

CHARACTER AREAS PLANNING INFORMATION SHEET

What is a Character Area?

A Character Area is a place with a distinctive look and feel that is valued by the community and worth preserving. These areas are recognised for their cohesive streetscape, building forms and visual character.

Character Areas are different from Heritage Areas. While both aim to protect places of value, Heritage Areas focus on buildings with heritage significance, whereas Character Areas focus on maintaining the overall streetscape and neighbourhood character. Some Character Areas may be considered for elevation to a Heritage Area where perceived heritage value eventuates.

There are 10 Character Areas within the City of Vincent, being St Albans Avenue, Carr Street, The Boulevard and Matlock Street, Florence Street, Prospect Place, Hammond Street, Strathcona Street, Wilberforce Street, Orange and Hope Street and Auckland Street.

Details relating to these Character Areas can be found in the City's Local Planning Policy: Character Area Guidelines.

Why have Character Areas?

Character Areas help protect the unique look and feel of streets and neighbourhoods that are valued by the community.

They ensure that new buildings, additions and alterations are designed in a way that fits in with the existing streetscape, rather than standing out or detracting from it. This helps maintain the identity of an area as it changes over time.

Character Areas do not prevent development. Instead, they guide how development should occur so that growth can happen while the character that people value is retained. These development standards are detailed in the City's Local Planning Policy: Character Area Guidelines and may relate to, but is not limited to, building heights, lot boundary setbacks and fencing etc.

How does an area become a Character Area?

Local Planning Policy: Character Area Guidelines specifies the process for an area to become a Character Area. This includes a nomination support for at least 40% of affected properties, an assessment by the City, and formal community consultation.

I want to make changes to my house; do I need a development approval?

Not all development to houses within a Character Area requires approval from the City.

Development approval is required when the 'deemed-to-comply' standards of the City's Local Planning Policy: Built Form Policy, Local Planning Policy: Character Area Guidelines or Residential Design Codes Volume 1 or Volume 2 are not met.

'Deemed-to-comply' standards specify specific and measurable standards that specify how development should be placed on a site. Where the 'deemed-to-comply' standards are not met, a development application is required for the City to determine whether the development would meet the relevant 'design principles' and 'objectives.'

Unlike a Heritage Area, demolition of a building does not require a development approval.

Generally, works beyond what would be reasonably considered as internal works or building maintenance (structural or landscaping) will not require a development application.

Owners are encouraged to speak to the City's Development and Design team should they believe that their works are exempt from requiring development approval.

What if I do works without approval?

Undertaking works without the required approvals may be a breach of the *Planning and Development Act 2005*. Penalties may apply.



You may be required to lodge a retrospective development application; however, this does not prevent the City from taking enforcement action, including issuing infringements or prosecution. Approval is not guaranteed, and you may be required to undo the unauthorised works and reinstate the property to its previous state, at your own cost.

How long does the development application process take?

The City has 60 days in which to determine the application or 90 days if the development application requires community consultation. Development applications may take longer than 90 days where it is agreed to in writing between the local government and the applicant.

What information is required for a Development Application?

Please refer to the relevant [Development Application Checklist](#).

How is my application assessed?

Your application will be assessed against the following:

- Residential Design Codes Volume 1 or Volume 2
- Local Planning Policy: Character Area Guidelines
- Local Planning Policy: Built Form
- Any other relevant City or State policies.

Do you have more questions?

The City can't confirm if a proposal would be supported unless a development application is lodged and is not able to undertake an assessment of plans in the absence of an application.

The City strongly encourages that any major additions are discussed with a Senior Urban Planners prior to lodgement. Residents can discuss planning proposals and preliminary plans with the City's officers. We recommend booking a meeting with a Senior Urban Planner to discuss any proposed development. You can arrange a meeting via mail@vincent.wa.gov.au or calling 9273 6000.

Phone: 08 9273 6000

Email: mail@vincent.wa.gov.au

Address: Main Administration Building, 244 Vincent Street, Leederville WA 6007