Residential Design—Character Code

1 Application
This Code only applies to Residential Areas in the Demolition Control Precinct (all Character Residential Areas are included in the Demolition Control Precinct).

This Code will apply in assessing material change of use and/or building work for a house or multi–unit dwelling. Where a Centre Activity on a site in the Demolition Control Precinct, the Centre Design Code (P14/A14.2 and P20/A20 in particular) will be considered in assessing the character of new development, rather than this Code.

This Code does not apply to building work involving only the following renovations and extensions:
- enclosing under the existing building
- enclosed extensions at the rear of the building
- external stairs and ramps
- a carport (with no garage doors) with a maximum total width of 6m or 50% of the average width of the lot (whichever is the lesser) located between the building and the front boundary
- carports (with no garage doors) located between the building and the side boundary
- carports, garages, sheds and other outbuildings at the rear of the building
- decks, verandahs and balconies at the rear of the building
- raising an existing house where the resultant maximum height does not exceed 8.5m above ground level.

Though exempt from assessment against this Code, the above building works may still be assessable against the House Code, and/or the Residential Design—Small Lot Code, or the Residential Design—Low Density, Character and Low–medium Density Code.

2 Using this Code
In using this Code reference should also be made to Section 1.1—How to use the Codes, at the front of this Chapter.

When this Code is listed in a level of assessment table in Chapter 3 or a Local Plan in Chapter 4 as an Applicable Code for code assessment:
- the Code is to be read as being the Purpose, Performance Criteria and Acceptable Solutions
- a Local Plan may include a Code that may vary or include additional Purposes, Performance Criteria or Acceptable Solutions.

3 Purpose
The purpose of this Code is to:
- encourage development in Demolition Control Precincts to reflect or strengthen pre–1946 housing character through compatible form, scale, materials and detailing
- in conjunction with the Demolition Code, ensure that precincts of pre–1946 houses are retained and redevelopment in those precincts complements the pre–1946 houses.

4 Assessment guidance—explanation of traditional character

Building form and scale
The predominant traditional building form of pre–1946 housing is a solid core with attached or integrated verandahs raised above the ground on timber supports. Enclosed areas under houses generally maintain the street appearance of lightweight supports to upper floors and reflect the layout of upper floor verandahs. Roof forms are medium pitched pyramids, hips or gables.

Refer to Figure a.

Street context
Building form can detract from the character of the street if it conflicts with the established patterns of roof shape and pitch, the relationship between floor and ground levels, and the traditional concept of lightweight verandahs attached to a solid core.

Refer to Figure b.

The traditional scale of a street was first established by its subdivision pattern of 16, 24 or 32 perch lots, with 10, 15 or 20m frontages respectively. This pattern was reinforced by the traditional building form of a single level house elevated on stumps. This created a reasonably uniform scale, accentuated by consistent stepping of the levels of adjoining buildings in Brisbane’s hilly suburbs, and by uniform spacing between houses in the flatter suburbs.

The sense of scale of a street can be diminished if buildings are introduced that significantly exceed the surrounding building height, present large unarticulated facades to the street, or interrupt the rhythm of stepping roof lines in a sloping street.

Refer to Figure c.

Scale can also be affected by introducing buildings and lots that are significantly smaller than the prevailing building sizes and subdivision pattern.

Note: the location of sites included in the Demolition Control Precinct is indicated on the Scheme Maps and CD ROM version of the plan.
Two narrow buildings can be combined with a zero lot line to give a single building form under a unified roof in scale with surrounding buildings. The extra width can be used internally or better utilised as outdoor space. Individuality can be provided through detailing and colours.

Refer to Figure d.

Materials and detailing

The character of the older suburbs is influenced by elements such as eaves, sunhoods, verandahs, lattice screens and batten panels that cast shadows and provide three-dimensional effects. Character is also derived from the relatively limited range of materials available at the time of construction. This provided a unifying theme of painted timber walls and corrugated steel roofing.

These lightweight external elements reduce building bulk and form a transition with the external landscape. They make an appropriate response to the local climatic conditions of strong sun and high rainfall.

The traditional character of a street can be diminished by styles that do not incorporate shade-forming elements and that present a flat facade to the street. These styles also have poor environmental qualities.

Refer to Figure e.

Setting

The traditional setting of houses in the older suburbs is a fairly uniform building line, with individual front gardens punctuated by a pedestrian path and single width driveway.

Front fences are usually low and reasonably transparent with timber paling or wire. This facilitates a clear view of buildings from the street and assists surveillance of the street from houses and front yards, resulting in streets that feel safe and welcoming.

The setting of new buildings can detract from the character of a street if garages dominate, or if fencing, orientation or setbacks conflict with the established settings.

Refer to Figure f.

Note: a useful guide to renovating and extending character buildings is the Council brochure, ‘Looking After the Queensland House’.

4.2 Compliance with the Residential Design—Character Code

Compliance with the Residential Design—Character Code will be achieved in one of two ways:

- Use of traditional materials as detailed in P1, or
- Use of contemporary materials with character elements as detailed in P2 to P7 inclusive.

5 Performance Criteria and Acceptable Solutions

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| 1. Use of traditional materials | A1.1 Buildings use traditional materials consistent with those most commonly used in pre-1946 houses in that part of the Demolition Control Precinct, including sloping roofing with eaves of similar proportions to pre-1946 houses in the street.  
  Note: traditional materials are most likely painted timber walls and tin roofing  
  Additional requirements for sites that contain pre-1946 building/s:  
  A1.2 Pre-1946 building/s are sited at the front of the site at the street frontage  
  A1.3 Building/s built prior to 1900 are reused, refurbished and retained |
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<td><strong>2. Use of contemporary materials with character elements</strong></td>
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| **P2** The building height and bulk must complement the predominant scale of pre-1946 houses nearby in the street | For houses (including small lot houses):  
A2.1 Where the topography is generally flat, the eaves height is within 20% of adjoining eaves heights  
OR  
For multi-unit dwellings:  
A2.2 Buildings that are taller or wider than the type of building prevalent in the street consist of clearly distinguishable parts similar in scale to existing pre-1946 housing  
Refer to Figures g and h |
| **P3** The building setting must complement the traditional setting of pre-1946 houses nearby in the street  
*Notes: this traditional setting usually involves a single width driveway and a fairly uniform building line*  
*This Performance Criterion does not apply to rear access lots* | A3.1 Buildings are set back from any road alignment (excluding eaves, awnings, stairs and garage) within 20% of the average front setback of the nearest pre-1946 buildings fronting the same street  
Additional requirements for house/s (including small lot houses)  
A3.2 Garages are setback from any road alignment in a position similar to garages located on sites of pre-1946 houses nearby in the street  
A3.3 The crossover width is a maximum of 3m  
Additional requirements for sites that contain pre-1946 building/s:  
A3.4 Pre-1946 building/s are located at the front of the site  
A3.5 Building/s built prior to 1900 are reused, refurbished and retained |
| **P4** The building form must complement the traditional elements of pre-1946 houses nearby in the street  
*Note: this traditional building form usually comprised a solid core with attached or integrated verandahs raised above the ground on timber supports. Enclosed areas under houses generally maintained the street appearance of lightweight supports to upper floors and reflected the layout of upper floor verandahs* | A4.1 The building includes a solid core with attached or integrated lightweight verandah or balcony structures  
A4.2 Different floor levels are distinguished with the use of entries, windows and balconies  
A4.3 Where the building is located at the front of the site, living areas, verandahs and windows are orientated towards the street  
Refer to Figure i  
Additional requirements for houses (including small lot houses):  
A4.4 The ground floor of the building gives the appearance of a lightweight support to the upper floor and reflects the layout of upper floor verandah or balcony structures |
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| P5  Roof form must reflect traditional roofs in that part of the Demolition Control Precinct | A5.1 Predominant roof forms will include one or more of a combination of pyramids, hips or gables of a similar pitch and proportions to those of pre–1946 houses nearby in the street.  
In a sloping street where the rhythm of stepping levels and roofs is a characteristic of the streetscape, that stepping is maintained.  
Refer to Figure c  
A5.2 The building includes eaves that are of similar proportions to eaves on pre–1946 houses nearby in the street  
A5.3 Roof materials are similar to the roof materials on pre–1946 houses nearby in the street |
| P6  External elements, materials and detailing must reflect pre–1946 architectural themes, and reduce building bulk and form a transition with the external landscape | A6.1 External elements such as lightweight verandahs and stairs, eaves, overhangs, sunhoods, lattice screens and batten panels are evident to reflect those of pre–1946 houses nearby in the street and are sufficient to cast shadows and provide three-dimensional effects.  
Refer to Figure j  
A6.2 Where masonry is used it is rendered and/or painted and used in conjunction with other more lightweight materials, particularly to define upper and lower levels.  
For houses (including small lot houses) these lightweight materials predominate |
| P7  Front fencing must reflect pre–1946 architectural styles and complement the building design | A7 Any front fences are compatible in materials, height and transparency with other fencing on sites of pre–1946 houses nearby in the street.  
*Note: traditional fences are usually low and reasonably transparent with timber paling or wire* |
Figure a  Typical existing housing styles in the older suburbs of Brisbane
Figure b  Building designs must consider the established patterns of roof shape and roof pitch, and relationship of floor to ground level.

Figure c  New buildings taller or wider than existing buildings in the street must be avoided so the scale and pattern of houses in the street is not interrupted. Where a sloping street, building height and roof should continue the rhythm of stepping roofs that exists in pre-1946 houses in the street.

Figure d  Two dwellings share a common boundary to provide a single building form.

Figure e  The absence of elements such as sunshading devices and verandahs result in a building appearance that fails to complement the character of the City’s older suburbs.
Figure f  The setting of new buildings can detract from the character of the street if garages dominate or if fencing, orientation or setbacks conflict with the established settings.

Figure g  New buildings are articulated to complement the scale of existing buildings within the street.

Figure h  This multi-unit development achieved a satisfactory building scale by breaking up the development so that individual dwelling units have frontage to the street.

Figure i  Balconies and living areas are orientated towards the street.

Figure j  This building incorporates lightweight timber framed verandah and stairs while incorporating modern building materials into the building design.