

A simple guide to Brisbane's heritage places and character homes.



From Brisbane City Council



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

THINKING OF BUYING A CLASSIC 'QUEENSLANDER' AND PUTTING ON AN EXTENSION FOR THE FAMILY? DREAMING OF TRANSFORMING AN OLD INDUSTRIAL WAREHOUSE INTO SLEEK NEW APARTMENTS?

Before diving in, you need to find out what rules Council has in place to protect Brisbane's historic places.

The rules mean that we can't just buy any old building, knock it down and build what we want. Some buildings are legally protected from being demolished. Others need to be carefully renovated in a way that retains the building's original form and fabric.

You can't tell just by looking at a building or a site if it is protected. The simplest timber cottage may be heritage-listed or protected from demolition. This booklet will show you how to find out about rules that apply to older properties in Brisbane. It will also help you understand terms like 'heritage listing', 'character housing' and 'demolition controls' and what they could mean for you.



THE BRISBANE WE LOVE

There's a lot to love about Brisbane.

Our climate is better than the Bahamas, we're surrounded by world heritage national parks, the islands of Moreton Bay are just a ferry ride away and Brisbane has become one of the world's great easy-living cities. Yet looking at the CBD's tall buildings, it's hard to imagine Brisbane was a convict settlement less than 200 years ago.

While Brisbane can't boast of buildings that have stood for centuries or cobbled streets steeped in history, we still have a rich collection of homes, shops, schools and places of special Indigenous significance that tell the story of where we came from. Like the Old Windmill in Wickham Park, built by convicts in the 1820s to grind grain, or Newstead House, Brisbane's oldest surviving home.

These historic places form a cultural tapestry that helps us understand who we are and what we've achieved. Many buildings, structures and places are also very beautiful, reflecting the history of our unique architecture, and helping to make our city an attractive place to live.

CONSERVING OUR PAST

Brisbane's historic places are protected by a combination of State heritage laws and the *Brisbane City Plan* (City Plan). The City Plan controls all development in the city.

Protected buildings and structures cannot be removed or demolished without approval, and this is rarely granted.

Unless the proposed work is very minor, owners of protected places also need approval to renovate or develop on the same site. For some protected places, there are even rules about what can be built next door.

Anyone planning on buying a property should first find out if it is protected or if there is a protected historic place on an adjoining site. If you break the rules, even accidentally, you could face a large fine from Council. You could even be forced to demolish anything that's constructed outside the rules and start again.

For more information on the City Plan and the rules it contains, download the booklet in this series called 'A simple guide to the plans that affect your home and neighbourhood' from Council's website. You can also call Council on (07) 3403 8888 to have a copy sent to you.

ABOUT HERITAGE LISTING

There are different ways Brisbane's historic places are protected.

All levels of government in Australia have heritage registers. Even some non-government organisations such as the National Trust have lists of heritage places. Council's register is called the City Plan Heritage Register (Heritage Register) and more than 2000 places are listed, from parks to homes, commercial buildings, schools, factories and cemeteries. Whole 'precincts', for example, buildings and their grounds, or even whole streets, can also be listed.

Places listed on the City Plan Heritage Register cannot be demolished or redeveloped without planning approval from Council (this is different to building approval). Owners of heritage-listed places must submit detailed plans and reports if they want to renovate, build something new or subdivide, showing how they'll meet specific heritage criteria.

Heritage listing does not mean bus tours can turn up on the doorstep. But it does usually give everyone the chance to comment before a heritage-listed place can be demolished or significantly altered. You'll know if this is proposed for a property near you as the owners must place an ad in the local paper, put a sign up on their property and write to their neighbours when they ask Council for approval. This will give you the chance to write a formal submission, and have it considered by Council.

Owners of heritage-listed places don't have to restore them, but Council does offer financial assistance and free expert advice to encourage conservation of properties listed on the City Plan Heritage Register.

Did you know?

There are many heritage registers, but in Brisbane only places listed in the City Plan Heritage Register or the State Government's Queensland Heritage Register (or both) have legal protection. These registers are assembled and managed separately, but have similar criteria. Just because your property is not listed on one does not mean it is not listed on the other. Contact the Department of Environment and Resource Management to find out if your property is listed in the Queensland Heritage Register (visit www.derm.qld.gov.au or call 3227 6499). To enquire about properties listed on Brisbane City Council's heritage register, contact 3403 8888.



For tips on how to write a submission, download the booklet called 'A simple guide to making a submission' from Council's website. You can also call Council on (07) 3403 8888 to have a copy sent to you.

Visit Council's heritage website or call Council to find out about grants available through the Heritage Incentive Scheme. These grants help fund appropriate conservation work, but aren't available for new development.

GET HELP WITH YOUR RENOVATION

Council offers free architectural advice to owners of heritage-listed properties. If you own a heritage place and are thinking of renovating or undertaking some other form of development, Council's Heritage Architects can help you identify any issues you could encounter in getting your proposal approved, as well as workable solutions, before you lodge a development application with Council. This includes ideas on how you might use your site for different activities, yet keep its historical integrity, or advice on specific conservation work.

You can also arrange a pre-lodgement meeting with one of Council's planners. These meetings are subject to a fee, but worth doing if you are planning a larger, more complex development. A pre-lodgement meeting can help you sort out any issues early, alert you to Council fees you could incur, and ensure your application starts on-track.

SIX THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HERITAGE LISTING

1. Everyone gets a say on what places are heritage-listed.
2. You can nominate any property for listing. Of course, you need to submit supporting evidence that it has some special qualities or history that makes it important. Just send Council details of the property, including the address and, if possible, photographs or historical material.
3. Sometimes, Council will also come across additional properties it thinks deserve listing while conducting surveys or during Neighbourhood Planning.
4. Proposed heritage listings are advertised in The Courier-Mail. Council also sends a letter to the property owner explaining the reasons for proposing the heritage listing of the property.
5. Everyone has the chance to make a formal submission about a property proposed for heritage listing. Council considers all submissions before making a decision and tells submitters about the outcome by sending them each a letter.
6. Listing on the Heritage Register is not subject to appeal (which means you can't take Council to court over the decision) however, Council's decisions about future development on the site can be appealed through the Planning and Environment Court.



'Timber and tin' suburbs have become some of Brisbane's most sought after and valuable residential addresses.

EVOLUTION OF THE 'QUEENSLANDER'

The 'Queenslander' has gradually evolved over time. The images below highlight various stages of this transformation

				
Transverse gable	Pyramid roof house	Asymmetrical bungalow	Triple gable	Californian bungalow



HOW DO I KNOW IF A PROPERTY IS HERITAGE-LISTED?

It will be listed in the City Plan Heritage Register. You can find a copy in Council libraries and Regional Business Centres. You can also download it from Council's website. The listing is part of the City Plan, which is updated and reprinted every six months (usually at the beginning of the calendar year and the financial year). The Heritage Register is updated at the same time, so make sure you view the latest version of the City Plan.

Did you know?

Some shops or office buildings built before 1947 are also protected from being demolished, removed or altered. These are known as 'Commercial character buildings' and they have their own special set of rules about development. Rules for the demolition of Commercial Character Buildings are similar to those for character houses and are in the same code. The unique thing about commercial character buildings is that Council has special rules that encourage their retention and adaptive reuse by lowering levels of assessment for a broad range of uses, as long as they don't alter the building.

FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW IF YOU OWN A HERITAGE-LISTED PLACE

- /// If you own a property that gets nominated for heritage listing, but Council has already given you approval to redevelop, you can still carry out your plans.
- /// Once your property is added to the City Plan Heritage Register, you'll have to get approval for any future development and it will need to meet Council's heritage rules.
- /// If you don't like Council's decision about a development application you make, you (or anyone who made a submission) can legally appeal the decision.
- /// You can find out more about rules that apply to heritage-listed places by looking at the City Plan or visiting Council's heritage website.

A QUEENSLAND CLASSIC

Many people think that Brisbane's old-style timber homes with their shady verandahs and tin roofs, which line the hilly streets of inner suburbs like Paddington, are the essence of 'Brisbane'. You won't see suburbs like this in Paris or Shanghai. You won't even find them in Melbourne or Sydney.

Queensland is the only place in Australia where building homes from timber was a strong tradition, right up until World War II. Sawmilling started up in the 1850s, which made timber cheap and easy to come by. Iron was easily transported through the colonies, so tin roofs also became a signature of Queensland housing. A unique architectural style developed around these

two materials and our climate, resulting in a home that became known as the 'Queenslander'.

While other materials like masonry were also used in Brisbane homes, it was not until after World War II that the 'timber and tin' home began to lose favour as a construction style. Though we've never stopped loving the Queenslander recent decades have seen a revival in interest. Thousands of homes have been painstakingly restored and new homes have been built to complement the character of the area.





ELEMENTS OF THE 'QUEENSLANDER'

Steep pitched roofs to help with quick run-off of notorious Queensland rains.

Tin roof - safer in tropical storms than tiles, good for construction and easily transported, but not ideal in summer!

Timber walls – cheap, lightweight, but popular with termites.



Big shady verandah – ideal for escaping the heat of the day and catching breezes. Often later enclosed to create more room as the family grew.

House with front stairs facing the street – resulting in streets full of charm and character.

Up on stumps – to survive flash floods, spot the termites easily and allow good airflow (inadvertently creating spots for drying washing on wet days).

Cars weren't widely available in Australia until post World War II, so garages were added as an afterthought and tucked around the back.

MOVING IN NEXT DOOR

Development around a heritage-listed place can dramatically impact on its beauty and historical value. Imagine a 20-storey apartment building in the middle of a row of quaint 1900s cottages or next door to Newstead House.

The City Plan includes specific rules about certain types of development on sites adjacent a heritage place to make sure views of the adjacent heritage place, and its setting, are not destroyed. New stand alone homes next door to a heritage place however, are not affected by these rules.



SAVING OUR CHARACTER HOMES

The most significant and stately of our older Brisbane homes, mostly Queenslanders, are heritage-listed. But not all Queenslanders are suitable for a place in the Heritage Register because they are just too numerous.

Yet a grouping of well-conserved houses can tell the story of people long gone equally as well as a heritage-listed place. In some suburbs such as Chelmer and Ascot whole streets of Queenslanders remain intact. These streets are among the most charming places in the city.

Brisbane's older homes give our city its character. They're considered so important to the city that regulations have been created to protect them. These are called 'demolition controls'.

In October of 1995, Council introduced a blanket layer of protection over suburbs where the majority of homes had been built before the end of World War II. After World Expo 88, Brisbane boomed and land

If your house is within a DCP, you can demolish internal walls and features, as well as parts of the home constructed after 1947, without planning approval from Council.

values increased. This extra protection was needed to stop the demolition of large numbers of older homes, many of which were on two blocks of land. Protected areas were called 'Demolition Control Precincts' (DCPs) and homes built before 1947 became known as 'character houses'. Most protected houses were in inner city suburbs, but areas of character housing further out were also included.

Since this time, Council has further refined the DCPs, taking out sites that didn't meet the criteria (remember, the protection layer was initially a blanket measure) or adding in areas that were missed.

PLAYING BY THE RULES

It's difficult to get approval to demolish a home built before 1947, or even part of an older home, within a DCP.

Generally, if you want to demolish all or part of a pre-1947 building in a DCP, you have to submit a development application (including forms and fees), provide a town planning report and perhaps other reports from a structural engineer and an architect. All of this takes time and money. If a character house contributes to the look of the street, has not been substantially altered and is capable of repair, Council will probably say 'no' to your application. You'll also need approval to demolish any free standing buildings built prior to 1947 such as sheds and garages on the property, unless they are at the rear of your property.

Character controls don't just prevent homes from being demolished or removed. Extensions or renovations to pre-1947 homes must also complement their architectural style and the style of other older homes in the street. Depending on what you want to do, proposals to extend or renovate can also require a planning application.

Be aware, homes built after 1947 or even vacant allotments can be within a DCP. While homes built after WWII can be demolished, anything built in their place must also complement the older style of the neighbourhood.

Detailed fact sheets to guide the renovation or extension of a heritage places or character home can be downloaded from Council's website.

RENOVATING OR EXTENDING IN 'CHARACTER' NEIGHBOURHOODS

DCPs are designed to help our older neighbourhoods such as Gordon Park and Red Hill keep their character. Any new development on a property within a DCP must meet specific guidelines. This could be renovating an old Queensland, extending or building a new home or even constructing a townhouse. If it's in a DCP, the rules apply.

Most of the time, new projects will need planning approval from Council (this is not the same as building approval). Some minor building work such as re-roofing will not need planning approval. But be careful, sometimes renovations that seem minor

SIX THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE BUYING OR RENOVATING A CHARACTER HOUSE

1. Character and heritage regulations have a big impact on what you can do with a property and therefore its value. They also affect what other people in your street can do.
2. You can't tell if a property is protected just by looking at it. Your real estate agent may not tell you either. The only way to find out for sure is by checking with Council.
3. DCPs sit across most residential zones.
4. A street that looks like it's protected may not be. Don't rely on the appearance of the street; always check with Council.
5. Sometimes, only part of a street will be protected. If this is the case, there's a chance some of your neighbours could be allowed to demolish or remove their houses and redevelop their site.
6. There are new houses and vacant sites within a DCP. On these properties, anything new you build will need to complement the older style of the neighbourhood.



may involve some demolition work such as modifying part of the roof. This could be considered 'partial demolition' and the project may still need Council approval.

The rules for building or renovating in character neighbourhoods are outlined in the City Plan. Read these closely if you are considering buying or building in an older part of the city. The main rules are summarised on the following pages.

Be aware, some Neighbourhood or Local Plans also contain extra, or more detailed regulations about character homes.



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BUILDING AND PLANNING APPROVAL?

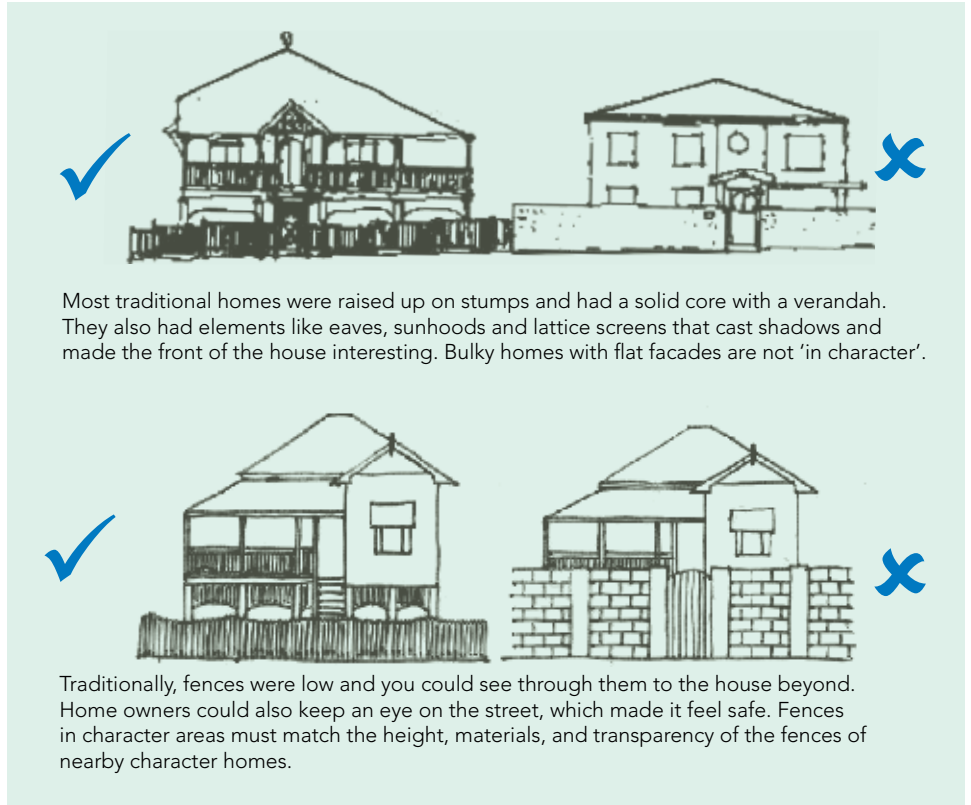
There are two types of approvals you might need if you are going to build or renovate in the DCP:

- A. Planning approval – planning approval is provided by Council. Planning approval is used to make sure new structures like decks, garages and carports complement the existing streetscape and do not negatively affect neighbours.
- B. Building approval – building approval ensures that buildings are structurally sound. You can arrange for building approval through a private building certifier (certifiers are listed in the Yellow Pages under 'Building Surveyors'). You will need to provide the certifier with scaled and detailed plans prepared by a drafter or architect.

UNDERSTANDING THE RULES

There are three main things you'll need to consider if you want to build or renovate in a DCP:

- The street** New development must fit in with the style and setting of other homes in the street, be it the distance that houses are set back from the street or the location of garages and driveways.
- The shape** Buildings must be similar in size and form to nearby character houses.
- The materials** Houses and other buildings must be made from materials similar to the ones commonly used in nearby older homes (normally, this will be timber and tin).



There are extra regulations for development on a 'small lot'. Small lots are properties that have an average width of less than 15m and/or an area less than 450m² or, if it is a rear allotment, an area less than 600m² (excluding access way).





New homes and renovations in character areas must fit in with other homes in the street. The size of the building and the shape and pitch of the roof are especially important. Buildings should also be set back from the street and garages should not dominate the house.



Many older Brisbane suburbs are quite hilly. New homes in these areas should not be wider or taller than existing buildings, so we can keep the traditional pattern and rhythm of 'stepping roofs'.

THE SMART WAY TO RENOVATE

Sometimes, by tailoring your renovation to meet Council's regulations, you can avoid the need to submit a planning application, saving you time and money. You are less likely to need formal approval for example, if you put extensions such as decks, verandahs and balconies at the rear of the building rather than the front and also locate carports, garages, sheds or other outbuildings behind the front building line or at the back. You still should check with a private certifier about whether your proposal needs building approval.



FIND OUT THE RULES FOR YOUR PROPERTY

Check out Council's website and use the tool called 'PD Online' to complete the six steps below. You can also call Council for help on (07) 3403 8888.

- Step one** **Find out your property's zone.**
Zones (also called 'area classifications') tell you what you can and cannot do with the property. Your zone is the key to unlocking the planning rules for your property.
- Step two** **Check if your property is a small lot.**
Different rules apply to properties that are smaller than standard, known as 'small lots'.
- Step three** **Find out if your property is in a 'Demolition Control Precinct'.**
You cannot demolish or remove a building built before 1947 in a Demolition Control Precinct without approval. There are also rules about renovating or building in a DCP.
- Step four** **Check whether the property is heritage-listed.**
Both Council and the Queensland Government have heritage registers and you should check both. Heritage-listed properties are protected and specific development rules apply.
- Step five** **Look at the Neighbourhood Plan (or local plan) for the area.**
Some Neighbourhood Plans contain extra rules about new development.
- Step six** **Check whether the property has other development constraints.**
Your property may have things that act as 'constraints' to development such as a waterway corridor, a patch of native bushland or an overland water flow path.

Start your search now. Go to www.brisbane.qld.gov.au and click on 'Planning and Building', then 'Tools and forms'.

OTHER SIMPLE GUIDES INCLUDE:

A simple guide to planning and development in Brisbane.

A simple guide to the plans that affect your home and neighbourhood.

A simple guide to making a submission.

A simple guide to building and renovating in Brisbane.

A simple guide to the way your neighbourhood could grow.

Download copies from Council's website or call Council on (07) 3403 8888 to have copies sent to you.

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