

Neighbourhood Character Review



What is Neighbourhood Character?

Neighbourhood Character is a term used by town planners to describe the particular appearance of an area that makes it distinctive.

Neighbourhood Character can be created by a range of factors such as the types of buildings or front gardens in a streetscape, how far buildings are set back from the street or side boundaries, or the presence of street trees.



The photos above show examples of significant neighbourhood character areas.

What is an Overlay control and how does it work?

An Overlay is a town planning regulation that applies additional control over properties and is designed to guide selected aspects of development. Depending on what characteristics of a neighbourhood are found to be significant an Overlay control may introduce particular guidelines, for example, about the design and siting of buildings, removal of vegetation, or the location of garages and carports.

For this project, we are investigating the need for a Neighbourhood Character Overlay or a Significant Landscape Overlay. Significant Landscape Overlays are slightly different to Neighbourhood Character Overlays, as they are designed to protect the landscape quality of an area, created by private gardens and street trees, rather than the appearance of buildings.

Why is Council considering Overlays?

Many people in Bayside have been concerned about some types of developments that are built in their neighbourhoods. Council has had a great deal of feedback from the community that they do not want to lose the 'look' and 'feel' of their neighbourhoods.

While Council does try to recognise the character of Bayside neighbourhoods, Council is limited by what it can control because of Victorian Government regulations. The Council introduced a Policy into its planning scheme last year that is helping to support decisions to refuse inappropriate development. However, in some areas the Council believes the controls need to be stronger.

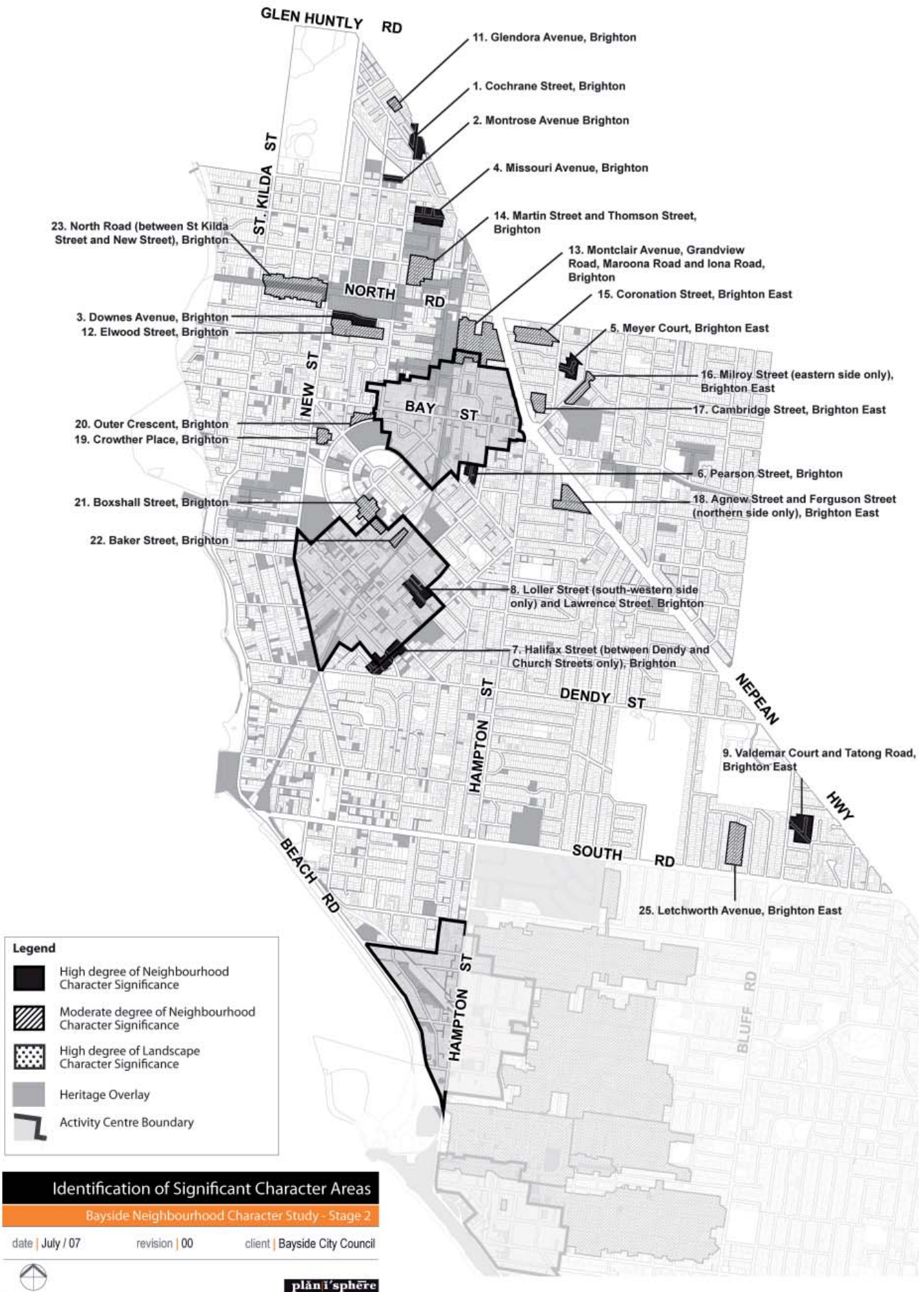
The Neighbourhood Character Review has identified 32 areas across Bayside that are considered to have a high or moderate degree of neighbourhood character significance, and which may require additional planning controls to assist enhancing this character into the future.

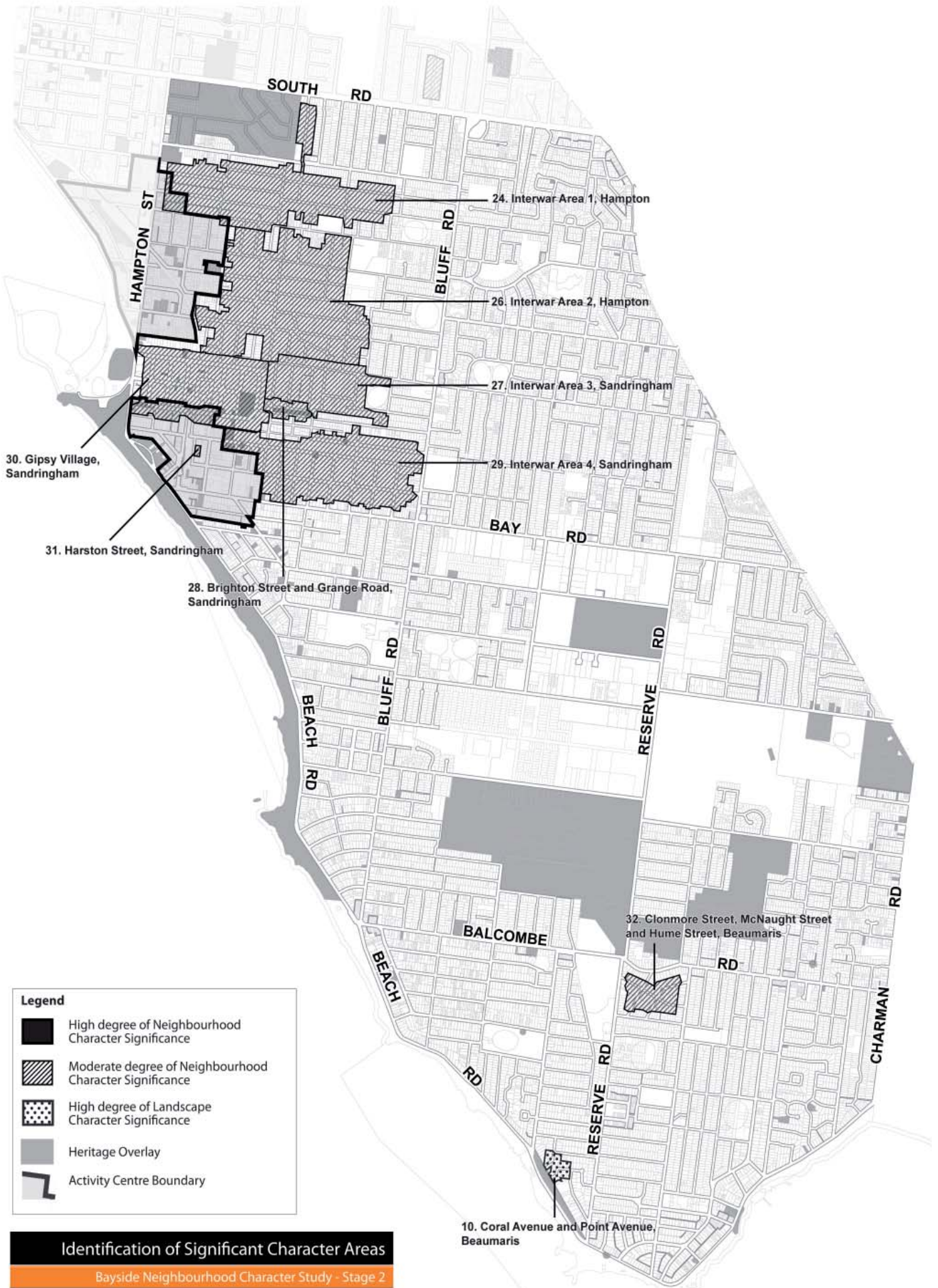
The review had input from community groups, councillors, planning staff and independent consultants who conducted detailed street surveys. Each of the 32 areas was evaluated, looking for consistency of features such as the design or style of buildings, vegetation or landscape.

This could mean introducing a new Overlay control for selected neighbourhoods of Bayside. It is important to Council that this is done with continuing involvement of the community.






Significant Neighbourhood Character Areas maps

The two maps on this page and the following page show the location of significant neighbourhood character areas, to the north of South Road and to the south of South Road.





Legend

-  High degree of Neighbourhood Character Significance
-  Moderate degree of Neighbourhood Character Significance
-  High degree of Landscape Character Significance
-  Heritage Overlay
-  Activity Centre Boundary

Identification of Significant Character Areas
 Bayside Neighbourhood Character Study - Stage 2

date | July / 07 revision | 00 client | Bayside City Council



Neighbourhood Character Review

Frequently asked questions

Q: Are there any other ways of protecting our neighbourhood's character apart from an Overlay?

A: At the moment, Council has a Neighbourhood Character Policy which attempts to do a similar thing to an Overlay. However, this Policy only relates to instances where a planning permit is required, such as a multi-unit development. In other instances, the Policy cannot be applied. The Policy is also more general in nature and may not address the specific development issues that are particular to the areas that have been identified as having a significant neighbourhood character.

Q: Is it a guarantee that developments I don't like won't go ahead?

A: No. The Overlay is a guide to home owners and developers on the desired 'look' and 'feel' of the neighbourhood. It is used by planners, councillors and VCAT (the Victorian Government planning appeal body) and is one of the considerations in making planning decisions.

Q: Will it be possible to make modifications to houses in the neighbourhood, such as a modern extension at the back of a house or a second storey, and use of certain types of materials?

A: Yes, it will be possible to make modifications to existing houses, provided that the proposal fits into the neighbourhood character of the area. For example, in some areas it may be required that modern extensions are located at the rear of a dwelling and not visible from the street, or that second storey additions are set back from the front façade.

Q: Will it be possible to demolish houses in the neighbourhood and build something modern?

A: In some areas a planning permit will be required to demolish a house. Council will take into account whether the proposed new development fits into the preferred neighbourhood character of the area when deciding on the permit application.

Q: Will it be possible to make changes to the inside of houses?

A: Yes. Overlay controls will not affect changes to the interior of houses.

Q: Will it be possible to paint houses any colour, or to render them?

A: Yes, the Overlay control will not require a permit for painting or rendering houses.

Q: Will it be possible to subdivide properties or build units?

A: Yes. However, if a development that is proposed for a property doesn't fit with the neighbourhood characteristics as defined by the Overlay, then it is less likely, but not impossible, that a subdivision would go ahead, or that units would be built.

Q: What if a house does not fit with the neighbourhood character now? Will it be exempt?

A: No, all properties within the Overlay area will be affected by the Overlay in the same way.

Q: Does this Overlay apply solely to my house?

A: Overlay controls will apply to a number of houses that create a particular 'neighbourhood character area'. This might comprise a group of houses in part of a street, a whole street, or a block of streets. Please refer to the Neighbourhood Character Information Sheet included in this pack which shows which houses in your area are included in the proposed Overlay.

Q: How is this different to Heritage Controls?

A: Heritage controls are primarily aimed at retaining the elements of the neighbourhood or property that have heritage significance. Neighbourhood character controls are primarily aimed at ensuring that new development fits in with the preferred future character of the area.

continued next page...

Neighbourhood Character Review

Frequently asked questions continued...

Q: Will an Overlay impact on my property value?

A: Council does not know if and how this will impact on your property value.

Q: Once the Overlay is applied to the neighbourhood, can a property be removed from the Overlay?

A: Once the Overlay is in place it cannot be removed without a further amendment to the Bayside Planning Scheme. The Overlay is intended as a permanent control.

Q: How does this proposed Overlay affect my neighbourhood specifically?

A: To understand how the proposed Overlay might affect your neighbourhood in particular, please read the **Neighbourhood Character Information Sheet** contained in this pack. There is a Glossary if you are unfamiliar with planning terminology.

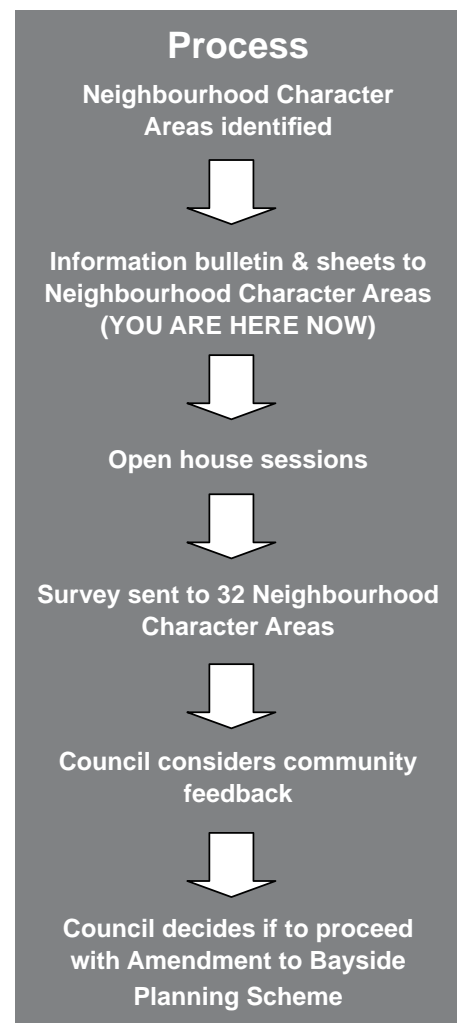
The **Neighbourhood Character Information Sheet** outlines the characteristics of your neighbourhood that were considered unique in the Neighbourhood Character Review, and worthy of acknowledging and retaining. Should this Overlay go ahead, these proposed characteristics would be incorporated into the planning scheme and be considered when assessing future development in your neighbourhood.

It is important to note that these characteristics are not final. After considering community feedback, Council will assess the merit of proceeding with Overlays on each of the neighbourhood character areas. Council may also make some adjustments to the extent and description of the neighbourhood character areas or their preferred future character based on community feedback, so your views are important.

The Council process for making a decision about Overlays

Following this consultation period Council will consider comments received from the community and decide whether they believe Overlay controls should be applied to each area.

If the Overlays are pursued, the next stage will be to prepare and exhibit a Planning Scheme Amendment for those areas. During this exhibition period there will be opportunities for people to make submissions to Council about the Amendment. Depending on the response, an independent panel may be appointed to hear these submissions.



Neighbourhood Character Review

What happens next?

Bayside City Council will not make a decision about Neighbourhood Character Overlays before the community has had an opportunity to understand the concept, to evaluate it, and provide comment back to Council about it.

If there are aspects of the Neighbourhood Character Review you would like clarification about, there are four 'open house' sessions where you can ask questions. These are:

Tuesday 13 November 2007 1:00pm to 8:00pm	Black Rock Activity Centre (Karrakatta Hall) 2 Karrakatta Street BLACK ROCK (Melway Ref 85 K4)
Wednesday 14 November 2007 1:00pm to 8:00pm	Black Rock Civic Centre Corner of Balcombe Road and College Grove BLACK ROCK (Melway Ref 85 K4)
Wednesday 21 November 2007 1:00pm to 8:00pm	Brighton Town Hall Corner Wilson and Carpenter Street (enter via Wilson Street) BRIGHTON (Melway Ref 67 F10)
Thursday 22 November 2007 1:00pm to 8:00pm	Brighton Town Hall Corner Wilson and Carpenter Street (enter via Wilson Street) BRIGHTON (Melway Ref 67 F10)

All households who are within a proposed Neighbourhood Character Overlay will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal via a survey. Surveys will be sent to all households involved in this proposal. The results of the surveys will be reported to all councillors to inform their decision making.

Further Information

For further information contact Bayside City Council's Urban Strategy and Culture Department on (03) 9599 4444.

Further information is also provided on Bayside City Council's website: www.bayside.vic.gov.au



The photos above show examples of significant neighbourhood character areas.