Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Emu Point Character Study

Emu Point Precinct Structure Plan

Reform, Design and State Assessment | Design Projects

01 December 2025

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Introduction

This character study supports the Emu Point Precinct Structure Plan (EPPSP) by identifying the unique qualities that define Emu Point's sense of place and providing guidance for retaining these features in future development.

Emu Point is a low-density coastal settlement nestled between nature reserves and the seaside, characterised by its open space, extensive tree canopy, eclectic mix of historic and contemporary dwelling styles, and informal infrastructure. The study applies a Place Responsive Design Methodology to catalogue the built form, streetscape, and environmental elements, and recommends design objectives and regulatory mechanisms to preserve Emu Point's relaxed, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, its integration with natural landscapes, and its distinctive architectural character.

Overview of Study

Aim

This study was created to support the development of the EPPSP being prepared by the Land Use Planning Team. This study aims to identify the built form character of Emu Point and provides design and regulatory guidance on how this character can be retained in future development.

Objectives of Study

The objectives of this study include:

- Identify the setting and influence surrounding Emu Point and how it contributes to its character.
- Catalogue the streetscape characteristics including trees and identify how it contributes to character.
- Catalogue the built form elements of the residential dwellings.
- Develop future development guidance on how character can be retained.
- Identify regulatory and policy control mechanisms to control built form character.

Area of study

This study covers the local centre of Emu Point, Albany, Western Australia which spans approximately 1.9 km^2. Much of this area is bushland and reserves, with only 0.7 km^2 of Emu Point as urban land.

Study Methodology

To achieve the objectives of this study, a Place Responsive Design Methods (PRDM) methodology was employed. PRDM is a data driven approach to identifying the contributing elements that give a place its unique character. It uses these identified elements to distil built environment design outcomes that are congruent with a place's character. This methodology was chosen because it allows this study to identify the character of Emu Point and provides additional value in identifying design control mechanisms.

To apply the data driven approach to PRDM, this study employs a mixed-method quantitative/ qualitative desktop survey of the built form and urban landscape. This methodology was chosen because the quantitative data-driven approach informs and complements the subjective qualitative analysis of place.

This review has been conducted digitally using mapping software and services. While this process offers qualitative analysis and insights, its limitations should also be noted, as there may be intangible aspects of place that cannot be conveyed without engaging with the community.

Desktop review methods

In conducting this desktop review, each residential dwelling within the Emu Point locality was catalogued and broken down into built form elements. These elements included:

Table 1. Built form elements catalogued for dwellings in Emu Point.

Dwelling Overview	Facade	Facade	Street Interaction
Dwelling site coverage, Number of storeys Decade built, style	Type, material, colour	Primary material, secondary material	Garages, carports, Verandah, vehicle crossover count, vehicle crossover location

Analysis of the street landscape was also conducted using a similar approach. Using satellite imagery from October 2025, trees located on City of Albany verges were catalogued based on their coordinates. The average distance between the road and residential lot boundaries were also calculated per street.

Introduction to character

The concept of place

When referring to character, this study uses this term as a synonym for place. Place is defined as a sense of space endowed with unique features that are fundamental to defining its identity. PRDM compiles these unique features into three categories: environment, society, and economy. These are then broken down further into the different elements shown in Figure 1. The key elements considered in this study as a built environment character analysis have been bolded.

Macro, meso and micro place

There are three scales to place. Macro place is the large scale of a region or city such as the City of Albany. Albany as a regional centre located southeast has its own identifiable uniqueness compared to metropolitan Perth, Carnarvon or Kalgoorlie. Meso place then zooms in one level further into settlements such as Emu Point, which has a distinct uniqueness compared to other surrounding settlements within Albany such as Collingwood Heights. Micro place zooms in further again and considers the different areas of Emu Point that have its own unique features such as the residential area to the north, which is distinctly different from the southern beachside holiday accommodation area.

Preferred character elements

This character study provides guidance on the current elements that contribute to Emu Point's unique character. It then provides recommendations for which character elements would need to be retained to conserve this unique character.

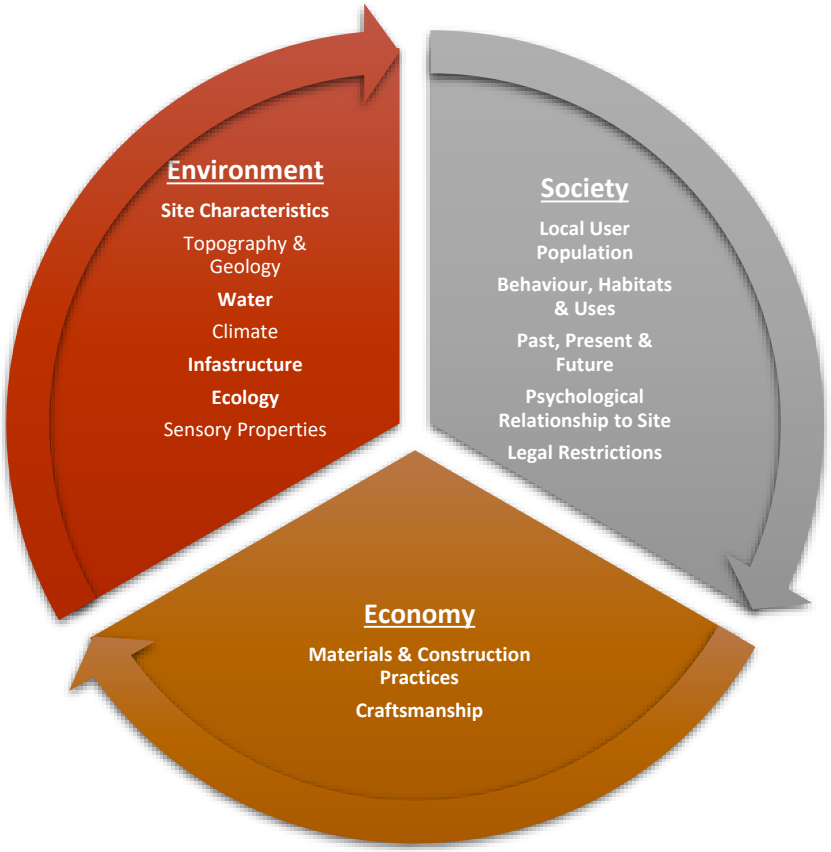


Figure 1. Place defined by the Place Responsive Design Methodology.

Setting

Regional setting

Overview of Albany

Emu Point is a tourism destination and small residential settlement that belongs to the larger City of Albany area and Lower Great Southern Ecosystem. Emu Point is located 5.8 km northeast of the Albany centre and 388 km southwest of Perth. The City of Albany spans 4,310 km^2 and has a population of 38,000 people, producing $2.756 billion in gross regional product[1]. Construction is the largest contributing industries at 26 per cent combined. This includes building construction,

[1] City of Albany economy statistics take from. IdCommunity at https://economy.id.com.au/albany/gross-product.

heavy and civil engineering, and agriculture machinery production. The regional location of Albany also provides valuable land resources used primarily for sheep, cattle and broadacre crops that contribute 9.2 per cent to Albany's output.

Tourism and Albany

Tourism is a growing industry in Albany. Expanding the food and beverage attractions is a key priority of the Great Southern Development Commission[2]. In 2023/24, tourism brought in $363 million in sales for Albany. Domestic tourism is the primary consumer with 1,077,293 domestic tourists visiting in 2023/2024.

Emu Point contributes to the tourism industry of Albany by being a key destination for those visiting the nearby Oyster Bay. Positioned directly at the mouth of the inlet, the Emu Point marina provides boat ramping and tours. The beach provides sea-side activities and hospitality, and the southern portion of Emu Point provides tourist accommodation.

Regional setting's contribution to character

The natural features and proximity to the water continues to be a key driver of Emu Point's unique character as a beach-side holiday destination. It has a calm, relaxing atmosphere that can be seen in the profile of the local long-term residents. The median age of Emu Point is 71, with 63.8 per cent of residents reportedly out of the labour force [3]. This suggests Emu Point is seen as a desirable location to retire.

Local setting

Road access

Access to Emu Point from Albany Centre requires traveling four km northeast via Emu Point Drive parallel to the Middleton Beach foreshore. The other primary settlements outside of Albany Centre with long-term residents are Middleton Beach located south-west of Emu Point, Collingwood Heights located north-west, and Bayonet Head, located north. Access to Collingwood Heights and Bayonet Head requires taking Collingwood Road and Lower King Road, which divert north before reaching Emu Point. This results in Emu Point being separated from most of the natural traffic flow across Albany, therefore, the traffic to Emu Point is deliberate and destination based.

Surrounding treescapes and reserves

Emu Point is positioned between nature reserves and the ocean inlet — the reserves once continued uninterrupted to the ocean inlet. The early 1920 to 1950 development in Emu Point made small clearings for houses and essential infrastructure. As Emu Point expanded, these trees were respectfully retained when clearing the land which has resulted in the significant tree

[2] For further reading regarding Tourism and Albany, see the Great Southern Development Commission at https://gsdc.wa.gov.au/our_focus.
[3] Median age and employment statistics taken from the 2021 Australian Bureau of Statics.

canopy coverage today. The surrounding nature reserves act as a buffer to Albany, further contributing to Emu Points separate and destination-based atmosphere.



Figure 2. Emu Point aerial photograph taken in 1954. Sourced from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage internal mapping system.

Due to this positioning, Emu Point is uniquely surrounded inland by a thick density of bushland reserve. Peppermint trees line the road reserves, with varying scales of hardscaping treatments with visibly less formality for roads abutting natural environments such as bushland or adjacent to the foreshore. A blending of trees intermingling across private lots, the road reserve and public open spaces has established a seamless natural environment and blurring the line between public and private spaces.



Figure 3. Peppermint trees line the verges along Mermaid Avenue. Sourced from Google Street View 2025.



Figure 4. Aerial Photography from October 2025. Edited to only colourise natural features. Original image sourced from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage internal mapping system.

Public open space, beach and inlet

Bovell Square serves as a central location for public open space, with the Emu Point Sport and Community Centre located adjacent and both accessible off Mermaid Avenue, the main central spine of Emu Point, running west to east. This road continues through to the foreshore running along Cunningham Street to the south, and Oyster Point harbour to the north.

Harbour and foreshore

Low vehicular traffic is a key characteristic of the Emu Point area, notwithstanding vehicles with boat trailers, that flow through to the harbour. Wide verges clear of parked cars, support an uninterrupted pedestrian flow through to recreational areas.

The pedestrian scale of developed areas directly adjacent to the foreshore contributes to the maritime context of the area.

Local setting's contribution to character

The high concentration of trees within Emu Point and its secluded location away from other developed areas contributes to the quiet, seaside character of Emu Point. The nature reserves bordering the area act as a physical buffer, protecting the natural quality and environmental features of Emu Point. Emu Point is maintained as a well-vegetated, and pedestrian focussed settlement with minimal development intervention. Maintaining low vehicular speed controls has avoided the need to introduce kerbs treatments or traffic calming, which may impact the relaxed, informal value of the area.

Lot and suburb morphology

Overview

The 2021 census data suggest that 70.6 per cent of Emu Point dwellings are detached single dwellings. The remaining consists of semi-detached row, terrace house (5.6%) and holiday accommodation (23.8 %). The location of battleaxe and grouped dwellings in Emu Point has been mapped below in Figure 5.

Emu Point is primarily freehold with an average lot size of 1,100 m^2. These lots have a standard configuration for regional settlements – wide lots sitting back-to-back, facing the road with no right-of-way laneways between them. This configuration is broken up every seven to 12 lots with arterial roads that connect the local distributors.

Lots in Emu Point have widths of up to 30 metres, with variations of five metres either side. Only two lots in Emu Point are in the battle axe configuration, with only one of these formally subdivided.

There are 20 single detached lots (10% of dwellings) that have two crossovers. Besides select corner lots, both crossovers face the street front due to there being no Right-of-Ways in Emu Point.

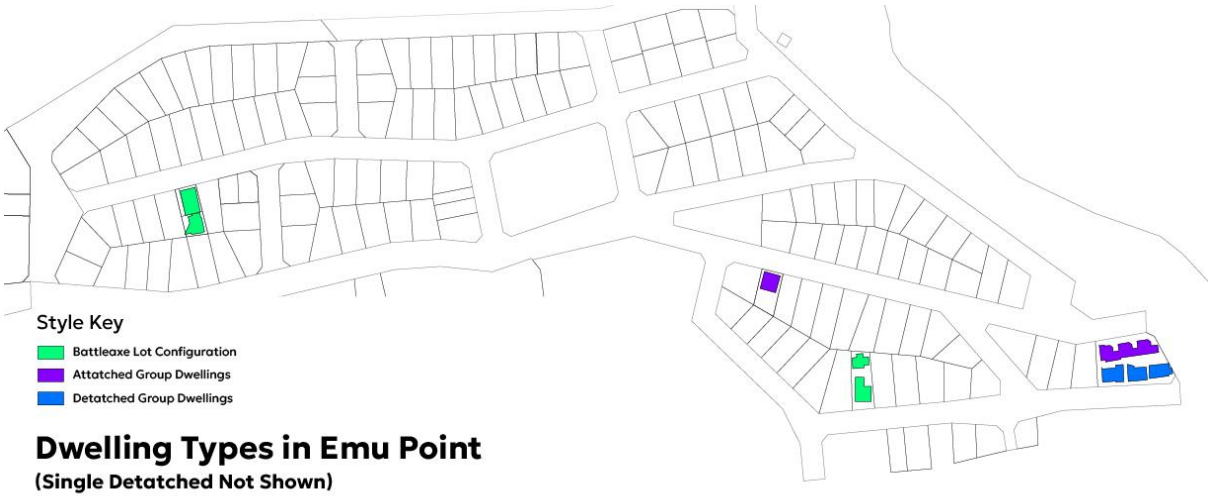


Figure 5. Battleaxe and Group Dwellings in Emu Point. Map Diagram prepared by authors.

Morphology's contribution to character

The wide lot width of the urban morphology is a significant contributor to the informal seaside character of Emu Point. These large widths comfortably allow for vehicle driveways adjacent to dwellings where residents store vehicles, caravans and boats. The buffer created by the driveways and distance between dwellings contributes to the low-density open feel of Emu Point.

The open feeling is complimented by the repeating rhythm of wide lots facing Mermaid Avenue, occasionally broken up by a small arterial street. This rhythm and open space present a calming tranquillity when navigating the area. These local distributor roads direct movement to the waterfront, which affirms the value of Emu Point as a sea-side settlement and tourism accommodation destination.

Morphology's challenges to retaining character

Due to the large lot size of Emu Point, subdivision is currently permissible for approximately 100 dwellings in Emu Point. If Emu Point were to densify through subdivision, the increase in density may reduce its openness, and impact Emu Point's seaside feel. The City of Albany Local Planning Strategy does not list Emu Point as a site for future development. Development guidance and control mechanisms would be important to be in place should this change.

Streetscape

Streets, verges and trees

Overview

The streetscape of Emu Point is wide with varying degrees of formality. All public roads in Emu Point are bitumen paved. The kerb treatments vary, and it is common for them to be absent in lower order streets such as parts of Burgess Street and Roe Parade. It is also common for vehicle

exits to be serviced with informal sandy crossovers. Overhead transmission lines extend across the area, mostly obscured by surrounding trees and vegetation.

Footpaths

Footpaths compliment Mermaid Avenue, the main road of Emu Point leading to the eastern end at the Emu Point Café. This path continues along the foreshore and connects to Mermaid Avenue via Boongarrie Street and Medcalf Parade. Footpaths also connect to the northeastern side, linking pedestrians to Swarbrick Street from Mermaid Avenue via Miller Street. The remainder of Emu Point does not have formal footpaths and requires pedestrians to share lower hierarchy roads with vehicles.



Figure 6. Pedestrians sharing access with vehicles - Corner of Cunningham Street and Burgess Street. Photograph taken by authors.



Figure 7. Pedestrian footpath on Mermaid Avenue. Photograph taken by authors.

Street verges

The generous depth of the City-owned verges in Emu Point contributes to a sense of openness and continuation of the natural environment – verges typically ranging from five to nine metres, from the road to the lot boundary. Street and verge parking is notably out of character for Emu Point. This creates uninterrupted and safer pedestrian shared ownership on the roads without footpaths.



Figure 8. Large open street verges in Emu Point. Photograph taken by the authors.



Figure 9. Consistency of building line setback and street trees are a strong characteristic. Diagram prepared by authors.



Figure 10. Minimal intervention to the roadway and bus stop, and vehicles kept away from verges, maintains the coastal character and pedestrian scale of the area. Image sourced from Google Street View 2025.

Street trees

Our survey has identified 175 street trees on City-owned verges fronting private residential lots which has been mapped below in Figure 11. The heatmap analysis shows that there is consistent street tree canopy coverage in all areas but the northwest. The southeast area towards the point has the largest concentration of street trees.

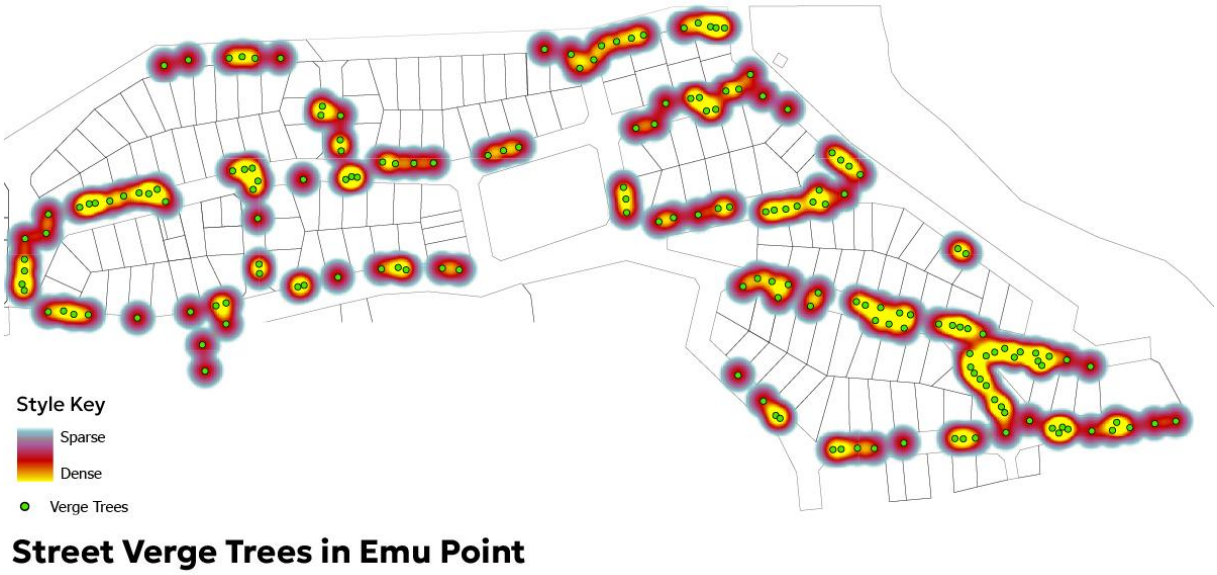


Figure 11. Visual Map of the street trees on City of Albany verges that front properties. Map prepared by authors.

Streetscape's contribution to character

Comparatively low levels of vehicular traffic in Emu Point, supported by reduced speed limit controls, typically at 40km/h, has enabled roads to remain comfortably shared amongst vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists, and contributes to a lifestyle that encourages leisurely walking and cycling. Street trees that line the verges provide spaces with ample shade and support the diverse ecology of the area. Where sandy crossovers and accessways have been prioritised over kerb treatments and hardscaping, the relaxed 'seaside holiday' atmosphere is preserved and contributes to a pedestrian-centric urban character.

Dwelling setbacks and street interaction

Overview

Emu Point dwelling setbacks range from six metres on Mermaid Avenue, and up to as much as 17 metres on access streets adjacent to bushland. The settlement is generally flat with dwellings at road level. The impact of the built form to the streetscape is related closely to the quantity of vegetation in the setback area, rather than the depth of the setback itself. Carports and garages are predominantly located to the side of the dwelling and are set back to the main building line.

The presence of street fencing and/or walls is uncommon, but where applied is typically of an open picket or a wire style, and are of low height, presenting open views along the street. Natural screening planting is more likely to occur. Solid fences like brick or limestone are generally out of character but do occur with dwellings constructed of brick.

Dwellings in Emu Point encourage passive surveillance of the front yard, and street engagement through the application of verandas, porches and balconies facing to the street and green spaces. Letterboxes vary in structure with large, rendered brick letterboxes only typical of the more contemporary dwelling styles.



Figure 12. 7 Hunter Street Emu Point: passive surveillance, no fencing and screen planting. Image sourced from Google Street View 2025.

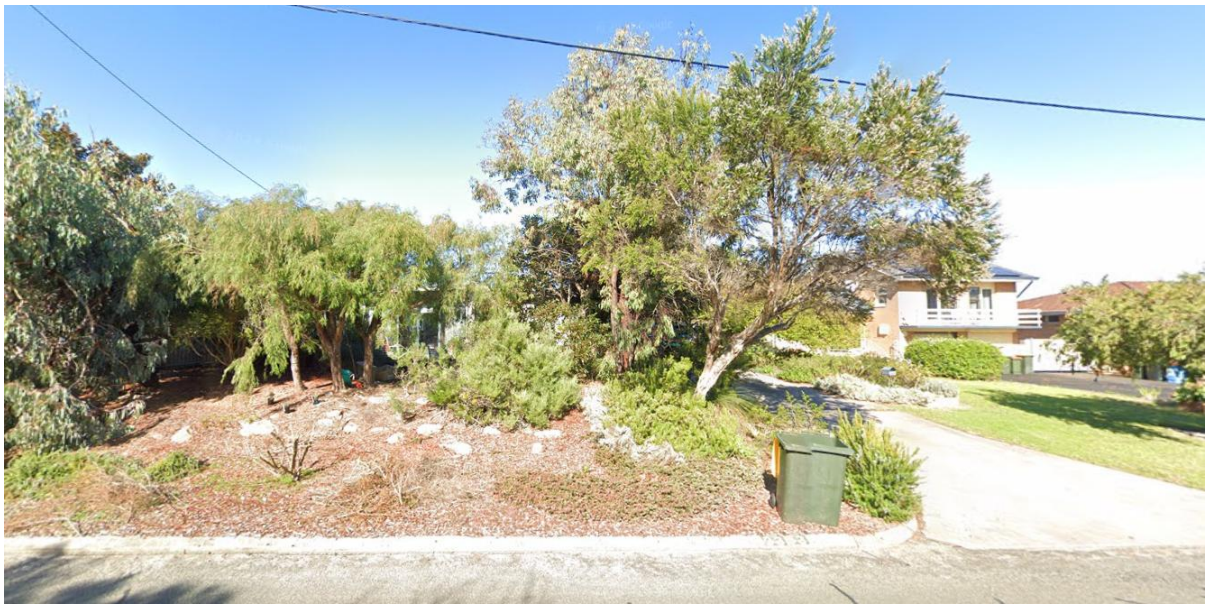


Figure 13. 33 Swarbrick Street, Emu Point with a strong natural frontage between dwelling and street. Image sourced from Google stream view 2025.

Dwelling setback and interaction's contribution to character

The transition between public and private is connected through vegetation. Vegetation of the adjacent reserves is often a continuous entity, seamlessly flowing along street verges, and into the front setbacks of private lots. While differentiation exists across built forms, the vegetative character in the front setback plays an important role as a buffer, obscuring dwelling bulk from the street view. Habitable spaces and verandas opening to the street, and the lack of front fencing are all elements that contribute toward maintaining openness and engagement with the street.

Dwelling form and style

Dwelling massing

Overview

The average site coverage across dwellings in Emu Point today is approximately 281 m^2. Dwellings built before 1954 have an average site coverage of approximately 126 m^2. This has increased by 178 per cent when the dwellings of 194 are compared to the dwellings built between 2000 and 2025 (351 m^2). This analysis includes the active habitable spaces of veranda and patio coverage but does not include carports. The 351 m^2 average of Emu Point is 70 m^2 more than the Western Australia average residential coverage of approximately 278.4 m^2 [4]. This increase in building site cover is afforded by the lots being 700 m2 larger on average than new lots in Western Australia.

Our survey indicates that 86 per cent of the residential dwellings in Emu Point have a height of one story, with the remaining 14 per cent (11 dwellings) being two storeys. [5] It appears that all dwellings two-story or more were built post 1980.

The shape of the dwelling site coverage has become increasingly varied since 1954, which was predominantly square in shape – typical of weatherboard cottages. The introduction of the mid-century modern skillion roof and gables from 1950 onwards adjusted the profile to include rectangular massing. This was then further varied through the mass use of the hip & valley roof from 1960 to today, which has introduced an array of L-shaped building configurations and irregular rectangles (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Examples of the diversity of dwelling massing in Emu Point created by contemporary developments. Images sourced from Google Street View 2025.

Dwelling massing's contribution to character

The predominantly one storey dwelling massing contributes to Emu Point's low-density, quiet atmosphere. With only 11 two storey dwellings, the view of the settlement as you approach from

[4] Average W.A. residential coverage calculated by taking increasing W.A. residential floor area average (232m^2) by 20%.

[5] 2 Hunter Street is a three-story development that appears to be beyond the Deem-To-Comply of 10m, by being 10-11m in height. This is a similar height to other gable two storey dwellings in Emu Point.

Emu Point Drive is one of treescape, not building lines. This immediately sets the tone of Emu Point as a respectful settlement nestled within the trees. This is then further illustrated when driving through the settlement by the dwellings that sit separated comfortably from neighbours within their respective lots, not up against the boundaries.



Figure 15. The approach to Emu Point from the main road of Emu Point Drive. Image sourced from Google Street View 2025.



Figure 16. Image showing the open space between dwellings, contributing to the low-density feel. Image sourced from Google Street View 2025.

Dwelling massing's challenges to retaining character

There are two key massing challenges to retaining Emu Points character. The first is maintaining the low-density feel while meeting future capacity needs. Developments at two storeys have allowed Emu Point to remain nestled within the trees but this may be impacted if development to three storeys is approved. The second challenge is maintaining the open feel through lot boundary setbacks. Developments within the last century have pushed dwellings to the boundary to maximise internal floor area. This is particularly present on the main thoroughfare of Mermaid Drive, which has resulted in a gradual loss of the open feel along this strip.

Dwelling styles

Overview

The built form aesthetic of Emu Point is eclectic, reflecting more than 50 years of architectural evolution. The settlement features a diverse mix of styles outlined in Table 2. The ubiquitous Western Australia postwar brick style is the highest frequently occurring style and it spans dwellings built from 1950 to today. Characterised by its cream and brown brick exterior with tiled roofs as seen ubiquitously across the State, it makes up for 41 per cent of the dwellings in Emu Point. Unlike other suburbs that have been dominated by this style, Emu Point has managed to preserve and develop a significant number of other dwelling styles of note. These include Weatherboard Cottages (9%), Postwar Fibro (6%) and Mid-Century Modern (10%).

Table 2. Dwelling Styles of Emu Point

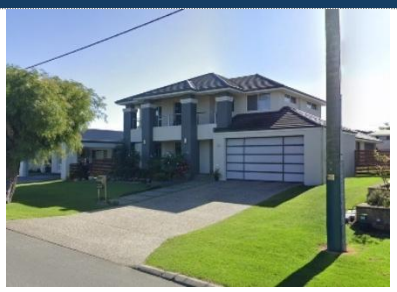
	Vernacular Farmhouse	Weatherboard
Example	 *Figure 17. Vernacular Farmhouse on 5 Burgess Street*	 *Figure 18. 16 Cunningham Street*
Count	1	13
Decade(s) Built	1910, 1920	1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950
Scale	Single storey	Single storey
Building Features	Surrounding Veranda	Front Veranda
Primary Facade Material	Asbestos Panelling	Weatherboard cladding
Secondary Façade Material	Usually, one consistent material	Usually, one consistent material
Primary Façade Colour	White, teal, blue	White, cream, blue
Secondary Façade Colour	Usually, one consistent colour	Usually, one consistent colour
Roof Type	Dutch Gable Roof	Pyramid Roof
Roof Material	Galvanised iron roofing	Galvanised iron roofing
Roof Colour	Silver	Silver or white

	Postwar Fibro	Mid-century - Modern
Example		

	Figure 19. 16 Bedwell Street	*Figure 20. 4 Miller St*
Count	10	14
Decade(s) Built	1940, 1950, 1960	1950, 1960, 1970
Scale	Single storey	Single Storey
Building Features	Front Veranda	Floor to Ceiling Windows
Primary Facade Material	Fibrocement Panelling or Asbestos Panelling	Brick or Plaster
Secondary Façade Material	Usually, one consistent material	Stone
Primary Façade Colour	White, cream, blue, teal	White or cream or brown
Secondary Façade Colour	Usually, one consistent colour	Stone (Brown, Orange or Grey)
Roof Type	Skillion Roof or Flat Roof or Hip & Valley	Skillion
Roof Material	Corrugated Metal, Tile	Corrugated Metal, Tile
Roof Colour	Silver (Metal) or Brown or Red (Tile)	Silver (Metal) or Brown or Red (Tile)

	Postwar Brick	**90s Mix & Match**
Example	 *Figure 21. 21 Swarbrick Street*	 *Figure 22. 5 Hunter Street*
Count	64	5
Decade(s) Built	1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020	1990
Scale	Single Storey	Double Storey
Building Features	Small patio	Large Veranda across first and second storey on front facade
Primary Facade Material	Brick or Plaster (rare)	Brick or Plaster
Secondary Façade Material	Usually, one consistent material	Timber

Primary Façade Colour	Brown, orange brown, orange, red, cream	Cream, White
Secondary Façade Colour	Usually, one consistent colour	Timber
Roof Type	Hip & Valley (Most common)	Gable and/or Hip & Valley
Roof Material	Tile	Corrugated Metal, Tile
Roof Colour	Brown	Silver, Grey, Orange

	Contemporary Modern	Plaster Modern
Example	 *Figure 23.8 Miller Street*	 *Figure 24. 21 Swarbrick Street*
Count	23	10
Decade(s) Built	2000, 2010, 2020	2000, 2010, 2020
Scale	Single Storey, Double Storey	Single Storey, Double Storey
Building Features		Front Facing Garage
Primary Facade Material	Weatherboard or Plaster	Plaster
Secondary Façade Material	Timber or Brick	N/A
Primary Façade Colour	White or cream or Grey	White, Cream, Grey
Secondary Façade Colour	Timber, Brick Red	White, Cream, Grey
Roof Type	Skillion, Gable	Hip & Valle
Roof Material	Metal Sheeting, Tile	Sheet Metal, Tile
Roof Colour	Silver (Metal), Navy, Black	Navy, Black

Location and patterns in dwelling styles

The housing styles across Emu Point have been mapped in their entirety in Figure 25. The contributing and non-contributing styles have been identified and mapped in Figure 26 and Figure 27. The styles that contribute to the character of Emu Point are: Contemporary Modern, Mid-Century Modern, Fibro, Farmhouse, Weatherboard, and select dwellings that do not conform to a specific style. These contributing styles have been identified utilising character elements outlined in the paragraphs below.

The mapping of non-contributing styles shows the micro place character of Emu Point. There is a higher concentration of brick generic to the north-west of Emu Point. Contrastingly, the south-east has a lower concentration of this style preferencing an eclectic mix of mid-century, weatherboard and contemporary modern.

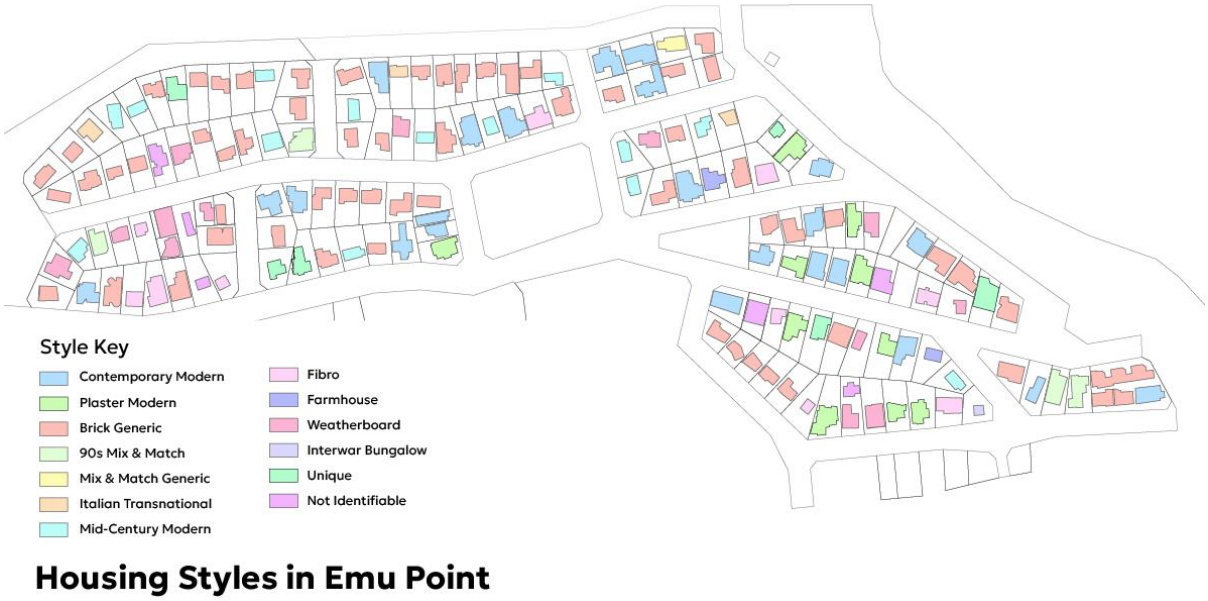


Figure 25. Housing Styles in Emu Point mapped by category. Map illustration prepared by the authors.

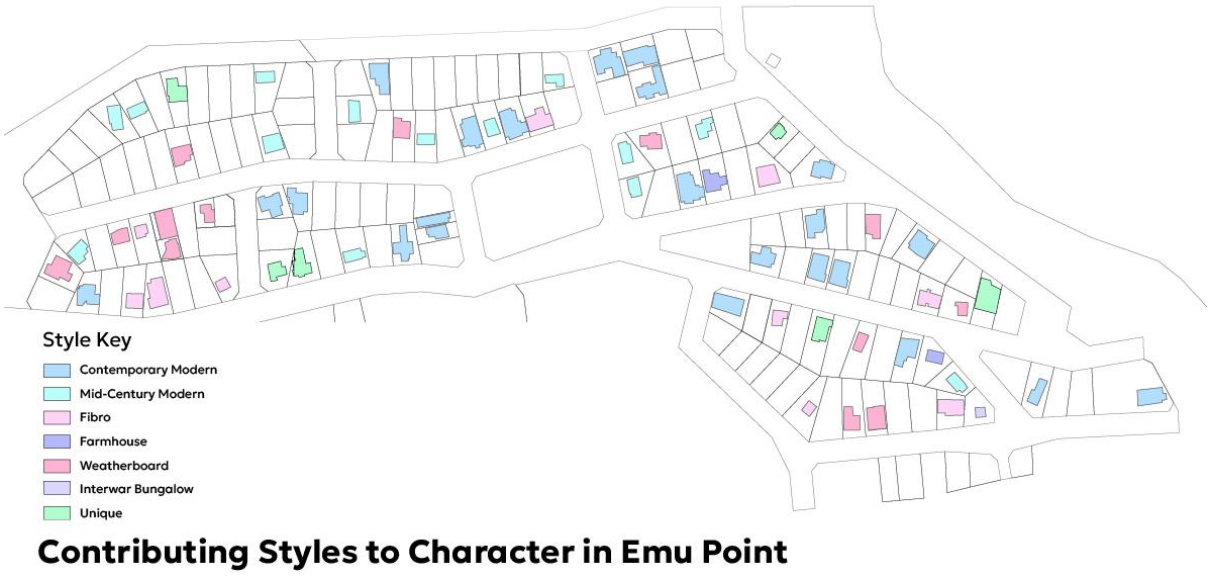


Figure 26. Contributing Styles to Character in Emu Point. Map illustration prepared by the authors.

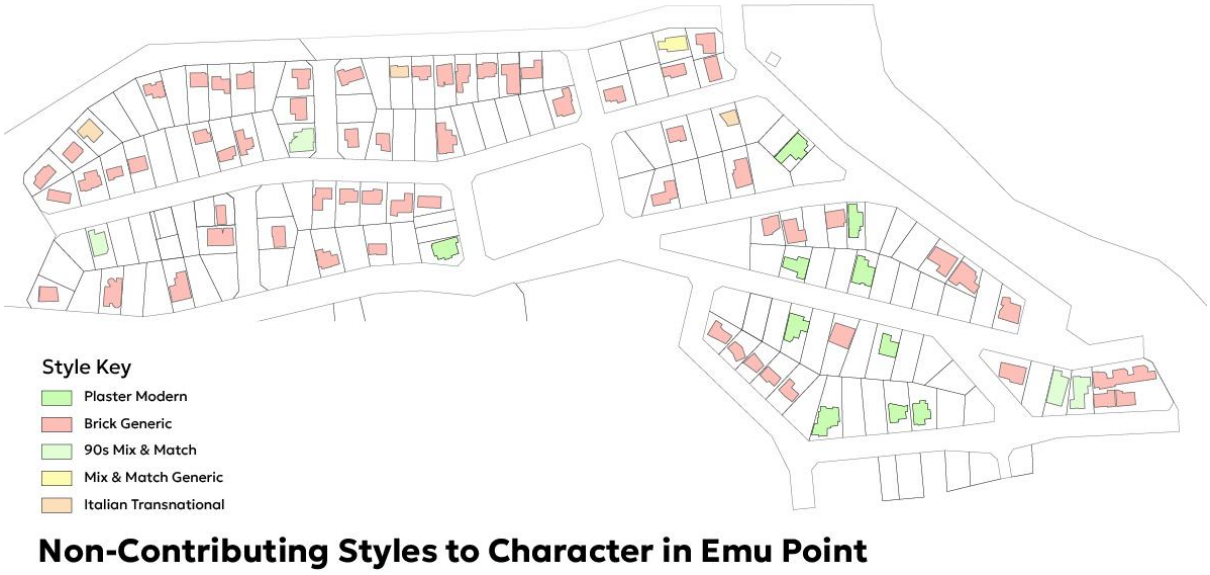


Figure 27. Non-Contributing Styles to Character in Emu Point. Map illustration prepared by the authors.

Dwelling style's contribution to character

The eclectic range of dwelling styles in Emu Point contributes significantly to its character, demonstrating that the settlement has grown organically through the decades, rather than as a point in time land release. Nearly every Western Australian dwelling style is present within Emu Point as residents built and renovated styles to their preference and across different time periods. The grouping and rhythm of styles have also been broken up as new developments have been demolished and built to the contemporary style of their time. This results in each street being unique.

Dwelling features, materials and colours

Brick is the most common façade material in Emu Point at 51 per cent, then both plaster and weatherboard are tied at 18 per cent. The most common colour is white at 40 per cent and then cream-brown at 29 per cent. The standard brick colours of red, brown, and tan make up 20 per cent collectively. Hip and Valley are the most common roof type at 40 per cent, followed by Gable at 30 per cent and a combination of both at 13 per cent. The mid-century modern skillion and low gable roof types then follow at seven per cent each. Roofing material is evenly split between Tile (50%), and Metal Sheeting[6] (50%). Silver is the most common roof colour at 19.61 per cent, followed by brown at 15.69 per cent, then red at 13.7 per cent. Black, dark-grey, and navy combined had a collective total of 16.35 per cent.

Garages were present at 48 per cent of dwellings, with no formal parking structure the second most prevalent option at 32 per cent. Carports then followed third at 20 per cent of dwellings. Verandas in varying form at the front of dwellings appear in 49.6 per cent of dwellings and occur across all styles and decades of development.

Character feature: Light colour palette

The lighter colour palette of white (40%) combined is an archetype colour of seaside settlements and is a significant contributor to the character of Emu Point. The lighter colour palette integrates with the abundance of surrounding green trees and vegetation, creating a vibrant and inviting character.



Figure 28. Dwelling in Emu Point with a white weatherboard facade. Image sourced from Google Street View 2025.

Character feature: Brick and weatherboard

Emu Point uniquely deviates from seaside archetype by incorporating Western Australia's brick industry. With two thirds Emu Point of dwellings painted white or cream, this brick pattern blends

[6] Metal sheeting includes Corrugated Metal (45.45%) and Standing Seam (3.9%).

in within the rhythm of weatherboard and plaster (Figure 28, Figure 29). The weatherboard of Emu Point is additionally a character feature as the materiality provides a rural feel to the settlement.



Figure 29. Weatherboard and Fibro dwelling on Cunningham Street, Emu Point. Image sourced from Google Street View 2025.

Character Feature: Carports and uncovered vehicle storage

Within Emu Point, 52 per cent of dwellings either have a side-loaded carport or uncovered vehicle storage. This contributes to Emu Points informal open feel character as the lack of street facing garage door affords visual permeability to the street (Figure 29, Figure 30). The open approach encourages chance opportunities for pedestrians and residents to engage and interact, compared to the closed street facing garage doors (Figure 30, Figure 31).



Figure 30. Open carport of dwelling in Emu Point. Image sourced from Google Street View 2025.



Figure 31. Closed garage door of Dwelling in Emu Point. Image sourced from Google Street View 2025.

Contributing feature: Verandas and street facing gables

The verandas seen in Emu Point contribute to the settlement's character and is a preferred build form feature as they enable passive street interaction and a slower rural-ness atmosphere. A unique feature of Emu Point is the verandas across multiple styles and decades of development, including contemporary. As shown in Figure 32 and Figure 33, these verandas allow for shaded seating that create opportunities for street engagement between residents and street pedestrians. The inclusion of the verandas additionally projects a ruralness and connection to the settlement history of weatherboard and fisherman cottages



Figure 32. Contemporary dwelling in Emu Point with a street facing veranda and seating. Image sourced from Google Street View 2025.



Figure 33. Contemporary dwelling in Emu Point with a street facing veranda and seating. Google Street View 2025.

Street facing gables are an additional feature that contributes to the seaside informal character of Emu Point. They are a feature typically seen in older styles of dwellings and contemporary rural farmhouses. Front facing gables have the benefit of being easily integrated with the ubiquitous hip and valley roof type seen in Western Australia.



Figure 34. Contemporary dwelling in Emu Point with a street facing veranda and gable. Photo sourced from Google Street View 2025.

Contributing Feature: Skillion roofs

Skillion roofs are a contributing character element of Emu Point that owe their origins to the settlements many mid-century modern dwellings. This is a persistent feature that has continued to be incorporated in contemporary developments today (Figure 35).



Figure 35. Skillion roof of contemporary dwelling in Emu Point. Photo sourced from Google Street View 2025.

Summary: The character of Emu Place

Emu Point is characterised by a relaxed holiday atmosphere, with its low-density housing contained within between the seaside and nature reserves. Its position at the end of Emu Point Drive means there is no through traffic, creating a quiet environment that attracts only destination-based vehicles.

Peppermint trees line the verges, and vegetation flows seamlessly into private front setbacks, blurring the boundary between public and private spaces. Informal sandy crossovers and accessways are preferred over kerbs and hardstand surfaces, reinforcing the natural character and supporting local ecology.

Generous setbacks and wide verges provide shade and foster a human-scaled environment that encourages walking and cycling, with direct pedestrian links to the foreshore and Oyster Harbour. The streetscape feels open and welcoming, due to verandas and habitable spaces facing the street, and the absence of front fencing, which preserves the area's informal, coastal character.

Character retention recommendations

Character retention outcomes and objectives

Desired development outcomes

Table 3. Desired development outcomes for retaining the character of Emu Point.

No.	Development Outcomes
1	Retention and conservation of the low-density built form, tree canopy coverage, landscape character and informal seaside feel of Emu Point.
2	Retention and conservation of early to mid-nineteenth century weatherboard and 'fisherman shack' dwellings.
3	Retention of and conservation of mid to late nineteenth century modernist dwellings.

Key Characteristics

Table 4. Key Characteristics of Emu Points character.

Characteristic	Details
Open space feel	The abundance of open space gives Emu Point a sense of spaciousness and breathing room. This openness is achieved through a low site coverage relative to lot size, generous setbacks from streets and neighbouring properties, minimal use of fences and walls, and building heights that remain comfortably within the surrounding tree canopy.
High tree density and landscaping	Emu Point's extensive tree canopy creates a lush, green environment that complements the light, reflective colour palette of its dwellings, resulting in a harmonious and vibrant streetscape.
Seaside and mid-century modern built form	The many retained weatherboard and 'fisherman shack' dwellings, along with mid-century modern homes, give Emu Point a distinctive historic character. Elements of these styles have been thoughtfully integrated into contemporary developments, and this approach should continue to be encouraged.

Informal infrastructure	The absence of kerbing, formal footpaths, and hardstand crossovers is a defining feature of Emu Point's informal infrastructure, and preserving this characteristic is essential to maintaining its relaxed coastal identity.

Design Objectives

Table 5. Design objectives to be achieved in retaining character.

Design Objective	Details
Demolition	Original character features visible from the street should be retained wherever possible. If demolishment is required, they should be reinstated. Original materials that contribute to character should be reused where feasible.
Open space / site coverage	Building site coverage should be minimised to maintain the low-density appearance of Emu Point.
Street setbacks	Street setback should be maximised and reflect = the surrounding streetscape to reduce visual bulk.
Garage setbacks	Garages and carports should not be located within the front setback. They should align with or be set back behind the main dwelling to minimize visual impact.
Lot boundary setbacks	Maximise lot boundary setbacks to maintain comfortable spacing between dwellings.
Street walls and fences	Street walls and fences should be designed to minimise visual bulk and through form and permeability, preserving Emu Point's open-space character.
Building heights	Buildings should remain within the surrounding tree canopy and avoid dominating the skyline.
Tree canopy	Trees should be retained where possible and planted in the low-canopy street verge areas identified in Figure 11.
Landscaping and impervious surfaces	Impervious surfaces should be minimised between dwellings and the street; encourage grass and other permeable materials.
Dwelling colours and materials	Use light colours (white or light cream) for street-facing facades. Favor weatherboard or painted brick. Roofs should ideally be corrugated metal; if darker metal is required for energy compliance, angle the roof to reduce visibility and use Shale Grey where possible
Dwelling Design Features	Include verandahs to promote street engagement. Incorporate front-facing gables and skillion roofs to reflect Emu Point's historic character.
Infrastructure	Maintain minimal street curbing in upgrades. Provide informal pedestrian tracks along one side of higher-order roads with direct access to the foreshore and Oyster Harbour.

Recommended Control Mechanisms and Priorities

No.	Control Mechanism	Details
1	**Deem-To-Comply (D-T-C) Precinct Structure Plan controls**	Develop amendments and replacements to the R-Code D-T-C provisions that account for Emu Points unique character. These are incorporated into the Precinct Structure Plan.
2	**Tree Retention Policy**	Develop a due-regard Local Planning Policy that sets the considerations for assessing the removal of trees that meet protection requirements.
3	**Character Area Development Policy**	Develop due-regard guidance on preferred built form and streetscape outcomes to retain the character of Emu Point.
4	**Incentive FastTrack Programs**	Develop and implement a Fastrack program to prioritise the assessment of applications that meet the Character Area Development Policy.
5.	**Local Housing Objectives**	Develop augmentations of the R-Codes Design Principles that expand on and clarify matters relating to character. These are incorporated into a local planning policy.

Recommended Deem-To-Comply Precinct Structure Plan Controls

Overview, benefits and limitations

Category	Details
Overview	Develop amendments to the R-Code D-T-C provisions that account for Emu Points unique character. This will encourage proposals to align with character of Emu Point if a D-T-C pathway is desired. These replacement provisions are incorporated into the Precinct Structure Plan.
Benefits	The *Residential Design Codes* Volume 1 (R-Codes Volume 1) 3.0 Local Planning Frameworks allow Precinct Structure Plans the power to amend specific Deem-To-Comply provisions if they meet the objectives and outcomes *of State Planning Policy 7.2 Precinct Design* (SPP 7.2). SPP 7.2 Outcome 1: > The precinct design responds to and enhances the distinctive characteristics of a local area, contributing to a sense of place. New development is integrated into its setting and responds positively to the intended future character of an area.
Limitations	The R-Codes Volume 1 do not provide Precinct Structure Plans with the power to amend or augment Design Principles for the non-D-T-C discretionary pathway.

Recommended Deem-To-Comply provisions

The R-Codes section *3.2.3* outlines which provisions of the R-Codes D-T-C can be replaced without requiring approval from the Western Australian Planning Commission. This section has outlined the recommended D-T-C provisions, split into their respective categories of requiring approval.

Table 6. Recommended Deem-To-Comply provisions.

Category	D-T-C Provisions (WAPC Approval Required)	Current R-Codes D-T-C Provisions
5.1.4 Open Space	**1:** The open space for single dwellings is to be a minimum of 65 per cent* and 50 per cent for grouped and multiple dwellings. *Replace 65 per cent with an appropriately identified percentage that preserve open space. Due to the median lot size, it is suggested that approximately 70 per cent will be required to be effective.	**C4:** Open space provided in accordance with Table B 50 per cent of site for R20.
5.1.3 Lot Boundary setbacks	**1:** Buildings are to be setback from lot boundaries by 3.5m* min. In cases where a common property access way serves a rear lot between the dwelling and the lot boundary, the building is allowed to be setback nil to the access way. *Replace 3.5m with an appropriately identified distance to preserve open space between dwellings.	**C3.1:** Buildings which are set back in accordance with the following provisions, subject to any additional measures in other elements of the R-Codes: i. buildings set back from lot boundaries in accordance with Table B and Tables 2a and 2b.

Control	D-T-C Provisions (WAPC Approval Not Required)	Current R-Codes D-T-C Provisions
5.1.2 Street Setback	**1:** The primary street setback is to be calculated by averaging the setback of the five adjoining properties, either side of the proposed development.[7] **2:** For the purpose of averaging, the primary street setback is to be measured from the street alignment to the nearest wall of the dwelling excluding porches, verandahs, carports and balconies.	**C2.1:** Buildings, excluding carports, porches, balconies, verandahs, or equivalent, set back from the primary street boundary: i. accordance with Table B (6m for R20).
5.1.3 Lot Boundary setbacks Remove C3.2.	**1:** Boundary walls may be built behind the street setback in accordance within the following limits and subject to the overshadowing provisions of clause 5.4.2 and Figure Series 11 of the R-Codes: i. where the wall abuts an existing or simultaneously constructed boundary wall of equal or greater dimension; or ii. where both the subject site and the affected adjoining site are created in a plan of subdivision submitted concurrently for the proposed development, and the boundary walls are interfacing and of equal dimension.	**C3.2** Boundary walls may be built behind the street setback (specified in Table B and in accordance with clauses 5.1.2 and 5.2.1), within the following limits and subject to the overshadowing provisions of clause 5.4.2 and Figure Series 11: i. where the wall abuts an existing or simultaneously constructed boundary wall of equal or greater dimension; or ii. In areas coded R20 and R25, walls not higher than 3.5m, up to a maximum length of the greater of 9m or one-third the length of the balance of the site boundary behind the front setback, to up to two site boundaries; or

[7] *Street Setback provisions have been sourced from the City of Vincent Built Form Policy No. 7.1.1. 5.1 Street Setbacks (Primary and Secondary) as presented on the 14th of November 2025.*

		iii. in areas coded R30 to R40, walls not higher than 3.5m for two-thirds the length of the balance of the site boundary behind the front setback, to up to two site boundaries; or iv. where both the subject site and the affected adjoining site are created in a plan of subdivision submitted concurrently for the proposed development, and the boundary walls are interfacing and of equal dimension.
5.2.4 Street walls and fences Remove C4.1& C4.2.	**1:** Street walls, street fences and gates are to be of a style and materials compatible with those of the dwelling on site and/or walls, fences and gates of the immediate surrounding area. 2: Street walls, fences and gates within the primary street setback area are to be as follows: i. Maximum height of 0.5 metres above the natural ground level. ii. Maximum height of decorative capping to be 0.6 metres above the natural ground level. iii. Maximum height of solid portion of wall to be 0.5 metres above adjacent footpath level and are to be **visually permeable*** above 0.3m. *visually permeable is per the R-Codes definition	**C4.1**: Front fences within the primary street setback area that are visually permeable above 1.2m of natural ground level, measured from the primary street side of the front fence (refer Figure 12). **C4.2**: Solid pillars that form part of front fences not more than 1.8m above natural ground level provided the horizontal dimension of the pillars is not greater than 400mm by 400mm and pillars are separated by visually permeable fencing in line with C4.1 (refer Figure 12)
5.2.1 Setback of carports and garages Remove C1.1, C1.2, C1.3, C1.4.	**1:** Garages are to be setback a minimum of 500mm* behind the predominant dwelling line (excluding any porch, veranda or balcony or the like)[8] for both primary and secondary streets. **2:** Garages and carports must match the existing dwellings predominant colour, scale and materials and must be complementary and subservient to the dwelling. *Replace 500mm with an appropriately identified setback that reduces the visual bulk of garages.	**C1.1:** Garages set back 4.5m from the primary street except that the setback may be reduced: i. in accordance with Figure 8b where the garage adjoins a dwelling provided the garage is at least 0.5m behind the dwelling alignment (excluding any porch, veranda or balcony); or ii. to 3m where the garage allows vehicles to be parked parallel to the street. The wall parallel to the street must include openings. **C1.2** Carports set back in accordance with the primary street setback requirements of clause 5.1.2 C2.1(i), except that the setback may be reduced by up to 50 per cent of the minimum setback stated in Table B where: i. the width of the carport does not exceed 60 per cent of the frontage.

[8] *Garage provisions have been sourced from the City of Vincent Built Form Policy No. 7.1.1. 5.4 5.4 Garages and Carports, as presented on the 14th of November 2025.*

		ii. the construction allows an unobstructed view between the dwelling and the street, right-of-way or equivalent; and iii. the carport roof pitch, colours and materials are compatible with the dwelling. (Refer to Figure 8a) **C1.3** Garages and carports built up to the boundary abutting a communal street or right-of-way which is not the primary or secondary street boundary for the dwelling, with manoeuvring space of at least 6m, located immediately in front of the opening to the garage or carport and permanently available. **C1.4** Garages and carports set back 1.5m from a secondary street.
5.2.2 Garage width Amend C2.	**1:** A garage door and its supporting structures (or a garage wall where a garage is aligned parallel to the street) facing the primary street is not to occupy more than 40 per cent of the length of the street facing predominant building line.	**C2:** A garage door and its supporting structures (or a garage wall where a garage is aligned parallel to the street) facing the primary street is not to occupy more than 50 per cent of the frontage at the setback line as viewed from the street. This may be increased up to 60 per cent where an upper floor or balcony extends for more than half the width of the garage and its supporting structures (or a garage wall where a garage is aligned parallel to the street) and the entrance to the dwelling is clearly visible from the primary street.
5.3.2 Landscaping Amend C2.2. C2.1 to Remain.	**C2.2** Landscaping of single houses, grouped dwellings and multiple dwellings to include the following: i. Single house and grouped dwelling are to have a minimum of three trees and associated planting areas, and a minimum tree planting area of 4x4m. Multiple dwellings are to have a minimum of three trees for a site area up of up to 1000m^2. For sites greater than 1000m^2, four trees are required. The minimum tree planting area for all site areas is 4x4m. ii. Landscaping of the street setback area, with no more than 30 per cent of this area to consist of impervious surfaces	**C2.2** Landscaping of single houses, grouped dwellings and multiple dwellings to include the following: i. the minimum number of trees and associated planting areas in the table below (1 Small Tree); and ii. landscaping of the street setback area, with no more than 50 per cent of this area to consist of impervious surfaces.
Building Height	Building height controls have not been included because the current Residential Design Code D-T-C provisions set adequate height limits. For dwellings within Emu Point (category B), the maximum height of walls is 7m, with the maximum height of gable, skillion and concealed roofs as 8m, and Hipped and pitched roof as 10m.	

Tree Retention Policy development and treet Tree Management Policy Amendments

Overview, benefits and limitations

Category	Details
Overview	A local planning Tree Retention Policy should be developed that sets the provisions for what is to be given due Regard when the removal of a **regulated tree** is proposed in a Development Application.
Benefits	The demolition of a tree now constitutes development and requires development approval. A tree retention policy will allow due regard to be provided.
Limitations	Policy is due regard. The strength of tree retention policies has not yet been tested in the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT). The demolition of trees now constitutes development. If no other residential works are proposed, this does not constitute residential development. Therefore, amended D-T-C tree minimums do not apply.

Amendments to Policy 1.56 Street Tree Management Policy (CoA Advice)

The following amendments to the Street Tree Management Policy are to advise the City of Albany and not the Precinct Structure Plan.

Control	Provision	Current R-Codes D-T-C Provisions
Verge tree replacement	3.3 Approval to remove street tree/s will be subject to the following conditions:[9] i. the landowner is responsible for any costs associated with the removal of the tree/s and any remediation works required. ii. for each verge tree removed, it is to be replaced by at **least two (2) verge trees,** subject to site availability and services. iii. replacement tree/s should be an approved species and are to be maintained and watered for a minimum of 2 years; and iv. any other conditions at the discretion of the City	i. Additional tree protection clauses requiring verge trees removed be replaced elsewhere may be a possible amendment (subject to your external legal advice).

[9] *This provision has been sourced from the City of Fremantle Council Policy Crossovers clause 3.3, as depicted on the 14th of November 2025.*

Character Area Development Policy

Overview, benefits and limitations

Category	Details
Overview	Develop a due-regard Character Area Development Policy that provides applicants with guidance on preferred built form and streetscape outcomes in Emu Point. This policy should be modelled on the analysis and design objectives identified in this report. Development that aligns with this policy could be encouraged through the FastTrack program outlined below. To provide benchmarks for meeting eligibility, provisions of this policy should outline both the guiding principles and prescriptive requirements.
Benefits	This policy can include in-depth guidance and examples to assist applicants with meeting character benchmarks.
Limitations	Policy is due regard. The strength of tree retention policies has not yet been tested in the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT). The demolition of trees now constitutes development. If no other residential works are proposed, this does not constitute residential development. Therefore, amended D-T-C tree minimums do not apply.

FastTrack incentive programs

Category	Details
Overview	Develop FastTrack incentive programs that provide expedited development assessments to applications, which meet benchmark standards. This can be applied to both character benchmarks and tree canopy benchmarks. If certain thresholds of including prescriptive character elements are met, then they receive a fast-tracked assessment. If certain tree canopy benchmarks are met through either retaining or planting trees, then applications are eligible for fast-track assessment.
Benefits	Has been proven to work by the City of Vincent through their Green Track sustainability program.
Limitations	Programs are opt-in. Programs require resources to develop the program and ensure DA timeframes are achieved.

Design principles discretion assessment and Local Housing Objectives development

Category	Details
Overview	Assess the character retention effectiveness of R-Codes Design Principles when applied to development assessment scenarios. Then improve these principles through augmentation, by developing Local Housing Objectives that better retain the character of Emu Point.

Benefits	R-Codes Volume 1 *3.2.3c Local Housing Objectives* allows local government to augment the design principles of the R-Codes Volume 1 by providing local housing objectives. They are intended to guide judgements about the merits of proposals for any aspect of residential development.
Limitations	The extent of permitted augmentation is limited as it must align with the general objectives of the R-Codes. The weight of augmented Local Housing Objectives has less weight than Design Principles. The specific weighting is clause and context specific.

Example: Design principles discretion assessment

Control Area	Current Design Principles	Effectiveness in Retaining Character
	P4: *Front fences are low or restricted in height to permit passive surveillance (as per clause 5.2.3) and enhance streetscape (as per clause 5.1.2), with appropriate consideration to the need:* • *for attenuation of traffic impacts where the street is designated as a primary or district distributor or integrator arterial;* • *for necessary privacy or noise screening for outdoor living areas where the street is designated as a primary or district distributor or integrator arterial.*	*If the D-T-C is not met, The R-Codes Design principle P4 may not effectively allow sufficient discretion to require fences have height limit of 0.5m and 70 per cent permeability. This is due to the consideration only extending to permit passive surveillance and enhancement of streetscape. 50 per cent permeability would adequately achieve street surveillance.*
	P2 Visual connectivity between the dwelling and the streetscape should be maintained and the effect of the garage door on the streetscape should be minimised whereby the streetscape is not dominated by garage doors.	*If the D-T-C is not met, the R-Codes Design Principle P2 will allow sufficient discretion to retain the open character of Emu Point.*
	P2: Landscaping of open spaces that: i. contribute to the appearance and amenity of the development for the residents. ii. **contribute to the streetscape**; enhance security and safety for residents; iii. **contribute to positive local microclimates**, including provision of shade and solar access as appropriate; and iv. retains existing trees and/or provides new trees to maintain and enhance the tree canopy and local sense of place.	*If the D-T-C is not met because the minimum number of trees are not provided, the R-Codes Design Principles would allow sufficient discretion to refuse an application based on the proposals impact to the streetscape, the microclimate, and local sense of place.*