

## INTRODUCTION

The illustrations used in the guidelines are provided to assist in understanding the points expressed in the text. These are not all existing buildings but are stylised designs.

These Guidelines have been prepared to help you if you are thinking of building in Akaroa, particularly in the historic town centre or residential conservation areas. They are intended to help you achieve the building you want, while at the same time ensuring that new buildings fit in with the town's surviving historic buildings and maintaining or enhancing the town's present character.



**Figure 1:** Typical Akaroa streetscape

You will find in this document a brief discussion of Akaroa's architectural history, and more importantly, a description of its architecture and value as a well preserved small scale historic town with a range of architectural styles. The historical and architectural importance of the town has been recognised by the local community, the Historic Places Trust and the Banks Peninsula District Council. The Guidelines outline the key principles which the Council will take into account in considering any consent applications.

This document will elaborate on those principles, which can, in essence, be summarised as follows:

New development and additions to existing structures should:

- Recognise and respect the unique historic character of Akaroa.
- Relate well to surrounding buildings and the general environment.
- Avoid dominating neighbouring buildings.
- Respect important views from public places.

### **Why Guidelines?**

Akaroa has a distinctive visual character, based on its physical setting, its buildings and its open spaces and gardens. A large part of the centre of Akaroa has been recognised by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and registered as a Historic Area. The Banks Peninsula District Council has similarly recognised that this special character is worth protecting by including in its District Plan, provisions, which give it, power to control the design of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings.

The Council's aim, through these Guidelines, is to ensure that the special historical character of Akaroa is maintained, as development of the town proceeds. In endeavouring to meet that objective, the other main goals are to provide property owners and developers with design and appearance guidance and to encourage early discussion of proposed building plans with the Council.

The primary concern of these Guidelines is to protect, for cultural and aesthetic reasons, the attractive appearance of the town after more than 150 years of growth and change. Adherence to these Guidelines also promises economic advantage for the town. Akaroa's appealing appearance and atmosphere help make it a desirable place to live, and an attractive place to visit. The town's architectural and historical heritage contributes greatly to its appeal as a holiday destination. By helping to protect the intrinsic characteristics of the town, the Guidelines will assist in strengthening the town's major economic base and potentially enhance the value of your property.

New buildings, or significant alterations to existing buildings in the town centre and residential conservation zones are the main concern of these Guidelines. However, many of the principles and specific guidelines could also be applied to the town's advantage in the residential areas which surround these two zones.

### **The Planning Framework**

The Council can consider the design and appearance of proposed work in central areas of the town, these being the Residential Conservation and Town Centre Zones, through the resource consent process. Any building work in the residential conservation and town centre zones should comply with the standards of the District Plan and be in accordance with these design guidelines. Failure to comply with the intentions of the Guidelines can be grounds for the Council to decline resource consent approval.

The relevant sections of the District Plan are the Residential Conservation Zone and for the Town Centre Zone.
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These guidelines set out issues which the Council will take into account when assessing a resource consent application required for design and appearance reasons. The Guidelines are intended to help applicants who require resource consents to undertake building work in the two zones understand how the Council will evaluate the design and appearance aspects of proposed work.

Most of the two zones lie within the Historic Area registered by the Historic Places Trust. This area has been recognised nationally as having a high percentage of original historic buildings which are of aesthetic and architectural importance in their own right, and form an inter-related group of historic places. As such the area is a vital part of the historical and cultural heritage of New Zealand. Approval from the Historic Places Trust is needed for work on any building within the Historic Area, or on any building elsewhere in the town which has been registered by the Trust. Failure to obtain the approval of the Historic Places Trust will normally necessitate the public notification of the application.

In considering the design and appearance aspects of proposed building work in the two zones, the Council may take advice from its Akaroa Design and Appearance Advisory Committee, the Historic Places Trust or any qualified expert. Individuals who need resource consent for building work in these areas are urged to study these Guidelines and to discuss their plans with the District Council, the Akaroa Design and Appearance Advisory Committee and the Historic Places Trust before formally applying for resource consent for the work. Early consultation can often facilitate subsequent consent processes, resulting in reduced time delays and costs.

### **Akaroa's Architectural History**

Akaroa has a distinctive architectural quality that stems, in part, from the high number of colonial buildings that have been retained to this day. Akaroa is one of New Zealand's most charming and romantic towns, although its origins as a French settlement are not strongly reflected in much of its architecture today. The earliest buildings of the French had steeply pitched roofs, small dormers, casement windows divided into many panes, louvered shutters and symmetrical facades. As early as the mid 1850s, Akaroa's buildings were no longer markedly different from other New Zealand buildings. A great number were cottages with reasonably large dormers, verandahs and lean-to's. Almost all were built of horizontal weatherboards with steep roofs initially of shingles, then of corrugated iron. These were typical New Zealand colonial buildings.

The one and a half storey, gable ended cottage with verandah, lean-to and dormers is often idealised as the archetypal Akaroa building. Though these cottages are still abundant, and valued, the town's architectural traditions are much richer and more varied.

Later building designs in the town also followed general New Zealand trends, with horizontal weatherboard and corrugated iron the predominant building materials. Thus, nineteenth century churches are variants of colonial wooden Gothic, while Italianate was favoured for public and commercial buildings. Many commercial premises were two-storied and differed from residences only in being somewhat larger, and in being built-up to the street line. All were still relatively small buildings and almost all were built of "timber and tin". This uniformity in styles and materials for residences and public and commercial buildings, and little variation in building size, have been characteristic of Akaroa's architecture since the nineteenth century.



**Figure 2:** Examples of early colonial cottages

In the late twentieth century there was a new development in Akaroa's architectural history. A demand emerged for multi-unit, privately owned apartments. These were up to three storeys high, built up to or close to the street line, and often of masonry construction. These buildings marked a significant departure from the single family houses and cottages, standing in individual sections, which were previously characteristic of most of the town. In retrospect many of these structures, individually or collectively, have not been successful in maintaining the intimate, mostly small scale of the town and the use of complementary building materials.



**Figure 3:** Townhouse block demonstrating overly repetitive elements.  
The buildings to the right display a pleasing variety and interest.

Akaroa's diverse range of buildings of different sizes, shapes, styles, set-backs, roof forms and materials mean there is a very large architectural vocabulary on which architects can draw for new building design, without introducing styles, or details that would appear out of place. It is important that new buildings and extensions reflect existing architectural themes and styles.

### **Akaroa's Setting and Urban Form**

Preserving and enhancing what is appealing about Akaroa requires careful consideration of more than the design of individual buildings. The spaces between matter too. Gardens and trees are generously dispersed throughout the town and large open spaces separate different built-up areas. Building has mostly been concentrated on the foreshore and up three small valleys, with the intervening spurs remaining open or bush-covered. The close integration between the natural and urban worlds in Akaroa also results from the town's position facing onto an extensive harbour, and being ringed by grand hills. Applicants are encouraged to consider the impact of their design or building extension on the existing views of water and hills from the town and of the integration of the built and the natural environment.

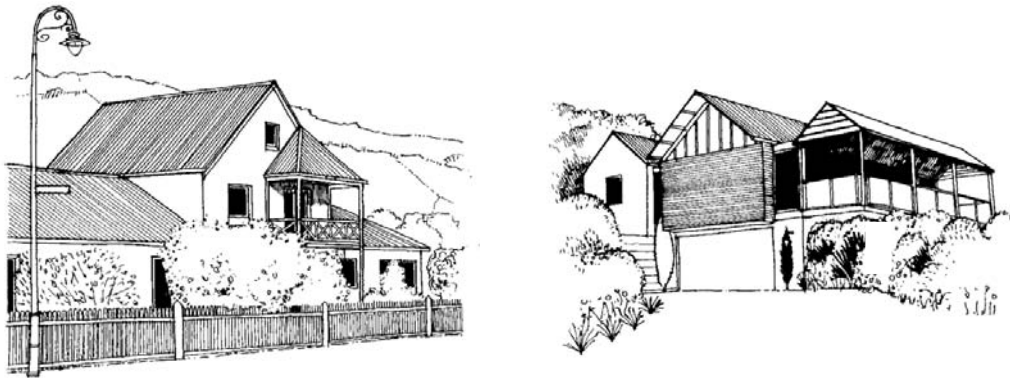
The town's development, and the proximity of commercial premises and residences give the town the relaxed, convivial atmosphere of a village. The maintenance of public and retail activities at street level is important to sustaining the town's vitality and is protected in certain areas along Beach Road between Rue Jolie and Bruce Terrace. The maintenance of open spaces and of private gardens is also important to maintaining the town's atmosphere.

### **Diversity and Innovation**

New designs will generally be acceptable if their proportions fit in well with nearby older buildings and maintain the scale of existing streetscapes. New buildings of contemporary design, built using up-to-date materials and building technologies can be added to Akaroa, provided they avoid or mitigate any adverse visual effects through careful use of scale, density, bulk, exterior cladding, external detailing and through their site location and setback.

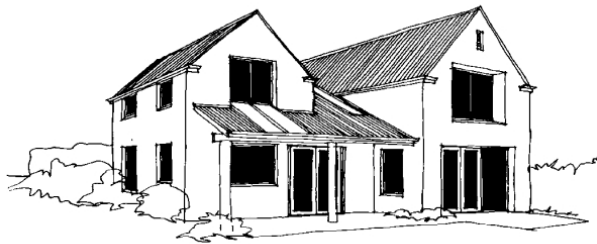
Successful approaches are:

1.     Compatible design: new buildings, or new work on old buildings may vary the design but maintain the proportions, scale, materials, textures and colours of the original.
2.     New design: work of completely contemporary design which uses modern materials and building technologies, but shows respect for the character of existing old buildings in the area. Care must be taken that the historic character of the town is maintained when new designs are introduced.



**Figure 4:** Modern buildings incorporating key architectural themes such as steeply pitched gabled roofs, verandahs and vertically oriented windows.

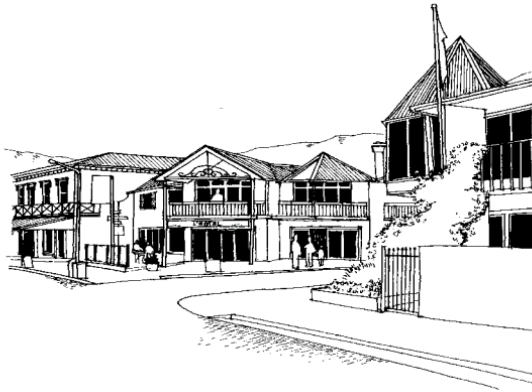
While nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings largely set the character of Akaroa, new development should generally reflect, rather than exactly replicate, these historic styles. Sympathetic design, whereby certain characteristics of historic buildings are incorporated into new buildings, is encouraged. Contemporary design, if carefully conceived to fit with the town's character, is often preferable to replica buildings.



**Figure 5:** New residence demonstrating site specific sympathetic small scale forms and details, and vertical windows.

### **Building on Specific Sites**

Each individual site has different buildings adjoining it, and sits in a different relationship to the wider landscape. What is suitable for one particular site may be quite unsuitable on another site. Corner sites need particular care, since they form a visual focal point. In some situations larger buildings on corner sites will be desirable to define streetscapes, on other corner sites, it may be desirable to avoid overpowering historic buildings nearby.



**Figure 6:** Corner Treatment – both buildings strongly define the corner yet include smaller scale forms that the pedestrian can relate to.

The size and scale of new buildings in relation to their neighbours are as important as the materials or architectural style of the new building.

The use of materials and architectural style of any development may add or detract from the overall proposal, its visual impact on the streetscape and historic character of the town.

## KEY CONCEPTS

### Streetscape, Rhythm and Scale

The goal is to maintain appealing streetscapes, characterised by sequences of buildings which are in scale and exhibit a pleasing modulation. Streetscape refers to the ways in which buildings form, together with gardens and trees, attractive combinations of mass and colour. Buildings are in harmony when, while not identical, they share similar elements and are of compatible size and form. When a rhythm is discernable in a sequence of buildings there are no abrupt transitions, in size, form or architectural detail, from one building to the next.

It may be appropriate for a contemporary building to sit beside a traditional weatherboard one provided there is some relationship to the rhythm and scale of windows, doors, roof pitch and other design elements.

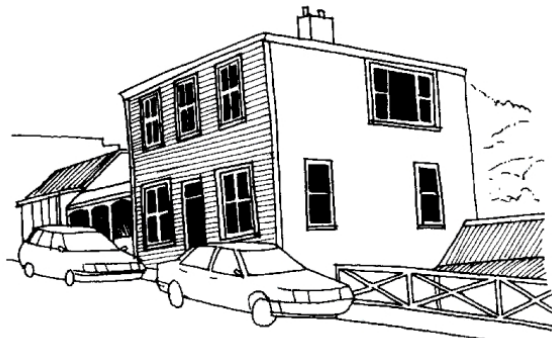




**Figure 7:** Height and Rhythm – a pleasing relationship between height and rhythm is evident.

Attention to scale is particularly important. Akaroa's character is largely created by the compatibility of its range of architecture – while buildings vary greatly in style they are mostly small and in scale with each other. New buildings that are visually prominent, and overpower their neighbours, will detract from, rather than enhance, the town's character. New buildings in Akaroa should not be significantly bulkier, or higher, than existing buildings in the same neighbourhood and should not dominate or overshadow existing buildings. The relationship between the height and width of a building is also crucial. A tall, narrow building is seldom a good neighbour of a lower, wider one.

**Figure 8:** Scale – an out of scale building which dominates adjacent buildings by size, bulk and height.



Larger, bulkier buildings can reflect the smaller scale of surrounding buildings by repetition of design elements such as gables, steps in the plan of the building, the use of different roof shapes, or dividing the building into visually separate units by using different treatments or colours for cladding.

Generally, designers of new buildings are asked to look at the existing historic buildings in the vicinity of the site, not to imitate them, but to consider whether the new building is sensitive to the surroundings in which it is to be placed.

### **Replica Buildings** (Updated October 2006)

Replica buildings, in the context of these guidelines, means an exact copy of the size, proportions, and architectural details of an older building. While it is generally undesirable to have a new buildings replicate the exact design of historic buildings, design elements of older buildings can be used to achieve an



overall visual harmony. Replica buildings can devalue the authentic historic character of Akaroa.

Attempts at 'replication' with inaccurate detailing, inappropriate materials and distorted proportions can become a caricature of the original building style.

### **Additions and Alterations to Historic Buildings** (Updated October 2006)

The character of Akaroa depends to a large extent on the survival of its many historic buildings. The preservation of these surviving buildings is important in maintaining its overall character. The demolition of historic buildings has had detrimental effects on the character of the town. The retention of the remaining older buildings will generally be to the town's advantage.

Registration by the Historic Places Trust, or listing by the District Council in its District Plan, are indications that particular historic buildings should be preserved and maintained for future generations.

Adaptive re-use is recommended. New developments on sites occupied by older buildings should use the historic structures whenever possible by building around or adding to them in a sympathetic way.

Key principles to bear in mind when adding to an historic building are:

- Alterations should be the minimum necessary.
- They should not detract from the heritage value of the place and/or building.
- They should be compatible with the original form and fabric of the building, but should be able to be read as new work, although this need not be obvious particularly for minor additions.
- They should be of a quality that does not detract from the heritage values of the place.

Ideally changes should also be reversible, to allow future generations to return the buildings to their original forms. When work is being done on historic buildings, previous inappropriate alterations should be reversed and unsympathetic additions removed whenever possible. The Historic Places Trust can provide advice on these matters.

**Figure 9:** Sensitive alteration to an historic building.

In the example to the right similar roof forms and window details have been used.



When work on an historic building is being undertaken the Conservation Guidelines published by the Historic Places Trust should be consulted. Where major work is envisaged, an architect who has experience in conserving or adapting older buildings should be engaged.

Both the Akaroa Civic Trust and the Historic Places Trust are available to advise owners of historic buildings who are considering major repairs or alterations to their buildings.

**SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

**Roof Forms (Updated January 2008)**

On Akaroa’s older buildings, roofs are generally of relatively steep pitch, with gable ends. Hipped roofs are evident within the Town Centre Zone. More recent buildings in the town exhibit a great variety of roof forms, including hip roofs, roofs of shallow pitch, and flat, or mono-pitch, roofs. While there is a variety of existing roof forms, those which are steeply pitched (i.e. 25 degrees and steeper) maintain an attractive streetscape and achieve a pleasing relationship with adjacent and nearby buildings and are to be encouraged.



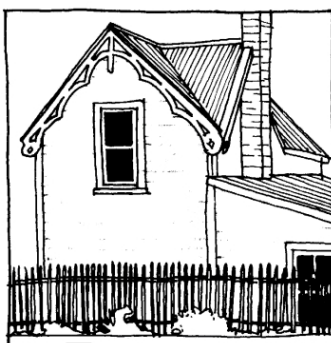
Villa Gable and Verandah



Verandah and simple gable with roof dormers



Two Storey Hipped Roof dormers



Two Storey Gable with Lean-to at rear



Multiple Gable Ends Roofs

**Figure 10: Roof Shapes and Forms**

### Cladding, Texture and Roofing Materials

Historically, weatherboard has predominated in Akaroa. Roofs have been mostly corrugated iron with door, and window frames of wood. Brick and other forms of masonry construction are unusual in Akaroa. Consequently, the use of traditional vernacular materials, such as weatherboard cladding, and corrugated iron roofing is encouraged in Akaroa. Some recent examples have not worked well because they lack detail and texture. An example of a modern application which reflects the character of the adjoining buildings, and has been successful, can be seen on the additions to the Akaroa museum.

To harmonise contemporary with traditional buildings, extensive, blank masonry walls, lacking in texture, should be avoided where masonry walls are necessary. Careful detailing and placement of wall openings, sensitive selection of colours or judicious planting can be useful in reducing adverse visual impacts to a limited degree.

### Windows

Attention should be paid to the sizes, symmetry and proportions of window openings and their placement, or grouping, in relation to neighbouring buildings. In the Residential Conservation Zone and Town Centre Zone any departure from the vertical orientation of windows of historic buildings is not encouraged. Timber windows are preferable to aluminium but if aluminium windows are used, they should be faced with timber.



**Figure 11:** Window Orientation – the illustration on the right demonstrates appropriate vertical orientation and facings and has pleasing symmetry.



Dormer in a roof



Modern blend of windows  
- all simple shapes

**Figure 12:** Window Shapes and Types

**Colours** (Updated October 2006)

There is no reason, when choosing colours for the walls, facings and roofs of new buildings, or when repainting older buildings, not to use today's much wider palette of colours than the palette available in earlier years, provided the new colours are in accord with the historic character of the town and its streetscapes. Simple combinations of discreet individual colours are particularly preferable in areas where there are large numbers of older buildings, however, the colour of new structures should not visually dominate heritage buildings or the streetscape. Owners of historic buildings are encouraged to consider using heritage colours and information about these is available from major paint manufacturers and retailers. Stained timber finishes are acceptable in the town's residential areas, but in the two town centres and the Residential Conservation Zone the preference is for painted or coloured surfaces. Corporate colour schemes and large corporate logos are not appropriate in the Akaroa Historic Area.

**Verandahs**

The only sequence of nearly continuous shop verandahs over footpaths in Akaroa is found along Beach Road. On Rue Lavaud occasional shop verandahs contribute to the variety and modulation of the streetscape. Where new buildings are being erected in either of these precincts, maintenance of the sequence along Beach Road, and of the pattern of occasional verandahs along Rue Lavaud, should be the goal.



**Figure 13:** Akaroa street verandahs

**Setbacks and Fences**

The requirements in the District Plan, under the Residential Conservation Zone, for recession planes can mean new buildings must have setbacks from the street, and from neighbouring buildings. Greater setbacks than the District Plan requires

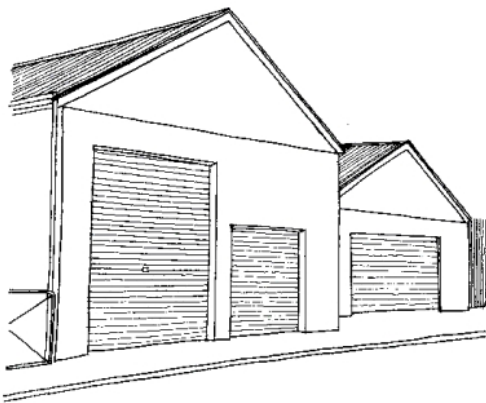
may be advisable in some locations within that zone. Akaroa's charm and historic character depend, in part, on gardens and trees remaining key elements in Akaroa's streetscapes. Setbacks will help ensure plantings continue to be a major element in most residential streetscapes. Only in existing commercial areas of the town, where setbacks are already small or non-existent, is it desirable to maintain the sense of a fully built-up townscape.

In predominantly residential areas, generous setbacks may be desirable where there are historic buildings nearby, to avoid new, dissimilar facades overwhelming the historic buildings. Having some buildings hard up against the street, even in predominantly residential areas, gives the town's streetscapes attractive variety.

To be able to look into and enjoy gardens along the street has long been the character of the settlement. Tall fences break this pattern, therefore low fences are encouraged. If taller fences are required, then they should be of a picket type so that the garden aspect is presented to the street.

### Parking and Garages

Garages should have a minimal visual impact on the historic character and amenity of the streetscape. They should be located further back from the road boundary than the main building and the repetitious sequences of multiple garage doors should be avoided. Within the Akaroa Historic Area, garages facing the street are required to be sited behind dwellings.



**Figure 14:** Garages on street front – these buildings detract from the streetscape.

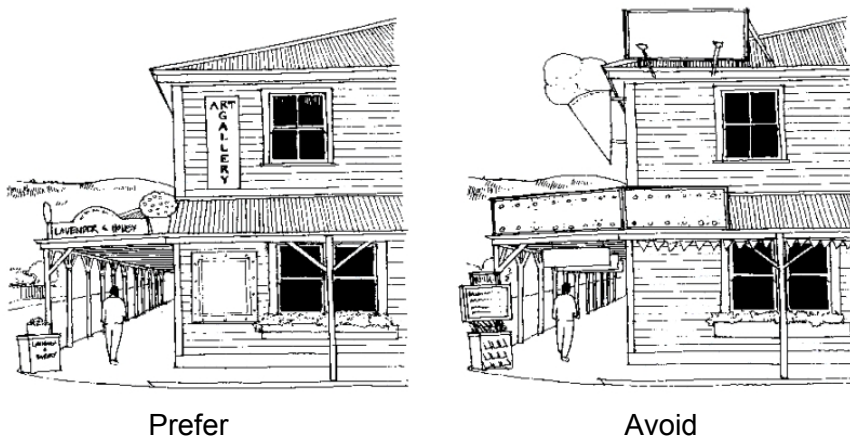
Car parking, especially with larger developments, should be concealed behind the main buildings, with minimal access points. Where this is not practical or possible, attention should be given to screening parking areas from view from adjoining streets.



**Figure 15:** Car Parking visually softened by location behind buildings and screen plantings.

### Signs

Rules in the District Plan govern the size and placement of signs. Besides conforming with these rules, new signs will help preserve the character of Akaroa if they are simple, not excessively large and do not obscure interesting architectural details of buildings. Signs incorporating simple backgrounds, borders and text are preferable to complex graphics, particularly photomontage based signage and large-scale advertising hoardings. The proliferation of signs which are obtrusive because of their size, colour or placement, could undermine the pleasing character of Akaroa. Neon, moving, illuminated or brightly lit signs will generally detract from the historic character of Akaroa and are discouraged.



Prefer

Avoid

**Figure 16:** Signage



In this illustration the signs on the right detract from the form of the building and create a sense of visual clutter.

The relevant section of the District Plan is the Signs Chapter – Chapter 34

### **Site Work**

The District Plan controls the heights of buildings in Akaroa, but again a building, which meets the requirements of the Plan, may not be satisfactory in its design, or impact on townscapes. On slopes, to avoid buildings dominating gardens and trees from the street, or obscuring views of the harbour or hills, cut and fill, allowing the buildings to follow the slope on stepped levels, is preferable to pole construction. Where pole construction is used, trellises and appropriate planting should mask the poles and dead spaces beneath the buildings.

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

<b>Bulk</b>	A building's bulk is its size or magnitude. The word is often used to refer to how large a building appears in relation to its neighbours.
<b>Density</b>	Density refers to the degree of closeness or crowding together of buildings. A built-up area has high density when there is a large number of units or large area of floor space on a specified ground area.
<b>Dormer</b>	A dormer window is a window that projects from a sloping roof which has its own small roof and side walls.
<b>Facings</b>	The facings of a window or door opening are the frames or other elements which surround the opening.
<b>Gable</b>	A gable is the triangular area at the top of a wall of a building, which has two sloping roof surfaces which meet at a ridge-line which extends right out to the wall.
<b>Gothic</b>	The style of architecture based on buildings of the European Middle Ages in which the windows have pointed heads and the building as a whole has an irregular form and sharp silhouette.
<b>Hip</b>	A hip is the line or angle formed when two sloping roof surfaces meet. A hip roof is one which ends in a face which slopes away and up from the top of an end wall. The inclined edges of a hip roof, which meet at a point at the ridgeline, are two hips.



<b>Historic Character</b>	Historic character is the visual and aesthetic impact that results from the relationship between a wide range of authentic old buildings and the impact of, and the relationship they have to, adjoining buildings and the streetscape.
<b>Italianate</b>	A style of architecture based on buildings of the Italian Renaissance, themselves based on the architecture of Classical Greece and Rome. The style is characterised by regularity and symmetry and has windows which are generally square-headed or round-headed (and not pointed).
<b>Masonry</b>	Stone, brick or concrete used as building material.
<b>Replication</b>	The exact copying of the size, proportions and architectural details of an older building.
<b>Roof pitch</b>	The degree of slope of a roof. A steeply pitched roof rises steeply to the ridge-line and is usually visually prominent. A roof of shallow pitch has a more gentle slope and is generally less conspicuous. A mono-pitch roof has only one slope. The roof of a lean-to is mono-pitch.
<b>Scale</b>	A building is “in scale” if it is of similar proportions and size to the buildings around it. The scale of a building refers generally to its size relative to its neighbours.
<b>Set-back</b>	The distance between the edge of a roadway or footpath and the outside wall of a building.
<b>Streetscape</b>	The combined effect, viewed from a roadway or other public open space, produced by the buildings, fences, hedges and other vegetation which can be seen from the street.