

15/05/2014
C64**SCHEDULE 1 TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER OVERLAY**

Shown on the planning scheme map as **NCO1**.

MAYDAY HILLS NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER AREA**1.0**15/05/2014
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The character of Mayday Hills is a function of its picturesque setting; its gently undulating topography; its curvilinear tree lined streets; established parkland and its considerable number of historic and architecturally important buildings which individually and collectively contribute to the character.

The character owes much to the early design elements typical of mid nineteenth century asylum planning; these include remnants of the ha-ha or sunk wall, gate lodge, axially planned buildings, wards with airing courts, informal tree planting, main front and rear drives, impressive entrance to the grounds as well as the administration block, extensive areas that were previously used for food production although constrained by previous disposal and low density residential development (former Dingle Road frontage) are now largely landscaped in an open park land manner consistent with traditional landscaping of the site.

The retention of a significant number of the buildings from the period 1864 – 67, which demonstrate the earliest phase of development on the site and typify the barrack planning of mid-nineteenth century asylums are not only of heritage significance but combine to define the character of the area; these include the gate lodge and fencing, administration block, wards, central amenity block, verandahs and covered ways, former chapel, artisans workshops, remnants of the rear gate lodge and sunk wall.

This is further built on by the buildings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which demonstrate the continuing development of the site and shifts in attitudes to the treatment of psychiatric illness; these include the cottage wards, kiosk, McCarthy House, stables, cricket pavilion, nurses' hostel, and former women's ward (The Pines).

Fundamental to the character created by the impressive scale and detailing of these elements and the autonomous use of the site as an institution rather than traditionally being part of or an extension to the surrounding urban environment is the tenure and management of space around the built fabric. This space is predominantly landscaped and in a normal urban context would present as public realm. Road alignment and widths, destination or nodular parking, a lack of fences and footpaths and the landscaped setting combine to create a low speed pedestrian parkland environment. Where private spaces do occur they are either internal to buildings (ie courtyards) or to the rear of dwellings around the periphery of the site.

The collection of mature trees and plants, many dating from the mid to late nineteenth century and others from the post 1913 work of Hugh Linaker and later curators are significant elements of the parkland character; these include indigenous species, a large collection of conifers and extensive avenue plantings.

Stands of remnant gum trees with white trunks (Brittle gum, Red Spotted Gum, Eucalyptus mannifera ssp. maculosa) which are native to Victoria present as a less formal native parkland (open bushland) in comparison to the predominantly European designed parklands. Two specimens located west of the main drive are of considerable size and it has been suggested that they may predate the development of the asylum complex in the late 1860s.

Within and complementary to the overall self-contained 19th century picturesque park character of the site, there are areas further defined by the topography; former use of the areas; location of the roadways and change of vegetation. These different precincts further

defined by landscaping and the built fabric are a function of the former uses and hierarchy of uses within the site. It is important to retain these subtle elements within the overall landscape as the site is not a uniform parkland.

The gatehouse area has its own specific character and is integral to the interpretation of the asylum as being a separate place within the broader urban area. It has an historic link to the main 19th century core and the 19th century picturesque landscape also reflects the function of the building. Its location within the external gated area as a freestanding building without any fencing clearly demonstrates its utilitarian function as well as its broader aesthetic contribution to the overall aesthetic and historic character of the place.

The main 19th century gardens to the west of the administrative wing provide an appropriate setting for the scale of the 19th century buildings and the specific planting pattern and plant species is integral to an understanding of 19th century and early 20th century landscape conventions.

The area to the north of the main 19th century complex including The Pines, the oval, the sporting pavilion and the complimentary landscaped (former food production) areas to the north-east all provide an ancillary landscape feature that has a specific character that complements the aesthetics of the 19th century precinct area.

The architecture of the landscaping around the oval area with the white trunked gum trees located along the rise and the more densely planted shrubberies which shield this area from Gilchrist Avenue provide a distinct setting for the open functional space of the oval. This landscape is an appropriate counterpoint to the distinctive 1930s architecture of the Pines. The planting of the row of pines in combination with the architecture of the building which now bears their name, complemented by the openness of the oval is distinct and displays a separate but complimentary character to the rest of the main 19th century complex.

The continuation of the open park land to the north east (former food production areas) links this distinctive area to the 19th century precinct area and provides a continuity of open parkland. The number of mature specimen trees are of particular note and the stature of the oak trees is striking and supports the aesthetic significance of this precinct as well as the overall site. The north east parkland with the avenue planted perimeter roads and dotted specimen trees is an important aesthetic element within the whole of the site.

The former utilitarian areas to the south east of the site including the workshops, stables and barn do not reflect the park like leisure gardens found within the primary [former] public areas of the site. This area has an industrial collection of buildings; fabric built to the road edge; low maintenance curtilages (grazed farmland or greater trafficked and paved areas). Within this precinct vistas and view lines across a landscaped area are not as integral to the character, however the visual links between the significant utilitarian buildings are important as these define the character of this area.

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Neighbourhood character objective

- To maintain the existing character of the area.
- To ensure that new development and works reflect the existing and preferred character of the area.
- Through sensitive design and siting, to retain landscaping and the open parkland setting of the place as well as viewlines to significant buildings.
- To retain the presentation of space as being part of the public realm.
- To retain the distinct autonomous character of the area so as not to present as an extension of suburban development. Threats to this include changes in road width, surfaces, different types of paths through the site, light fittings and infrastructure, fencing, and symmetry (through formalized gardens, formalized pathways and regular garden beds aligned with individual buildings). Landscaping in particular needs to be

maintained as a landscape in which built fabric is situated rather than treated as a garden/s to individual buildings.

- To ensure that development respects the visual connections between significant buildings and the relationship to open spaces.
- To maintain the primacy of the historic 19th century and early 20th century buildings and their relationship to the landscaped parklands.
- To maintain the relationship of the entry lodge to the gardens and to the asylum complex. This should not be 'built out' or 'fenced out' it should maintain its presence as a garden feature within the greater landscape of the gardens and the main buildings.
- The open courtyard spaces within the 19th century complex and the relationship they have with the more utilitarian aspects of the complex should be reinforced.
- To allow some minor, discrete development in areas where sensitive design, landscaping and layout will ensure the subservience of new development and its absorption in the landscape.
- To ensure building form, scale, height and siting (including the location of car storage facilities), building materials, roof form, fences and landscaping do not detrimentally impact on the existing character.
- To maintain the landscaped setting in a manner compatible with the historic character and significance of the site. Landscaping, paving and the siting of new structures should respect, protect and seek to compliment the open parkland setting in terms of new landscaping and through the selection, placement and number of retained and new trees. To preserve and enhance the landscape setting of the site.

3.0 Permit requirement

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In addition to the requirements under Clause 43.05-2, a permit is required to:

- Construct an outdoor swimming pool associated with a dwelling.
- Construct or extend an outbuilding normal to a dwelling.
- Remove, destroy or lop a tree.

4.0 Modification to Clause 54 and Clause 55 standards

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None Specified.

5.0 Decision guidelines

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Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines listed at Clause 43.05-5, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

- The extent to which the proposed buildings or works assists in achieving the desired character.
- The impact on existing landscaping and the need for additional or replacement plantings.
- The location and landscaping of any proposed parking area. Landscaping of any car park should use exotic tree species which pick up the existing plant groupings in the immediate locality and are associated with the historic planting in the area.
- Whether the land is developed in a way that minimises any detrimental impact on the existing character of the area.

- Whether buildings and works are set back reasonable distances from property boundaries to provide for present and future planting and landscaping.
- Whether the height of buildings is controlled to ensure that they retain an inconspicuous profile and do not dominate the landscape.
- Whether the density of development in the area is controlled to ensure that a reasonable part of the land is available for tree planting, landscaping and outdoor open space uses.
- Any Design or Development Guidelines prepared for the site.
- Any conservation management plan prepared for the site.
- Relevant landscape plans and management requirements.
- Relevant servicing plans and infrastructure requirements.
- *The Former Mayday Hills Hospital, Albert Road, Beechworth, Conservation Management Plan Review, Lovell Chen, 2012.*
- The extent to which the building design and siting responds to the characteristics of the site taking into account slope, aspect and existing vegetation as well as the heritage significance of the site.
- The reasons for removing the tree and the practicalities of alternative options that do not require removal of any trees.
- The impact on existing landscaping and the need for additional or replacement plantings.
- The significance of vegetation identified on the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Register of Significant Trees and Councils Significant Tree Register and the potential impact of development on vegetation.