





7.5. Garden Court 2

PRECINCT DESCRIPTION

Garden Court 2 (GC2) consists of four areas known as GC North, GC East, GC West and GC South, covering sections of St Helena, Macleod, Watsonia North, Greensborough, Viewbank and Yallambie. The areas are characterised by late 1960s and early 1970s development with some newer infill dwellings interspersed throughout. Garden Court East features more recent 1980s -1990s development. Curvilinear and cul de sac street patterns occur over undulating to hilly topography.

Featuring colours from cream to earth tones, older housing styles in the precinct are largely single storey brick dwellings. Dwellings feature low hipped roof forms and horizontally proportioned windows with predominantly concrete tiled roofs and newer builds utilise cooler tones and pops of colour. Newer dwellings are mostly double storey, some with recent second storey additions to capitalise on views.

Front setbacks vary from moderate to large. With the exception of carparking facilities, side setbacks are generally between one and three metres. Front gardens are a mix of low level exotics and natives, often complimented by high canopy natives. Pockets of remnant indigenous vegetation exist throughout on private and public land.

Front fencing is often absent, however sleeper retaining walls are common and occasionally brick or basalt are used. Footpaths are usually provided on both sides of the street.



REVIEW OF EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

Architectural style	• 1960s and early 1970s era dwellings interspersed with some newer infill developments. • Garden Court East – 1980s and 1990s • Low hipped roof forms and horizontally proportioned windows
Subdivision pattern	• Curvilinear and cul de sac street pattern.
Topography and ridgelines	• Undulating to hilly. • Bundoora - Diamond Village - Army Barracks Ridgeline in southern sections • Foothills ridgeline in northern sections
Dwelling type	• Predominantly single detached dwellings,
Materials and form	• Mostly brick often with concrete tiled roofs.
Setbacks	• Front setbacks vary 5-9 metres. • Side setbacks are generally 1-3 metres
Height	• 1-2 storeys
Vehicle storage and access	• Carports and garages present often located forward of the dwelling in newer areas.
Garden styles	• Front gardens are a mix of low level exotics and natives. • Often high canopy native trees in front setback.
Vegetation Cover	• Pockets of remnant indigenous trees and other high canopy trees • Streetscapes can include groups of tall trees, most have understorey vegetation with occasional tall natives. • Tall exotic species are infrequent.
Front fencing	• Generally not present. • Sleeper retaining walls common, occasionally brick or basalt is used.
Public realm	• Footpaths provided on both sides of the street • Irregularly placed street trees, mostly native. • Kerb and channels.

KEY THREATS IN GC2

- Dwellings, carports or garages that are located forward of the dwelling line.
- Removal of the remaining indigenous vegetation and native trees.
- Minimal landscaping in front setbacks.
- New dwellings that are visually prominent in streetscapes and backdrops and do not respect the general form of existing dwellings.
- Construction of front fences.

GARDEN COURT 2 PREFERRED CHARACTER STATEMENT

New development in the Garden Court 2 character area enhances the garden character of the precinct with an emphasis on protecting trees and creating new opportunities for vegetation. A range of low to medium density developments are provided in a scale and form that is consistent with existing development in the precinct.

New development is designed to follow the natural topography of the land to minimise the need for cut and fill. Front setbacks are consistent with existing dwellings in the street with space provided around and between dwellings to create an attractive, treed landscape setting. The retention and planting of canopy trees contributes to the landscape character of the area and enhances the scenic and environmental qualities of the treed ridgelines.

Carports, garages and open car parking spaces are positioned to minimise their visual impact on the street and are serviced with a single vehicle crossover and driveway that is softened with landscaping to either side. Vegetation is used as an alternative to front fencing allowing for views into front gardens from streetscapes. The streetscapes are characterised by enhanced planting of native street trees with views of canopy trees within private properties.

Garden Court 2 **minimal** change areas are subject to vegetation controls with enhanced planting of native vegetation in gardens and streets. Development is anticipated to consist of single dwellings that reflect the existing neighbourhood character and integrated with and sensitively designed to respect the character of these locations.

Garden Court 2 **incremental** change precincts will experience modest infill development including a mix of sensitively designed single dwellings and some dispersed medium density dwellings respecting the existing character of the precinct.

GARDEN COURT 2 OBJECTIVES

All areas

- To maintain consistency of current front setbacks with sufficient space to enable tree planting in front gardens.
- To minimise the loss of front garden space through minimising the dominance of vehicle access and storage facilities as viewed from the street.
- To maintain the openness of front boundary treatments by providing no front fences and strengthen the garden and tree dominated streetscape character and the landscaped setting of the precinct.

Minimal

- To ensure new development respects the architectural style, form and materials of development in the street.

Incremental

- To ensure new development complements the architectural style, form and materials of development in the street.

City Wide

- To ensure that developments on or near ridgelines retain existing trees, sit below the tree canopies, minimise excavation, and enable further tree planting to form a continuous canopy, so that the scenic quality is maintained and enhanced.
- To ensure development adjacent to parks and open spaces provides an active façade to improve safety and engagement with the public realm.
- To ensure development adjoining or adjacent to a heritage place is respectful of the significance, character, scale, setbacks, and form of the heritage place

GARDEN COURT 2 DESIGN GUIDELINES

Change Area	Design Response
Building Form and Materials	
All areas	• Minimise the need for cut and fill through careful siting of development. • Recess second storey portions of buildings from ground level wall surfaces, incorporate within roof spaces where possible and minimise in height. • Complement the main design elements of surrounding dwellings through careful attention to roofing form, materials, wall heights and façade articulation. • Provide well-articulated building forms to reduce building bulk and provide visual interest. • Provide variation between each dwelling in a development that faces the street through varied roof pitches, window and door placement, materials, façade articulation or other design detailing. • Design and site new buildings at or near ridgelines so that cut and fill is minimised and the building sits below the height of trees along the ridgeline. • Use muted colours and tones, and non-reflective materials in new buildings at or near ridgelines. • Design site services, including utility meters and mailboxes, to be integrated within the design of the development and co-located where possible to minimise their visual impact on the street. • Locate and screen household services, including air conditioning units, hot water systems, rainwater tanks, solar panels, storage shed and bin storage areas to minimise their visual impact on the street and adjoining properties.
Minimal	• Design development to reflect the existing building height of up to two storeys.
Incremental	• Design development to reflect a preferred building height between two and three storeys.

Change Area	Design Response
Siting and Setbacks	
All areas	• Locate dwellings in line with the predominant front setback of dwellings along the street with sufficient space for the planting and growth of canopy trees and understorey vegetation. • For corner sites, the front setback of a dwelling facing the side street should be at a transition between the predominant setback along the side street, and the side setback of the dwelling facing the front street. • Design buildings at the rear of a site to follow the topography of the land and respond sensitively to each interface with generous side and rear setbacks that are screened with vegetation. • Ensure building site coverage does not exceed 40 per cent to enable the planting, growth and retention of vegetation. • Minimise hard surface areas where possible to achieve a minimum site permeability of 50 per cent.
Minimal	• Set buildings back a minimum of 3 metres from at least one side property boundary to enable the planting and mature growth of small to medium canopy trees and understorey vegetation. A carport or garage may be provided on the other side property boundary. • Set buildings back a minimum of 5 metres from the rear property boundary to enable the planting and growth of medium to large canopy trees and understorey vegetation. • Provide a minimum of 5 metres separation between each dwelling to allow for the planting and growth of small to medium canopy trees and understorey vegetation. • Locate secluded private open space behind the line of a dwelling that faces the street with a minimum area of 50 square metres and minimum dimension of 4.5 metres to enable the planting and growth of medium canopy trees and understorey vegetation.
Incremental	• Set buildings back a minimum of 2 metres from at least one side property boundary to enable the planting and mature growth of small to medium canopy trees and understorey vegetation. A carport or garage may be provided on the other side property boundary. • Set buildings back a minimum of 4 metres from the rear property boundary to enable the planting and growth of medium to large canopy trees and understorey vegetation. • Provide a minimum of 3 metres separation between each dwelling to allow for the planting and growth of small to medium canopy trees and understorey vegetation. • Locate secluded private open space behind the line of a dwelling that faces the street with a minimum area of 40 square metres and minimum dimension of 4.5 metres to enable the planting and growth of medium canopy trees and understorey vegetation.

Change Area	Design Response
Landscaping	
All areas	• Retain existing trees wherever possible. If this cannot be achieved, or a tree is considered appropriate for removal, the site should provide adequate space for offset planting of indigenous or native trees that will grow to a mature height similar to the mature height of the tree to be removed. • Provide a 1 metre wide landscape strip along the length of any shared driveway adjacent to the fence line. • Provide one (1) medium to large canopy tree for every 400sq.m of site area including at least one large canopy tree in the front setback, until the tree planting ratios are reviewed as part of the RDF in which case the updated ratios will prevail. • Use curved garden beds within front setbacks to enable better softening of hard surface areas and opportunities for tree planting. • Provide a new street tree if there is no street tree within the frontage of a dwelling. • Use appropriate tree species and carefully selected planting locations to avoid canopy or root conflicts with overhead wires, easements and existing trees. • Retain trees and vegetation in new development at or near ridgelines that contributes to the landscape. New native or indigenous trees should otherwise be planted on or near the ridgeline to form a continuous canopy.
Vehicle Storage and Access	
All areas	• Locate carports and garages behind the line of the dwelling or integrate them into the dwelling design. • Provide only one (1) new or existing single width vehicle crossover. • Locate and design new vehicle crossovers to not affect existing street trees or on street parking, considering the rhythm and spacing of vehicle crossovers along the street. • If more than one (1) dwelling is proposed and the street frontage is more than 20 metres wide in GC2 (South) and GC2 (West), or 22 metres wide in GC2 (North) or GC2 (East), a second crossover may be considered. This is only appropriate where this results in an improved site layout and landscaping outcome, there is at least 8 metres between each crossover, street trees are protected, planting opportunities are maintained in the front setback, on street parking is not reduced, and pedestrian and traffic safety is maintained. • Double width vehicle crossovers should only be considered where the street frontage is more than 20 metres wide in GC2 (South) and GC2 (West), or 22 metres wide in GC2 (North) or GC2 (East). This outcome is only appropriate where street trees are protected, planting opportunities are maintained in the front setback, and on street parking is not reduced. • Finish driveways in muted tones and include curves and bends that provide sufficient room for landscaping at varying heights.

Change Area	Design Response
Front Fencing	
All areas	• Avoid the construction of front fences. This may be varied on sites that are adjacent to a main road. • Construct any retaining walls in timber or basalt.
Public Open Space & Heritage	
All areas	• Provide an active façade, including doors, windows or balconies adjacent or adjoining public open space or shared use paths to encourage activation with the public realm. • Encourage the use of low or open style fencing adjoining public open space or shared use paths to allow for passive surveillance and engagement with the public realm.
	Buildings on lots adjoining or adjacent a heritage place should: • complement the height, scale and setbacks of the heritage building • not visually dominate the heritage place • not obscure vistas and view lines to significant buildings