



Dromana

Residential Investigation Areas Report

June 2018

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1 Introduction and Summary

Hansen Partnership has been commissioned by the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) to undertake an investigation of residential character in a number of areas that form part of the Dromana township. The primary purpose of the project is to:

1. Determine whether there is a need for additional neighbourhood character protection; and
2. Recommend changes to the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme, where deemed necessary.

Work to date has involved the following tasks:

1. Background review, including a review of existing policy framework in relation to housing and development, as summarised in part 2 of this report.
2. Discussions with Council Officers and a resident focus group to gain an initial understanding of key issues and to confirm the boundaries of the investigation areas/precincts.
3. Site analysis work, including street by street inspections, having regard to a number of criteria, including those specified in (former) Planning Practice Note 78. This also included the identification of sub-areas within the two main precincts. Map 1 below indicates the location of the precincts and sub-areas referred to in this report.
4. Assessment of the elements, and relationships between elements, contributing to the existing character of the Dromana investigation areas.
5. The formulation of draft statements of preferred neighbourhood character for each area and the identification of potential threats.



Map 1 Dromana investigation area precincts

Initial focus group discussions, primarily with representatives of the Association for Building Community in Dromana (ABCD) group, indicated a significant level of agreement with the assessment by Council officers and our own initial assessment regarding the appropriate focus for the investigation area review, concentrating mainly on:

- a) The area at the interface between the McCrae residential area and the area of “Old Dromana” to the south west of Foote Street – Dromana Landscape (sub precinct 1a)
- b) Part of the older township area between Foote Street and Arthur Street – Dromana Township (sub precinct 1b).
- c) An area located above (to the south of) the Freeway reservation – Dromana Hillside (Precinct 2).

The strong strategic policy directions regarding the protection of neighbourhood character on the Mornington Peninsula, the identification of the elements which contribute to the character of the Dromana investigation areas and concerns regarding the recent amendments to the Residential Zones, have been the major factors in recommending the following planning controls:

Precinct 1 Dromana Bayside Investigation Area

Sub - Precinct 1a Dromana Landscape

- Ensure that residential development responds to the existing character, topography and coastal setting of the area in terms of built form, landscaping and siting.
- Retain a spacious feel that is characterized by garden areas, consistent front building setbacks, limited site coverage, and landscaped areas alongside boundaries.
- Support the retention of existing vegetation, particularly within front setbacks to buildings and along road verges and provide space for onsite landscaping.
- Ensure that new development has proper regard for the established streetscape and development pattern in terms of building scale, height and siting.
- Encourage low permeable timber fencing to a maximum height of 1.2m or no fencing at all.
- Implementation of an 8m/2 storey height limit.
- Materials to be reflective of Mornington Peninsula’s coastal environments including timber and weatherboard products, natural stone and light muted tones.
- An average area of all lots within a subdivision of no less than 1,500m², able to contain a rectangle with minimum dimensions of 25m x 35m.

Sub - Precinct 1b Dromana Township

- Ensure that residential development responds to the existing character, topography and coastal setting of the area in terms of built form, landscaping and siting.
- Retain a spacious feel that is characterized by garden areas, consistent front building setbacks, limited site coverage, and landscaped areas alongside boundaries.
- Support the retention of existing vegetation, particularly within front setbacks to buildings and along road verges and provide space for onsite landscaping. Maintain a coastal landscape character in front setback through native vegetation including a minimum of 1 large canopy tree.
- Encourage low permeable timber fencing to a maximum height of 1.2m or no fencing at all.
- Implementation of an 8m/2 storey height limit.
- Materials to be reflective of Mornington Peninsula’s coastal environments including timber and weatherboard products, natural stone and light muted tones.
- Retention of rear setback to preferred minimum of 5m.

Precinct 2: Dromana Hillside Investigation Area

- Ensure that residential development responds to the existing character, topography and coastal setting of the area in terms of built form, landscaping and siting.
- Retain a spacious feel that is characterized by garden areas, consistent front building setbacks, limited site coverage, and landscaped areas alongside boundaries.
- Encourage low permeable timber fencing to a maximum height of 1.2m or no fencing at all.
- Implementation of an 8m/2 storey height limit.
- Support the retention of existing vegetation, particularly within front setbacks to buildings and along road verges and provide space for onsite landscaping.
- Materials to be reflective of Mornington Peninsula's coastal environments including timber and weatherboard products, natural stone and light muted tones.
- A minimum subdivision lot size of 650m², with provision to consider no more than 2 dwellings for every 720m² of site area.

It is acknowledged that direct consultation with landowners and residents has been limited to date and this report is in part intended to facilitate further consultation on the form and content of new planning controls for the area.

The MPSC will need to consider the most appropriate future process in this regard, noting that in the case of the Bittern and Mount Martha investigation areas a planning scheme amendment was exhibited in conjunction with the release of the draft investigation area report, providing for community submissions and review by an independent panel appointed by the Minister for Planning.

2 Policy Context

2.1 Plan Melbourne

Plan Melbourne (March 2017) is the State government planning strategy for the Melbourne metropolitan region which has been prepared to guide residential, commercial and industrial development throughout Victoria (in conjunction with a number of Regional Growth Plans) over the next 35 years.

Plan Melbourne identifies five (5) sub-regions across metropolitan Melbourne. The Mornington Peninsula is included as part of the Southern Sub-region. Dromana is not specifically mentioned in Plan Melbourne, but is affected by both the general policies and those that apply specifically to the Mornington Peninsula.

In terms of population growth and housing demand, Plan Melbourne 2017 anticipates an increase in the population of metropolitan Melbourne by 3.4 million people over the next 34 years (to 2051), growing from approximately 4.5 million in 2015 to almost 8 million. During the same period, Victoria's total population will reach 10.1 million.

Key objectives in Plan Melbourne that relate to housing may be summarised as follows:

- The need to accommodate projected population growth – resulting from natural increase and migration (from interstate and overseas). This indicates a need for an additional 1.55 million dwellings in the metropolitan Melbourne region by 2051.
- Support for a polycentric metropolitan structure i.e. the distribution of growth through a hierarchy of centres including Metropolitan Activity Centres (such as Frankston and Dandenong), major health and education based precincts (such as Berwick), National Innovation and Employment Clusters (such as Clayton/Monash) and State Significant Industrial Precincts (such as the Port of Hastings). At the same time there remains a strong focus on the development of central Melbourne to become Australia's largest commercial and residential centre by 2050.
- Deliver more housing close to jobs and public transport – Plan Melbourne 2017 includes an “aspiration” to provide 70% of new housing through housing consolidation /re-development within existing areas, particularly inner and middle ring suburbs.
- Avoid continuing urban sprawl – strong support for protection of the existing Urban Growth Boundary and Green Wedge areas. Plan Melbourne 2017 estimates that there is at least 20 years supply of existing residentially zoned “greenfield” land.
- Support for the 20 minute neighbourhood principle – i.e. so that people are able to access most daily needs within a 20 minute journey – by walking, cycling, riding or public transport – as an indicator of liveability and reduced car dependency.
- Increase the supply of social and affordable housing
- Provide greater choice and diversity of housing

As noted above, Plan Melbourne 2017 emphasises the need to accommodate population growth and increase housing supply within established residential areas with better access to employment, facilities and transport. In this context a previous direction to apply the Neighbourhood Residential Zone over 50 % of all established residential areas has been removed. The report notes that:

To provide greater consistency and certainty about growth in the suburbs and the built form outcomes being sought, the residential zones have been reviewed and updated to provide consistent and strengthened mandatory height controls and building coverage requirements. This will provide greater certainty to communities about the level of development that can occur and enable Melbourne to develop in a way that is sustainable and does not detract from the character of the suburbs.

In terms of the distribution of future housing demand, Plan Melbourne 2017 projects a demand for approximately 310,000 additional dwellings in the Southern Region between 2016 and 2051 – and proposes that 195,000 new dwellings should be accommodated through infill development within established areas and 105,000 through green field development. The implementation plan released with Plan Melbourne 2017 proposes the development of Regional Housing Plans by the end of 2018 to determine the distribution of future housing supply at the municipal level.

While this work is yet to be commenced, the Victoria in the Future Projections indicate an increase of 12,128 households and 15,858 dwellings on the Peninsula between 2016 and 2031, and an ongoing growth rate of approximately 1.1%. This suggests a housing demand in order of 25,000 – 30,000 dwellings to 2051.

Work by the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council indicates this level of supply can be met under existing planning controls – although there is a level of uncertainty associated with:

- The rate at which sites in established areas may become available/economically viable for re-development.
- The yield of new housing from infill development i.e. the density of re-development.
- The rate at which holiday homes may be converted to permanent occupancy.

It is also critically important to recognise that projections based on current patterns and previous trends alone do not determine appropriate planning policies – there must also be consideration of the objectives and role of different areas as part of the overall strategic planning framework. In this context, the designation of the Mornington Peninsula under Plan Melbourne 2017 as one of four areas where a Localised Planning Statement should apply is highly significant and the details of this Statement are outlined below.

2.2 State Planning Policy Framework

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) addresses strategic issues of State importance. It lists policies under ten headings – settlement, metropolitan Melbourne, environmental and landscape values, environmental risks, natural resource management, built environment and heritage, housing, economic development, transport and infrastructure.

Given the wide range and, at times, potentially conflicting policy objectives, planning authorities and responsible authorities are advised to endeavor to integrate the range of policies relevant to the issues to be determined and balance conflicting objectives in favour of “net community benefit and sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations”.

The following sections provide a brief overview of the main SPPF policies relating to planning for housing and neighbourhood character, but in no way cover all elements of the SPPF, which is available on-line: <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/vpps>. The policies are outlined in a different order to the way in which they appear in the SPPF in order to provide a more direct link with the local policy framework which applies specifically to the Mornington Peninsula.

SETTLEMENT (11)

Urban growth (11.02 -1)

The SPPF aims to ensure a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, retail, industrial, recreational, institutional and other community uses. In this context, the SPPF includes the strategy to plan to accommodate projected population growth over at least a 15 year period and provide clear direction on the locations where growth should occur. There is a particular focus on activity centres and promoting a diversity of housing types at higher densities in and around activity centres.

The SPPF specifies that residential land supply will be considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town-by-town basis.

The SPPF also states that planning for urban growth should consider:

- Opportunities for the consolidation, redevelopment and intensification of existing urban areas.
- Neighbourhood character and landscape considerations.
- The limits of land capability and natural hazards and environmental quality.
- Service limitations and the costs of providing infrastructure.
- The definition of clear boundaries around coastal settlements to ensure that growth in coastal areas is planned and coastal values protected, and that development on ridgelines, primary coastal dune systems and low lying coastal areas is avoided (11.05-6).

METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE (11.06)

Housing Choice (11.06 -2)

In accordance with Plan Melbourne 2017 the SPPF seeks to:

- Maintain a permanent urban growth boundary around Melbourne to create a more consolidated, sustainable city.
- Facilitate increased housing in the established areas to create a city of 20 minute neighbourhoods close to existing services, jobs and public transport.
- Direct new housing to areas with appropriate infrastructure.
- Deliver more housing closer to jobs and public transport.
- Allow for a spectrum of minimal, incremental and high change residential areas that balance the need to protect valued areas with the need to ensure choice and growth in housing.
- Provide certainty about the scale of growth in the suburbs by prescribing appropriate height and site coverage provisions for different areas.
- Support a cooler Melbourne by greening urban areas, buildings, transport corridors and open spaces to create an urban forest.(11.06-6)

HOUSING (16)

Location of residential development (16.01-2)

One of the objectives of the SPPF is to locate new housing in or close to activity centres and in urban renewal precincts and on sites that offer good access to jobs, services and transport. Strategies to achieve this objective include:

- Increasing the proportion of new housing in designated locations within established urban areas and reduce the share of new dwellings in greenfield and dispersed development areas.
- Encouraging higher density housing development on sites that are well located in relation to jobs, services and public transport.
- Identifying opportunities for increased residential densities to help consolidate urban areas.

Housing Diversity (16.01-4) and Housing Affordability (16.01-5)

This section of the SPPF seeks to increase housing diversity while making efficient use of services and infrastructure. There is policy support to increase the supply of housing in existing urban areas and in particular to locate housing in or close to activity centres, employment corridors, and public transport. A strategic direction under this clause is to ensure housing stock matches changing demand by widening housing choice, particularly in the middle and outer suburbs (16.01-4).

In terms of housing affordability (16.01-5), an objective of the SPPF is to deliver more affordable housing closer to jobs, transport and services. The Framework proposes to improve housing affordability by:

Ensuring land supply continues to be sufficient to meet demand.

- Increasing choice in housing type, tenure and cost to meet the needs of households as they move through life cycle changes and to support diverse communities.
- Promoting good housing and urban design to minimise negative environmental impacts and keep down costs for residents and the wider community.
- Encouraging a significant proportion of new development to be affordable for households on low to moderate incomes.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE (15)

This section of the SPPF seeks to promote good urban design and to create high quality urban environments that are safe and functional and to protect cultural identity, neighbourhood character and sense of place. The clause encourages the protection and enhancement of the public realm, including pedestrian spaces, streets, squares, parks and walkways, and the protection and enhancement of key landmarks and vistas.

The SPPF states that planning should achieve high quality urban design and architecture that:

- Contributes positively to local urban character and sense of place.
- Reflects the particular characteristics, aspirations and cultural identity of the community.
- Enhances liveability, diversity, amenity and safety of the public realm.
- Promotes attractiveness of towns and cities within broader strategic contexts.
- Minimises detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.

To ensure these outcomes, the Framework includes directions to:

- Require development to respond to its context in terms of urban character, cultural heritage, natural features, surrounding landscape and climate.
- Require development to include a site analysis and descriptive statement explaining how the proposed development responds to the site and its context.
- Ensure sensitive landscape areas such as the bays and coastlines are protected and that new development does not detract from their natural quality.
- Encourage retention of existing vegetation or revegetation as part of subdivision and development proposals

In the context of the current review of Dromana's residential planning controls, the issue of neighbourhood character is particularly relevant and this section of the SPPF states that it is a strategy to:

- Ensure development responds and contributes to existing sense of place and cultural identity.
- Ensure development recognises distinctive urban forms and layout and their relationship to landscape and vegetation.
- Ensure development responds to its context and reinforces special characteristics of local environment and place by emphasising:
 - The underlying natural landscape character.
 - The heritage values and built form that reflect community identity.
 - The values, needs and aspirations of the community

Distinctive areas of state significance (11.05-2)

The objective of this clause is to protect and enhance the valued attributes of the distinctive areas of the Bellarine Peninsula, Macedon Ranges, Mornington Peninsula and the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges, with the supporting strategies to:

- Recognise the significant geographic and physical features of these areas.
- Protect the identified key values and activities of these areas.
- Support use and development where it enhances the valued characteristics of these areas.

Mornington Peninsula Localised Planning Statement (July 2014)

As the most recent and highest level of State policy specifically relating to the Mornington Peninsula, the Localised Planning Statement, which was endorsed by the State government in July 2014, is considered to be particularly important in determining the appropriate application of the various policy directions and strategies. It is an overarching policy statement that clearly identifies that:

- The Peninsula has a role that is complementary but clearly distinct from metropolitan Melbourne and designated growth areas;
- There are ever increasing pressures and demands placed on the Mornington Peninsula. For this reason it is necessary to put in place clear policy directions
- The Peninsula is to remain clearly separate from metropolitan Melbourne, with the Peninsula maintaining its settlement patterns;
- There is acknowledgement that Mornington Peninsula will need to set its own planning priorities, which are different from other areas; and
- The statement provides support for a strong land-use planning framework, including the use of mandatory provisions, to provide certainty for landholders and the community over time.

The Planning Statement includes the following relevant provisions:

- The Mornington Peninsula will not accommodate major population growth and the existing Urban Growth Boundary and Green Wedge rural area will be maintained.
- Urban development, including residential and low density residential development in whatever form, will be limited to areas within the Urban Growth Boundary.
- The townships of the Mornington Peninsula are expected to accommodate at most moderate and generally low levels of housing growth, with many smaller towns and villages intended to accommodate very limited further development. Special regard should be given to the provision for appropriate housing growth in the Western Port area, having regard to employment growth over time associated with the further development of the Port of Hastings and the opportunities this provides.
- Development within the Urban Growth Boundary, whether within residential, commercial or other areas, will be of a type and scale that maintains the existing valued character of each town or settlement, or supports a change to a preferred future character that is clearly established through community consultation and the adoption of a relevant local area plan. In the assessment of any planning permit application, priority will be given to any local character statement or policy adopted by the responsible authority.
- The character and functions of the towns and villages will be protected and there will be no linear development between towns along the coast or expansion into the areas between townships. Development within each settlement will only be of a scale and character appropriate to the role, function and location of that settlement.

These provisions highlight that future housing growth on the Mornington Peninsula must be tempered by policies which protect the valued and special characteristics of the Peninsula's landscapes, townships and neighbourhoods. The provisions of the Planning Statement clearly indicate that on the Mornington Peninsula, in most cases the protection of character (or ensuring that development is in accordance with a defined future character) will be given policy precedence over providing additional housing supply or consolidation policies per se.

2.3 Local Planning Policy Framework

The Local Planning Policy Framework contains the municipal strategic statement (MSS) and local planning policies. This framework presents a vision for its community and other stakeholders and identifies long term directions about land use and development in the municipality. The MSS includes the following sections:

Clause 21.02 Profile of the Mornington Peninsula states: The Mornington Peninsula is not a designated urban growth area and the limitation of urban development on the Peninsula is consistent with State policies for the Peninsula that have emphasised environmental and landscape conservation, the role of the Peninsula as a recreational area and the potential of Western Port for deep water port activities. In this context the Peninsula has a different but complementary role to other parts of Melbourne in meeting the overall needs of the community.

Strategic challenges are highlighted in Clause 21.03 and include:

The need for a strategic framework emphasises reinforcing the Peninsula's boundary, and the "green break" between the Peninsula and metropolitan Melbourne. It also notes the importance of establishing clear boundaries for all townships and settlements on the Peninsula – directing future growth to selected centres, while containing other townships and villages in order to maintain their environmental values and community life styles. Decisions regarding the distribution and level of future population on the Peninsula are seen as central to achieving Council's vision. In this context, the existing hierarchy of towns and villages, each with a distinctive character and capable of meeting the needs of residents and visitors is considered to be one of the Peninsula's main strengths.

Future township growth notes that the Peninsula continues to experience strong residential growth and increasing population. There are substantial areas set aside for new development, as well as the pool of vacant lots and holiday houses, that may be developed and redeveloped for permanent occupancy. The increasing population builds the economic base to support town centres and other economic activity, but also brings with it demands for services, facilities and infrastructure.

Local area character identifies the importance of character and the need to facilitate greater housing diversity in response to changing housing requirements. This is particularly the case where new housing proposals impact on the existing residential fabric. When considering housing diversity it is important to:

- Identify and evaluate the factors which contribute to the character of different residential areas within the Shire;
- Establish an equitable planning framework that can address the cumulative impact of development decisions on local areas (the concept of shared amenity), as well assessment of individual sites; and
- Ensure adequate recognition of infrastructure limits and environmental capacity.

Clause 21.06 provides an overview of the Strategic Framework and the Peninsula's Settlement Pattern stating inter alia:

The major towns of the Peninsula, including Mornington, Somerville, Hastings, Dromana and Rosebud provide access to services, employment and recreational opportunities for the majority of the Shire's residents and visitors. It is important to strengthen these major centres by consolidating future population growth within their defined growth boundaries.... Adequate land has been provided within defined growth areas of these major townships to accommodate more than 20 years demand at current rates of housing growth, without consideration of the potential for higher density infill development or the conversion of existing holiday homes to permanent occupancy.

Although Dromana is referred to in this Clause only Mornington, Hastings and Rosebud are designated as major towns (being major activity centres), while Somerville and Dromana are included in a lower level of the township hierarchy, being large townships.

Clause 21.07 – Clause 21.10 provides more detailed commentary on the key strategic issues for the Peninsula, with **Clause 21.07** relating to Guiding future township development:

Clause 21.07-1 Housing and integrated local area planning identifies the following relevant key issues for the Shire include:

- The distribution of demographic and household characteristics throughout the Municipality is very uneven and it is important to consider the current and likely future population profile of particular areas when planning for service and facilities, and providing for housing diversity, and
- Provision for housing diversity is necessary to cater for the changing housing needs of current and future communities. This demand may be accommodated with less disruption in newly developing areas.

Strategies include:

- Direct growth to major townships to give these towns the population base necessary to support a wider range of infrastructure, facilities and services and to encourage the development of a stronger employment base.
- Plan and coordinate the development of townships having regard to the surrounding environment, the character and functions of the particular settlement.
- Provide for the development of greater housing diversity in new growth areas and through appropriate consolidation within established areas, having regard to:
 - The function of each township;
 - Existing and projected population characteristics;
 - Environmental capacity and principles of best practice environmental management;
 - The available and accessibility of services and infrastructure;
 - The capacity of local infrastructure systems and roadways; and
 - The character of the neighbourhood and heritage significance of the site or precinct.

This Clause also states, in relation to implementation:

- Ensuring that appropriate areas of land are zoned for residential, commercial and industrial activities to reflect a balance between current and likely future needs and the role of specific townships in the Peninsula's hierarchy of towns and villages.
- Applying the General Residential Zone and Neighbourhood Residential Zone to the major areas set aside for future residential development.

This statement appears to have been translated at the time the new residential zones were introduced i.e. replacing reference to the Residential 1 Zone with GRZ and NRZ, although the use of the NRZ to identify "major areas for future residential development" is questionable.

Clause 21.07-2 Local area character provides an overview of pressures on the Peninsula that relate to the protection of local area character. It notes that there is continuing demand for new housing on the Peninsula and, as with the rest of Melbourne, a changing demographic profile in some areas that may be reflected in greater demand for medium density housing. It acknowledges that the availability of a range of housing may also enable people with different housing needs at different stages of their lives to remain in an area and maintain community contacts.

However, there is concern that in some areas the cumulative effect of market driven changes may adversely affect the features of residential environments which are valued by existing residents. It is therefore critical to identify areas where change to the residential environment may be both appropriate and desirable, areas where some change is possible without adverse impact and areas where minimal change is appropriate. One of the key challenges in this process is to identify local area character.

The introduction to this Clause states that:

The concept of local area character is still in the process of being defined and translated into operative planning principles and provisions. However, planning on the Peninsula has sought to reinforce the sense of place associated with different townships, and different areas within townships, recognising that this is one of the things that make the Peninsula special and that it is highly valued by residents and visitors. To this end, efforts have been made to maintain the relationship between townships, coastal areas and rural landscapes by containing expansion and preserving the non-urban areas between and around townships...

It is clear that the extent of site coverage has a direct effect on the ability to retain or establish site vegetation and that the ability to retain a "bushland" or "woodland" setting is often dependent on retaining larger lot sizes. It is therefore important to define requirements for site- and area-responsive design—design that integrates subdivision and development with the natural landform and vegetation and recognises the importance of existing townscapes and streetscapes.

In this context, the key issues identified by this clause are as follows:

- There is a continuing strong demand for housing on the Peninsula, with changing demographic and housing demand profiles in some areas;
- It is appropriate to accommodate demand for greater diversity of housing to the extent that is compatible with the achievement of other planning objectives for the Peninsula; and
- Limits need to be clearly established to avoid the loss of critical values, including the distinctive character of some of the Shire's existing residential areas.

The objective relating to Local Area Character is to ensure that the design and intensity of new residential subdivision and development is site and area responsive. Strategies to achieve this objective include:

- Identify areas of distinctive character based on land form, environmental, heritage or building and subdivision design elements
- Require site and location responsive design in the subdivision of land and in the siting and design of buildings and other development. Ensure that proposed subdivision and development within existing townships demonstrates regard to:
 - Environmental features and environmental capability.
 - The retention of native vegetation of local provenance and other existing vegetation.
 - The established residential fabric.
 - Sites and areas of heritage significance.
 - Maintaining the balance between open space, vegetation and building density.
 - The landform and avoiding extensive or excessive excavation or landfill.
 - Building profiles that complement the natural topography of the site.
 - Energy conservation.
 - The relationship between the intensity of land use, traffic circulation, and parking requirements.
 - The capacity of local streets and safe pedestrian movement.
 - The provision of appropriate landscaping and the capacity of drainage systems and other infrastructure.

The implementation section sets out a range of actions, including the following, which are relevant to this report:

- Utilising land use zoning to identify the intended township boundaries and to maintain the relationship between townships and the surrounding rural and coastal landscapes.
- Applying the General Residential Zone and Neighbourhood Residential Zone in combination with Development Design Overlays to recognise areas of greater sensitivity where the design of development must respect particular locational, environmental, infrastructure or landscape factors and the limited capacity of these areas to absorb further development.
- Utilising Design and Development Overlays to identify a density of development which is considered to be consistent with maintaining the character and environmental values of specific areas - having regard to the potential cumulative impact of higher density infill and site redevelopment within established areas.
- Providing siting, design and height provisions within Design and Development Overlays to encourage site responsive design.
- Applying specific Environmental Significance, Vegetation Protection and Heritage Overlays within parts of the township areas, where adequate information is available, in order to ensure appropriate site responsive design.
- Recognising the locational advantage of sites within walking distance (approximately 400 metres) of commercial activity centres for medium density housing and redevelopment, subject to consideration of environmental, township character and infrastructure factors.
- Requiring site analysis and design response plans, where appropriate, as part of applications for single dwellings in areas of greater sensitivity
- Requiring development plans based on a site analysis and design response plan, as part of subdivision applications in areas of greater sensitivity.
- Requiring all proposals for major site development or redevelopment, including those involved in the disposal of public land, to be based on a comprehensive site analysis conducted in conjunction with extensive community consultation.
- Preparing a more detailed Housing Strategy for the Mornington Peninsula, which will provide a clear definition of those areas where Council supports different degrees of change in response to anticipated housing demand.
- Undertaking a Local Area Character Study to refine the methodology of assessment and provide the basis for development of performance based principles and provisions, aimed at promoting excellence in design outcomes.

2.4 Zones and Overlays

Design and Development Overlay Controls

As noted in the summary of the relevant policies, the Mornington Peninsula relies on the application of Design and Development Overlays to provide detailed development guidance and control character outcomes across the Shire.

At present there are 28 individual DDOs (local schedules to the “parent” DDO Clause 43.02) that apply across the Shire, reflective of the varied environmental and development conditions at play.

The first seven DDO’s effectively form a character typology that is applied to various residential areas on the Peninsula. These may be summarised as follows:

DDO Type	Key features
No DDO (ResCode only)	predominantly around the Major Activity Centres – but also applies to smaller townships on the eastern Peninsula
DDO 1 - Township Design	including township areas adjacent to the foreshore/coast – no specified minimum lot size.
DDO 2 - Bayside and Village Design	existing lot sizes generally greater than 650sqm – min subdivision 1,300sqm (with provision to consider dual occupancy on lots of 1,300sqm).
DDO3 – Coast and Landscape Design	existing lot sizes generally greater than 820sqm – min lot area now 1,500sqm.
DDO 4 - Environmental Design	existing lot sizes generally greater than 2000sqm – min lot area in new subdivision 2,500sqm
DDO5 - Low Density Wildcoast Protection Area	lot sizes generally greater than 5000sqm
DDO6 - Low Density Landscape	lot sizes generally greater than 1 hectare
DDO7 - Low Density Environmental	lot sizes generally greater than 2 hectares

The Dromana investigation areas are currently either within DDO1 or are not included in a DDO.

DDOs 2 – 5, provide for increasing minimum mandatory lot sizes, which generally reflect existing subdivision/development patterns and the increasing dominance of the landscape setting in influencing neighbourhood character.

DDO 1 Township Design incorporates a number of objectives that relate largely to residential areas where the landscape setting, topography and vegetation cover is a less dominant characteristic than in those areas included in DDO2 - Bayside and Village Design or DDO3 - Coast and Landscape Design.

The objectives of DDO 1 include the need for new proposals to have regard for the existing streetscape and development pattern, specifically height, scale and siting. DDO1 specifies both General requirements which should be met and Mandatory requirements which must be met.

There is no explicit density control under DDO1, relying on the Statewide provisions of Clause 54 – 56 (Rescode) however there is a mandatory height limit: A building must have a maximum building height of no more than 10 metres and must contain no more than 2 storeys above natural ground level, with some exemptions for non-residential buildings, or those covered by a Development Plan Overlay, where a different height limit may be specified.

DDO2 does not currently apply to areas within the Dromana township, but does apply in areas which are arguably comparable in terms of landform and development pattern. The Objectives of DDO2 include to:

- Ensure that the design of subdivision and housing is responsive to the environment, landform, site conditions and character of coastal and bayside residential areas and rural villages.
- Recognise areas where substantial vegetation cover is a dominant visual and environmental feature of the local area by ensuring site areas are large enough to accommodate development while retaining natural or established vegetation cover and to provide substantial areas for new landscaping and open space.
- Ensure that new development has proper regard for the established streetscape and development pattern in terms of building height, scale and siting.
- Protect shared viewlines where reasonable and practical.

The provisions of DDO2 include some significant differences from DDO1, including a mandatory height limit of 8 metres (or two storeys); and minimum lot size requirement (of 1,300sqm) and a control on the number of dwellings per lot (1 dwelling per lot), but with an ability to consider (integrated) dual occupancy development on lots with an area greater than 1300sqm.

DDO3 (Coast and Landscape Design) applies to areas where the landscape setting is a dominant feature, primarily in smaller coastal villages, hillsides and clifftop areas and applies to parts of the Dromana township e.g. on the border with McCrae and the hillside area south of the Freeway reservation.

This DDO control has a number of design objectives, including:

- To ensure that the design of subdivision and housing is responsive to the environment, landform, site conditions and character of coastal villages, hillsides and clifftop areas.
- 'to recognise areas of substantial vegetation cover is a dominant visual and environmental feature of the local area by ensuring that site areas are large enough to accommodate development while retaining natural or established vegetation cover and to provide substantial areas for new landscaping and open space' and
- To ensure that new development has proper regard for the established streetscape and development pattern in terms of building height, scale and siting.

DDO3 also includes a mandatory maximum height limit of 8m (or two storeys) and a mandatory minimum lot size of 1,500sqm, but with no provision for dual occupancy development.

It may be noted that in addition to the Design and Development Overlays, the MPSC has also adopted a Guide to Site Analysis and Design Response which is intended to be applied by applicants in the design process and by planners in the assessment of applications. A copy of the guide is included as Appendix 1.

Residential Zones

The inclusion of three new residential zones into the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPPs) in 2013 was intended to clarify expectations regarding future development for both the community and developers. It provides a hierarchy of zones, with the Residential Growth Zone (RGZ) to be utilised in areas of substantial character change e.g. near to major activity centres, the General Residential Zone (GRZ) within areas where modest development is anticipated in keeping with valued neighbourhood character, and the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) where limited change is proposed.

The MPSC put forward proposed zone conversions as part of Amendment C179 in March 2014, including the use of the NRZ where existing DDO controls were in place. For the most part, the proposals of the MPSC were accepted by the Residential Zones Standing Advisory Committee in their (June 2014) report; however due to the structure of the NRZ at the time it was not possible to effectively translate the existing subdivision controls into the new zone format. In this context, the (former) Minister for Planning applied the GRZ as the blanket translation of the Residential 1 Zone when the new provisions were approved in September 2014. No land on the Mornington Peninsula has thus far been allocated to the Residential Growth Zone.

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Subsequently, in November 2015 the (new) State government established the Managing Residential Development Advisory Committee (MRDAC) to review the implementation of the new residential zones and to review the residential zone provisions. The State government's response to the MRDAC report was released in March 2017 and significant changes to the residential zones were also introduced. The following sections provide an overview of the current zones – forming part of the “tool box” for establishing appropriate planning controls for Dromana.

General Residential Zone

This zone is to be utilised where there is an expectation for modest levels of growth. It provides for incremental levels of change and there is a clear expectation in the purpose of the zone that neighbourhood character will be respected. However, the March 2017 amendments removed one of the original key zone purposes, which was: To implement neighbourhood character policy and adopted neighbourhood character guidelines. Following the amendments in March 2017 the purposes of the GRZ are:

- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies
- To encourage development that respects the neighbourhood character of the area
- To provide a diversity of housing types and moderate housing growth in locations offering good access to services and transport.
- To allow educational, recreational, religious, community and a limited range of other non-residential uses to serve local community needs in appropriate locations.

Following the amendments in March 2017 the GRZ includes the following key elements:

- A (local) schedule to the zone may contain neighbourhood character objectives to be achieved for the area
- An application to subdivide land that creates a vacant lot capable of development for a dwelling or residential building must ensure that each lot created contains the minimum garden area (see below).
- There is no provision in the GRZ to set a minimum lot size requirement.
- Where a vacant lot less than 400sqm is created, that lot must contain at least 25 percent of the lot as garden area.
- Minimum garden area requirement - whether or not a planning permit is required for the construction or extension of a dwelling or residential building on a lot, a lot must provide the minimum garden area at ground level as set out in the following table:

Lot Size	Minimum percentage of a lot set aside as garden area
400 – 500sqm	25%
501 – 650sqm	30%
Above 650sqm	35%

- If no maximum building height or maximum number of storeys is specified in a schedule to the zone the building height must not exceed 11m; and the building must contain no more than 3 storeys at any point (subject to some exemptions. A local schedule cannot apply a height requirement more restrictive than the default standard.
- There is no maximum number of dwellings on a lot specified, or able to be specified within the local schedule i.e. development density is effectively determined through Clause 54 – 56 (ResCode) and the new garden area requirements.
- Variations to ResCode Standards can be included in the schedule, where strategically justified. Such changes are not mandatory provisions, but are put in place to indicate the type of development response that would better meet neighbourhood character objectives.

Neighbourhood Residential Zone

The NRZ is the zone used in areas where there are overriding character values or other development limiting factors that indicate the area will undergo limited change.

Following the March 2017 amendments, the purposes of the NRZ are to:

- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- To recognise areas of predominantly single and double storey residential development.
- To manage and ensure that development respects the identified neighbourhood character, heritage, environmental or landscape characteristics.
- To allow educational, recreational, religious, community and a limited range of other nonresidential uses to serve local community needs in appropriate locations.

Two of the previous zone purposes have been deleted:

- To limit opportunities for increased residential development
- To implement neighbourhood character policy and adopted neighbourhood character guidelines

Following the amendments in March 2017 the NRZ includes the following key elements:

- A (local) schedule to the zone **must** contain the neighbourhood, heritage, environment or landscape character objectives to be achieved for the area.
- An application to subdivide land that creates a vacant lot capable of development for a dwelling or residential building, must ensure that each lot created contains the minimum garden area (see below).
- A schedule to this zone may specify a minimum lot size to subdivide land. Each lot must be at least the area specified for the land, except where an application to subdivide land is made to create lots each containing an existing dwelling or car parking space
- Where a vacant lot less than 400sqm is created, that lot must contain at least 25 percent of the lot as garden area.
- Minimum garden area requirement - whether or not a planning permit is required for the construction or extension of a dwelling or residential building on a lot, a lot must provide the minimum garden area at ground level as set out in the following table:

Lot Size	Minimum percentage of a lot set aside as garden area
400 – 500sqm	25%
501 – 650sqm	30%
Above 650sqm	35%

- If no maximum building height or maximum number of storeys is specified in a schedule to the zone the building height must not exceed 9m; and the building must contain no more than 2 storeys at any point. Building height in areas liable to inundation is measured from the minimum floor height determined by the relevant drainage authority. A local schedule cannot apply a height requirement more restrictive than the default standard.
- The previous limitation on the number of dwellings that could be constructed on an existing lot (with a default of two dwellings) has been removed i.e. development density is now effectively determined through Clause 54 – 56 (ResCode) and the new garden area requirements.
- Variations to ResCode Standards can be included in the schedule, where strategically justified. Such changes are not mandatory provisions, but are put in place to indicate the type of development response that would better meet neighbourhood character objectives.

2.5 Planning Practice Note 78 (PPN78)

Planning Practice Note (PPN) 78 'Applying the Residential Zones' was released by the Department of Environment Planning and Infrastructure at the same time as the "new" residential zones in 2013. It was intended to provide assistance to Councils in determining the appropriate application of the zones. The PPN states

'In deciding which residential zone should apply, the following principles should be considered:

- *The zone should support and give effect to the SPPF.*
- *The zone should broadly support all relevant policy areas in the MSS.*
- *The rationale for applying the zone should be clearly discernible in the LPPF.*
- *The zone should be applied in a way that is consistent with its purpose.*
- *The zone should give effect to any adopted housing strategy*
- *A balanced approach being utilised, promoting residential growth, moderate residential change and limited residential change to provide outcomes which achieve a reasonable housing choice and diversity in a municipality.*
- *The requirements of any applicable Minister's direction must be met.'*

It also includes criteria for applying the zones, as set out in Appendix 2

With the release of the updated residential zones in March 2017, PPN 78 has been withdrawn, pending a review of the Practice Note and Ministerial Direction. It is expected that a new Practice Note and/or Ministerial Direction will be completed by mid-2017. However, it is considered that PPN 78 still expresses appropriate criteria for the assessment of residential areas and this framework has in part been utilized in developing the assessment of the Dromana Investigation areas.

2.6 Summary

The previous sections have endeavored to provide an overview of the main policy considerations and planning scheme tools that are relevant to consideration of the Dromana residential investigation areas. While there are many themes and issues to consider some of the key points may be summarised as follows:

- At the State level, the ability to accommodate demand for future housing in appropriate locations, with good access to employment, services and public transport (e.g. 20 minute neighborhoods) is a key planning objective.
- The State Government seeks to limit the outward expansion of metropolitan Melbourne and pursue “urban consolidation” i.e. achieving a greater proportion of housing supply through re-development within existing established areas, which often have better access to employment, services and public transport than fringe locations. It is also noted that there is an estimated 20 years supply of zoned “green field” land.
- The implementation of Plan Melbourne includes a commitment to the preparation of Regional Housing Strategies (and presumably the subsequent preparation of Municipal Housing Strategies) to better define and agree the location of future housing growth. However, the Regional Housing Strategies are not scheduled for completion until the end of 2018.
- The direction towards urban consolidation is reflected in the revised Plan Melbourne and associated changes to the residential zones, which have reduced the limitations on infill development – particularly the previous restriction of no more than two dwellings per existing lot (regardless of lot area) in the NRZ.
- At the same time, the State government has sought to address concerns about site over-development and the impact on green space by introducing new mandatory garden area requirements.
- The new mandatory garden area requirements (ranging from 25 % of the site area to 35% of the site area) do not represent a radical change, given that Rescode already specifies a maximum site coverage of 60% and requires at least 20 % of a site to remain permeable. In this context, the application of the new standards may result in relatively modest increase in onsite garden area, and may not necessarily affect the housing yield achieved on particular sites.
- The limitation on site coverage (through the garden area requirement) may see more pressure for three storey development (to maintain the housing yield and floor area provided in the development of new dwellings). It is uncertain how this will affect the character and amenity of established areas, but the increase in maximum building height in the GRZ arguably this increases the need to consider the existing character of areas and the potential impact of the revised zone provisions.
- The provisions of Plan Melbourne, the Mornington Peninsula Localised Planning Statement and the Local Planning Policy Framework make it clear that although meeting some demand for future housing is an important objective for the Mornington Peninsula, priority must be given to protecting local area character i.e. the character of the Peninsula’s townships and neighbourhoods.
- While many areas are already subject to significant character protections through the Design and Development Overlays, those which either have no existing overlay or are subject only to DDO1 are arguably exposed to significant development pressure – which may be exacerbated by the controls that exist elsewhere (i.e. “directing” growth to areas which lack additional controls).
- Some locations e.g. in proximity to the Major Activity Centres may be appropriate to accommodate these demands and provide for greater housing diversity in well serviced locations – subject to a clear statement of preferred future character. However, other areas may be comparable in terms of landscape and character features to those which are already included in a “stronger” DDO, and therefore would be better/more appropriately included in that DDO – or be subject to some alternative new provision. This is the basis of the current Investigation area study.

3 Assessing and Managing Residential Character

3.1 Neighbourhood Character

Neighbourhood character is subject to a range of interpretations, with varying views on how a neighbourhood should be defined, how to identify and describe the elements which are distinctive about particular areas, whether it should include consideration of social as well as physical characteristics etc.

Planning Practice Note 43 Understanding Neighbourhood Character (DELWP June 2015) states that:

“neighbourhood character is essentially the combination of the public and private realms. Every property, public place or piece of infrastructure makes a contribution, whether great or small. It is the cumulative impact of all these contributions that establishes neighbourhood character ... Understanding how these relationships (between features and characteristics) physically appear on the ground is usually the most important aspect in establishing the character of the area.”

In order to assist land use planning and development decisions the current investigation area study is focused on physical planning elements that are capable of being influenced by planning scheme tools, and includes consideration of both the private realm (i.e. development of private properties) and the public realm (i.e. the streetscape and public land) and how they interact.

Although “amenity” and “neighbourhood character” refer to different values, there is a degree of overlap. In some instances important aspects of character may be considered in terms of providing “shared amenity”. For example, an attractive landscape setting, resulting from a combination of vegetation on public and private land, the design of the street, the scale and setback of buildings etc. may be an aspect of character that most residents of an area share and value. The concept of shared amenity is also important in highlighting the importance of fair “contributions” from those who benefit – often through the implementation of consistent development controls.

In assessing character, how buildings “fit” in their landscape and streetscape context is critical. In many areas, key elements include:

- the formality (or otherwise) of the street space (e.g. the extent to which the street space is formally defined e.g. by a linear (straight line) alignment, a sealed road pavement, kerb and channel , constructed footpaths etc. or is more curvilinear and informal, possibly with wider nature strips which add to the apparent setback of buildings from the road)
- the height, proportions and apparent mass of buildings (which is often linked to the “era” of development and the form of housing e.g. single detached dwellings c.f. apartment blocks),
- the depth of front setbacks and the associated provision of front garden space;
- the relationship between front garden areas and street space i.e. a distinctly difference or an apparent continuation of the street space planting);
- the visual connection between dwellings and the street, including the presence and/or permeability of a front fencing;
- the space around buildings (side setbacks - or lack thereof) – this is expressed in the building pattern along the street – is there a continuous urban “street wall” or greater separation between buildings.
- the provision for road side and onsite parking and the location of garages – the dominance, or otherwise, of car related space.
- the amount and type of vegetation on site, including street trees, front garden vegetation, and canopy trees. This also applies to rear yards where gardens create a “backyard zone” providing a green backdrop.

On the Mornington Peninsula, the existing framework of Design and Development Overlays have been strongly framed around the degree to which topography and vegetation are dominant elements in particular areas.

3.2 Defining Coastal and Bayside Character

Although each place or area is different, some basic character types can be identified.

For example in inner city areas buildings often dominate the character of an area and present a solid wall to the street, producing a “hard” urban character. In contrast, in some areas on the urban fringe, the topography/landform of an area and natural vegetation is a more dominant element, and often links the public realm of the street with the private realm of the private property, producing a “soft” informal bushland character. Areas may be classified by how closely they resemble one or other of these types (albeit with some variations). A “garden” character type is also frequently identified, usually where land form and remnant vegetation are not predominant features, but where site sizes are relatively large and garden space around buildings and landscaping in the streetscape is a key factor. A number of areas on the Mornington Peninsula are referred to as having a “coastal” or “bayside” character. The term “coastal” has been applied generally to refer to areas with a stronger land form influence, while “bayside” often refers to areas near the bay with a flatter topography but which still retain substantial vegetation cover/lower site coverage.

While not easy to define, coastal character is partly a product of landscape/topography, combined with some elements of built form that have become associated with this environment, no doubt influenced by both the era of development and the high level of informal holiday home use that has previously dominated many of these areas.

While this character varies across and within neighbourhoods, and even along single streets, it still makes sense to describe an area as having “coastal character” – often in contrast to concerns regarding “homogenization” and the spread of “suburbia”.

As such, the following factors are considered to be relevant to the description of coastal character and to the assessment of the Dromana investigation areas:

- Protection of the relationship to the coast – maintaining views from developed areas to the coast and also from the coast to the township and the hinterland landscape beyond e.g. such as the backdrop of the Arthur’s Seat hillside. Development should not overwhelm the vista from the foreshore. Retaining breaks in development “street wall” also enables some views from surrounding streets towards the foreshore.
- Development is predominantly low scale –being predominantly single and two storey in height. While there are variations in height (as there are variations in relation to most elements), these variations are still within an established range i.e. one or two storey – but not three or four storeys. Equally front setbacks may vary between 5m to 8m – but very rarely less etc. Variation is in fact an element that contributes to informal character – but occurs within a range which avoids obtrusive development which no longer “fits”.
- Building siting that retains space around building forms; with limited on boundary construction. In the case of Dromana, it is important that development in hillside locations also allows some visual connection between residential streets and the coast.
- Relatively narrow sealed roads within wider road reserves, often retaining/enabling roadside vegetation, and providing a greater setback between the road and the buildings and a greater sense of openness.
- Limited number and width of property crossovers, informal footpaths (in some areas), low traffic volumes, lack of through traffic etc. all combined to add to the sense of “quiet streets”.
- In some areas there are still narrow and/or unsealed roads, with a curvilinear alignment.
- Areas at the front of dwellings often retain vegetation and not dominated by driveways, parking areas and hard surfaces. Crossover and driveway widths relatively narrow (3.5m – 4m). Usually no more than a single property crossover.
- Front fencing often low or permeable – good visual connection between the streetscape and adjacent properties. High screen fencing and walls are unusual and appear out of place.
- Development that includes landscaping that reinforces the informality of existing landscape; retaining and protecting areas of significant vegetation
- Architecture that complement natural features and/or is associated with the coastal setting, rather than buildings with a typical ‘suburban’ appearance or period style replicas.
- The use of timber and natural materials in preference to the traditional suburban use of brickwork and blockwork.

- Buildings that appear to be “sit in the landscape” rather than an appearance of overwhelming mass and weight, that “fill the block”
- Disaggregated/articulated forms with interesting spaces and projections rather than solid bulky structures with blank walls.
- Facades that utilise light, shade and texture rather than smooth, uninterrupted, single coloured surfaces.
- Development that minimises hard surfacing including driveways, and seeks to use materials that are permeable and more in keeping with the coastal setting (crushed gravel etc.).

Parts of Dromana do have a more developed feel, but still display more ‘coastal character’ and less formality than typical suburban areas.

3.3 Existing Character, Expected Change and Preferred Future Character

In considering the importance of character to an area, it is also necessary to have regard to both the need for additional housing supply at the municipal level, the role of particular townships and neighbourhoods in providing new housing and the likelihood of demand for renewal of housing stock. Equally, as areas are converted from predominantly seasonal holiday towns to areas with a more permanent residential population there have been, and will continue to be, associated pressures for change in the built environment

As noted previously, the PPN 78 regarding the application of different zones has been suspended pending a review. However, this PPN did include a range of criteria that indicted the suitability of areas to accommodate future residential development, and are still relevant to finding the balance between respect for neighbourhood character and the provision of adequate future housing supply.

In some cases, even where there is a distinct existing character it may be appropriate to consider some future change and to define the preferred future character of an area.

Arguably, some of the concerns expressed in relation to neighbourhood character relate to the significant differences between the established residential areas, the current forms of new development (which are often more intensive) and the lack of a clear example of the intended overall outcome for an area.

The notion of “emerging character”, where change is simply driven by individual development applications without an overall future vision, provides little basis for confidence, and some poor examples of over-development can generate considerable community concern.

Even in areas where some level of change would not necessarily be opposed there can be strong opposition to “densification”, if this means intrusive development – with substantially greater heights, more bulky built forms, less ancillary “green space” around buildings etc. It is not necessarily the case that the existing built form is strongly valued – but rather it is preferred to the limited alternatives that appear to be offered by the market.

In this context, it is important to recognise that the Mornington Peninsula Planning Statement provides that: development ... will be of a type and scale that maintains the existing valued character of each town or settlement, or supports a change to a preferred future character that is clearly established through community consultation and the adoption of a relevant local area plan. In the assessment of any planning permit application, priority will be given to any local character statement or policy adopted by the responsible authority.

3.4 Respecting Character – Discretionary and Mandatory Provisions

One of the key issues in managing residential character is the degree to which mandatory provisions are necessary and justified.

The state-wide planning scheme provisions 54, 55 and 56 (Rescode) are framed as requiring that the Objectives of each clause must be met, but there is discretion to consider variations to each of the stated standards. Accordingly, these statements and provisions may be viewed as supporting “performance based” planning i.e. particular proposals are assessed in terms of how well they meet objectives rather than being determined by a mandatory standard, and support the use of discretion to consider design proposals on their merits.

Planning Practice Note 28 (July 2004) - Using the neighbourhood character provisions in planning schemes, states that:

In most cases, the application of Clauses 54, 55 and 56 (i.e. Rescode) will be effective in respecting the existing neighbourhood character of an area without the need to supplement these standard provisions with additional local neighbourhood character provisions... Respecting character does not mean preventing change. In simple terms, respect for the character of a neighbourhood means that the development should be designed in response to its context.

Equally Planning Practice Note 43 (June 2015), Understanding Neighbourhood Character states:

In simple terms, respect for the character of a neighbourhood means that the development should try to ‘fit in’. Respecting neighbourhood character does not mean limiting the scope of design interpretation and innovation, or mimicry or pattern book design. Instead, it means designing the development to respond to the features and characteristics identified in the neighbourhood.

However, the new Residential Zones have incorporated mandatory provisions – both in relation to maximum building height, and required minimum garden area, while the Neighbourhood Residential Zone also provides for mandatory minimum lot size controls, although a requirement allowing no more than two dwellings on an existing lot has been deleted. Planning Practice Note 59 – The role of mandatory provisions in planning schemes (DELWP June 2015) states:

“... there will be circumstances where a mandatory provision will provide certainty and ensure a preferable and efficient outcome. Although these circumstances cannot be common practice, they may include areas of high heritage value, strong and consistent character themes, or sensitive environmental locations such as along the coast. A balance must be struck between the benefits of a mandatory provision in the achievement of an objective against any resulting loss of opportunity for flexibility in achieving the objective.”

As noted in the policy review, the Mornington Peninsula Localised Planning Statement specifically foreshadows the use of mandatory controls and standards as part of a strong and consistent planning framework, due to the particular pressures on the Peninsula’s rural landscapes, coasts, towns and villages, and the risk of unintended and unplanned change through cumulative impacts.

This arguably recognises the value of mandatory provisions in areas where there may be high pressure/incentive to “push the envelope” – such as in proposing additional storeys to gain both floorspace and view lines, and where the assessment of proposals on their individual merits may be too open to variation in interpretation. Mandatory provisions provide a strong framework and ability for all landowners to plan their future development with greater certainty.

Equally, there is a concern that some townships on the Peninsula have less ability to “absorb” variation without fundamental changes in character. Due to their relatively small size, a few prominent insensitive developments can have a disproportionate impact and establish a new defacto “standard” for development throughout a residential area. There are sufficient examples to support this concern; particularly in areas where no design overlays (such as the Design and Development Overlay) exist.

In this context, there is often criticism that developers, who are not necessarily residents, have little regard for the cumulative impact of proposals, and mandatory provisions are arguably warranted where there is a high risk of substantial unplanned change in the basic fabric of an area and a need to manage the potential for cumulative impact.

In addition, as noted, some aspects of neighbourhood character may be considered to be a form of shared amenity, and mandatory provisions also ensure reasonably equitable “contributions” from all of the beneficiaries within an area. This becomes particularly acute where there is a risk of new development relying on the character provided by other owners (such as by maintaining larger garden areas and vegetation cover) rather than making adequate provision within the new development itself.

Finally, where there is a significant difference between existing conditions and the default standard under state-wide provisions, and where application of the default standard is likely to have a substantial impact on the character of an area, then there is also an argument to introduce additional mandatory provisions. For example where a default height limit of three storeys would be out of character with predominantly single storey areas – or where existing garden areas are generally much larger than default requirements, then there is an argument for additional control.

It important to recognise that mandatory provisions relating to existing character elements are not necessarily “arbitrary”, in the sense of being random and unrelated to context. Rather, they (can) reflect a standard based on the assessment of a range of existing specific sites. This involves consideration of the existing predominant values (in terms of height, setbacks, site coverage etc.).

It is also important to consider the limit of what standard, if applied on a cumulative basis, would be consistent with an existing or preferred future design outcome i.e. what will fit (and not fit) with that “vision”.

Such a vision might include a green and relatively open streetscape, without individual buildings dominating (through intrusive setbacks or excessive height) and with a sense of space and landscape between and around buildings (as distinct from more urban areas). While this approach emphasizes “fitting in” over “bold expression”, this is to some degree the nature of respecting (shared) character – unless of course the character of an area is based on a collection “bold expressions”.

3.5 The Investigation Area Process

As noted above, the MPSC put forward a proposed conversion of the previous Residential 1 Zone as part of Amendment C179 in March 2014. At that time the Council generally confirmed the Peninsula's housing strategy based on maintaining a strong Urban Growth Boundary, directing future housing growth on the basis of the existing hierarchy of townships and maintaining character controls through Design and Development Overlays. As part of this process a number of "investigation areas" were identified where it was considered that existing planning scheme provisions may be insufficient and a review should be conducted.

The initial residential investigation areas included:

- Mornington – Beleura Hill – Amendment C189 (approved Oct 2016) introduced new DDO provisions
- Mornington East – request for authorisation – rejected by DEWLP – under review
- Mount Martha – Birdrock Avenue precinct – Amendment C189 (approved Oct. 2016) introduced new DDO provisions
- Bittern (Creswell Street area) – Amendment C188 part 2 (approved March 2016) introduced new DDO provisions
- Dromana (precincts) – current report

Equally, current amendments (C209) related to the introduction of the Rosebud and Hastings Major Activity Centre Structure Plans also include new DDO provisions for some residential areas in proximity to the town centres.

In relation to Dromana, initial consideration by the Shire's planning officers identified potential areas for investigation/review, particularly in locations adjacent to areas which are already subject to DDO provisions, where similarities in physical or built form characteristics exist e.g. in terms of hillside land form, development pattern/site coverage, predominant form of housing, location relative to the town centre etc.

With the appointment of the consultants one of the requirements of the brief was to review the boundaries of areas to be investigated. This was undertaken through the street by street character assessment outlined later in this report and having regard to comments received through the initial community consultation (primarily with the ABCD group). This resulted in the definition/confirmation of the areas to be assessed. While there are variations within each of the areas, there is sufficient consistency in the key elements for these to be considered coherent "character precincts".

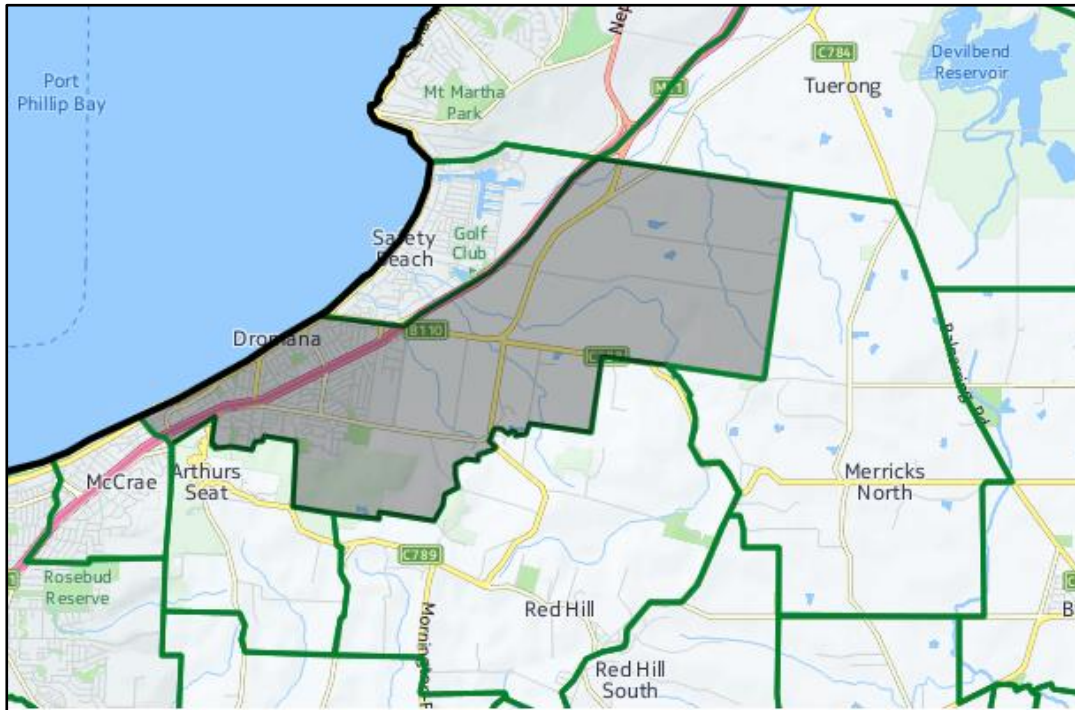
It should be noted, however, that this initial identification process was undertaken while the previous residential zones were in force, and this influenced decisions regarding the areas where there was a need for further investigation. This is particularly important in relation to height limits, where the recent change to the General Residential Zone, increasing the default height limit from 9 metres and two storeys to 11m and 3 storeys is of particular concern. Having regard to the recent changes the areas for further review may need to be revisited.

4 Dromana Snapshot

Dromana is a coastal township on the Mornington Peninsula, located approximately 84km from central Melbourne. It is located on the Port Phillip Bay coastline and is nestled at the foot of Arthur's Seat, which provides an iconic green 'backdrop' for which the town is well known.

Throughout much of its early history Dromana had strong links with its rural hinterland and provided a key connection to Melbourne at a time when lack of reliable transport routes and relative isolation were key barriers to further development on the southern Peninsula.

Figure 2 Dromana local area



Historically, the town originally developed in the vicinity of McCullough Street, however the opening of a store and construction of a jetty circa 1870, saw commercial development begin to focus in the area of the current town centre, where the first hotel (the Dromana) had also been established. The first Shire offices were built on Point Nepean Road in Dromana (corner Verdon Street) in 1928 and were not relocated to Rosebud until 1970.

Visitors to Dromana first came by steamer from Melbourne to the Dromana pier, fostering the development of several guest houses. Following the Second World War, the establishment of better road links and greater use of motor vehicles meant more day trippers and the evolution of foreshore camping. Dromana's beach is unique in the context of Port Phillip Bay, being one of the few north facing beaches around the bay.

Improvements in the transport (road) network have increased the potential to commute from Dromana to employment in the region, resulting in a growing residential population. As a result Dromana is, to some extent, transforming from a summer holiday destination into a more substantial township. The establishment of the Peninsula Link freeway extension is expected to further support this transformation, although the demand for holiday homes remains an important driver of development.

The Dromana commercial area is classified as a large township activity centre, and includes a recently refurbished supermarket as well as a wide range of specialty shops and commercial services, together with retailing and restaurants aimed towards visitors. The total commercial floor space provided in Dromana is in the order of 15,300sqm (c.f 62,700sqm in Rosebud).

The Dromana pier remains a key landmark and anchor within the town centre, given its prominent and central location as well as its close proximity to both the Point Nepean Road and shops.

In recent years, Dromana has experienced development pressure, primarily in the form of residential redevelopment.

This is particularly evident where original small fibro beach houses on large lots have been replaced by semi-attached 2 storey townhouses. In addition, there have been several high profile sites along to the fringe of the town centre which have gained approval (via VCAT) for 3-4 storey mixed use and apartment developments. Residents and community groups have expressed concerns that such development will set a precedent for future proposals and that Dromana is at risk of losing its coastal village character.



View from Dromana Pier towards town centre - Arthurs Seat in the background

4.1 Demographic Trends

Dromana today has a population of approximately 5,738 residents and is forecast to increase to approximately 6,500 by 2031.

In 2011 the Dromana Statistical Area exhibited a fairly balanced age profile, with a dominant age of 65-69, which accounted for 8.4% of total people. This was closely followed by 60-64 age group. This is in keeping with Mornington Peninsula's population profile, which includes a higher proportion of the population in these cohorts than metropolitan Melbourne. It is also in keeping with the demographic split seen on the Peninsula, with younger age cohorts being more prevalent in Mornington and Hastings.

The median age in Dromana is 49 years, with some of the areas forming part of this study having a higher median age than average (59 years in the western bayside landscape area and 64 nearer the town centre and an average age in the late 30s, in the eastern hillside area, which is significantly lower than the Dromana median .

Within Dromana, the forecast change in age groups to 2031 indicates most change in the 55-59 age group, which is expected to increase by 347 and account for 7.1% of the total persons. This is closely followed by 75-79 and 30-34 age groups.

While traditionally a popular area for retirees, the demographic profile also seems to indicate there will be strong growth in the younger age cohorts (04, 5-9, 10-14) and the 15-19, 20-24 25-29, 30-34 and 35-39 age groups to 2031, consistent with families settling in the area. These trends suggest, as with most areas of the Peninsula, that a decrease in the number of persons per household is likely to occur, as the older age groups become more prominent.

Despite the trend in household size there is not necessarily a direct connection with housing demand i.e. the market for smaller dwellings and/or less garden area. A range of other factors, including both housing styles and alternative investment options appear significant. It should also be noted that the occupancy rate in Dromana remains at 60 % (i.e. 40 % vacant at the time of the census), indicating the continuing strong role of Dromana as a seasonal holiday destination, and there is expected to be continuing demand for second homes/holiday homes in the area.

4.2 Current Housing Characteristics and Projections

Within the Dromana area the predominance of single dwellings remains strong, with 82.6 percent of the total housing stock (4,344 dwellings) classified as single dwellings. This has decreased from approximately 93 % in 2006 - but remains the predominant housing type in the area.

The age of the housing stock in Dromana is also quite varied, and this creates a significant level of difficulty in predicting the likely rate of re-development i.e. when or if sites with some development potential may actually be made available to the market.

Information on single and multiple dwelling sites provided by id.consulting indicates that the level of medium density development in an area that roughly correlates with the proposed sub-precinct 1b area has grown from 6.9% medium density housing (or 21 dwellings) to 40.3% medium density housing (150 dwellings). This represents a significant change to the housing profile within this part of the precinct.

The housing growth projections for Dromana, indicates the development of 331 new dwellings between 2016 and 2031. i.e. an increase of approx. 0.86% per year.

4.3 Employment

Recent analysis of employment and journey to work statistics (2011) indicates that there were approximately 1,667 jobs located in Dromana (c.f. 42,179 across the Peninsula, Dromana = approx.. 4%) and compared with a labor force of approx.. 1,973 persons.

The most significant employment sections were Retailing (331/19.9%) and Education and Training (13.1%). The most frequent occupations were Technical and Trades (18.7%) and Professional (16.2%). Approximately 80% of all journey work trips were taken by car, either as driver or passenger.

4.4 Services and Infrastructure

Discussion with council's Infrastructure Planning and Policy team has indicated that there are no significant servicing or infrastructure issues for the Dromana area.

The unmade roads within the western part of the Dromana township area are referenced in Council's Unmade Roads Construction Strategy and have varying levels of priority. Clarendon Street and Pasley Street are 'A' priorities, with McArthur Street, Park Grove and Stawell Street 'B' level priorities and Layard Street 'C' level. 'A' level priority road sealing means that construction is recommended in the 'short to medium term'. However, all Special Charge street construction projects are subject to resident consultation and are not committed.

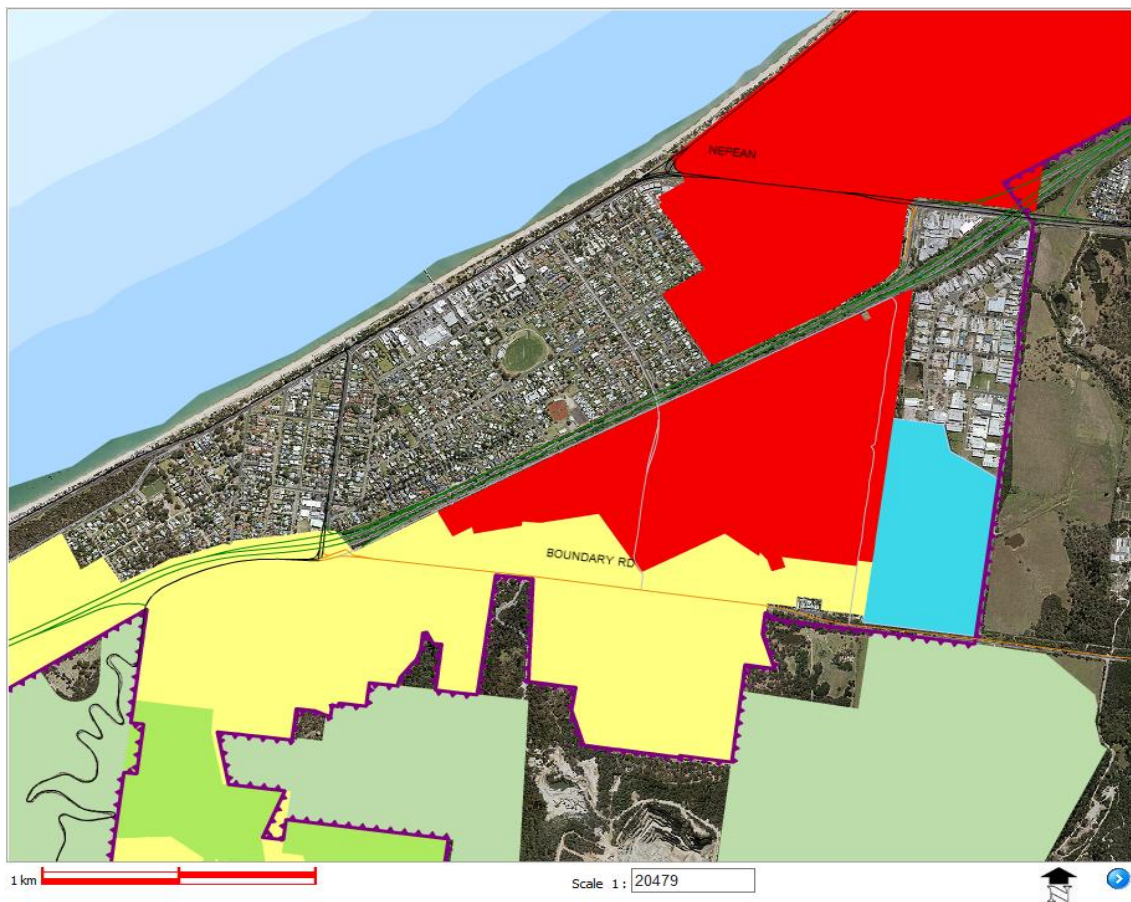
Discussion with Council's Infrastructure Planning and Policy team has indicated that there are no significant servicing or infrastructure issues for the Dromana hillside area.

4.5 Existing Design and Development Overlays

The majority of the Dromana residential area to the north of the freeway reservation is not currently subject to any Design and development overlay (DDO) control, or (as shown in red in Figure 3) is subject to DDO1, which applies a mandatory height limit (of 10m or 2 storeys), but does not include any other site coverage, garden area or minimum lot size requirements.

The area to the south (above) the Freeway reservation, is largely included in the DDO1 control, but as the elevation increases the DDO3 (Coast and Landscape Design) provisions are applied – which include a maximum building height of 8m or 2 storeys, and require an average minimum lot size of 1,500sqm, with no more than one dwelling per lot. All land south of Boundary Road is included in DDO3, as this area forms part of the foothills of Arthurs Seat.

Figure 3 Dromana – existing Design and Development Overlays



5 Dromana's Investigation Areas

5.1 Policy References and Direction

Dromana is regarded as a larger township in the hierarchy of settlement on the Mornington Peninsula, having a population of approximately 5,738 residents, and containing a Large Township activity centre (refer Clause 21.07 of the Planning Scheme).

Consistent with the large township classification, there is anticipated to be some scope for additional housing and population growth in Dromana, however this needs to be tempered by identification of areas of valued character and the definition of appropriate standards of development to ensure that change produces positive outcomes.

5.2 Investigation Area Neighbourhood Character Assessment

Following the first round of informal consultation with Council officers and residents, a neighbourhood character matrix was developed. This was used to assess the contribution that the following elements made to the overall neighbourhood character in each of the investigation areas:

- road treatment
- landscape (public realm)
- landscape (private realm)
- lot size
- housing typology (including materials/styles)
- fence types
- provision of infrastructure/services

The assessment was undertaken on a street by street basis. This process was used to identify and evaluate in detail the built form and environmental elements that contribute to an areas' character, with a weighting system for how important the characteristic was in defining the areas' character (each characteristic was rated from 1-5 for its contribution). Surrounding streets were also viewed to establish whether there was a definable 'edge' to the character area being assessed, sufficient to justify the character area boundary.

In addition to this field work, GIS data was reviewed to establish more accurate site area information, and was used to check recent planning and building permit history. Aerial photography and valuation base information has also been analysed to establish approximate site coverage, and dual occupancy and multi-unit development sites and layouts.

This work has enabled the preparation of draft character statements for the Dromana investigation areas (as outlined below.

The key threats to the established character have also been identified and noted, and draft controls that could be applied to assist with ensuring appropriate future development have then been prepared.

Much of the study area is within 800m of the Dromana town centre, however the Mornington Peninsula Freeway runs through the study area and is considered a physical barrier to pedestrian and vehicle movement to the town centre, increasing the effective walking distance to the commercial area.






The area to the south of the freeway reservation extending to Boundary Road and Rainer Avenue appears to form part of the low foothill area of Arthurs Seat, with varying topography, as can be seen from the contour maps. The area to the north of the freeway reservation (described as "Bayside") appears to be part of the older section of the Dromana township, with an appreciably larger lot size, particularly to the west of Verdon Street.

In this context, it has been useful to define two areas, primarily north and south of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway. In addition, within each area a number of sub-precincts, which have different characteristics, have also been identified. These are:

- Dromana Bayside (north of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway) – Precinct 1
 - Sub Precinct 1a – Dromana Landscape
 - Sub Precinct 1b – Dromana Township

- Dromana Hillside (south of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway) – Precinct 2
 - Sub Precinct 1 - east
 - Sub Precinct 2 - central
 - Sub -precinct 3 - west

DROMANA RESIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION AREAS
COASTAL PRECINCT

- legend
-  dromana township boundary
 -  residential investigation areas
 -  general residential zone 1
 -  public park and recreation zone
 -  public conservation and resource zone



Project Ref: 14.246
 Dwg No.: UDD-001
 Scale: 1:4,000@A3
 Date: 30.08.2016
 Revision: -

hansen partnership pty ltd
 melbourne level 4 136 exhibition st
 melbourne vic 3000
 t 61 3 9654 8844 f 61 3 9654 8088
 e info@hansen-online.com.au
 w hansen-online.com.au

DROMANA RESIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION AREAS

COASTAL PRECINCT

legend

study area

coastal township

coastal landscape



Project Ref: 14.246
 Dwg No.: UDD-001
 Scale: 1:4000@A3
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 Revision: -



DROMANA RESIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION AREAS
COASTAL PRECINCT

- Legend
- study area
 - 1 garden suburban
 - 2 coastal hillside
 - 3 established suburban



5.3 Precinct 1: Dromana Bayside Investigation Area

Precinct Description

The character of the Dromana bayside study area varies from the north-west to south-east. Development patterns as well as dwelling type and scale are diverse throughout the precinct. There is also clear distinction between landscaping and road treatment transitioning away from the Dromana town centre.

The area was previously included within the Residential 1 Zone, with no overlays. This was largely a result of the translation of the former Flinders Planning Scheme into the new format Planning Scheme in 1999, rather than being based on any analysis of residential character. The area has now been included (as part of the “blanket” translation of the Residential 1 Zone) in the General Residential Zone (GRZ) with no overlays.

The area immediately adjoining to the west (towards McCrae) is included within DDO3 – Coastal Landscape, based on the topography of that area, larger lot sizes and relatively low site coverage. However, there does not appear to be any strong boundary i.e. where development at the edges of the DDO3 area becomes distinct from development within the western section of the investigation area. In fact a clearer distinction appears to occur within the investigation area.

On this basis, two distinct sub precincts have been identified as shown in figure 17. These are based on both landscape and built form characteristics.

- Dromana Bayside Precinct
- Sub Precinct 1a – Dromana landscape.
- Sub Precinct 1b - Dromana township.

Figure 4 Dromana Bayside sub-precincts



5.4 Sub Precinct 1a (Dromana Landscape): Neighbourhood Character Description

Sub precinct 1a of the study area is distinct from other parts of the bayside investigation area in Dromana and has the most readily definable character, largely derived from the landscape setting. A relatively clear boundary exists between this sub-precinct and the adjoining area to the east. This area exhibits strong character qualities that warrant protection.

The area contains 102 lots and is characterised by unsealed roads with heavy verge and private planting comprising significant canopy tree cover and no footpaths. Some streets have a closed canopy formed by trees within the private and public realms extending over the relatively narrow roadways.

Single dwellings predominate, and are single or two storeys in scale, maximising available views to the bay, and are of varied eras, from post-war weatherboard dwellings to contemporary, brick and render forms. The median site coverage (calculated from MPSC valuation data and excluding vacant sites) is only 14%, with only 3 sites being above 40% site coverage.

Buildings are well setback from boundaries and side boundaries are not always obvious. Front fences are either non-existent, or low and permeable and often are not noticeable due to the high levels of landscaping.

The sub-precinct's topography has an influence on built form and views, with the area sloping up from the bay towards Arthurs Seat. Many dwellings are not readily seen from the street, being integrated within a bushy coastal environment that features high levels of native shrub and canopy tree planting in both public and private realms.

Draft Preferred Character Statement

This area is identified as an area of special character that warrants protection. The area will be characterised by dominant vegetation in the public and private realms. Buildings will be largely hidden from view by landscape. Front and rear setbacks will continue to accommodate large canopy trees.

Development will respond to topography and buildings and hard surfaces will cover a low proportion of the site area. Any new driveways will be constructed from sympathetic materials such as lilydale toppings or sealed gravel, and should not be constructed from concrete. No front fences, or very low and visually permeable front fencing styles will be used.

Threats to Character

Potential threats, which may transform the preferred character of the Dromana coastal landscape environment, include:

- Clearing of native vegetation particularly along road verges and front setbacks of properties;
- Formalisation of roads within the south-western precinct. This would result in the removal of a significant portion of roadside vegetation;
- Contemporary dwellings of high site coverage with minimal landscaping along front boundaries and low permeability;
- Excessive multi-unit development;
- High, impermeable fencing;
- Sealed crossovers; and
- Small front setbacks, enclosing the street with built form in the north-eastern part of the precinct.

Recommendations – Sub Precinct 1a Dromana Township

Sub precinct 1A of the study area (Dromana – Landscape) should maintain its coastal residential character and development (and subdivision) within this area should therefore be quite limited.

This area has a clear and definable boundary, and planning scheme provisions should seek to limit site coverage and encourage an appropriate landscape response. Dwellings should also be respectful of their context and utilise materials and architectural treatments that are popular within coastal areas, including natural, muted tones, timber, weatherboard and lightweight balustrading along balconies. Front fences should be open and permeable, and side fencing treatments should be unobtrusive.

This area is best considered as being part of the established precinct to the west, where DDO3 already applies and therefore the existing Schedule 3 of the Design and Development Overlay (Coast and Landscape Design) should extend across this sub-precinct.

DDO3 provides controls in relation to building siting, height, setbacks, materials, sewerage and drainage, total dwellings on a lot and subdivision. There is a minimum lot area requirement (for new subdivision) of 1500sqm, with no more than one dwelling per lot. This overlay effectively indicates an area of very limited change.

While the introduction of this overlay will affect the potential development yield, depending on various assumptions regarding future development potential, this is considered to be consistent with the priority given to the protection of character in the policy directions relevant to the Mornington Peninsula. As much of the character of this area is landscape derived further controls should also be considered.

5.5 Sub Precinct 1b (Dromana Township): Neighbourhood Character Description

Sub precinct 1b of the study area includes 264 lots and is generally characterised by an open streetscape and mixed housing types. The roads are sealed and minimal street tree planting is evident within deep, grassed nature strips, many with no formal footpaths.

Development within this area is mixed both in age and type, with older forms of single dwellings as well as more recent dwellings and (some) villa unit development, often single storey, dual occupancy and townhouses. Single storey detached dwellings are still by far the most dominant form of development, with a relatively small number of larger 2 storey dwellings.

Dwellings are constructed from brick and timber and include rendered finishes, mixed material palettes and old fibro shacks. Building forms are clearly evident from the street, driveways tend to be sealed and often located along the side boundary.

Most dwellings include setbacks from both side boundaries, with either no front fences or low, permeable fence styles supporting a spacious low intensity coastal character - particularly in the areas with a higher proportion of older dwelling stock. More recent development tends to include taller buildings, with increased site coverage, less landscaping, smaller setbacks from side boundaries, and more dominant fencing (between dwellings and to sides). This area is typical of a Port Phillip bayside streetscape.

Due to the proximity of this precinct to the Dromana town centre, it has some advantages in terms of providing for further housing growth and diversity. However, the level of “densification” which is appropriate to this bayside residential area is not the same as that which may be considered ‘standard’ across metropolitan Melbourne and which forms the basis for the Rescode provisions. In other words, it is still necessary to define a balance between retaining some elements of coastal character while also accommodating a (moderate) level of change and providing increased housing opportunities. The expression “moderate change” applies both to the extent of medium density housing within the precinct and the degree of difference between existing and likely future built form.

Draft Preferred Character Statement

Over time it is expected that there will be incremental change within this precinct including both new single detached dwellings and a moderate level of medium density housing, providing additional diversity and housing choice, particularly suitable for an older resident population.

A variety of building styles will be supported however building forms will be highly articulated and should be designed to respond to their coastal setting in style, form and environmental performance. Building height and massing will be carefully considered, and the use of increased upper storey setbacks to reduce upper storey footprints and avoid intrusive building bulk will be promoted. Extensive areas of blank wall space should be avoided. This area is not expected to accommodate apartment block style development.

A spacious feel will be retained by requiring the provision of onsite garden areas, consistent front building setbacks, limiting site coverage, avoiding boundary to boundary construction, and allowing adequate space for landscaping along both side boundaries. Low and permeable front fencing styles will continue to enable views to and from front garden areas and provide a sense of openness along the street.

Front setback areas should be well landscaped and should not be dominated by driveways and hard surfacing. Only one vehicle crossing per site will be supported unless there is an unusually wide lot frontage. Where new medium density development includes an internal driveway/ access street serving a number of dwellings sufficient space will be provided to ensure an effective landscape treatment.

Threats to Character

Potential threats, which may impact on the preferred character of the Dromana township sub precinct 1b, include:

- Clearing of native vegetation particularly along road verges and front setbacks of properties;
- Formalisation of roads within the south-western precinct. This would result in the removal of a significant portion of roadside vegetation;
- Contemporary dwellings with a high site coverage with minimal landscaping along front boundaries
- Excessive building heights and buildings with a bulky visual appearance.
- Excessive multi-unit development within the south-western precinct;
- High, impermeable fencing;
- Sealed crossovers; and
- Small front setbacks, enclosing the street with built form in the north-eastern precinct.

Recommendations - Sub Precinct 1b Dromana Township

This sub-precinct currently accommodates a significant level of multi-dwelling development with a number of dual occupancy and villa unit developments sites to the north-east of the precinct. However, more recent development appears to occupy a substantially greater building footprint, and is changing the spacious coastal feel of the area.

While to some degree this is to be expected where any intensification occurs, the emerging form of development is similar to that found in suburban Melbourne, rather than responsive to the coastal environment.

The lack of character provisions means that there is no clear direction on how development should respond to local context. Accordingly, it is considered that a new planning controls should be applied to this precinct. These controls would provide greater guidance on character and seek to influence outcomes while still enabling an appropriate level of additional development.

The proposed controls should include two mandatory controls:

- an 8m / 2 storey height limit – which, as previously discussed, is considered appropriate to all residential areas on the Mornington Peninsula outside of the major activity centres, and
- a mandatory garden area requirement of 45% i.e. a somewhat greater requirement than applies across metropolitan Melbourne more generally, and more consistent with the current low site coverage in this sub area.

The proposed controls should also include a range of other discretionary provisions which are intended to address other issues identified in the draft statement of preferred character and the threats to this character.

The use of a mandatory garden area requirement is intended to provide flexibility in relation to the form of development – whether for a single dwelling on a site, dual occupancy or multi-unit development, while still ensuring a moderation of the physical /visual impact of development and maintaining some of the elements which contribute to the character and shared amenity of the bayside area. It should be noted that the existing median site coverage in this precinct is only 22% within 51 sites (19%) above 40% site coverage.

It is expected that this provision will reduce the overall development yield on individual sites – but only to the extent of avoiding over-development rather than excluding reasonable levels of new development. In this context, “reasonableness” is a matter of balancing the objectives of providing new housing with supporting (future) bayside character.

Given that ResCode already includes a (discretionary) standard of no more 50% site coverage, and assuming in the order of 10% for impermeable surfaces (driveways etc.) the notional minimum on-site permeable area is already in the order of 40%. This calculation suggests that the reduction in development yield from an increase in the garden area requirement may be more in terms of dwelling size rather than in dwelling numbers per se – and an increase in the supply of smaller dwellings is consistent with the likely shift towards smaller household sizes.

In the case of Dromana, it is considered that a lower intensity of development, with more landscaped space on site, is one of the key elements of “bayside” character and that this is an appropriate element of future character even where a degree of infill (re) development is also supported.

5.6 Dromana Hillside Investigation Area

Precinct Description

The Dromana hillside study area comprises an area rising from a lower area adjacent to the Mornington Peninsula freeway reservation towards the lower foothills of Arthurs Seat. The area contains approximately 815 lots (with 35 vacant). The area features an eclectic mix of dwelling styles and eras typified by the gradual shift from traditional weatherboard and brick veneer holiday homes to more permanent contemporary single and multi-dwelling developments.

The study area typically displays limited canopy tree cover within both the private and public realms, however scattered trees, low shrubs, lawn and a mix of exotic and native vegetation in open gardens is a characteristic feature.

The area suffers from a lack of connectivity to the Dromana town centre and foreshore, with the Mornington Peninsula Freeway forming a major barrier. The lack of connection applies to both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, resulting in significant travel distances to community facilities, commercial / retail amenities and education services.

Single detached dwellings are the predominant dwelling type within the Dromana hillside study area, particularly, between Lombardy Avenue and Collins Road (Collins Road is located to the east, outside the study area, but is the boundary of the statistical division, being inside the Urban Growth Boundary). The existing median site coverage within this area is approx. 16%, with only 26 developed lots (3.5% of all developed lots) having a site coverage greater than 49%.

The study area is currently within the General Residential Zone and is subject to Schedule 1 of the Design and Development Overlay, which relates to township design. The key objective of the overlay is to ensure that new development has proper regard for the established streetscape and development pattern in terms of building height, scale and siting. It also seeks to protect shared view lines where reasonable and practical, and to ensure that buildings are designed and sited to avoid being visually obtrusive.

While the overlay does not limit the number of dwellings, it does have a mandatory height control of 10m, and restricts development to no more than two storeys above natural ground level. Schedule 17 of the Environmental Significance Overlay - Streamlines, is also applied to Heath Road, which cuts through the centre of the study area.

The recent survey indicates little change to the dominant housing typology for the study area, indicating that single dwellings remain the preferred form of new development. Valuation data indicates that the median site coverage across this precinct (including all three sub-areas but excluding vacant sites) is in the order of (no more than) 18%.

It is clear that local factors, including planning controls (particularly the Design and Development Overlay) as well as the physical barrier of the freeway, has had some bearing on the lack of multi-dwelling development and intensity of change, despite the fact that these controls do not explicitly control development density.

Figure 5 Dromana hillside contours

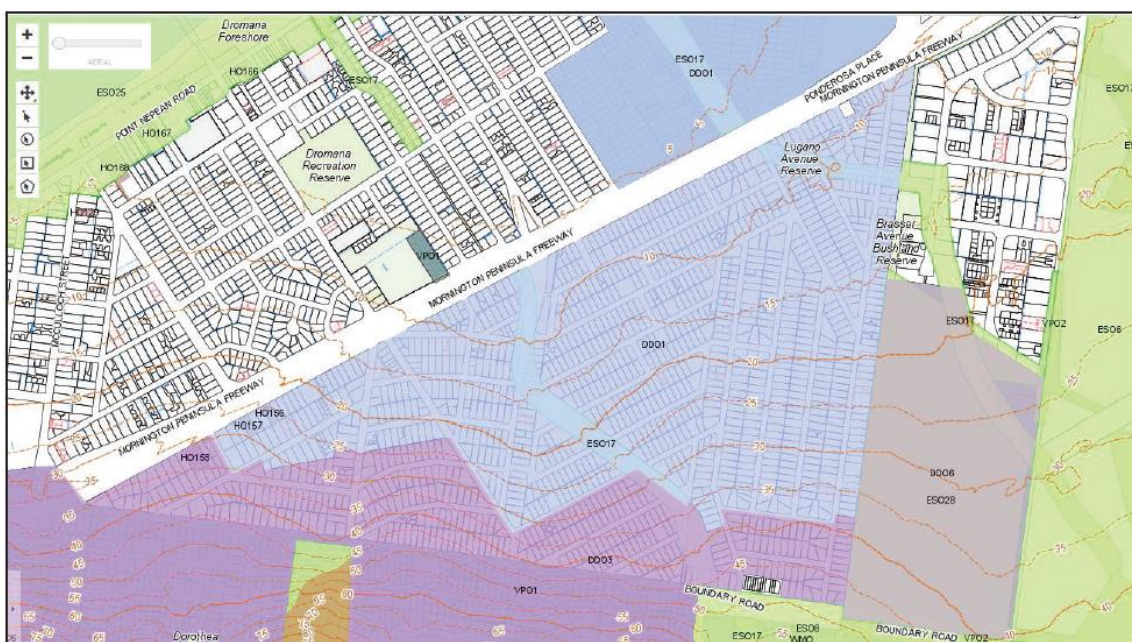


Figure 6 Dromana hillside sub-precinct



Three sub-precincts (East, Central and West) have been identified in the study area, primarily on the basis of differences in topography, lot orientation and landscape treatment. There is also a more distinctive landscape character at higher (southern) side of the study area. However despite the division of the precinct for the purpose of character assessment, the key similarities tend to outweigh the differences and therefore in framing a character statement, identifying threats and developing a recommended response the area has been addressed as a single precinct.

5.7 Sub Precinct 1: East - Neighbourhood Character Description

Sub-precinct 1 is located to the east of the study area and is bounded by Centella Street to the west. The road pattern in this area is based on a typical grid layout, albeit with some curvilinear street alignment and the streets are relatively narrow with rollover kerbs, deep nature strips and no footpaths. Dwellings tend to have regular, deep front setbacks and are fully detached, and set in gardens. Older dwelling stock of varying eras, generally single storey in form, predominates with a limited number of two storey dwellings. There has been limited recent development in this area. The existing buildings include a variety of finishes including brick veneer, render, weatherboard and fibro cement, and sit within gardens with lawn, shrubs and dispersed canopy trees.

Front fences vary and there is no distinct type- some properties have low and permeable fences, many have no fencing, however a number have timber or paling fences along the frontages, displaying a lack of consistency in boundary treatment. However, there were no observed examples of high screen front fences (higher than 1.5 metres) or high masonry walls.

5.8 Sub Precinct 2: Central - Neighbourhood Character Description

This sub precinct is located within the centre of the study area and is guided by the orientation of lots and dwellings towards the Port Phillip Bay. Streets are wide and open with minimal canopy vegetation within nature strips, and are clearly wider than those within sub-precinct 1.

The roads are constructed and utilise standard kerb and channel drainage, wide grassed nature strips and generally no footpaths. Dwellings within this precinct are a mix of single and two-storey and are of the post-war era with emerging contemporary forms, many of which are replacement dwellings. There appear to be very few medium density developments.

Front setbacks are regular, and buildings tend to be based on simple forms that appear setback from at least one side boundary. Garages and carports are often located to the side, on the boundary. Where fences exist, they vary in style, height and materials and there is no clear fencing character across the precinct. However, there were no observed examples of high screen front fences (higher than 1.5 metres) or high masonry walls.

5.9 Sub Precinct 3: West - Neighbourhood Character Description

This precinct is located in the west of the study area. Streets are predominantly oriented east - west in grid form, and roads are sealed and open in nature, with standard kerb and channel, no footpaths and deep grassed nature strips.

Dwellings are typically of the post-war era and are single storey, with some newer two storey development. The area displays some more recent infill and replacement of single dwellings, but a large proportion of older dwelling stock remains. Medium height fencing is most commonly found, much of which is permeable. Gardens tend to be well landscaped, and include lawn, shrubs and small canopy trees within front setbacks.

Residential streets abutting the study area boundary to the south (i.e. higher up the hillside) are subject to Schedule 3 of the Design and Development Overlay, and south of Boundary Road the area is also subject to a Vegetation Protection Overlay.

Draft Preferred Character Statement

This area provides a transition from the lower lying bayside residential areas to the north of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway reservation and the steeper Arthurs Seat hillside areas to the south. There is expected to be a limited degree of change in this area, as the existing housing stock ages and there is greater demand for permanent occupancy.

A variety of building styles will coexist, however building forms will be designed to respond to topography, and their coastal setting in style, form and environmental performance. This area is not expected to accommodate apartment block style development or generally more than dual occupancy development of existing sites with relatively low site coverage.

Building height and massing will be carefully considered, and the use of increased upper storey setbacks to reduce upper storey footprints and avoid intrusive building bulk will be promoted. Extensive areas of blank wall space should be avoided.

A spacious feel will be retained by requiring the provision of onsite garden areas, consistent front building setbacks, limiting site coverage, avoiding boundary to boundary construction, and allowing adequate space for landscaping along both side boundaries.

Front setback areas should be well landscaped and should not be dominated by driveways and hard surfacing. Only one vehicle crossing per site will be supported unless there is an unusually wide lot frontage. Where new development includes an internal driveway/ access street serving a number of dwellings sufficient space will be provided to ensure an effective landscape treatment.

Threats to Character

The key threats of the neighbourhood character for the Dromana hillside study area include;

- Multi-dwelling developments of a high site coverage and building height within streets higher up the hillside;
- Removal of existing canopy vegetation;
- Removal of front setbacks including the suburban garden character; and
- High impermeable fencing enclosing the streetscape.

Recommendations – Precinct 2 Dromana Hillside

The Dromana hillside precinct is a transitional area in a number of ways. There is a physical transition from the lower lying flatter areas to the steeper hillside areas. The area is reasonably close to the town centre, but not necessarily convenient for pedestrian access due to the separation created by the freeway.

It is currently dominated by single storey detached dwellings, but given the age of the housing and the changing role of Dromana, it can be expected that there will be a degree of re-development over time. However, there seems to be some natural limitation on re-development pressures, possibly due to the topography and relative distance from the town centre, as demonstrated by the limited level of re-development to date.

The area is in fact comparable with some of the existing areas included in Design and Development Overlay 2 – Bayside and Village Design, for example around Rye and Tootgarook.

A 2 storey height limit is certainly more appropriate than the 3 storey limit under the General Residential Zone.

Use of design requirements alone, such as a minimum mandatory garden area, will provide more flexibility for the design of re-development proposals and may in fact stimulate the provision of more smaller dwellings (to maintain yield in terms of dwelling numbers on site while reducing overall floor area). However, the inclusion of a clear subdivision/dwelling yield provision would more clearly identify the intended (limited) role of this area in providing additional housing supply, and arguably avoid uncertainty for both residents and (potential) developers.

At this stage it is considered that there is sufficient strategic value to support a mandatory minimum lot size, and that the arguments in support and opposed to such a provision may be further tested through the planning scheme amendment process. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Dromana Hillside area include a proposed mandatory minimum lot area of 650sqm, as well as a range of design requirements which are intended to reflect the preferred character statement e.g. in relation to minimum mandatory garden area requirements, side setbacks, and a lower site coverage etc. reflective of the existing fabric of development.

In summary, it is recommended that controls be applied to the Dromana Hillside area including a minimum mandatory garden area requirement of 50%, a maximum height limit of 8m (or 2 storeys) and a minimum lot area requirement of 650sqm, but with provision to consider no more than two dwellings for every 720sqm of site area.

While these provisions may have a limited effect on potential dwelling yield the majority of sites would still be eligible for consideration of dual occupancy applications, and this, combined with the minimum garden area requirement is considered to be an appropriate outcome given the characteristics of this area.

6 Conclusion

The Mornington Peninsula Localised Planning Statement establishes a clear position that the Mornington Peninsula should not be considered as a growth area for the purposes of housing strategy and that different planning priorities will apply.

Equally, the importance of respecting and protecting character is strongly emphasized, with clear directions that future development will be of a type and scale that maintains the existing valued character of each town or settlement, or supports a change to a preferred future character that is clearly established through community consultation and the adoption of a relevant local area plan.

The analysis undertaken as part of this study has identified a range of physical elements and relationships which together constitute existing character. On this basis a statement of preferred character has been prepared for each area and a range of potential future threats has been identified.

In the absence of specific planning provisions there is a significant risk that new development, in the form of very large single dwellings, three storey townhouses or apartment blocks, could be established, and that this would fail to “maintain existing valued character”. It is therefore considered that there is a strategic need and justification for additional development controls.

In this context, the recommendations for each of the investigation area precincts may be summarised as follows:

Precinct 1 Dromana Bayside Investigation Area

Sub - Precinct 1a Dromana Landscape

- Ensure that residential development responds to the existing character, topography and coastal setting of the area in terms of built form, landscaping and siting.
- Retain a spacious feel that is characterized by garden areas, consistent front building setbacks, limited site coverage, and landscaped areas alongside boundaries.
- Support the retention of existing vegetation, particularly within front setbacks to buildings and along road verges and provide space for onsite landscaping.
- Ensure that new development has proper regard for the established streetscape and development pattern in terms of building scale, height and siting.
- Encourage low permeable timber fencing to a maximum height of 1.2m or no fencing at all.
- Implementation of an 8m/2 storey height limit.
- Materials to be reflective of Mornington peninsula’s coastal environments including timber and weatherboard products, natural stone and light muted tones.
- An average area of all lots within a subdivision of no less than 1,500sqm and able to contain a rectangle with minimum dimensions of 25m x 35m.

Sub - Precinct 1b Dromana Township

- Ensure that residential development responds to the existing character, topography and coastal setting of the area in terms of built form, landscaping and siting.
- Retain a spacious feel that is characterized by garden areas, consistent front building setbacks, limited site coverage, and landscaped areas alongside boundaries.
- Support the retention of existing vegetation, particularly within front setbacks to buildings and along road verges and provide space for onsite landscaping. Maintain a coastal landscape character in front setback through native vegetation including a minimum of 1 large canopy tree.
- Encourage low permeable timber fencing to a maximum height of 1.2m or no fencing at all.
- Implementation of an 8m/2 storey height limit.
- Materials to be reflective of Mornington peninsula’s coastal environments including timber and weatherboard products, natural stone and light muted tones.
- Retention of rear setback to preferred minimum of 5m.

Precinct 2: Dromana Hillside Investigation Area

- Ensure that residential development responds to the existing character, topography and coastal setting of the area in terms of built form, landscaping and siting.
- Retain a spacious feel that is characterized by garden areas, consistent front building setbacks, limited site coverage, and landscaped areas alongside boundaries.
- Encourage low permeable timber fencing to a maximum height of 1.2m or no fencing at all.
- Implementation of an 8m/2 storey height limit.
- Support the retention of existing vegetation, particularly within front setbacks to buildings and along road verges and provide space for onsite landscaping.
- Materials to be reflective of Mornington peninsula's coastal environments including timber and weatherboard products, natural stone and light muted tones.
- A minimum subdivision lot size of 650sqm, with provision to consider no more than 2 dwellings for every 720sqm of site area.

