area should include these elements. The planning scheme should acknowledge the interrelationship between these elements constitutes a traditional neighbourhood.

Recommendation 3 – Develop Planning Scheme Provisions to manage Infill

Prepare overlay provisions that manage infill development in the Traditional Neighbourhood Area. The provisions used by Brisbane and Toowoomba councils can serve as examples.

Recommendation 4 – Prepare traditional character guidelines.

Council should prepare a guideline similar to Brisbane's *Traditional Housing: Alterations and Extensions Design Guide* to support management of the Traditional Neighbourhood Area. The guideline should be developed in consultation with the community, including property owners, to ensure it is a functional document that clearly states what the relevant planning schemes provisions are relating to the Traditional Neighbourhood Area, and practical information for planners and property owners to guide future development of properties in a manner consistent with the planning scheme.

Recommendation 5 – Future Reviews.

The nature and extent of Traditional Neighbourhood Areas of Maryborough (and the Fraser Coast more generally) should be reviewed on a regular basis (e.g., every 10 years, or during a planning scheme review, whichever comes first).

The definition of the Traditional Neighbourhood Area should be reconsidered during each review. Historical aerial imagery can support this review, as it is consistent from 1958 onward. Consideration should also be given to the inclusion of later housing styles, such as post-war austerity housing, and other house styles immediately following the lifting of rationing on materials from around 1952 Equally, such reviews should consider the inclusion of further neighbourhood character types in addition to traditional, such as a mid-century or transitional Neighbourhood Area that sits historically between the pre-war 'traditional' neighbourhood and contemporary neighbourhood areas that begin to appear from the 1970s.

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