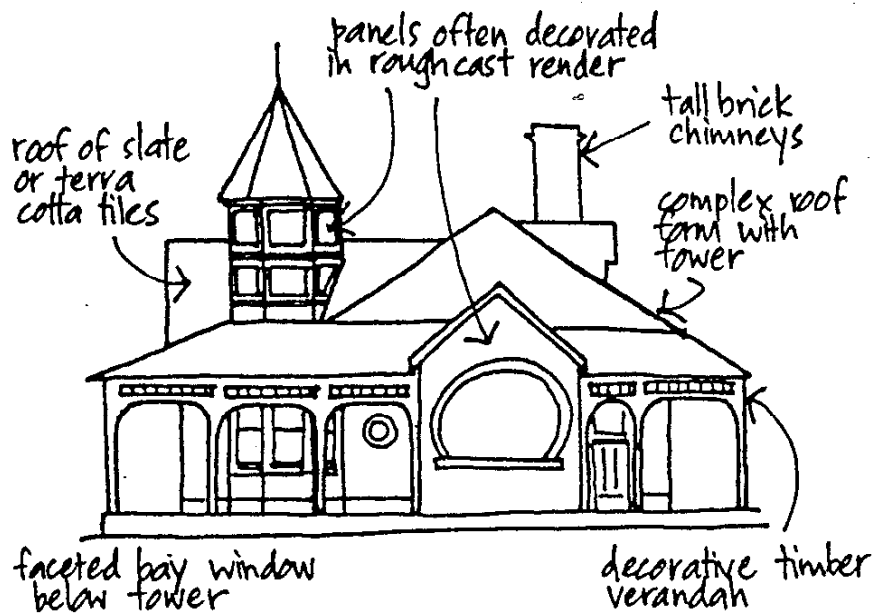


CONSERVATION
AND
ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES
FOR
RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES
IN
MOSMAN MUNICIPALITY



Grand Federation House
1895-1915

MOSMAN HERITAGE GUIDELINES

Introduction

These guidelines are intended to assist you in making a positive contribution to the conservation of Mosman's unique heritage.

Heritage conservation does not prevent owners doing work on their buildings. Owners of heritage houses are just as entitled to upgrade their buildings to modern standards. As with any building work, the Council's approval is required.

Proposals do need to be sensitive to the features which give individual items or areas their special heritage significance. In addition, the Council considers the same matters it would for any other development.

The Council will assist you in every way possible to reach a satisfactory design solution, one that meets your needs as well as the interests of conservation. The two objectives do not necessarily conflict. What is important is that you consult with the Council early. Council's Town Planners will be able to provide you with information and advice.

Your heritage asset

Mosman's heritage consists of both natural and built elements. Mosman's outstanding water views, bushland setting and interesting topography originally attracted builders of fine homes to the suburb. Conserving the local heritage will help ensure the area's desirability as a living environment continues in the future.

These guidelines recognise the value of your property. In conserving it you will also be maintaining its market worth. Valuation data collected by the Council clearly demonstrates that heritage is a benefit rather than a burden. There is evidence of continuing strong demand for older style houses, and most people in this market are prepared to pay a premium.

Constraints

How much freedom you have in making changes probably depends more upon the situation of your building, in relation to buildings on adjoining land. From a practical point of view heritage creates less of a constraint. Most heritage requirements are directed to cosmetic features. Controls are usually restricted to what people see from the street, or other public places. This rarely prevents people refurbishing interiors, altering rear areas, or adding on.

Good manners

Large houses on small allotments may cause problems. In single storey, closely built streets, a second storey addition may look out of place. Such additions are more likely to cause shadowing and overlooking problems for neighbours than rear ground level extensions.

Similarly, front garages and high walls can do great damage to the local streetscape. They break up the established pattern of fences, gardens and setbacks, as well as obscuring attractive older buildings. If the street



looks bad, all the houses in the street will be disadvantaged in the marketplace. The value of "improvements" made to individual houses may be more than cancelled by the damage done to the street as a whole.

You should respect the existing streetscape, and your neighbours.

These guidelines attempt to provide ideas for more acceptable alternatives, where constraints limit the options.

In all situations, where major alterations or additions are contemplated, you are strongly advised to seek professional assistance. You need someone who is a recognised expert in conservation, with a reputation for good design. A good designer will know the best way to give you what you want, without compromising your building's heritage value, or your neighbours' amenity.



"front garages and high walls can do great damage to the streetscape"

Heritage study and plan

In 1986 Mosman Council commissioned a heritage study of the Municipality. This study identified outstanding items and areas of heritage value which were nominated for special protection. A special local environmental plan was prepared for this purpose.

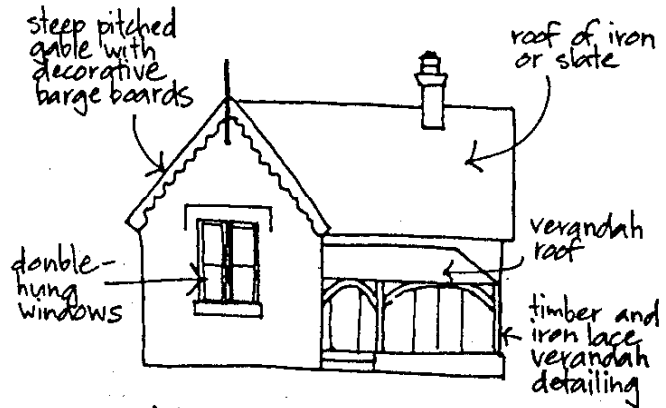
Other listings

Every heritage item on Mosman Council's list is of local heritage interest. There are also some items which have interest for the whole of New South Wales. Most of these have been given additional protection under the Heritage Act. Any changes affecting these items must have the approval of the NSW Heritage Council, as well as normal building and development approval from Mosman Council.

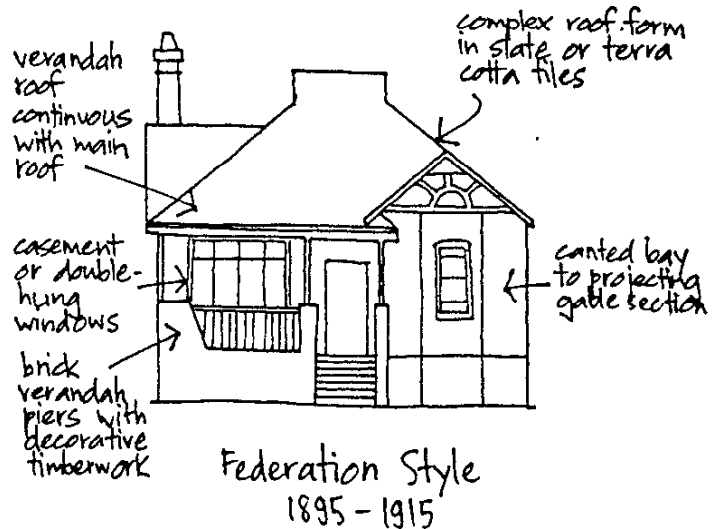
The restrictive requirements people associate with orders under the Heritage Act are not applicable to the vast majority of heritage items listed in the Council's local plan. There is nothing to prevent applications being made for alterations and additions. A listing simply means that the Council must take into account heritage attributes, in addition to the matters it would consider for any other application.

The heritage local plan

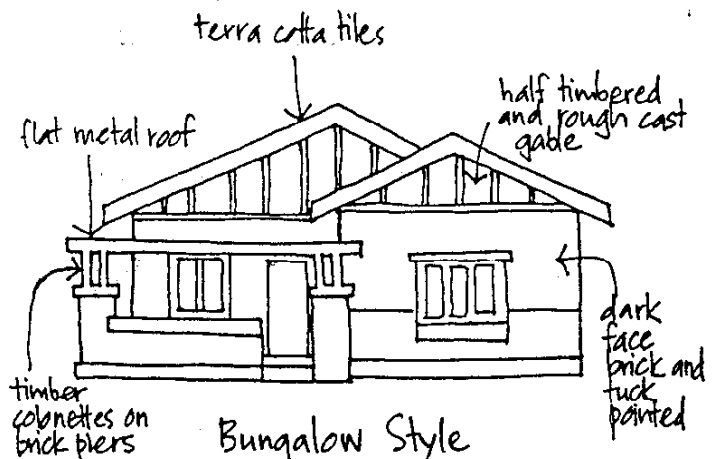
There are about one hundred individual houses on Mosman Council's heritage list. These include a small number of buildings surviving from the Victorian Period (c1871-1893). Listed items from the Federation Period (c1893-1915) are more numerous. There are also many houses from the Inter-War period (1915-1940). Generally Mosman's early twentieth century homes are quite distinguished, relative to those in other parts of Sydney. Mosman has many more large and ornate style residences, usually set in spacious gardens. In combination with Mosman's hilly landscape, this creates a unique local character.



Victorian Gothic Cottage
1870 - 1890



Federation Style
1895 - 1915



Bungalow Style
1920 - 1935

The heritage list also includes a number of distinctive buildings from later in this century. They represent more recent changes in the architectural style and social history of Mosman.

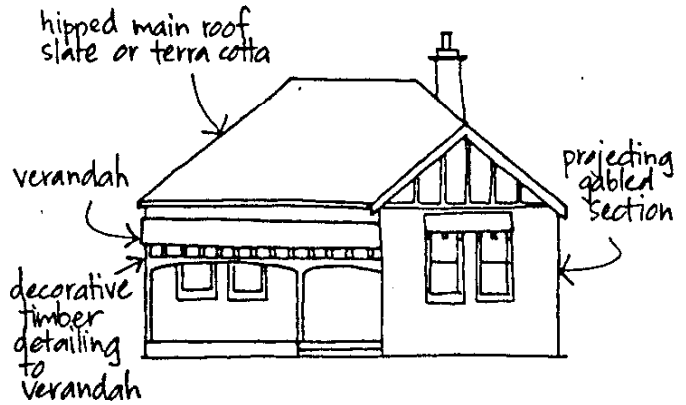
Conservation areas identified by the local plan are precincts considered to have architectural, historical and scenic qualities, which merit protection as a whole.

Mosman's valuable built heritage is not confined to listed heritage items and conservation areas. Owners of all older style houses are strongly encouraged to enhance and care for them in the most appropriate manner. The Council's guidelines are designed to help all owners of period houses.

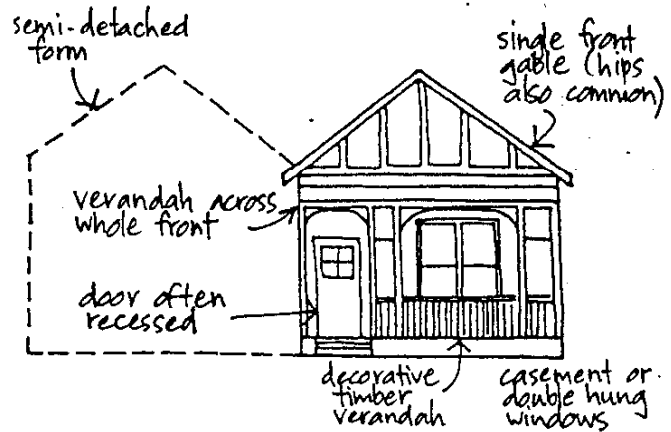
A development application is required for any development affecting a heritage item or conservation area. This includes demolition, subdivision, removal of archaeological relics, and alterations and additions to buildings. Such things as external painting are counted as alterations. Changes to interiors are permitted, without development approval being required, provided no increase in floor area is proposed. The Council must take into account heritage matters in dealing with an application. Otherwise the application is no different to any other.

You are strongly advised to consult with Council's Town Planning staff before contemplating any work to a heritage item or in a conservation area. They will be able to assist you and provide you with the guidance you need.

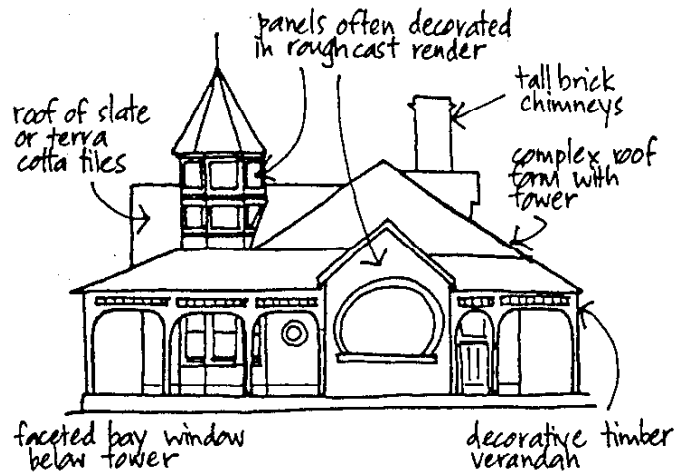
Heritage protection does not aim to freeze development in time. The right to upgrade older homes to modern standards is recognised. It is a matter of ensuring that what is proposed is sensitive and appropriate.



Standard Federation or Edwardian Cottage 1895-1915



Narrow-fronted Federation 1900-1920



Grand Federation House 1895-1915

Meaning of Heritage Significance

What is required is that changes take place in the most sympathetic way possible. Those things which lead to an item, or area, being identified in the Council's heritage plan, should be kept. These are the aspects which are said to be of heritage significance. Often it is simply the external appearance of the building.

There may however, be less visible aspects of historic or social interest. It is the part of the building or physical fabric which provides the interest which should be respected. The remainder may change, provided it does not compromise, disguise, exaggerate or interfere.

Determining what is significant

Every individually listed heritage item has been recorded on an inventory form, available from the Council. The form states why the building is listed, and what its significance is. Descriptions identify important architectural features. For conservation areas, there is a single form which notes all the elements which contribute to the significance of the area as a whole.

Inventory forms however do not always go into sufficient detail. Depending on what changes you have in mind you may need to obtain expert advice from a recognised conservation architect. You should discuss this with the Council when you make your initial enquiries.

Most buildings in conservation areas are significant for their contribution to an historic streetscape. All older style houses, listed or unlisted, will have interest for their external architecture, as viewed from the street or nearby vantage points.

Types of significance

Architectural interest may be a result of overall form, design and materials, as well as the quality of its detailing. The importance of gardens should also be considered.

Some buildings are especially significant for their rarity. They may be the only local examples of their style or type.

Some buildings owe their significance to an association with a well-known historic figure, or a famous architect.

Buildings which have interest for their historic associations, but which are otherwise undistinguished, do not necessarily have to be kept as they are. The physical fabric only needs to be retained to the extent that it continues to demonstrate or remind people of the person, their lifestyle, or their notable work. If the connection with the surviving physical evidence is weak, it may be sufficient to make a photographic and documentary record of the building as it was.

The Burra Charter

There are many different approaches to conservation. The preferred approach, generally accepted by most practitioners, is one based on principles set out in a document known as the "Burra Charter".

The Burra Charter is based on an international convention for conserving outstanding monuments and sites. The principles are not always strictly applicable when considering changes to a suburban family home. However they are of great assistance in deciding what is appropriate.

The Charter also provides us with some useful definitions. When most people talk about

"restoration" they mean putting back lost features in new materials. Strictly, "restoration" means putting back original material only. If new materials are introduced into the fabric "reconstruction" is the proper term to use.

"Reconstruction" means returning a place, as nearly as possible, to a known earlier state. If we are only guessing about what the original was like, it is not strictly "reconstruction".

Most alterations and additions in the Municipality involve what is termed "adaption", or do not qualify as "conservation" at all as the Charter defines it. They deliberately change the known earlier state of the building. "Adaption" means modifying a place to accommodate new uses which are compatible with conservation objectives.

Checklist/Before you start

1. Contact the Council

If your property is a listed item, or in a conservation area, ask for a copy of the relevant heritage inventory form

You should also obtain a copy of the Council's booklet, "Advice to Applicants". It provides general information for all persons making development applications.

Speak to the Council's Town Planning staff about your ideas. They can advise you further. Show them your proposals in sketch form before going to the expense of having detailed plans prepared. Staff could also refer these to Council's Heritage Technical Advisory Group, if the proposal is likely to be sensitive or complex.

2. Get expert help

The Council strongly recommends that you consult a recognised conservation expert, where major new work is proposed. The National Trust and the Heritage Council have lists.

3. Do your own research

"The conservation policy appropriate to a place must first be determined by an understanding of its cultural significance and its physical condition." (Article 6, Burra Charter)

Find out what you can about the building. Previous owners or neighbours may have old photographs or drawings.

Look closely at the building. What has been altered and added? Paint scrapings may reveal original colour schemes. Expert assistance is recommended here.

Do not always assume what has been altered should be reinstated. Additions often have interest of their own. Always ask why and when the changes were made.

"The contributions of all periods to the place must be respected. If a place includes the fabric of different periods, revealing the fabric of one period at the expense of another can only be justified when what is removed is of slight cultural significance and the fabric which is revealed is of much greater cultural significance." (Article 16, Burra Charter)

Often the removal of a balcony or verandah enclosure, for example, will enhance people's appreciation of an old house. Sometimes however an addition may have interest of its own, eg a Federation addition to a Victorian cottage.

Make a record (photographs and drawings) of the existing building, prior to your own alterations.

Study the street and the area. Look at similar houses. What scenic and streetscape qualities are important?

4. Design the proposal

See "Design Principles" below.

5. Select a builder

Find at least one reputable builder, capable of quality work. Ask for references and look at the builder's other jobs.

6. Check the work

Inspect the building as work proceeds, to ensure a high standard of workmanship.

Design principles

There are a few firm rules to follow when designing additions to heritage buildings. A knowledge of historical styles is important, but every case is different.

Nevertheless, the application of a few basic design principles will produce a satisfactory solution in the great majority of cases. Make an assessment of your building in terms of the matters listed below.

Scale and proportion

Every heritage building has a characteristic scale and proportion in all its parts. "Scale" refers to size. "Proportion" refers to the relative size of different parts. These principles apply to the larger elements of a building (e.g. roofs), as well as the smallest (e.g. timber mouldings).

Shape

Buildings of a particular historical style tend to have elements of a characteristic shape. A typical 1920's or 1930's Bungalow, for example, has simple front facing gables of low pitch. A Federation period house, on the other hand, will usually have a more complex roof form.

Symmetry/Asymmetry

Much of the distinctive quality of historic houses is dependent on a balance between symmetry and asymmetry. For example, Federation period houses normally have windows symmetrically positioned, but the front gable is almost always asymmetrically placed on the facade.

Construction

Heritage buildings display an honesty of structural expression. They were built in a practical manner. The same spirit should be pursued when making an addition.



If the original finish or texture cannot be achieved using modern tools and materials, it may be advisable to use the original technology. The result is what counts. You should also be mindful of the original purpose of decorative elements, and the role they played.

Some properties are more suitable for alterations and additions than others. Much depends on the style of the building, its present siting, and the size of the land.

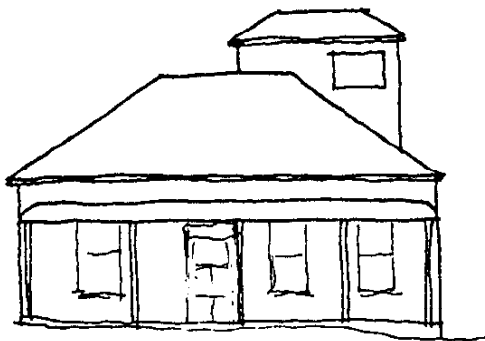
These design principles apply to all elements of the building, no matter how big or small. Although the range of possible problems and solutions is large, most tend to fall into the same broad categories. They are worth discussing as typical instances.

Roof style/size/form

Complex Federation period roof forms allow new dormers to be introduced inconspicuously.

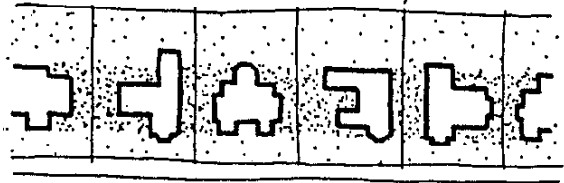
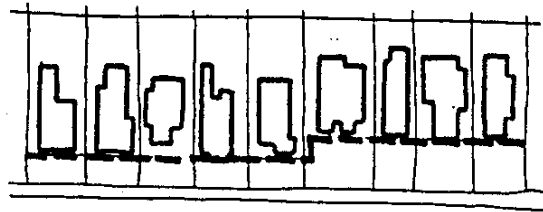


With simpler roof forms however, any roof alteration will stand out.



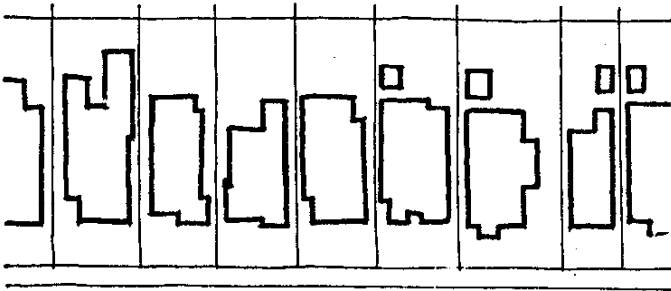
Land size and siting

Note the general pattern of setbacks and site planning in the street.



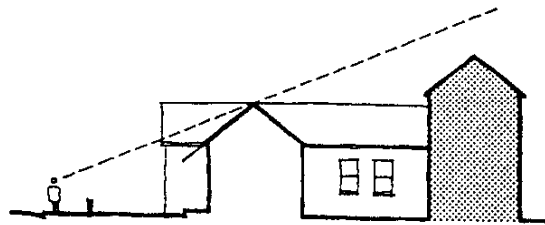
A large second storey addition to a single storey house will significantly compromise its character.

A two storey addition should be sited at the rear, below the line of sight (when viewed from the street).



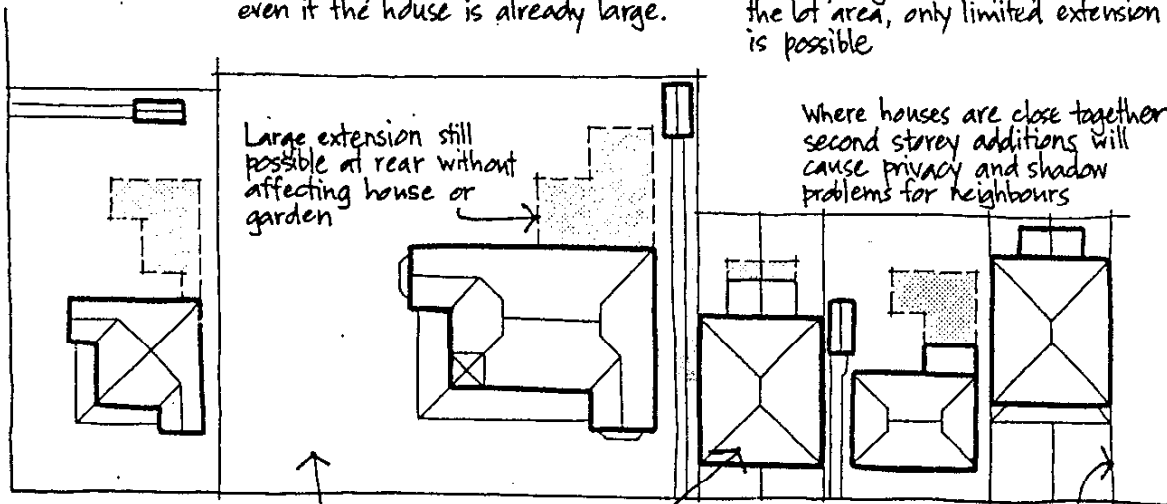
A large lot with plenty of rear space offers many options for rear extensions.

Small lots offer fewer options.



A large allotment will usually have many options for additions, even if the house is already large.

Where the built upon area is already high, as a proportion of the lot area, only limited extension is possible



Large extension still possible at rear without affecting house or garden

Where houses are close together second storey additions will cause privacy and shadow problems for neighbours

On corner sites appearance from both streets must be considered

Original garden setting to be retained for its contribution to significance

A second storey is a possibility but could undermine the streetscape and affect neighbours

Space available at front cannot be used as this would destroy the visible front facade

Buildings on the boundary prevent access to rear garages (unless there is a rear lane)

Site planning priorities

1. If possible, keep extensions to the rear.

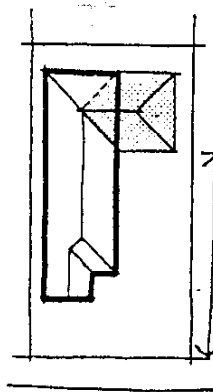
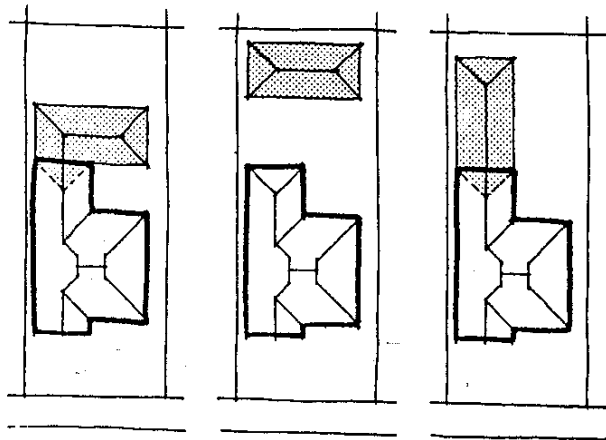
"Conservation requires the maintenance of an appropriate visual setting, eg form, scale, colour, texture and materials. No new construction, demolition or modification which would adversely affect the setting should be allowed." (Article 8, Burra Charter)

2. If there is insufficient space for a rear extension, set any side extension back as far as possible from the street.

3. Where sites are severely constrained a dormer or similar addition may be permitted, but preferably not at the front if the building is a heritage item.

4. Otherwise very minor additions may be all that are possible. Look for ways of making better use of the space available, rather than adding on. Some rebuilding at the rear may achieve this without endangering heritage values.

Extensions to the rear

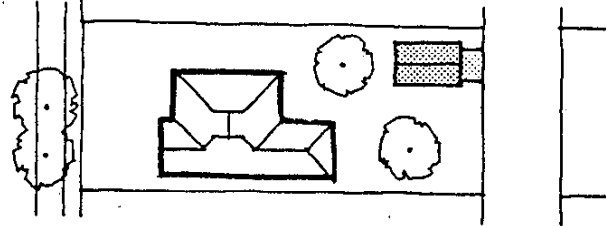


Side extension kept well back from the street

Priorities for accommodating the car

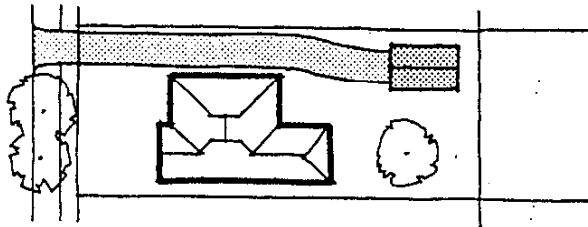
1. Locate at the rear, with access from a rear lane.

or



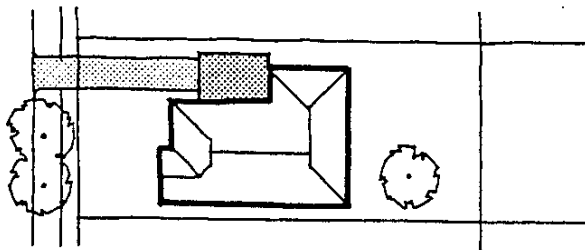
2. Locate at the rear, with access from the front.

or



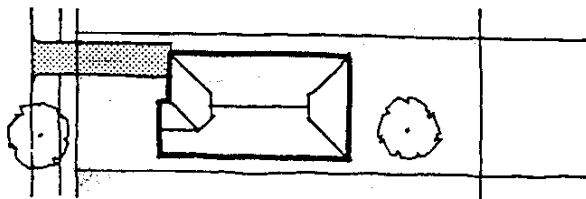
3. Locate at the side of the house, well set back.

or



4. Provide an uncovered paved area at the front.

or



5. If a covered area at the front is necessary, keep it unobtrusive. A flat roof with planting is often the best solution.

Modifying existing facades

Changes to the facade are generally not advisable, particularly for heritage items and conservation areas.

Minimise changes to materials and the roof form. Large complex roofs, where changes may be less noticeable, may be an exceptional case.

"Conservation is based on a respect for the existing fabric and should involve the least possible physical intervention. It should not distort the evidence provided by the fabric." (Article 3, Burra Charter)

Don't add decorative elements, no matter how sympathetic the styling.

Old features may be put back. Do not add what was never there.

"Reconstruction is limited to the completion of a depleted entity and should not constitute the majority of the fabric of a place." (Article 18, Burra Charter)

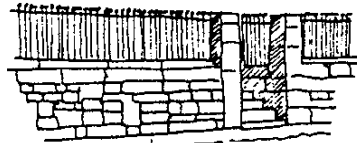
"Reconstruction is limited to the reconstruction of fabric, the form of which is known from physical and/or documentary evidence. It should be identifiable on close inspection as being new work." (Article 19, Burra Charter)

High walls or fences, front garages and unsympathetic garden treatment (e.g. rockeries, dense plantings) are all strongly discouraged.

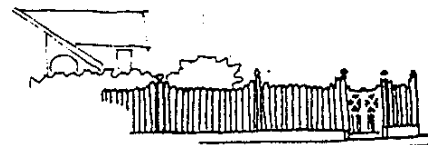
Fencing

The importance of fencing cannot be overemphasised. Because of their proximity to the street, fences have an impact out of proportion to their size. Good fencing can unify and make a street, just as inappropriate fencing can destroy it.

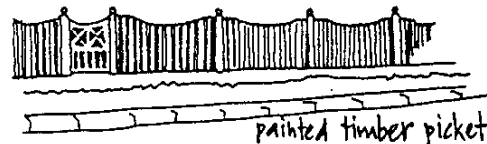
Common materials are timber, iron and brick. Fences need to be in keeping with the individual building, as well as the street as a whole.



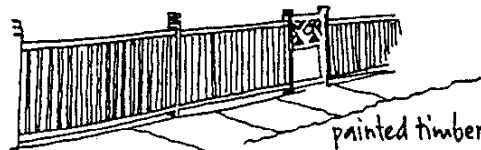
Iron pike and rail on stone retaining wall



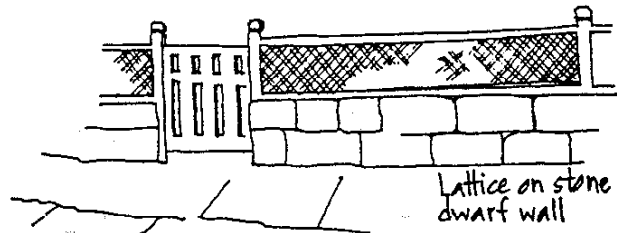
Timber picket on brick dwarf wall



painted timber picket



painted timber



Lattice on stone dwarf wall

Typical Mosman Fences

Materials and details

As a rule, if the larger scale elements are designed effectively, the detailed elements will fit in well. Although it is rarely necessary to make exact copies of existing details, attention to materials and details is still important. The following is a checklist of materials and features to look for.

Bricks

Note the brick and mortar colour, the type of joint and the brick laying pattern. Most Federation Period buildings in Mosman are made of red-brown bricks and are tuck-pointed. It may be possible to get second-hand bricks from the period.

Cement render

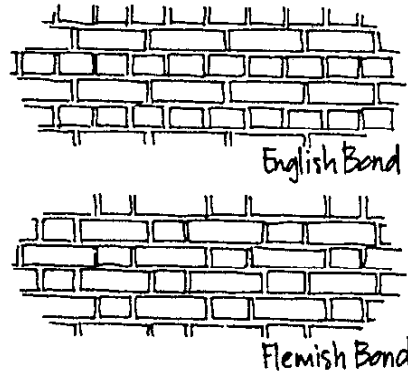
Two types of finish are typical: smooth and roughcast.

Timber

Many building elements can be made of timber: window frames, boarding, fascias, brackets, columns, friezes, etc.. Many joinery companies have similar profiles in stock. If an exact copy is required, the joiner can easily measure a profile to be run off.

Metal

Cast iron is commonly used in balustrades and other areas. Second-hand building suppliers may have replacement pieces. Foundries may have moulds from factories which originally cast patterns.



Stone

Sandstone is a feature of many of the older houses of Mosman. The stone may have been cut out of the site. Sandstone fencing, foundations, etc should be retained and sympathetically incorporated in any additions. Check the finish.

Slate may also have been used on base courses, sills, steps etc.

Roofing

What is the roof pitch and roofing material? Slate and tile are the most common. Imperial tile sizes can be hard to match exactly. Note also chimneys, cappings, gutters, rainwater heads and downpipes.

Flooring and paving

What are the materials, patterns and colours? Slate, tiles and timber are typical.

Windows

Match sill and head heights. Are the window heads straight or curved? Is stained or patterned glass used? Check local examples for framing layouts.

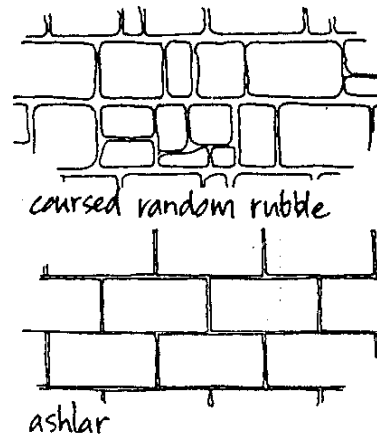
Paint

What are the original paint colours? Scrape back newer layers of paint to see if there was an older, original colour. Scrapings should be taken from areas sheltered from sun and rain. Allow for fading of the original colour. More accurate colour matching can be achieved by a colour specialist.

Stone Dressing



Stone Coursing



References

The following publications can provide you with further information and guidance:

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Jones P, "Planting c1850-1900: A Guide to the Restoration, Conservation and Rehabilitation of Early Australian Gardens and Man Made Landscapes", Technical Bulletin No 4, Australian Council of National Trusts, Melbourne, 1982

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Lucas C, "Preservation of Roofs", Australian Council of National Trusts, Sydney, 1979

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Royal Australian Institute of Architects (NSW Chapter) and Heritage Council of NSW, "Infill: Guidelines for the Design of Infill Buildings", 1988

Stapleton I, How to Restore the Old Aussie House, John Fairfax & Sons, Sydney, 1983

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Tanner H and Cox P, Restoring Old Australian Houses and Buildings, Macmillan, 1973

Current titles will be available in most major bookshops. Others will be obtainable at the National Trust bookshop and the Department of Planning's information branch in Liverpool Street.