7.1. Bush Garden (formerly Semi Bush)

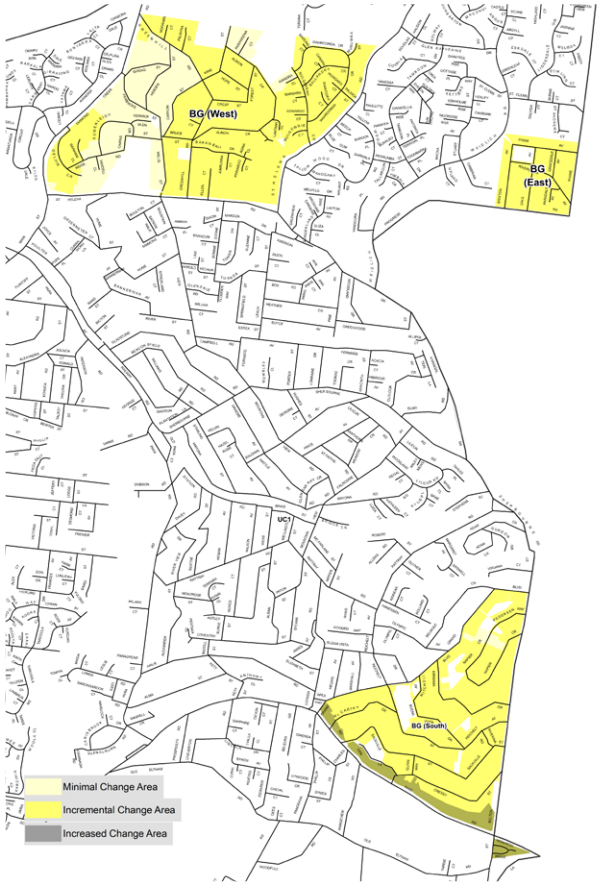
PRECINCT DESCRIPTION

The Bush Garden (BG) precinct is located across three small areas in north eastern Banyule. The two smaller areas are located on the Nillumbik border, in Montmorency, Lower Plenty (BG South) and St Helena (BG East), with the third taking up a pocket in north-east Greensborough (BG West).

The area is characterised by dwellings set within a bush environment in hilly topography. Native and indigenous high canopy trees dominate views, and significant amounts of understorey vegetation is present. Buildings are often screened from view from the street assisted by materials of muted or earthy tones. Dwellings are usually single storey, other than on slopes where two storeys are accommodated over the fall of the land. Dwellings are positioned on the site with large front and side setbacks.

Front fences are rarely present and occasional basalt or railway sleeper retaining walls exist. Front gardens are usually bushy, often including understorey vegetation and substantial trees.

Streetscapes are informal, generally containing native planting. Footpaths are predominantly provided on one side of the street. Nature strips are informal, often extending to the roadside. This contributes to the bush garden character with vegetation flowing from the public to the private landscape.











EXISTING KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Architectural style	• Forms are low and predominantly horizontal • Dwellings generally screened behind a buffer of trees and shrubs
Subdivision pattern	• Curvilinear with courts or connected depending on the topography
Topography and ridgelines	• Hilly to very hilly topography • Foothill Ridgelines runs north-south through the precinct
Dwelling type	• Predominantly detached housing
Materials and form	• Muted colours predominantly brick with tiled or colourbond roofs
Setbacks	• Front setbacks generally 7 – 9 metres with some larger sites 10 – 20 metres • Side setbacks 3 – 6 metres
Height	• 1 – 2 storeys
Vehicle storage and access	• Garages often integrated into the building form or carport located behind the dwelling • Driveways often bitumen
Garden styles	• Front gardens are usually bushy with native and indigenous vegetation
Vegetation Cover	• Bushy environment with dominant native and indigenous high canopy trees • significant under storey vegetation
Front fencing	• General absence of front fences • Occasional basalt or railway sleeper retaining walls
Public realm	• Footpaths generally on one side only • Informal nature strips often with no delineation between private and public land • Generally informal native planting

KEY THREATS IN BG

- Removal or lack of space for native or indigenous canopy trees throughout the site and removal of lower level vegetation in front of dwellings.
- Increased use of non-indigenous vegetation.
- Excavation for dwelling sites, driveways or garages, rather than building to follow the topography.
- Buildings that are highly visible from the street and backdrops due to position on the site, scale or colour.
- Formal street works including footpaths and square kerbing.

PREFERRED CHARACTER STATEMENT

Dwellings in the Bush Garden precinct will be designed with an emphasis on protecting trees and creating new opportunities for indigenous and native vegetation throughout sites to maintain the consistent tree canopy and the sense that the bush dominates rather than the dwellings.

New development uses natural materials and colours that reflect the surrounding environment and simple building forms to fit within the vegetated setting. Dwellings are consistent with the predominant front setback in the street and include sufficient space for shrubs and tree planting, planted to minimise views to surrounding dwellings. Site layouts are designed with spacing around dwellings that allows for the planting and mature growth of indigenous and native vegetation. Buildings follow the natural topography of the land ensuring the excavation of sites is minimised and scenic qualities are preserved.

Existing canopy trees and other significant vegetation, including the Melbourne Yellow-gums are retained. Avenues of street trees, the views of trees on private property from the street and the environmental qualities of treed ridgelines are protected and enhanced.

The bush landscape flows between lots and into the public realm due to the openness of the front gardens that have no front fences and open and low side fences. The informal nature strips and plantings of native vegetation in the verge contributes to this important quality.

Garages and carports are hidden from view, often located behind the line of the front dwelling façade or are integrated with the design of the dwelling. Developments are designed with only one single width crossover and a driveway that is softened with curves and vegetation.

Bush Garden **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.

Bush Garden **incremental** change areas will contain a mix of sensitively designed single dwellings and some dispersed multi-unit developments up to two storeys consistent with the existing character of the precinct.

Bush Garden **increased** change area, located along the Main Road, Montmorency, will see a greater level of development with development of up to three storeys to enable space for planting around more dense development, potentially greater site coverage, and smaller setbacks than incremental precincts.

BUSH GARDEN OBJECTIVES

All areas

- To use natural materials and finishes in dwellings that reflect the landscape setting.

Minimal

- To retain and enhance opportunities for large canopy trees and understorey through careful siting of dwellings among large canopy trees and within native vegetation gardens.

Increased

- To set dwellings among large canopy trees and within native vegetation gardens.
- To maintain the continuity of vegetation in front of and behind dwellings through setbacks and locating garages behind the dwelling.
- To maintain the bush garden setting by encouraging the use of native and indigenous vegetation and natural materials.
- To encourage the consolidation of large sites to deliver improved development outcomes.

Minimal and Incremental

- To set dwellings among large canopy trees and within native gardens that allow views to tree canopies in the rear of gardens.
- To maintain the continuity of vegetation in front of and around dwellings through large setbacks and integrating garages into the dwelling design.
- To maintain the continuous flow of the bush garden settings around and between dwellings by providing no or low fencing and encouraging the use of natural landscaping and vegetation.
- To minimise site disturbance and impact of the building on the landscape.

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.

BUSH GARDEN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Change Area	Design Response
Building Form and materials	
All areas	• Ensure wall and roof materials and finishes blend with existing materials in the streetscape and bush garden setting. • Ensure variation between each dwelling of a development that faces the street through varied roof pitches, window and door placement, materials, façade articulation and other design detailing. • Provide well-articulated building forms to reduce building bulk and provide visual interest. • Recess second storey portions of buildings from ground level wall surfaces, incorporate within roof spaces where possible and minimise in height. Variations may be acceptable in increased change areas for developments that demonstrate exemplary design outcomes. • Integrate site services, including utility meters and mailboxes, 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 sheds and bin storage areas, to minimise their visual impact on the street and adjoining properties. • 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.
Minimal & Incremental	• Design development to reflect the existing building height of up to two storeys.
Incremental	• In Bush Garden (West), weatherboard dwellings should not be painted.
Increased	• Design development to reflect a preferred building height of up to three storeys.

Change Area	Design Response
Siting and Setbacks	
All areas	• For corner sites, transition the front setback of a dwelling facing the side street between the predominant setback along the side street, and the side setback of the dwelling facing the front street. • 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. • Site and design buildings to protect existing vegetation and incorporate space for the planting of indigenous and native trees, shrubs and understorey plants. • Minimise the need for cut and fill through careful siting of development.
Minimal	• Provide a minimum of 8 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 80 square metres and minimum dimension of 4.5 metres to enable the planting and growth of medium canopy trees and understorey vegetation. • Ensure building site coverage does not exceed 35 per cent to enable the planting, growth and retention of vegetation. • Minimise hard surface areas where possible to achieve a minimum site permeability of 55 per cent.
Minimal and Incremental	• 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. • Set buildings back a minimum of 3 metres from both side property boundaries to enable the planting and mature growth of small to medium canopy trees and understorey vegetation. • Locate additional buildings at the rear of a site to follow the topography of the land and respond sensitively to each interface.
Incremental	• 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 60 square metres and minimum dimension of 4.5 metres to enable the planting and growth of medium canopy trees and understorey 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.
Increased	• Encourage lot consolidation to deliver improved design outcome and limit impacts on the street environment. • Locate dwellings in line with the predominant front setback of dwellings along the street or a minimum of 6 metres with sufficient space for the planting and growth of canopy trees and understorey vegetation. • Set buildings back a minimum of 2 metres from one side boundary and 1 metre from the other side boundary to enable the planting and mature growth of small to 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 one (1) medium to large canopy tree for every 150 square metres 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. • Minimise large areas of lawn within front setbacks by incorporating landscaping that comprises a mix of native or indigenous canopy trees and understorey vegetation. • Use curved garden beds within front setbacks to enable better softening of hard surface areas and opportunities for tree planting. • Provide a 1 metre wide landscape strip along the length of any shared driveway adjacent to the fence line. • Use appropriate tree species and carefully selected planting locations to avoid canopy 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. • 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.
Vehicle Storage and Access	
All areas	• Locate carports and garages behind the line of the dwelling or integrate them into the dwelling design. • Provide landscaping such as large shrubs and trees in the front setback to discourage car parking in the front yard. • 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 22 metres wide, 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 22 metres wide. 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. • Site driveways to follow the contours of the land and finish driveways in muted tones with curves and bends that provide sufficient room for landscaping at varying heights.

Change Area	Design Response
Front Fences	
All areas	• Construct any retaining walls in timber or basalt.
Minimal and Incremental	• Avoid the construction of front fences.
Increased	• Provide open and low front fences with a maximum height of 1.2 metres along the frontage and within 3 metres of the frontage. This may be varied on sites that are adjacent to a main road.
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