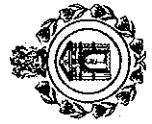
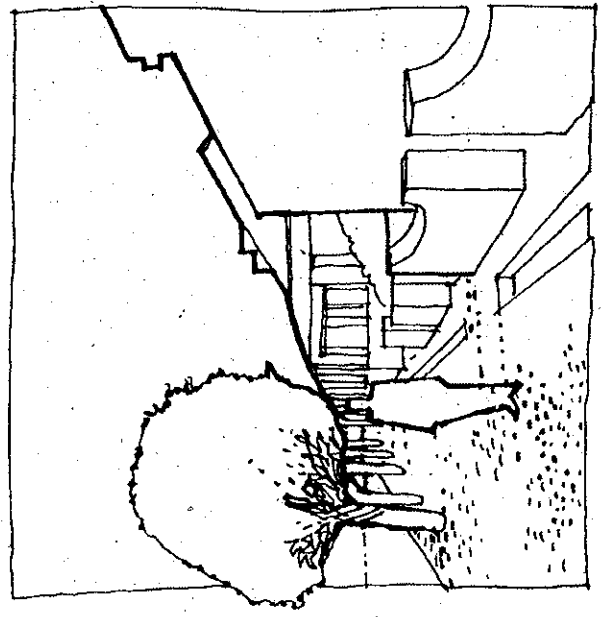


GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR URBAN CONSERVATION AREAS

DESIGNATED IN TERMS OF THE NATIONAL MONUMENTS ACT



NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL

NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL

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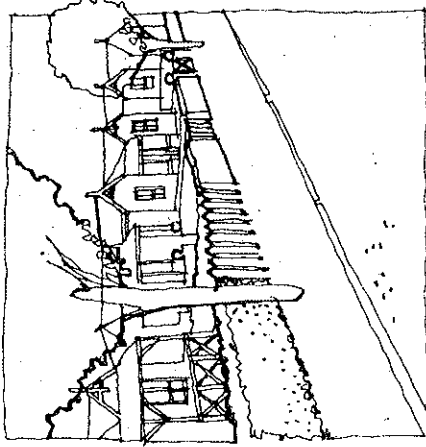
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The National Monuments Council is the statutory organisation responsible for the protection of South Africa's heritage in terms of the National Monuments Act, 1969.

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INTRODUCTION

"Urban conservation means the sensitive use and adaptation of an urban area or part of an urban area so as to maximise its desirable historic, aesthetic or social attributes and to enhance the value of the area, both for its present users, and for the future."

Stephen Harris, Chairman, Urban Conservation Committee, National Trust of Australia (NSW).

In terms of the National Monuments Act (No.28 of 1969), the National Monuments Council (NMC) is empowered to designate any area of land of historic, scientific or aesthetic interest to be a conservation area.

The legislation requires that the designation of a conservation area be done in consultation with the local authority, and that thereafter, the planning authority and owners of property must consult the NMC about any planning affecting the area. It is the policy of the NMC to seek the co-operation of the local authority involved, and to encourage it to introduce an appropriate system of conservation controls so that conservation areas can be managed, as far as possible, as part of the local planning and development control system.

To this end, the National Monuments Act makes provision for the publication of by-laws (by the NMC or the local authority) "safeguarding ... conservation areas from damage, disfigurement, alteration, destruction or defilement". To assist the local authority to design suitable conservation controls for conservation areas, the NMC has produced Proposed By-laws for Urban Conservation Areas in terms of Section 18 of the National Monuments Act. These can be used as a foundation for the drafting of specific by-laws for a particular conservation area.

However, effective management of conservation areas (especially those in an urban context) depends not only on control, but on education and guidance. It is in this context that conservation area guidelines are especially important. While by-laws are necessarily prescriptive, guidelines are encouraging in that they describe the kind of design or-use which is

likely to be permitted, thereby preventing confusion and misunderstanding on the part of owners, developers and designers. The publication of guidelines for alterations, demolition and new development in conservation areas is therefore an essential part of an effective local conservation management system.

The purpose of conservation area guidelines is to inform owners and designers about the valued qualities of the area, and provide information about the kinds of physical changes that are likely to be approved by the local authority. In addition, guidelines help to ensure that the local authority itself is consistent in its management of the area - in terms of the maintenance and enhancement of the public realm, as well as in its handling of applications for the approval of plans (see the NMC's Proposed By-laws).

These general guidelines have been drawn up to assist local authorities to compile specific guidelines for urban conservation areas which fall within their areas of jurisdiction. They set out the broad principles for dealing with characteristic features which may need to be controlled in an area. Because areas will differ from one another, these general guidelines should be modified and detailed (ideally, after an analysis of the character of the area by a suitably qualified urban designer) to relate to the specific characteristics of each area, such as street and site layout, building patterns and architectural styles.

The specific guidelines drawn up for the area should be made available to applicants and their designers, and should also be used by the advisory committee and the local authority in considering applications.

SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. The protection, maintenance and enhancement of the cultural, architectural, aesthetic and/or historical significance of the area is of primary importance.
2. Sensitive contemporary design is encouraged, whereas imitation can lead to falsification and reduce the value of the genuine articles. New buildings and additions should be compatible with the character and scale of the area, without being literal copies of existing styles.
3. Whenever possible, additions and alterations to historical properties should be reversible - that is, done in such a way that if they were removed in the future the historical fabric would again be visible.
4. Buildings and their environments should be recognised as products of their own time, as well as providing evidence of continuous historical development. Later additions should not automatically be removed to restore a building to its original appearance - they may contribute to the historical development of the building and be conservation-worthy themselves.
5. Architectural features, elements and components should be repaired rather than replaced. If features are missing, their replacement should be based on evidence, such as old drawings or photographs or the evidence of the building itself. The replacement should match the original in visual qualities such as colour and texture, but should be distinguishable as new work on closer inspection.
6. Traditional techniques should be used for repairs and conservation work wherever possible.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALTERATIONS, ADDITIONS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

1. ENVIRONMENT (THE PUBLIC REALM)

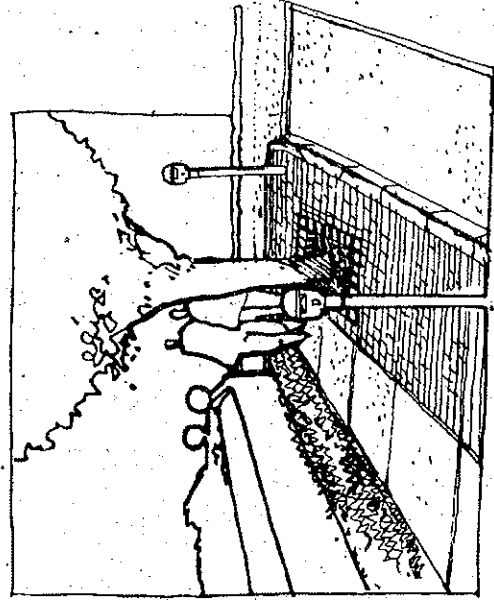
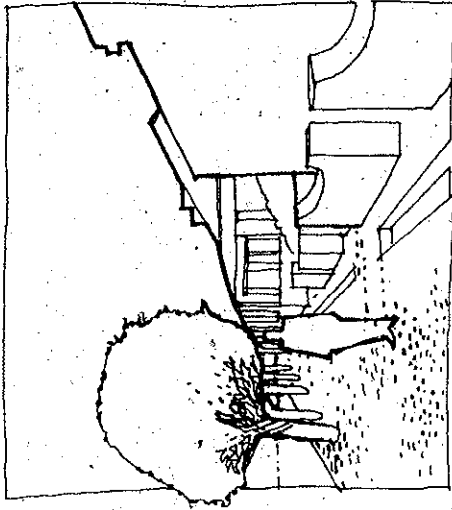
The following elements are likely to be under the control of the local authority itself. It is important that their impact on the area is considered and that public works are co-ordinated with long-term aims for the area.

The local authority can play an important role by demonstrating that it is sensitive to the historical character of the conservation areas under its control. Environmental improvements in the public realm encourage owners to invest in the area, and can lead to general upgrading of properties.

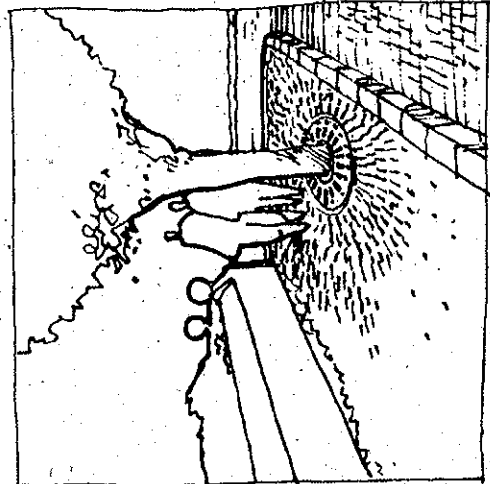
1.1 ROAD-WORKS, PAVING AND TRAFFIC CONTROL

Maintenance work such as resurfacing and repairs to roads and pavements should be done in the same materials and with the same details as existing, and would then not require a permit.

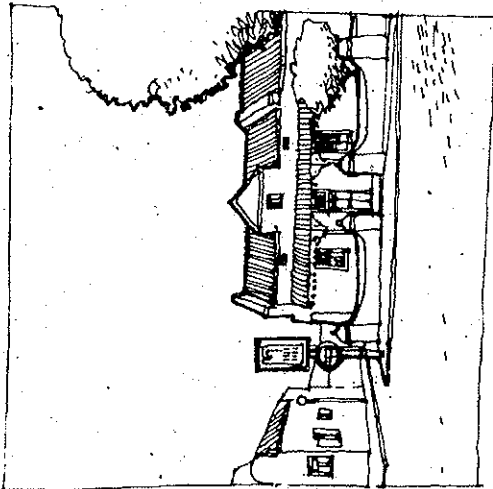
Consideration should be given to altering any recent changes which are not in character with the surroundings, to make them more compatible.



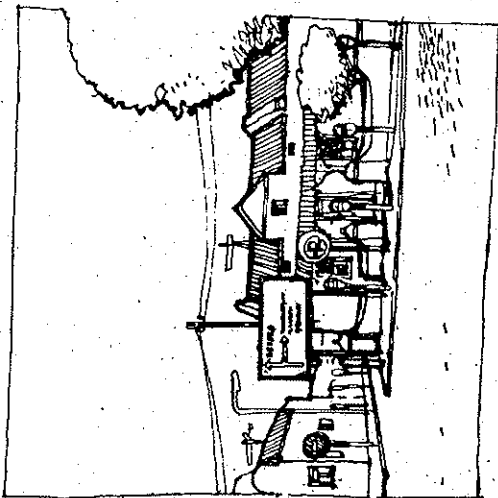
Standard surfaces and road works may not be appropriate in a conservation area.



Carefully considered road-works and paving can enhance the character of an area.



Signage and other traffic controls should be as simple and unobtrusive as possible.



Uncoordinated signage and traffic controls often result in disturbing visual clutter.

Works associated with traffic control, such as signage, traffic signals, road closures, the construction of medians and crossings may be necessary. The following points should be considered:

- * they should be as unobtrusive as is consistent with safety standards;
- * where possible, signs should be grouped on one support;
- * materials and details consistent with the colour and texture of those in the area should be used;
- * the original street pattern should be respected.

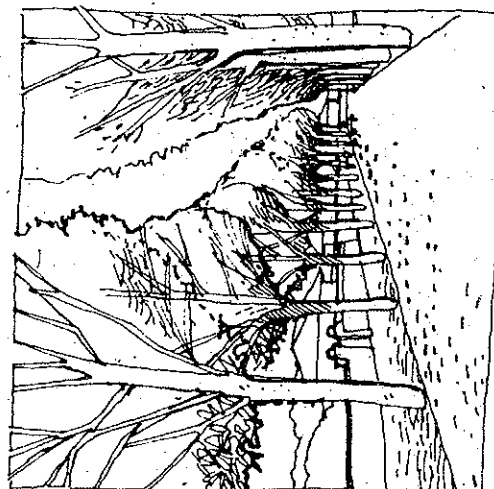
1.2 VEGETATION IN ROAD RESERVES AND PUBLIC AREAS

Existing established planting patterns in a conservation area, such as avenues of trees and grass verges, often contribute to the character of historical areas and should be maintained.

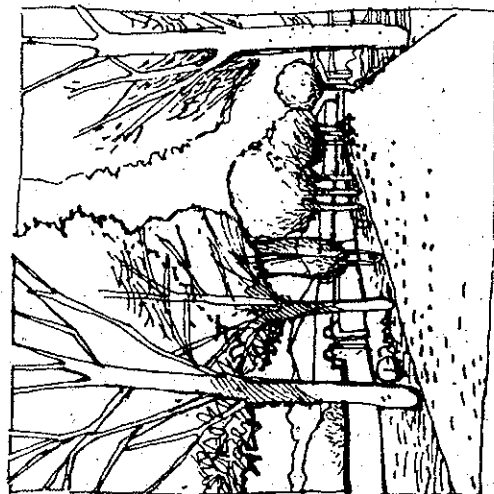
New planting should be compatible with the historical character of the area and not introduce conflicting themes or elements.

1.3 SERVICES (street lighting, telephone lines, etc.)

Wherever possible, surviving early light and other service fittings should be retained, as they often add to the character of an area.



Planting patterns in public areas, such as established avenues of trees, should be maintained.



The introduction of incompatible planting patterns and species in the public realm should be avoided.

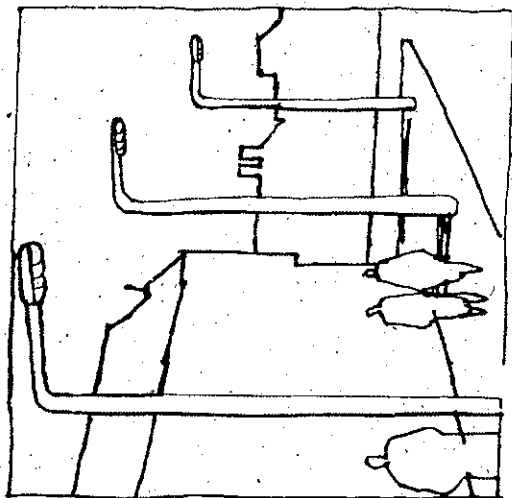
New lighting should be of simple design and should not imitate historical designs unless there is documentary evidence of previous lighting. The colour of standards and brackets should be compatible with the surrounding area.

Fittings emitting white light are preferable. Light levels should not be excessive, within the limits of public safety.

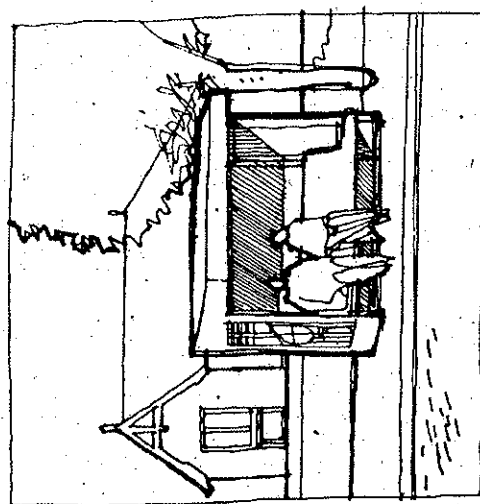
Electrical substations, meter boxes, telephone lines, etc. should be as unobtrusive as possible, and should be carefully positioned in relation to surrounding buildings and other features.

1.4 STREET FURNITURE

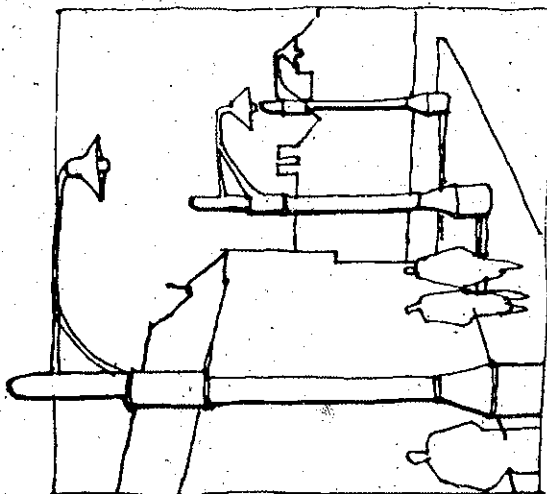
Street furniture should be of simple design and the materials, texture and colour used should be compatible with the surrounding area.



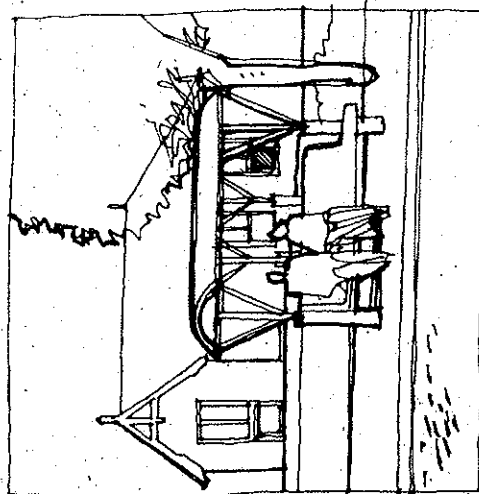
Lighting which is incompatible with or detracts from the character of the area should be avoided.



Modern materials and designs which conflict with the architectural character of the area should not be used.



Existing historical light fittings or appropriate new designs can contribute to the character of the area.



New street furniture should be designed to be compatible with the character of the area.

2. SITING

2.1 TOPOGRAPHY

The landscape setting may make a considerable difference to the siting and design of buildings, as the topography determines where and how buildings can be seen.

Scenic views, for example of waterfronts, and views of the town from surrounding areas should be protected.

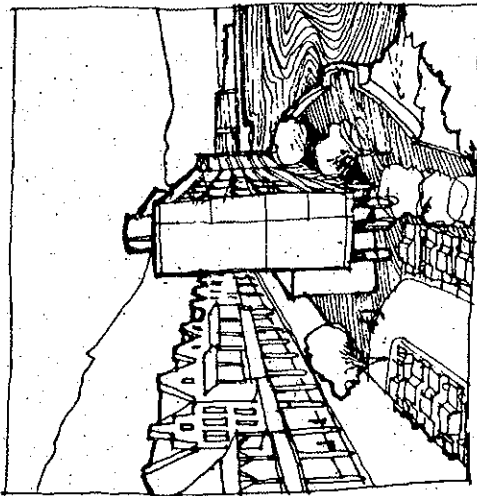
In flat locations, the rear of sites may not be visible from the street, whereas in hilly areas, buildings may be visible from many different points so that overall design and siting, including the design of rear elevations and roof views, become important.

Buildings in hilly areas are generally located along the contour rather than across it, and new buildings should be established on cut and fill platforms, rather than stilts.

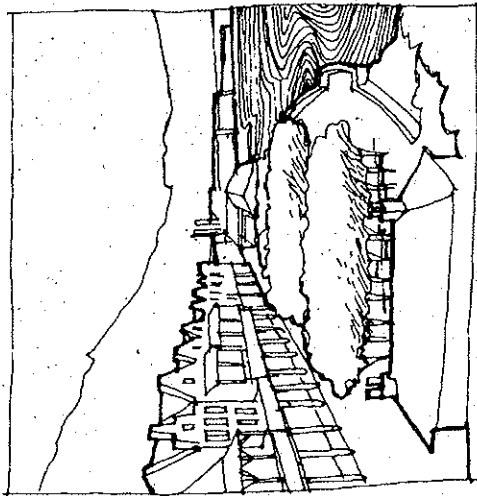
2.2 SUBDIVISION LAYOUT

The layout of towns and the different areas within them may vary considerably. The established pattern of streets and subdivisions is the enduring foundation on which the character of an area is based, and it is vitally important to respect it.

Unplanned early developments or the constraints of topography, such as rivers, valleys and hills, may have resulted in an informal, organic layout with curving streets and interesting vistas and focal points. Plots in such areas are likely to vary in size and shape.



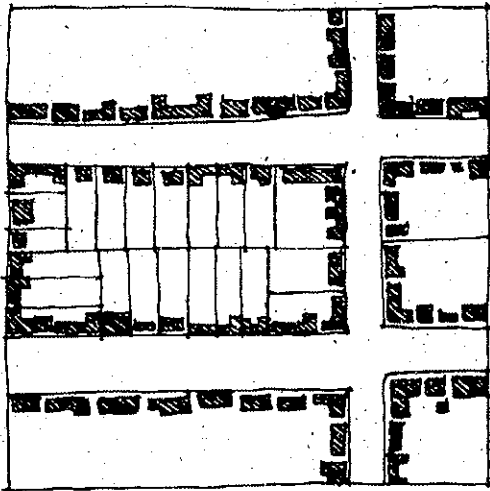
It is not appropriate for new construction to cut off the buildings from the water and destroy the views.



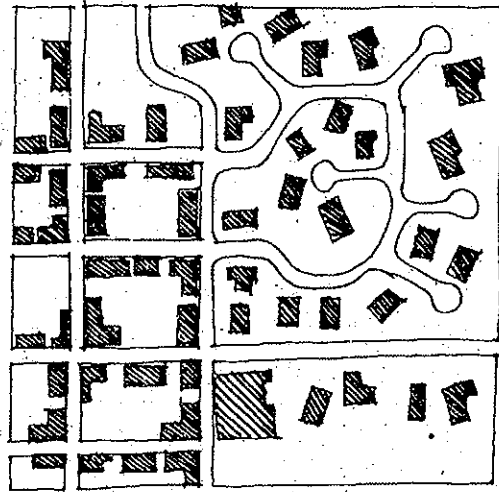
In a waterfront setting, the views of and from existing buildings are important, and can be protected by the provision of public space along the waterfront.



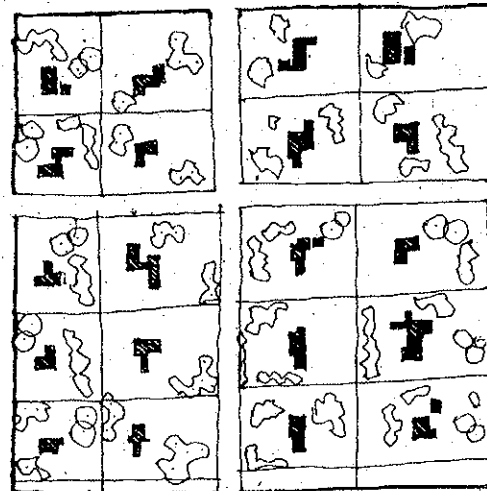
In a hilly terrain, the layout of streets and subdivisions is often organic, following the contour lines.



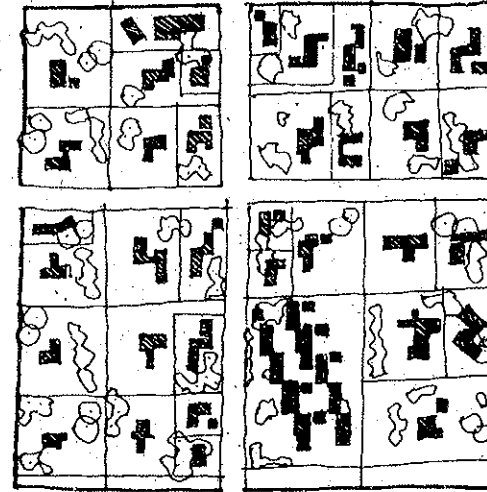
Many old towns were laid out with a simple rectangular grid and geometric subdivisions.



It is usually not appropriate for new developments adjacent to historical areas to differ radically from the traditional layout.



The low building density is part of the character of an area of free-standing villas in large gardens.



Guidance is needed to ensure that the way densification is achieved does not disturb the overall character of the area.

Many old towns were laid out with a rectangular grid street pattern. There are many variations within the basic grid. Different areas may have either generous sites with large houses set back from the boundaries, or buildings right on the street with large sites behind (this was a common pattern for Voortrekker towns such as Pietermaritzburg). Close grids with narrow sites and terrace houses with small setbacks are characteristic in many 19th Century urban areas. In some areas, axes and focal points (such as important public buildings) may be a feature of the grid.

When considering subdivisions of existing erven and the development of new areas adjacent to historical areas, the traditional layout must be respected. Radical departures from the traditional pattern - whether it is an organic or geometric layout - can seriously disturb the character (and functioning) of historical districts.

2.3 DENSITY / COVERAGE

There is pressure in many historical areas for the provision of additional accommodation. There may be many reasons why densification is desirable (or unavoidable) in a conservation area. However, when considering the construction of additional structures on existing erven or the subdivision of existing properties for new developments, care should be taken to ensure that the increased density and coverage does not adversely affect the overall character of the conservation area.

2.4 SETBACK

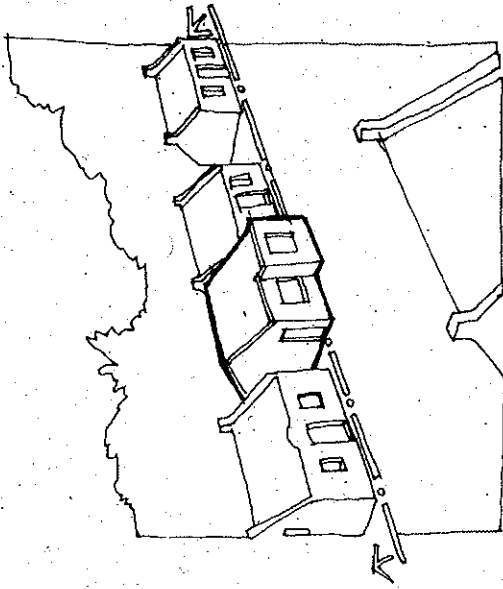
The distance between the street boundary and the buildings is often a characteristic feature of an area. If there is a uniform setback, it should be maintained. If the setback varies, new buildings and additions should usually not be located closer to the street than adjacent historical buildings.

2.5 SPACING (side spaces)

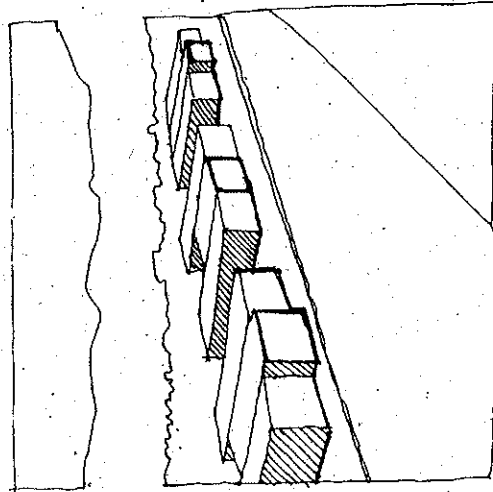
The degree to which buildings are set back from side boundaries may set up a rhythm of buildings and spaces which should be maintained when considering additions to existing buildings and new infill buildings.

Additions in the spaces at the sides of existing buildings may be acceptable in some cases, if the addition is set back sufficiently from the front facade and the addition is unobtrusive.

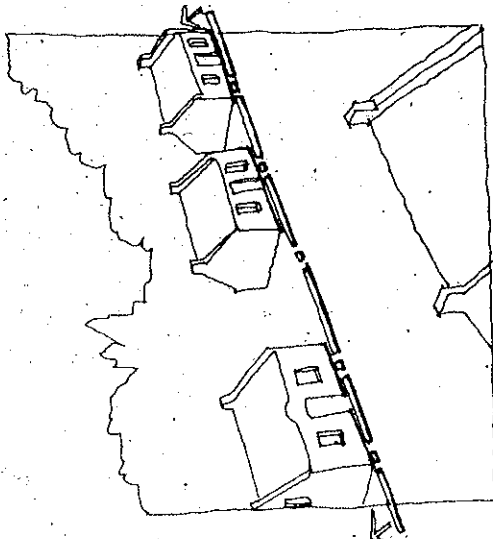
In areas where there are no side spaces and buildings are attached to one another, this relationship should be maintained. Free-standing buildings in such settings should usually not be permitted.



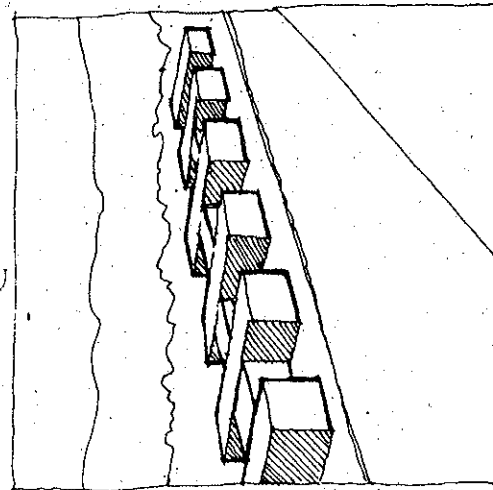
New buildings and additions which deviate from the traditional building line disturb the character of the streetscape.



Additions in the side spaces which are flush with, or protrude beyond, the front facades of existing buildings can seriously disturb the rhythm of buildings and spaces.



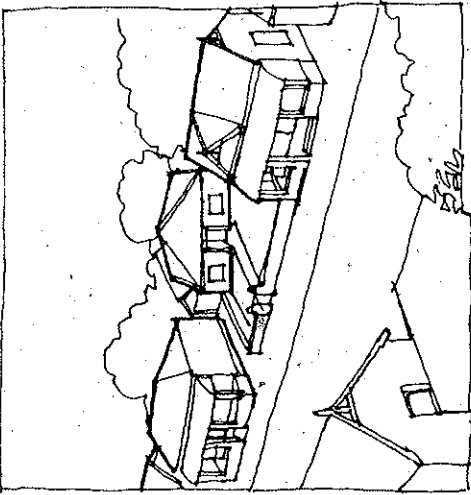
In historical areas, buildings are often set back to a uniform building line.



The rhythm which is set up between the buildings and the spaces between them can be maintained by setting back any additions in the side spaces.

2.6 ORIENTATION OF BUILDING ON SITE

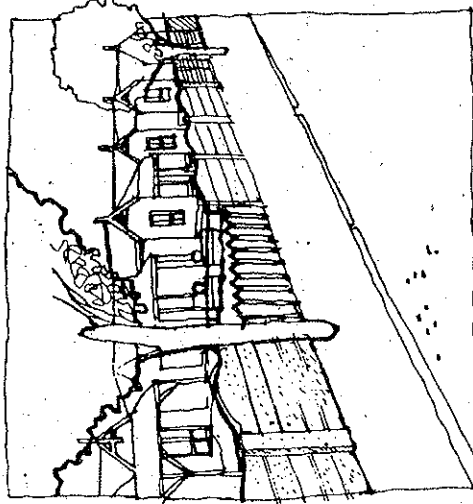
New buildings should respect the predominant orientation of buildings in the street. For example, a new house in a row of houses with front elevations parallel to the street should not be placed at an angle on the site.



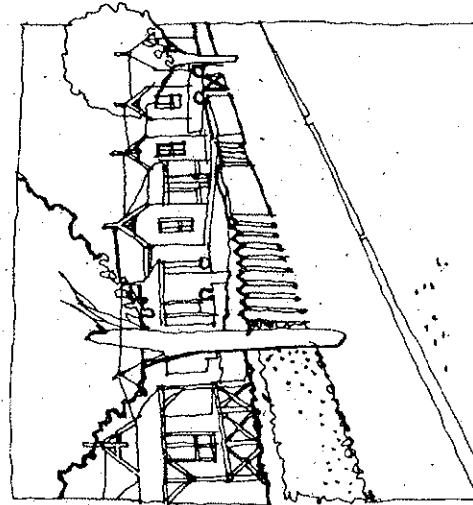
When the pattern in an area is for buildings oriented parallel to the street, new buildings should not be placed at an angle on the site.

2.7 BOUNDARY ENCLOSURE

The treatment of the front boundary, whether with walls, fences, hedges, building facades or combinations of such elements, is vitally important to the character of an area. Boundary elements are an important component of the "public face" of private property and contribute to the character of streets and public spaces. Existing boundary treatments should therefore be carefully studied and important elements should, wherever possible, be maintained.



The introduction of alien boundary elements and materials can be very destructive.



Boundary walls, fences and hedges may be an important component of the character of an area.

New boundary elements should be in sympathy with the character of the area, without necessarily reproducing historical details.

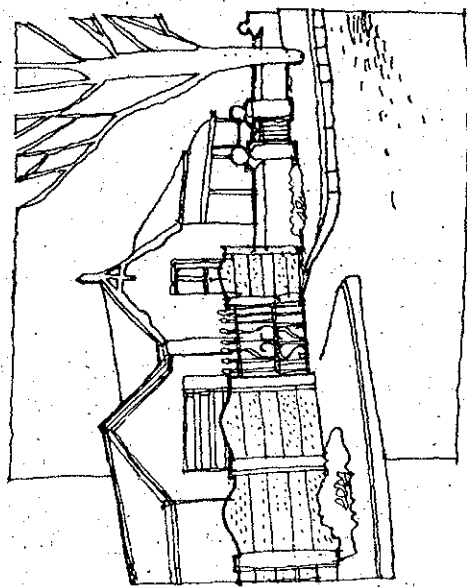
In many established residential areas there is pressure to provide off-street parking, which can be very destructive of traditional boundary elements.

Where unavoidable, off-street parking should be designed to cause minimal disruption to the continuity of boundary elements. Simply demolishing the boundary wall and paving the garden is not acceptable (see also 2.9: Garages, outbuildings and parking).

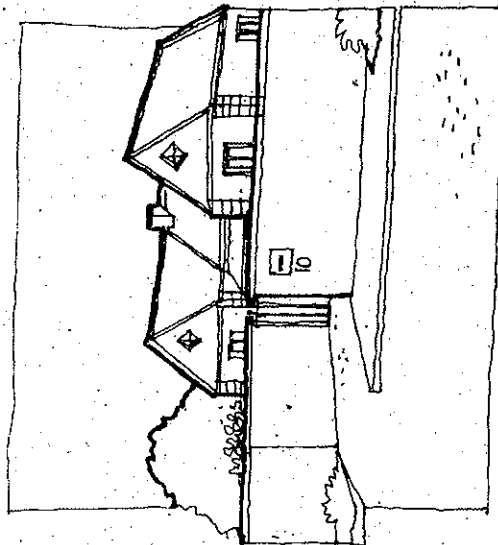
The modern desire for privacy and need for security also threaten traditional boundary treatments, which were often low, permitting a view of the building behind.

When no private space is available at the rear of the site, it may be acceptable to enclose a portion of the front garden, maintaining a view of the building from the street; privacy can also sometimes be provided by vegetation such as hedges, which are softer and less intrusive than high walls.

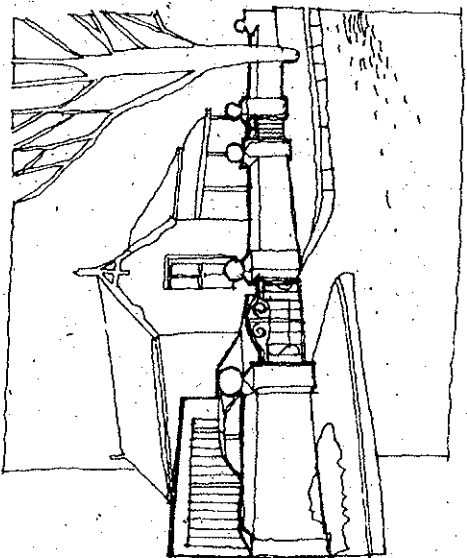
In general, security is not enhanced by high walls, as intruders are then not visible from the street and neighbours can no longer keep an eye on the property. Security should be provided as discreetly as possible. (See also 5: Modern fixtures to existing buildings.)



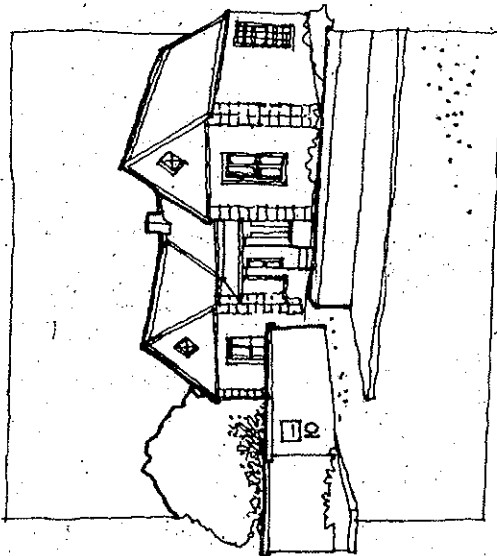
The rough-textured concrete wall with its horizontal panels is incompatible with the original boundary elements.



High walls detract from the area as a whole and do not necessarily enhance security.



The continuation of the plastered wall and the use of similar gateposts for the vehicle entrance is discreet and appropriate.



Partial enclosure of the front garden can provide a private area, without destroying the view of the building from the street.

2.8 GARDENS

Front gardens are often an integral part of the character of the houses in historical areas. Existing gardens in the neighbourhood should be studied to establish the principles of design, such as symmetry and balance, formality or informality of planting, the configuration of entrances and pathways, driveways and parking, materials used and the variety and distribution of trees, shrubs, climbers and bedding plants, which are appropriate to the area.

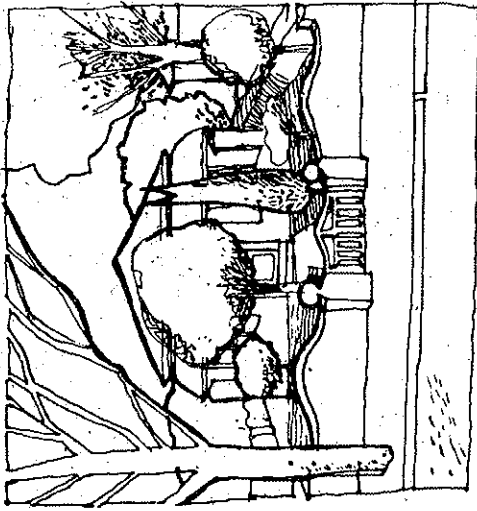
2.9 GARAGES, OUTBUILDINGS AND PARKING

Garages, carports, outbuildings and parking areas should be designed to conform as closely as possible to existing patterns.

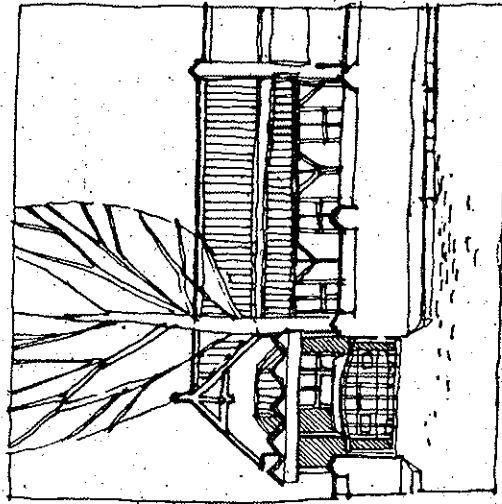
Garages and outbuildings should generally not be located in front of the main building. Materials used should be compatible with those of the building, and the architectural style should be appropriate. Garage doors should usually have vertical cladding in timber or steel. To reduce the scale and give a sympathetic proportion, double garages, should have two independent doors separated by a pier.

When the provision of increased parking is unavoidable, such as with commercial use of a residential property, care should be taken to use compatible surfaces and to make the parking as unobtrusive as possible. Paving the entire front garden, for instance, is not appropriate.

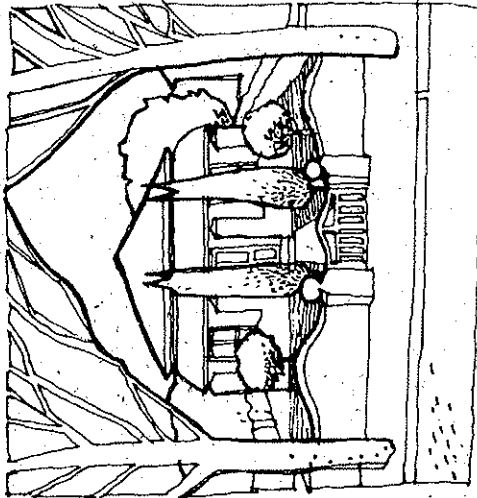
Depending on the circumstances, local authorities might consider a reduction in normal parking requirements to protect the character of a conservation area.



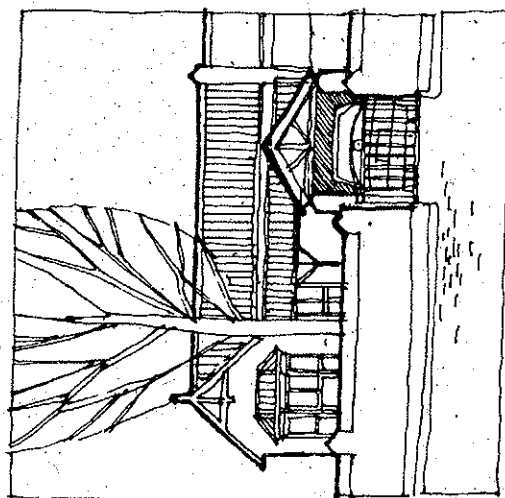
In sensitive changes to the landscaping can destroy the traditional relationship between the building, its site and the public realm.



A carport which obscures the main elements of the building and with incompatible forms and materials is not appropriate.



Front gardens were often designed to set off the architectural characteristics of the house and enhance the sense of arrival.



New carports and garages should be sensitively placed and compatible with the architectural style of the building.

3. BUILDING FORM

3.1 HEIGHT

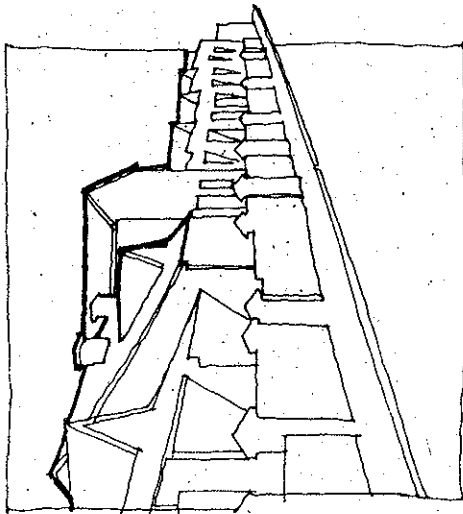
When the buildings in an area have a fairly uniform height, this should be respected in the design of alterations and new infill buildings. The degree of conformity required will vary depending on the degree of uniformity in the area - in some situations, such as when filling in a missing house in a row of attached town houses, it may be essential to maintain the height of adjacent buildings exactly; in suburban or main street situations, an existing variety in the number of storeys may allow greater leeway. A new building which is too low, or squat, can be as disturbing as one which is too tall and overpowering.

It is often appropriate, especially in commercial areas, to increase height at the corner of a block, providing emphasis and a sense of place.

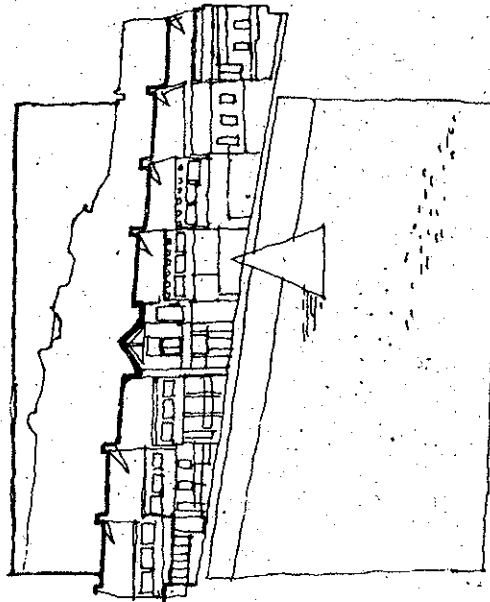
An increase in height at the rear of the site, set back from the main facade, may be appropriate if the increased height is not visually intrusive from any public space.

3.2 SILHOUETTE

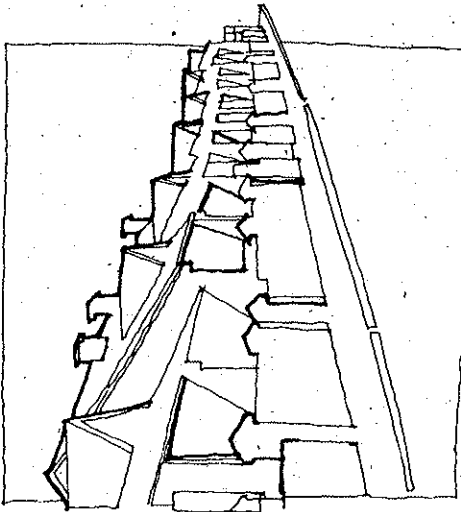
The silhouette, or profile of the shapes of the roofs, may be an important component of the character of an area, and infill designs should be sympathetic to this outline. This is particularly important when buildings are attached, and have similar roof forms - such as a row of Victorian town houses, or a row of Karoo type, parapeted buildings - but it can also be significant in groups of detached buildings with a greater variety of roof forms.



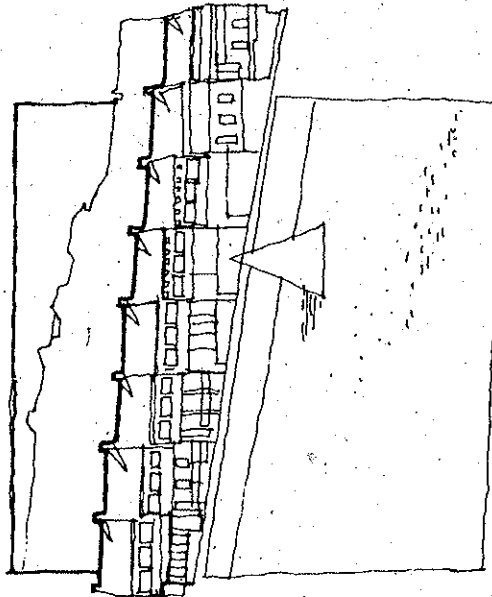
Increasing the height of one building in a group can have a significant impact.



An infill building with a different roof shape would disturb the stepped profile of the group.



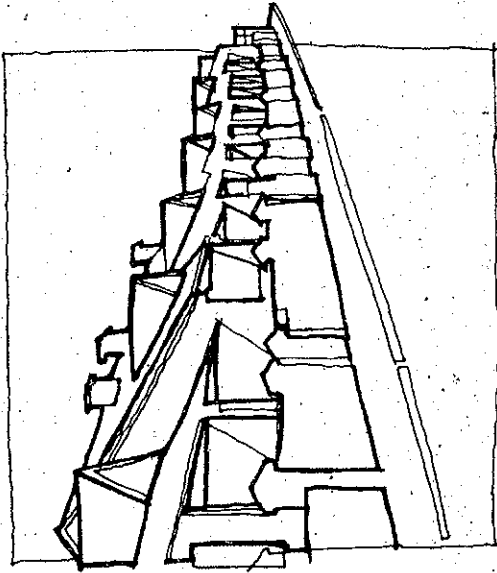
Victorian row houses often have a uniform height which is part of their character.



Because of the repetition of standard units, the silhouette of these houses is even and geometric.

3.3 VOLUME / MASS

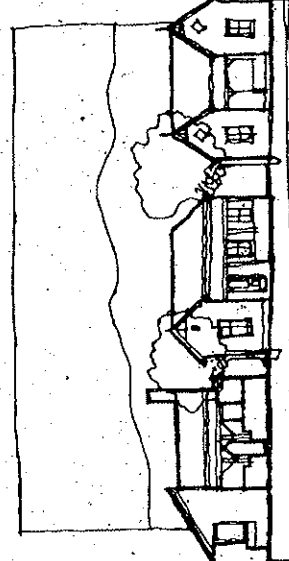
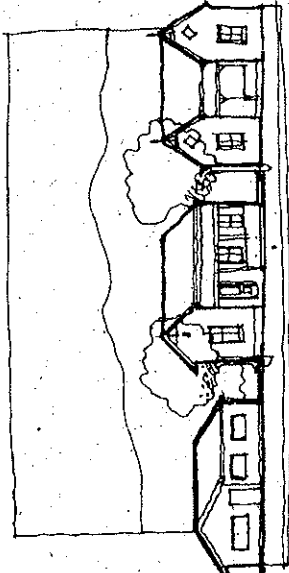
The forms of buildings, their projections and recesses, give a sense of volume and mass and create a play of light and shadow which is a significant element in their character. For instance, the complex forms of Victorian villas, with their gables, turrets, verandahs and complex roofs, have a different sense of volume to Cape Dutch town houses, with their flat facades and heavy horizontal cornices. This is an important consideration when designing new buildings and extensions in a conservation area.



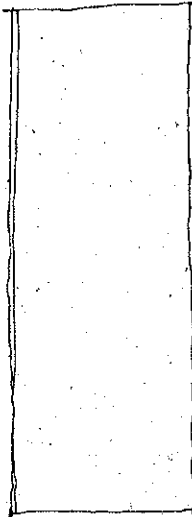
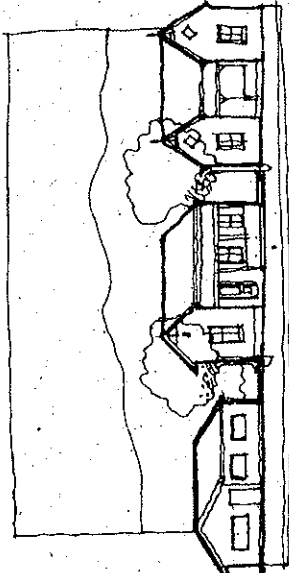
The complex massing and strong rhythm of these Victorian row houses is created by the projecting verandahs, gables and chimneys.

3.4 PROPORTION OF BUILDINGS' FACADES / DIRECTIONAL EXPRESSION

The relationship between the height and width of buildings gives them a horizontal or vertical expression which should be respected. When a new building or addition cannot conform to this pattern, its facade should be articulated to form bays of the correct proportion.



The proportions of the new house on the left show respect for the predominantly vertical expression in this row of buildings.



In the same context, the horizontal proportions of a bungalow are disturbing.

3.5 RHYTHM OF BUILDING FORMS

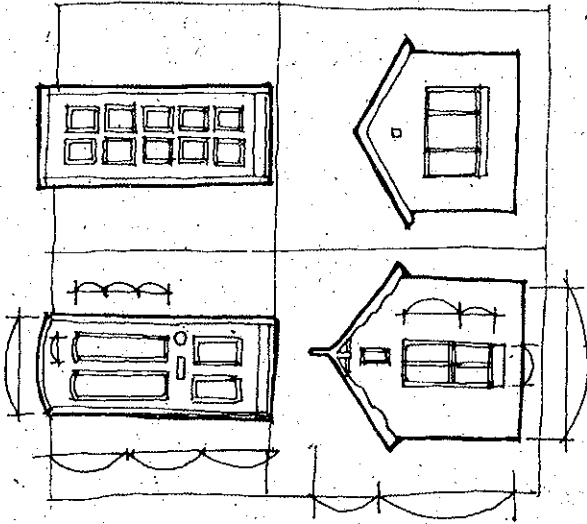
Forms which are used repeatedly in an area, such as bay windows, projecting gables, projected or recessed entrances, parapets and steps, may create a rhythm of greater or lesser regularity. A similar rhythm should be created in new developments in these areas.

4. BUILDING TREATMENT

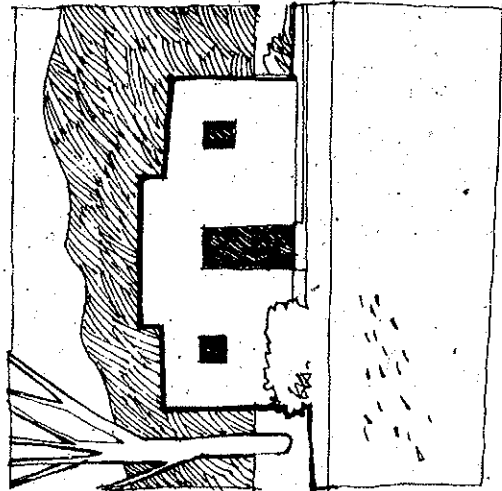
4.1 PROPORTION

As with the proportion of the buildings as a whole (see 3.4), the relationship between the height and width of architectural elements in the facades of the existing buildings in an area should be respected. For instance, windows and doors may be predominantly vertically or horizontally proportioned, and their subdivisions, such as mullions or panels, usually relate to the proportion of the openings as well. It is important to respect these proportions in new developments in the area, as well as when existing buildings are altered.

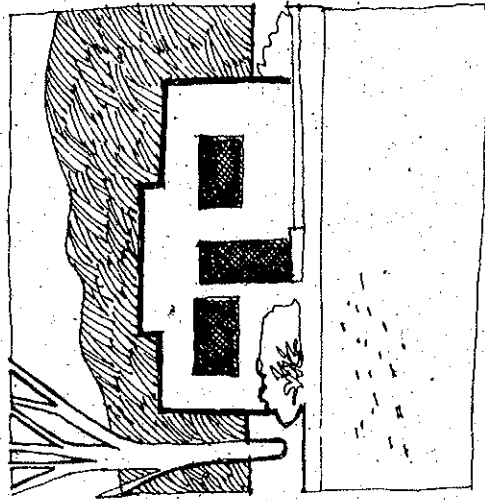
Similarly, the relationship between openings and wall masses is a significant component of the character of buildings. For instance, even if they are of similar proportions to the openings in historical buildings, large sheets of glass or picture windows are seldom appropriate in areas where windows are read as openings in the mass of the wall.



Although the architectural elements on the left and right are the same, their proportions are different.



One of the characteristics of the architecture here is the wall masses, punctured by small openings.



Fitting large windows seriously disturbs the proportions of the facade.

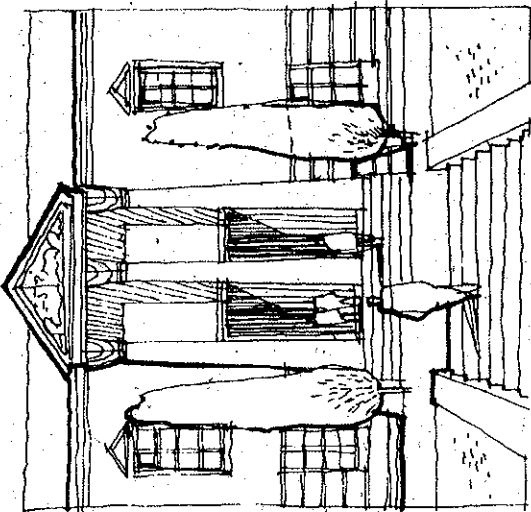
4.2 SCALE

Scale is the relationship between the size of units of construction and building details and the size of man, as well as the relationship between building mass and the open space and other buildings around it.

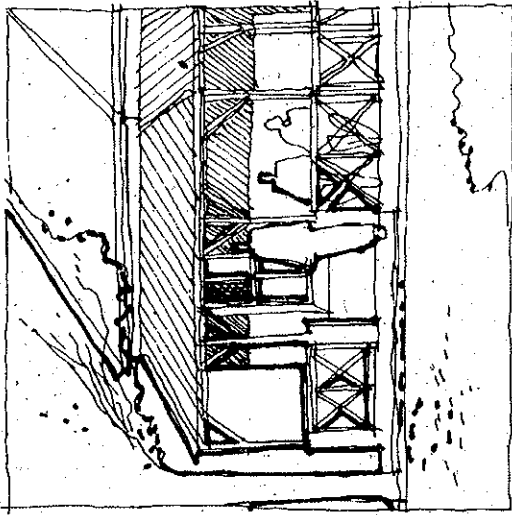
The scale of a new building or extension should relate to the size of the property and adjacent historical buildings, and details of a similar scale to those in the area should usually be used. One of the characteristics of Post-Modern architecture is the exaggeration or reduction of the scale of building elements; unless this is done with great sensitivity, it is seldom appropriate in conservation areas.

4.3 MATERIALS

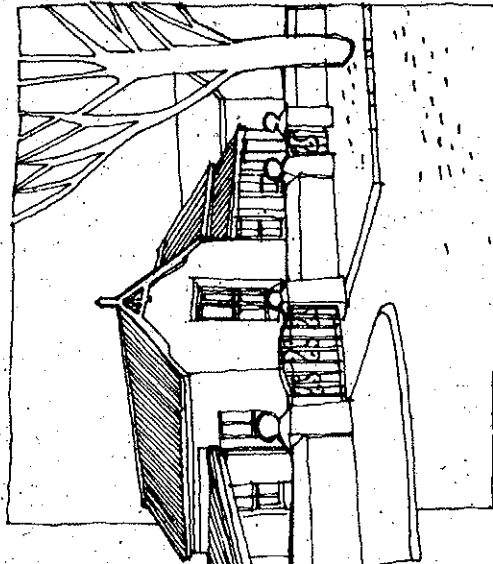
The materials used for new buildings and additions should be compatible with the prevalent materials in the area in terms of colour, texture and scale. For instance, facebrick can be very intrusive in an area where the buildings are predominantly plastered and painted, because of its different texture and colour; large profile asbestos cement or metal sheeting is not compatible with corrugated iron because of its scale. On the other hand, black-painted corrugated iron can be an appropriate material in relationship to thatch because it has a similar colour and fine-grained texture and scale, and concrete blocks of a suitable colour may be compatible with sandstone.



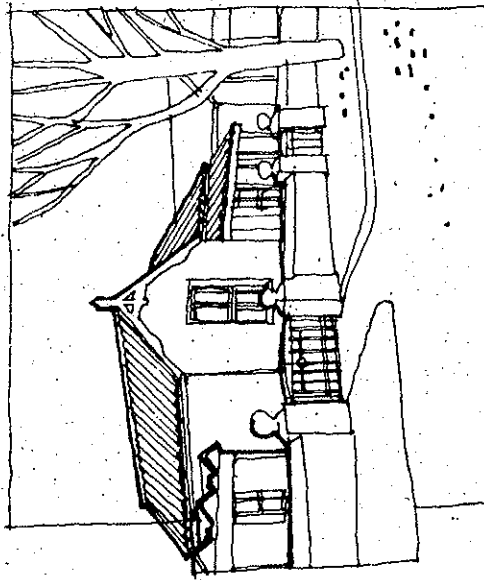
The imposing scale of this entrance is appropriate for an important public building.



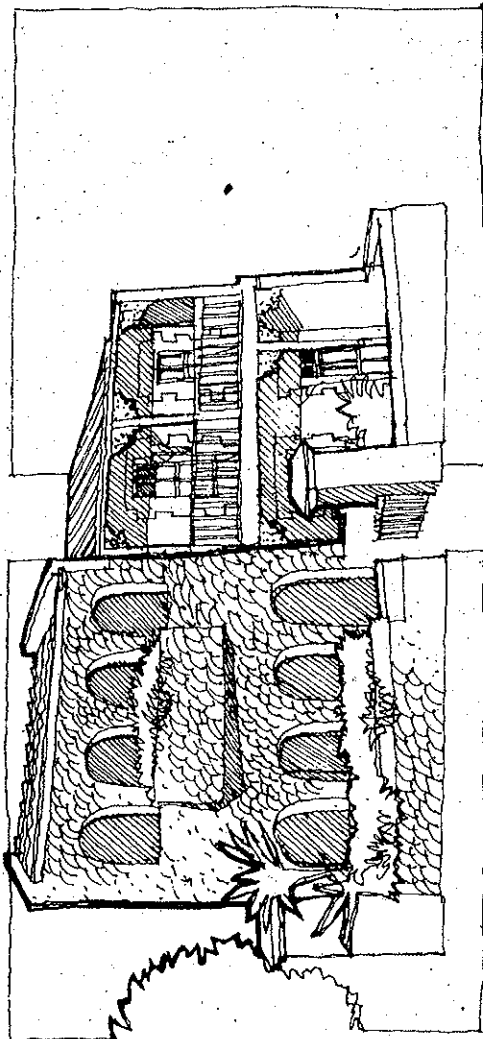
In a domestic situation, the building and its details should be more closely related to the human scale.



An addition using compatible materials is appropriate.



The use of large-profile roof sheeting would make the same addition obtrusive.



The coarse texture of the rough plaster and "Spanish" tiles of the building on the left are completely incompatible with the fine textures of the Victorian house, with its smooth plaster, mouldings and timber fretwork.

4.4 TEXTURE

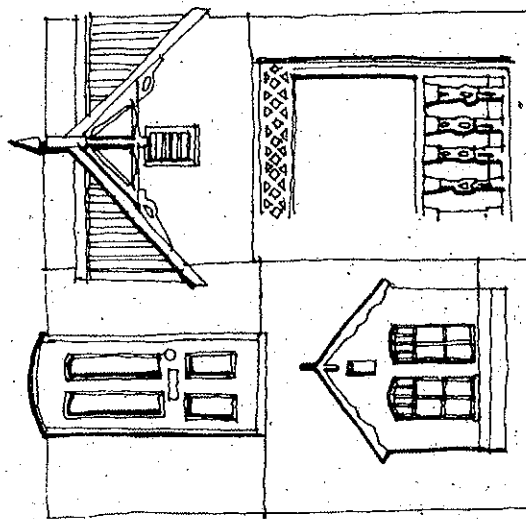
Texture is the result of the surface material and the amount and boldness of decoration. Like mass (see 3.3, above), texture is perceived as a play of light and shadow. Textures may be rough, smooth, lined, random, coarse or fine. The overall texture of a building's surface can be a significant factor in how well it contributes to group unity.

4.5 COLOUR

The use of a sympathetic colour scheme can contribute to the compatibility of a building with its surroundings.

4.6 ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Historical architectural details such as doors and windows, verandah decoration, plasterwork and gutters should usually not be exactly imitated in new structures, as falsification can undermine the value of the original buildings. However, the use of detail elements which are compatible in some qualities such as proportion, scale, texture, material and colour is recommended.



The "language" of architectural details in a conservation area should be studied for clues about appropriate detailing of new buildings and additions.

5. MODERN FIXTURES TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

5.1 SIGNAGE

The size, style and position of signage should be complementary to the buildings around it and the quality of the area. Signs should not obscure historical detail and should be discreetly lit at night.

5.2 SECURITY

The use of security systems which are not visible, such as alarms, is recommended.

When burglar bars are necessary, they should preferably be positioned on the interior. The bars should be simple, take into account the proportion of the windows, align with the glazing bars where possible, and be painted in a colour which is unobtrusive from the outside of the building.

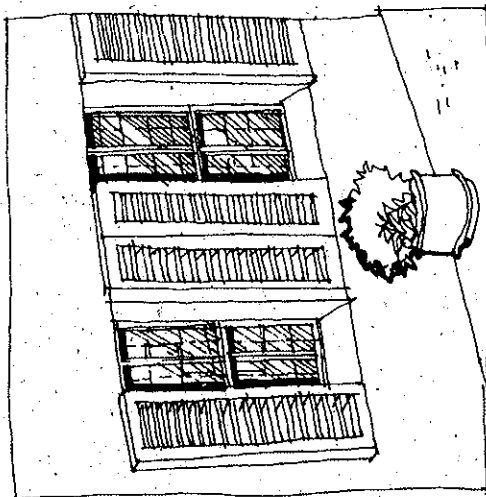
Security doors are not recommended for the front facade. If absolutely necessary, they should be designed to follow the lines of the door and should be painted in an unobtrusive colour.

5.3 AIR CONDITIONING

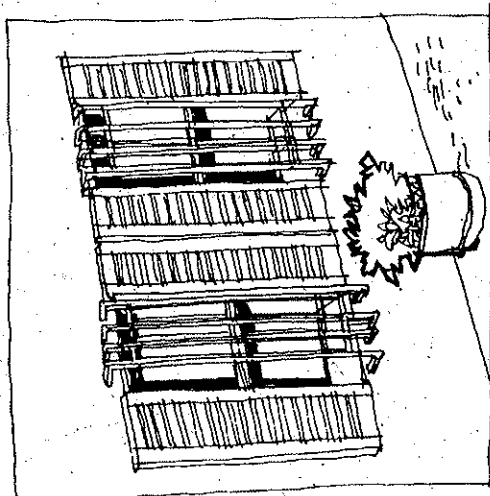
Air conditioning should be unobtrusive. Units should not be installed in window openings.

5.4 TV ANTENNAE

Television aerials can be very obtrusive if visible from public areas. External aerials should preferably be installed at the rear of the property, where they are concealed from public view.



Burglar bars fitted on the inside of the windows are hardly noticeable - especially if painted in a dark colour.



These external burglar bars are obtrusive (and would interfere with the use of the shutters).