# Planning Scheme Policy – Neighbourhood Character

## 1. Purpose of the planning scheme policy

(1) The purpose of this planning scheme policy is to:
- (a) Support the CairnsPlan 2016 planning scheme;
- (b) Provide guidance on designing development within Neighbourhood character areas shown on the Neighbourhood character overlay maps contained in Schedule 2 of the CairnsPlan 2016 planning scheme;
- (c) Identify information that is or may be required to support a development application where the development is located within a Neighbourhood character area;
- (d) Provide guidance on undertaking and documenting a Neighbourhood character assessment.

## 2. Interpretation

(1) Terms used within this planning scheme policy are defined within Schedule 1 of the CairnsPlan 2016 planning scheme. Where a term is not defined in Schedule 1, section 1.3 Interpretation of the CairnsPlan 2016 planning scheme applies.

## 3. Guidance on meeting planning scheme outcomes

### 3.1. Planning scheme intent

(2) The purpose of the Neighbourhood character overlay is to identify and protect areas that have a distinctive character. Neighbourhood character areas are identified on the Neighbourhood character overlay maps contained in Schedule 2 of the CairnsPlan 2016 planning scheme.

(3) The Neighbourhood character overlay seeks to retain neighbourhood character places in their original location and ensure that any new development or additions are consistent with and sympathetic to the character of the place, streetscape and wider area.

(4) In 2019, Cairns Regional Council undertook the Freshwater and Stratford Town Planning Survey seeking community feedback on the town planning requirements for new residential developments within the suburbs of Freshwater and Stratford. The results of this survey have informed the levels of assessment and specific code provisions within the Neighbourhood character overlay code for Neighbourhood character area 6 – Freshwater and Neighbourhood character area 11 – Stratford.

(5) The following diagrams provide guidance on achieving outcomes consistent with the Neighbourhood character overlay code.

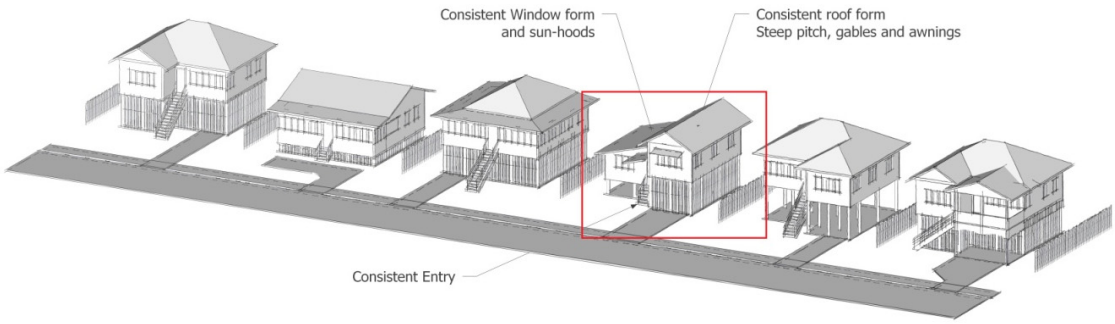
(1) Figure 3.1.a below illustrates consistent and inconsistent design solutions for carports, sheds and outbuildings located in Area B.

| ***CONSISTENT*** | ***CONSISTENT*** | ***CONSISTENT*** | ***CONSISTENT*** | ***INCONSISTENT*** | ***INCONSISTENT*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Garage behind | Garage to side and set-back from front | Narrow and open garage at front | Garage under with screen gates | Incompatible roof form at front | Wide garage at front with roller doors |

Figure 3.1.a – Consistent and inconsistent design solutions for carports, sheds and outbuildings located in Area B

(2) Figure 3.1.b below illustrates consistent and inconsistent design solutions for new buildings or works in a residential neighbourhood character streetscape.

Consistent design solution




Inconsistent design solution

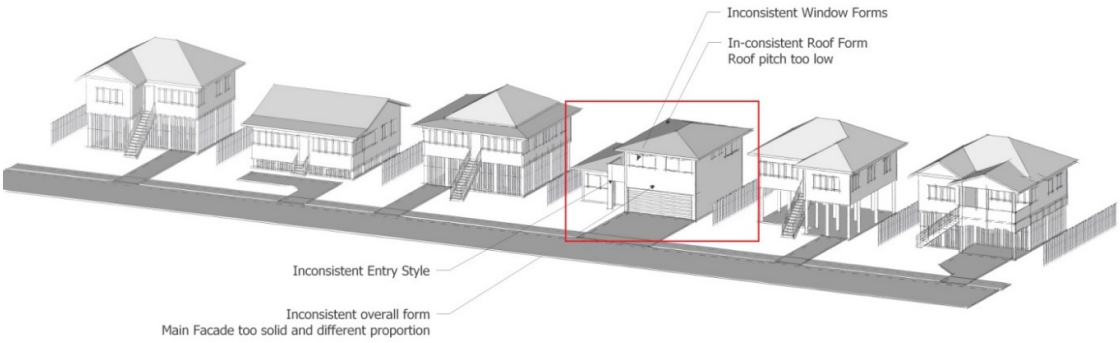
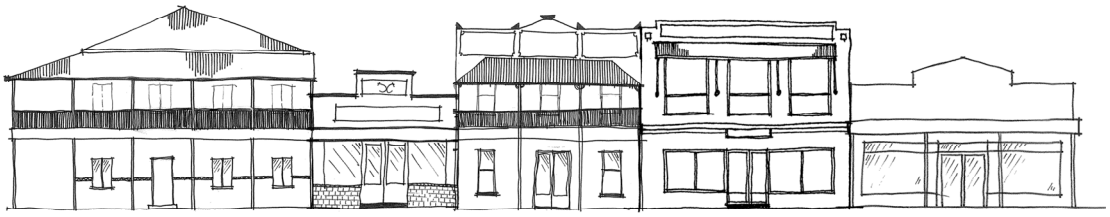



Figure 3.1.b – Consistent and inconsistent design solution for new buildings or works in a residential neighbourhood character streetscape

(3) Figure 3.1.c below illustrates consistent and inconsistent design solutions for new buildings or works in a commercial neighbourhood character streetscape.

Consistent design solution:



Inconsistent design solution:

Figure 3.1.c – Consistent and inconsistent design solutions for new buildings or works in a commercial neighbourhood character streetscape

(4) Figure 3.1.d below illustrates consistent and inconsistent design solutions for window design and positioning.

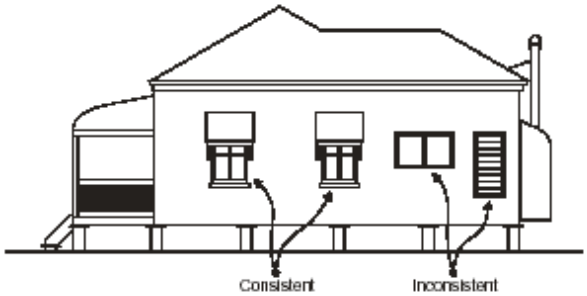
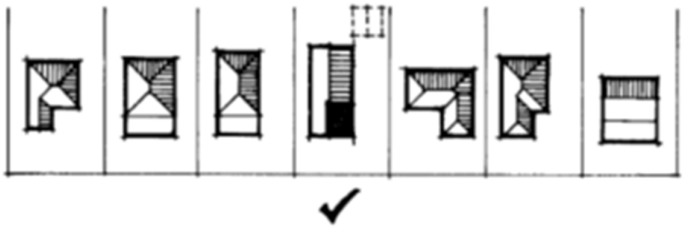



Figure 3.1.d – Consistent and inconsistent design solutions for window design and positioning

(5) Figure 3.1.e below illustrates consistent and inconsistent design solutions for building alignment.

The new house setback is consistent with the streetscape pattern, and the carport is either an integral element of and forms part of the house or is located within Area A.

Consistent Design solution:



Inconsistent design solution:

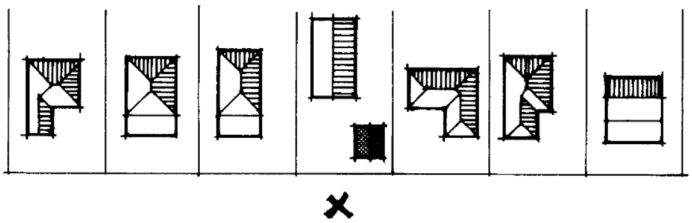
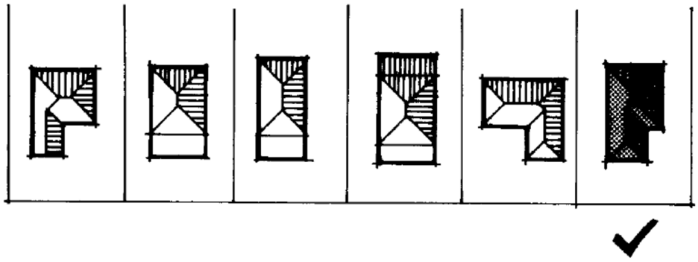


Figure 3.1.e – Consistent and inconsistent design solutions for building alignment

(6) Figure 3.1.f illustrates consistent and inconsistent design solutions for building orientation

Consistent design solution:



Inconsistent design solution:

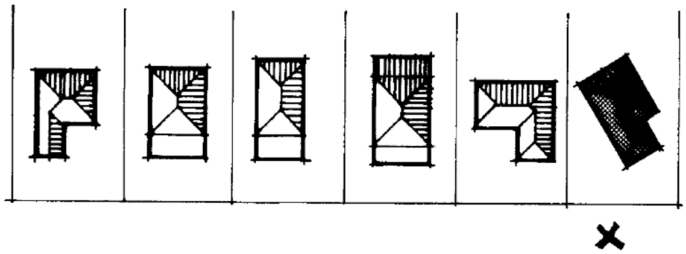
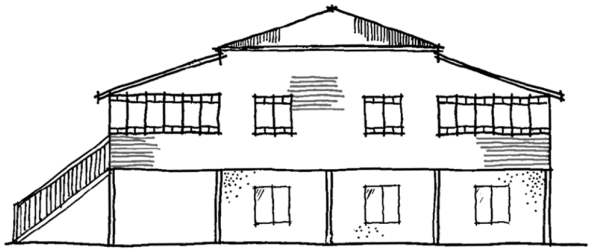


Figure 3.1.f – Consistent and inconsistent design solutions for building orientation

(7) Figure 3.1.g illustrates consistent and inconsistent design solutions for development involving the enclosure of the understory of a building.

Consistent design solutions:



Inconsistent design solution:

Figure 3.1.g – Consistent and inconsistent design solutions for development involving the enclosure of the understory of a building

### 3.2. Neighbourhood character area statements and character elements

(1) The following tables provide a summary of each of the Neighbourhood character areas within the region including a character statement and character elements which are generally displayed within each area.

(2) The character elements listed in the tables below are provided for guidance only and do not represent a complete list of all the Neighbourhood character elements within each area or streetscape. A Neighbourhood character assessment is required to identify and verify the specific character elements displayed by the character place and its wider setting and streetscape.

**Table 3.2.a – Neighbourhood character area 1 - Aeroglen**

| Character statement | |
|---|---|
| Located at the foot of the Mount Whitfield Conservation Park, the neighbourhood character area forms part of the original suburb of Aeroglen.<br><br>A variety of architectural styles exist within the area, with a strong presence of dwellings from the inter-war and immediate post-war periods. Roof styles in the area include various pitched styles with some skillion forms present. Dwellings are mostly parallel to the street with many incorporating carports under the dwelling. The flatter areas of the neighbourhood character area provide denser tropical gardens and grassy verges. | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | A mix of well maintained homes dating back to the inter-war and immediate post-war eras. |
| Building materials | Timber, fibro sheeting, brick, render, corrugated steel roofs. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Roof style | Various pitched styles with some skillion roof forms present. |
| Front setbacks | Generally 3-8 metres although some are larger depending on the topography. |
| Side setbacks | Generally 1-5 metres, although some are larger depending on the topography. |
| Building height | Mainly low-set and high set Queenslanders, some of which have been enclosed underneath. |
| Car parking /vehicle storage | Carports and garages are often present, with many located under the dwelling. |
| Lot frontages | Generally 18-20 metres, with some lots down to 15m and others up to 30m. |

**Table 3.2.b – Neighbourhood character area 2 - Babinda**

| Character statement | |
|---|---|
| This neighbourhood character area is located within Babinda and contains a series of small scale timber and metal sided single fronted houses on the south side of the street, and a high-set group of 1930s timber double fronted houses on the north side. Both sides of the street display a high level of consistency in their arrangement and respective periods of development. There is a strong sense of spaciousness in the street due to the relatively wide roadway with grassed shoulders, wide nature strips and sparse vegetation.<br><br>Views to the west are also dominated by the mountain ranges in the distance. The visibility of the mountains over the roofs of dwellings has the effect of reducing the dominance of the built form. | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | Victorian style dwellings on the south side of the street and 1930s Interwar style Queenslander dwellings on the north side of the street. |
| Building materials | Timber and corrugated steel, both on the roofs and sides of dwellings. |
| Building form | Generally single or double fronted. On the northern side of the street, many buildings have a front room projected towards the street. |
| Roof style | On the north side of the street roofs have gabled ends fronting the street, while on the south side, roofs have hipped ends fronting the street. |
| Front setbacks | Dwellings are generally set back around 5 metres from the front boundary, although this can appear larger due to the nature strips. |
| Side setbacks | Generally between 1 and 2 metres on one side and between 4 and 5 on the other. |
| Building height | Generally single storey, although on the north side of the street dwellings are highset and some have been enclosed underneath. |
| Car parking /vehicle storage | Car ports and garages are generally not provided or are located to the rear of dwellings. |
| Lot frontages | Between 15 and 20 metres on the northern side of the street and around 20 metres on the southern side. |

**Table 3.2.c – Neighbourhood character area 3 – Cairns North**

| Character statement | |
|---|---|
| This neighbourhood character area is significant owing to its relatively intact pre-war and inter-war style dwellings set within lush green landscapes. There is a high degree of consistency in the form, scale, light colours and setbacks of the dwellings that create a sense of order and rhythm to the streetscapes. The tropical gardens of dense foliage, tall palms and canopy trees are enhanced by the wide nature strips and grassy verges, creating a soft and spacious landscape to compliment the high-set Queenslander dwellings. | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | Predominantly pre-war and inter-war high-set Queenslanders. |
| Building materials | Predominantly chamferboard, with corrugated steel roofs. Some fi bro sheeting is present. |
| Building form | A mix of hipped, asymmetrical and multi-gabled bungalows. |
| Roof style | Pitched, with either hipped or gabled ends to the street |
| Front setbacks | Generally 4-6 metres, with several dwellings up to 8 and 10m. |
| Side setbacks | Generally 0-3 metres. |
| Building height | Mix of single and double storeys, with a number of highset Queenslanders, some of which have been enclosed underneath. |
| Car parking/vehicle storage | Carports and garages are present and are generally located under the dwelling. |
| Lot frontages | Generally 10-15 metres lots, with some 20 metre wide lots. |

**Table 3.2.d – Neighbourhood character area 4 – Earlville**

| Character statement | |
|---|---|
| Earlville contains a collection of high-set timber houses dating from the 1940s and early 1950s. Dwellings have a number of common aspects that result in a high level of consistency including the combination of hip and gable roofs and the detailing of casement windows which all follow a typical pattern of four pane casement sashes. Wide streets, generous nature strips and low, permeable or non-existent front fences result in a spacious feel. This character is complemented by established vegetation on private property and views to mountain ranges. Of particular note is the subdivision pattern around Hoad Street, which includes dwellings positioned around an oval reserve comprising established vegetation. The reserve contributes substantially to the neighbourhood character area. | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | Consistent interwar and post-war styles, dating from the 1940s and early 1950s. |
| Building materials | Predominantly timber with steel roofing. Houses are generally highset on concrete stumps. |
| Building form | Generally double or triple fronted, with a projecting room, either in the centre or the side of the building, fronting the street. |
| Roof style | Pitched, with a mix of hipped and gabled ends fronting the street. |
| Front setbacks | Generally medium to large, between 6 and 10 metres. |
| Side setbacks | Generally medium to large, between 1 and 3 metres on one side and between 3 and 5 metres on the other. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Building height | Predominantly single storey, with some highset Queenslanders enclosed underneath. |
| Car parking/vehicle storage | Car ports and garages are either absent or are provided to the side or rear of the dwelling. Occasionally vehicle storage is provided beneath dwellings. |
| Lot frontages | 15 to 20 metres. |

**Table 3.2.e – Neighbourhood character area 5 – Edge Hill**

| Character statement | |
|---|---|
| This neighbourhood character area is characterised by the rainforest landscape and the hilly topography that influences architectural styles. Building styles vary from inter-war and post-war dwellings to contemporary dwellings.<br><br>The built form generally sits below the height of established trees and tall palms, resulting in the dominance of vegetation. In some cases, vegetation is used as a front boundary treatment, resulting in blurred boundaries between the public and private realms. | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | Inter-war and occasional post-war and 1960s styles. |
| Building materials | Predominantly timber, brick or render with corrugated steel roofs. |
| Building form | A mix of styles including double-fronted with projecting front room. |
| Roof style | Pitched, with hipped and gabled ends fronting the street. |
| Front setbacks | Varied, generally between 3 and 9 metres. |
| Side setbacks | Generally 1-3 metres. |
| Building height | Single and two storeys dwellings, including low-set and high-set Queenslanders, some of which have been enclosed underneath. |
| Car parking/vehicle storage | Mostly provided in car ports, with some garages or open air car parking to the side of the dwelling. |
| Lot frontages | 15-20 metres. |

**Table 3.2.f – Neighbourhood character area 6 – Freshwater**

| Character statement | |
|---|---|
| Freshwater has a distinct landscape character that is defined by its undulating topography, established tropical gardens and surrounding mountainous outlook. While the built form contributes to the neighbourhood character area, it is the dense vegetation that generally dominates streetscapes and results in an overall impression of a treed neighbourhood.<br><br>Dwellings from various eras are present in the neighbourhood character area. The landscape of the neighbourhood character area is further enhanced by the narrow road pavements, grassy verges and informal street trees. Front gardens are also generally characterised by dense tropical foliage, large palms and canopy trees that provide shade. | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | A mix of inter-war, post-war and contemporary development. |
| Building materials | Timber, fibro sheet, render, brick, corrugated steel roofs. A range of light pastel colours are used in buildings. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Roof style | Mixed, pitched (gabled and hipped to the street), skillion, flat. |
| Front setbacks | Varied, generally 2-8 metres, but up to 45 metres. |
| Side setbacks | Varied. |
| Building height | Predominantly a mix of low-set and high-set Queenslanders. |
| Car parking/vehicle storage | Carports and garages, often located under the dwelling. |
| Lot frontages | Varied, most lots are either approximately 12 metres, 18 metres or 20 metres in width, however some residential lots are as large as 70-75 metres wide. |

**Table 3.2.g – Neighbourhood character area 7 – Gordonvale**

| Character statement | |
|---|---|
| The neighbourhood character area comprises dwellings in wide, spacious streetscapes. A number of building eras are represented throughout streets, including pre-war, inter-war and post-war styles. Dwellings are generally well maintained, surrounded by gardens of shrubs, lawn and occasional canopy trees or tall palms. The landscapes surrounding the township are evident from some streets, including views to Walsh's Pyramid. The spaciousness of streets and the availability of views to surrounding landscapes reduces the impact of the built form on streets, although the frequent use of light-coloured finishes highlights the appearance of buildings throughout the neighbourhood character area. A network of rear laneways adds a layer of interest to the neighbourhood character area, providing a sense of the area's history and enhancing the function of the rear of properties. | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | Pre-war, inter-war and post-war and a large number of workers cottages and houses. |
| Building materials | Predominantly timber, with corrugated steel roofs and occasional use of brick or fibro sheeting. |
| Roof style | Pitched, with a mix of hipped and gabled ends fronting the street |
| Front setbacks | Generally small, between 3 and 4 metres, although this is enhanced by very wide nature strips. |
| Side setbacks | Varied. |
| Building height | Predominantly low-set and high-set, some of which have been enclosed underneath. |
| Car parking /vehicle storage | Where provided, carports and garages are generally sited to the rear of the dwelling. |
| Lot frontages | Mixed. Generally between 15 and 20 metres |

**Table 3.2.h – Neighbourhood character area 8 – Manunda**

| Character statement |
|---|
| The wide road reserves of this neighbourhood character area create a spacious feel, despite the close proximity of buildings. The often wide grassy verges and nature strips provide an informal and open streetscape, allowing for a variety of large shady street trees. Where kerbs are sealed, car parking is provided along the wide streets.<br><br>High-set dwellings from the inter-war era form the predominant housing style, although there is a small presence of pre-war dwellings as well as infill from the post-war and contemporary eras. |

| | |
|---|---|
| A small, low scale group of retail and commercial businesses is located within the neighbourhood character area. These buildings generally use lighter colours similar to those of the surrounding dwellings. | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | Predominantly inter-war and post-war, as well as a small number of pre-war dwellings |
| Building materials | Mixed, including timber, fibro, cement sheeting, brick and render, with corrugated steel roofs. |
| Building form | A mix of hipped, asymmetrical and multi-gabled bungalows |
| Roof style | Mixed pitched styles. |
| Front setbacks | Between 3 to 8 metres, with most around 5 metres, |
| Side setbacks | Generally 1-3 metres. |
| Building height | Predominantly high-set as well as some low-set buildings. Some of the high-set dwellings are enclosed underneath. |
| Car parking /vehicle storage | Carports and garages to the side of, or beneath the dwelling. |
| Lot frontages | Generally from 10-20 metres. |

**Table 3.2.i – Neighbourhood character area 9 – Parramatta Park A**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Character statement** | |
| Dwellings are predominantly from the pre-war era, however a mix of inter-war and immediate post-war styles are also present. There is a range of architectural styles suited to tropical living.<br><br>Given the inner urban nature of the neighbourhood character area and its close proximity to the Cairns City Centre, several infill developments are scattered throughout. Enhancing the higher densities of the neighbourhood character area are the smaller front and side setbacks.<br>The high densities are softened by the relaxed landscaping, including tropical vegetation.<br><br>Martyn Street (north-west of Grove Street) displays particularly distinctive and consistent qualities, containing a series of double fronted weather-boarded dwellings with two distinct gabled roof shapes backing into a hipped form. The street is a near-intact representation of a distinct period of development. Dwellings share many common characteristics, giving the group of houses a strong streetscape presence. | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | Predominantly pre-war and inter-war with some recent infill and multi-unit development. |
| Building materials | Timber, brick, render, cement sheet, corrugated steel roofs. Generally light and pastel colours. |
| Building form | A mix of hipped, asymmetrical and multi-gabled bungalows |
| Roof style | Pitched, including a mix of both hipped and gabled styles |
| Front setbacks | Generally 3-5 metres |
| Side setbacks | Generally small, but ranging between 1-5 metres |
| Building height | Predominately high-set with some low-set buildings. Some high-set dwellings are enclosed underneath. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Car parking/vehicle storage | Carports and garages are located either in front, beneath or to the side of dwellings. In some instances car storage is absent. |
| Lot frontages | Generally 10-20 metres. |

**Table 3.2.j – Neighbourhood character area 10 – Parramatta Park B**

| Character statement | |
|---|---|
| The broad mix of uses found scattered throughout the residential streets provide this neighbourhood with a number of functions. Dwellings are predominantly from the pre-war era as well as a mix of inter-war and post-war styles.<br><br>There is a range of architectural styles suited to tropical living. Given the inner urban nature of the neighbourhood character area and its close proximity to the Cairns City Centre, several infill developments are scattered throughout. Enhancing the higher densities of the neighbourhood character area are the smaller front setbacks and smaller side setbacks. The high densities are softened by the relaxed landscaping, including tropical vegetation.<br><br>Lumley Street displays particularly distinctive and consistent qualities, comprising a series of small-scale, timber, single-fronted houses that are set close to the street. The street is a near intact representation of a distinct period of development. Dwellings share many common characteristics, giving the group of houses a strong streetscape presence. | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | Predominantly pre-war and inter-war with some post-war and more recent multi-unit developments. |
| Building materials | Timber, brick, render, cement sheet, corrugated steel roofs. |
| Building form | Predominantly hipped with some asymmetrical and multigabled bungalows. |
| Roof style | Pitched, including a mix of both hipped and gabled styles. |
| Front setbacks | Generally 3-5 metres. |
| Side setbacks | Generally small, but ranging between 1-5 metres. |
| Building height | Mix of high-set and low-set dwellings with some of the high-set houses enclosed underneath. |
| Car parking/vehicle storage | Carports and garages are present throughout, either in front, beneath or to the side of dwellings. There are some dwellings with no car storage. |
| Lot frontages | Generally 10-20 metres. |

**Table 3.2.k – Neighbourhood character area 11 – Stratford**

| Character statement | |
|---|---|
| Heavy rainforest vegetation in nearby hills, along with the tall palm trees and dense tropical foliage of front gardens provide a leafy green outlook for this neighbourhood character area. There are a variety of architectural styles, which date back to the interwar era. Grassy street verges contribute to a casual streetscape; however the various front boundary treatments, including medium height wire, masonry and timber fences, delineate between the public and private environments. | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | Predominantly inter-war and post-war high-set Queenslanders with a small presence of 1960s infill. |
| Building materials | Timbers, fibro sheeting, render, corrugated steel roofs. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Roof style | Pitched, generally gabled to the front. Some skillion. |
| Front setbacks | Quite varied, however generally between 2-9m. |
| Side setbacks | Generally about 0-5 metres, with the odd larger lots having larger side setbacks. |
| Building height | Some low-set and single story dwellings but predominantly high-set Queenslanders, some of which have been enclosed underneath. |
| Car parking /vehicle storage | Generally carports/garages, many located beneath the house. |
| Lot frontages | Generally 20 metres. However, a few lots as low as 15 metres and several between 20-40 metres. |

**Table 3.2.l – Neighbourhood character area 12 – Westcourt**

| Character statement | |
|---|---|
| The neighbourhood character area is characterised by its regular grid pattern and variety of architectural styles. Dwellings reflect styles from the inter-war, post-war and 1950s periods. Most properties provide a clear delineation between the private and public domain through a range of fencing styles.<br><br>Mann Street is a key feature for this neighbourhood character area, based on its wide grassy verges and avenues of large ornamental trees | |
| **Character elements** | |
| Architectural style | Mixed, including inter-war, post-war, 1950s and some recent building styles. |
| Building materials | Timber, fibro sheeting, brick and corrugated steel roofs. |
| Roof style | Pitched with some skillion style roofs. |
| Front setbacks | Generally between 3-5 metres, with some up to 8-9 metres. |
| Side setbacks | Generally between 0-4 metres. |
| Building height | Predominantly high-set Queenslanders with some single and double storey dwellings. |
| Car parking /vehicle storage | Predominantly garages or carports, either attached to the house or located to the rear of the dwelling |
| Lot frontages | Generally 18-19 metres. |

### 3.3. Repairs and like-for-like replacements

(1) The full or partial demolition of a building or structure is considered to be demolition under the CairnsPlan 2016 planning scheme (refer to the definition for demolition in Schedule 1). This includes the removal of any part of the building or structure, even where this part is intended to be replaced.

(2) Building work for the demolition of a building within a Neighbourhood character area requires a code assessable application to be made to Council. However, it is acknowledged that buildings will require routine maintenance and repair from time to time which will include the replacement of old or damaged parts of a building such as re-roofing, repair of rotten timber or replacement of timber stairs.

(3) If it can be demonstrated that the effect of the building work would be minor or inconsequential, an applicant may apply to Council for an Exemption Certificate (pursuant to section 46 of the *Planning Act 2016*) for the development. This may include but is not limited to:
   (a) Repairs and replacements where the replacement is like-for-like. For example, a re-roof where the new roof has the same design, roof profile, material and colour as the existing roof; or
   (b) Building work that is internal to the building; or
   (c) Building work that cannot be seen from the street or any other public place.

   Council considers each application for an Exemption Certificate on the circumstances of the proposal and can only issue an Exemption Certificate if it meets the requirements under the *Planning Act 2016*.

## 4. Information Council may request

### 4.1. Neighbourhood character assessments

(1) Council may request that a development application in a Neighbourhood character area is accompanied by a Neighbourhood character assessment.

(2) The purpose of the Neighbourhood character assessment is to:
   (a) Identify and accurately describe the Neighbourhood character elements displayed by the Neighbourhood character place and Neighbourhood character streetscape;
   (b) Describe the overall character of the Neighbourhood character place and Neighbourhood character streetscape;
   (c) Detail the proposed development;
   (d) Detail any adverse impacts of the proposed development on the Neighbourhood character place or Neighbourhood character streetscape; and
   Describe how the proposed development has been designed to respond to and reflect the identified character of the Neighbourhood character place and Neighbourhood character streetscape.

(3) Neighbourhood character assessments should identify the specific character elements displayed by the Neighbourhood character place, Neighbourhood character streetscape and Neighbourhood character area.

(4) The assessment should also describe the overall character of the place, streetscape and area. The description of the overall character of the streetscape and area should reflect the predominant character, noting that there will be some variation in any streetscape and area as newer development occurs. Newer or more recent development should not be relied upon to demonstrate the overall character of a streetscape or area. Similarly, a single development or single Neighbourhood character place should not be relied upon to demonstrate the overall character of the streetscape or area.

(5) A Neighbourhood character assessment may also identify a development that does not reflect the character of the area or display any of the character elements commonly seen in the area. The presence of this type of development should not diminish the character of places in the area and should not be relied upon to demonstrate the overall character of an area.

(6) Neighbourhood character elements are the features and characteristics of a Neighbourhood character place, Neighbourhood character streetscape or Neighbourhood character area. Neighbourhood character elements may include, but are not limited to:
   (a) Architectural style of buildings and structures (including roof style);
   (b) Building materials;

(c) Pattern of development;
(d) Setbacks;
(e) Building height, form, scale and bulk;
(f) Layout and orientation of buildings and structures;
(g) Access, car parking and vehicle storage;
(h) Lot layout, lot sizes, dimensions and frontages;
(i) Site coverage;
(j) Topography;
(k) Fencing, landscaping and vegetation;
(l) Street trees.

(7) The Neighbourhood character elements displayed will vary across each Neighbourhood character area and Neighbourhood character streetscape. This is why it is important to undertake a Neighbourhood character assessment to identify the unique character elements displayed on a Neighbourhood character place or within Neighbourhood character streetscape or area.

(8) The design response should explain how the proposed design derives from and responds to the identified Neighbourhood character elements and how the proposed design will be consistent with and sympathetic to the character of the streetscape and area.

(9) The below table provides guidance for Neighbourhood character assessments to assist in identifying and describing the Neighbourhood character elements of the Neighbourhood character place, streetscape or area. It does not provide an exhaustive list of features to be considered. Describing neighbourhood character requires a qualitative assessment about which features and characteristics determine the overall neighbourhood character of the streetscape.

**Table 4.1.a – Guide to Neighbourhood character assessments**

| Matters to be considered | Questions that might help in the preparation of the neighbourhood and site description | Terms/features that might help to describe this aspect of neighbourhood character | Your response |
|---|---|---|---|
| The pattern of development of the streetscape/area | Is the streetscape/area typical of a particular form or pattern of development?<br><br>Are there any patterns in building form, height, setbacks or rhythm?<br><br>How do these relate to topography, natural features and street network?<br><br>Is there any pattern in relation to any particular feature or characteristic?<br><br>What is the pattern of landscape and street tree planting?<br><br>How do buildings and private open spaces relate to each other or to the public realm?<br><br>What is the size of lots in | • Topography;<br>• street block length<br>• street alignment, type and width;<br>• extent of rear gardens and private open space;<br>• landscaping and vegetation in the neighbourhood;<br>• patterns of use;<br>• diversity of housing;<br>• building orientation;<br>• building alignment;<br>• lot sizes;<br>• lot dimensions;<br>• lot frontages;<br>• access and driveway arrangements. | |

| Matters to be considered | Questions that might help in the preparation of the neighbourhood and site description | Terms/features that might help to describe this aspect of neighbourhood character | Your response |
|---|---|---|---|
| | the streetscape/area and is there a pattern of certain sized lots?<br><br>What are the dimensions (including street frontage dimensions) of lots in the streetscape/area?<br><br>Is there a pattern of access and driveways (e.g. single width driveways)? | | |
| The built form, scale and character of surrounding development including front fencing | What is the predominant form of development?<br><br>Is the streetscape/area consistent or diverse in terms of the built form, scale and character?<br><br>What sort of front fences are there? What is their height? Do they complement the building on the lot in colour and materials?<br><br>How is parking and access arranged? | • building mass and height;<br>• setbacks;<br>• space around properties and site coverage;<br>• car parking;<br>• fences (style and height). | |
| Architectural and roof styles | What architectural styles are typical in the neighbourhood?<br><br>What levels of articulation and detail are typical in the neighbourhood?<br><br>How do roof patterns relate to built form? | • architectural rhythm of street;<br>• porches and verandahs;<br>• architectural style;<br>• roof form. | |
| Any other notable features or characteristics of the streetscape/area | Are there any other notable features that have not been picked up through the consideration of the above matters?<br><br>Are there any significant street trees or vegetation that would affect the design response? | • Waterways;<br>• street trees;<br>• details of the footpath and street;<br>• landscaping and vegetation on private lots;<br>• nearby places of significance. | |
| Include copies of any photographic records of the Neighbourhood character place or area | Are there any recent or historic photographs or documents relating to the neighbourhood character place or wider streetscape or area? | • Photos of the character place including views to and from the place;<br>• Photos of views showing relationships to other relevant structures, surrounding streetscape, adjoining places or landscape features. | |

### 4.2. Supporting information for demolition of a Neighbourhood character place

(1) The purpose of the Neighbourhood character overlay is to retain Neighbourhood character places. Given this, demolition of a Neighbourhood character place will only be supported in very limited and genuine circumstances and where the applicant has provided sufficient justification and supporting evidence.

(2) Where a neighbourhood character place is proposed to be demolished because it is not structurally sound and cannot reasonably be made to be sound, the development application must be accompanied by a report prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland (RPEQ) demonstrating that the building is not structurally sound and cannot reasonably be made structurally sound. This report must include:

(a) A detailed description and photographic evidence of the structural elements of the building that are not structurally sound;

(b) A detailed list of the repairs required to make the building structurally sound;

(c) Identification of any repairs that would be the ordinarily required to maintain a building of its age (e.g. replacement of roof sheeting, replacement of rotten timber, replacement of stairs);

(d) A cost estimate of the repairs required to make the building structurally sound. The cost estimate must be limited to the cost of the repairs required to make the building structurally sound and cannot include the cost of other renovations to improve the building or costs for repairs that would be ordinarily incurred in the maintenance of a building of its age. Where an estimation of the cost to repair is provided as a contributing factor to justify the demolition, the estimates must be undertaken by a suitably qualified person (e.g. a quantity surveyor, building estimator, multiple quotes from a QBCC building contractor/builder);

(e) A statement as to the reasons why the building cannot reasonably be made structurally sound.

A person's circumstances, financial or otherwise cannot be provided as a reason to justify demolition and will not be considered in the assessment of the development application.

(3) Where a Neighbourhood character place is proposed to be demolished because it is not structurally sound, Council may also require:

(a) An inspection of the property to verify the evidence outlined in the RPEQ report;

(b) An independent review by a consultant at the cost of the applicant in accordance with Council's fees and charges schedule.

(4) Where a Neighbourhood character place is proposed to be demolished because it does not reflect the character of the Neighbourhood character place, Neighbourhood character streetscape and Neighbourhood character area, Council may require the development application to be accompanied by a report prepared by a heritage consultant to demonstrate that it does not reflect the character. The report must include:

(a) A Neighbourhood character assessment prepared in accordance with section 4.1 of this planning scheme policy;

(b) For partial demolition, a statement as to why the part of the Neighbourhood character place does not reflect the Neighbourhood character place, Neighbourhood character streetscape and Neighbourhood character area;

(c) For full demolition, a statement as to why the part of the Neighbourhood character place does not reflect the character of the Neighbourhood character streetscape and Neighbourhood character area;

(d) Photographic evidence that supports the statements above.

(5) Where a Neighbourhood character place displays the character elements commonly or predominantly seen in the Neighbourhood character streetscape and Neighbourhood character area, it will be considered to reflect the character of the streetscape and area.

(6) Where a Neighbourhood character place is proposed to be demolished because it does not reflect the character of the Neighbourhood character place, Neighbourhood character streetscape and Neighbourhood character area, Council may also require:
   (a) An inspection of the property to verify the evidence outlined in the heritage consultant's report;
   (b) An independent review by a consultant at the cost of the applicant in accordance with Council's fees and charges schedule.

## 5. Related materials

(1) Other documents which provide guidance on Neighbourhood character requirements in the CairnsPlan 2016 planning scheme, include:
   (a) Freshwater and Stratford Town planning Survey Consultation Report November 2019.

## 6. Schedule of amendments

**Table (a).a – Schedule of amendments**

| Amendment title | Version number | Description | Dates |
|---|---|---|---|
| CairnsPlan 2016 Amendment 1 of 2017 - Administrative | 1.1 | The amendment integrates the Cairns Local Government Infrastructure Plan and corrects formatting, numbering, outdated terms and factual matters incorrectly stated in the planning scheme. | Adopted 28 June 2017<br><br>Commenced 1 July 2017 |
| Planning Scheme Policy – Neighbourhood character Amendment 1 of 2017 - Administrative | 1.2 | The amendment corrects formatting and numbering to remove the Planning Scheme Policy from Schedule 6 of the CairnsPlan 2016 and includes a schedule of amendments. | Adopted 6 December 2017<br><br>Commenced 11 December 2017 |
| Planning Scheme Policy – Neighbourhood character Amendment 1 of 2021 - Amendment | 2.0 | The amendment provides additional guidance on preparing a Neighbourhood character assessment, repairs and like-for-like replacements to a Neighbourhood character place and supporting reports for demolition of a Neighbourhood character place. | Adopted 13 October 2021<br><br>Commenced 26 October 2021 |