



Building Design Handbook

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The building adventure

Welcome to the Dulaiwurrong Village handbook for building and garden design.

The process of designing and building your house and garden is a great adventure. There are many different ways to approach this process and many choices to make. We encourage you and your consultants to read and understand this handbook prior to starting your design or house selection process. If you have any questions or seek clarification of any part of the process, we would be happy to assist you (see contact details in appendix).

Because there are a number of technical aspects discussed in this handbook, we recommend that you consult an experienced designer or architect to help you design your home. We have created a list of like-minded consultants who can guide you in meeting the goal of building a *sustainable home* in the village.

During the design process we ask you to look carefully at the points raised in this handbook and we challenge you to be creative and thoughtful in your use of materials, detailing and presentation. The creativity you put into your designs will ultimately be rewarded in your living experience and the unique sense of place created.

The guidelines and requirements we have outlined are intended to create a sense of connection and belonging within the village, while avoiding the dullness and sameness that seems to be typical of many estates. In this process, we are able to celebrate the uniqueness that each individual person and family will contribute. The adventure we speak of is in some ways a simple one. As you bring your sense of fun, passion and indeed love to your home and garden you will be deeply rewarded for years to come.

- Buildings shall be contained within the setback envelopes described. The siting of envelopes includes an allowance for a north-facing outdoor private space for each allotment. The committee may consider requests to vary building envelopes, subject to planning approval. Requests for variations to building envelopes will not be considered unless these outdoor private spaces are maintained.
- Buildings shall be set back a minimum of 2.0 metres from the **north** boundary of the allotment. Walls over 3.6 metres in height shall be set back a minimum of 2.0 metres from north boundaries. Access road setbacks shall take precedence over access road boundaries.
- Buildings shall be set back a minimum of 2.0 metres from the **south** boundary of the allotment. Walls over 3.6 metres in height shall be set back a minimum of 4.0 metres from south boundaries, and walls over 6.0 metres shall be set back a minimum of 5.0 metres from south boundaries. Access road setbacks shall take precedence over access road boundaries.
- Buildings shall be set back a minimum of 0.0 metres from **east** and **west** boundaries of the allotment (refer to specific building envelopes). Walls over 3.6 metres in height shall be set back a minimum of 1.0 metres from east and west boundaries, and walls over 6.0 metres shall be set back a minimum of 2.0 metres from east and west boundaries. Access road setbacks shall take precedence over access road boundaries.
- The access road setback shall be 1.0 metre. Projecting awnings, bay windows, pergolas, etc. may be approved by the Committee.

Overlooking

Objective: To protect the privacy of neighbouring buildings and private outdoor space.

- North-facing windows have priority in terms of overlooking. Houses shall generally be designed in such a way as to minimise the overlooking of allotments to their south.
- Where windows have direct view into neighbouring windows or private outdoor space within 9 metres one of the following remedies shall be required:
 - Window sill height to be at a minimum 1.7 metres to floor level;
 - Obscure or screened glazing to be installed up to 1.7 metres from floor height.
 - External screening or fencing up to 1.7 metres above the building floor height.

Exploring the village foundation

Celebrating true Eltham character

This project seeks to reflect the true essence of Eltham. Our village plan is to create a sustainable residential community that celebrates the evolution of Eltham and its building characteristics and lifestyle. The ideas we have put together draw upon a rich local history of natural and energy-smart design and construction, from the eclectic French village character of the artist-built Montsalvat to the mud-brick architecture of Alistair Knox.

Intentional community

The inspiration for establishing an intentional community within the Nillumbik Shire has been derived from many successful projects worldwide. These include projects as far away as Findhorn Ecovillage in Northern Scotland and as close by as Moora Moora in Healesville or Common Ground in Seymour. A web search on cohousing and ecovillage projects will give you a taste of our overall intentions and of other fruitful communities both here and abroad.

The community vision has evolved from two fundamental values: the desire to live in *intentional community* and to live a *sustainable lifestyle*, including sustainable living practices; through energy-efficient building and community action and co-operation. This village will be a living demonstration of the powerful impact that a sustainable intentional community lifestyle can have on the human spirit and a healthier planet. Further details of the *community building* process have been outlined in a separate handbook.

Sustainable building and lifestyle

There are two important intentions in this village in terms of assisting residents to create a sustainable community. Firstly, these design guidelines and requirements will ensure that home designs are five-star rated, consist of mostly earth or timber materials, collect rainwater, use passive and active solar design and other earth-friendly components and materials. Secondly, we intend to draw on the power of local people to work together to create sustainable outcomes. This includes supporting local trade, growing organic food, implementing strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fostering valuable local relationships.

The place

The land is situated west of Railway Parade, Eltham, adjacent to the Diamond Creek and consists of 2.2 hectares (5.5 acres). The close proximity of the town centre and railway station provides the opportunity for a car-free lifestyle. The land is gently undulating, and will drain into Diamond Creek via a series of constructed wetlands.

Some of the other key aims proposed for this site include:

- Enhancing the local native bushland environment and caring for the creek;
- Drawing on the wisdom and experience of the local aboriginal tribe, the Wurundjeri people, including the acknowledgement of relevant site-specific totems and animals;
- Creating resourcefulness through applying permaculture design principles, including a fruit and nut tree-lined roadway and community vegetable gardens, wise water collection, use and conservation, and sustainable home design;
- Creating an intentional cohousing community – a place in which people can connect and enjoy the company and support of like-minded people;
- Applying architectural design that honours the pioneering history of natural building in the Nillumbik Shire.

In the footsteps of the local pioneers we intend to create a leading-edge concept, a community project that integrates sustainability at the core and provides an inspiring living model for others to draw upon for years to come.

Working with the design flow

The following diagram illustrates the key design stages that you will need to follow. It should be noted that there might be additional processes you will need to undertake to comply with the appropriate legal and building requirements.

Who	Process	Information
You and DWV sales representative	Pre-purchase discussions and DWV welcome process	Sales team to introduce the development, philosophy and requirements for the house and garden design approval.
You and your designer or architect	Purchase your block and prepare house and garden concept designs	Use the handbook as your design guide. Questions will be answered by DWV sales team and architect.
DWV architect	Preliminary design review	The architect will review your concept plans and provide feedback. Information required includes: site analysis, site plan, floor plans, elevations, and landscape concept plan (2 copies of drawings are required)
DWV architect	Final design review	The DWV architect will review final drawings. Information required includes: site plan, floor plans, elevations & sections, landscape plan, colour scheme, external materials, home energy rating certificate (five-star) (3 copies of drawings are required)
DWV building committee	Design approval	Committee meets monthly or as needed to review endorsed designs and stamp drawings if approved. Nillumbik Shire may require amendments to be sent to council for further planning approval.
You and your designer or architect	Prepare construction drawings	DWV can provide information and share resources during contract documentation process.
Registered building surveyor	Building approval	Houses require approval from a registered building surveyor.
DWV committee	Amendments	Amendments to house and garden designs to be submitted to committee for approval.
You and your builder	Build your home	DWV can provide information and share resources during construction process.
You and DWV representative	Final inspection	The DWV committee will carry out an inspection to ensure that completed buildings comply with the design proposal.

What are the benefits of compliance?

Here are some well-founded reasons why sticking to the handbook requirements and suggestions is important.

- Co-operating with the agreed goals within the village activates a greater sense of community spirit.
- Energy efficiency will ensure that your home has the potential to save you and the planet, by reducing energy bills now and in the future, while making a significant contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- As your home reaches a five-star energy rating you may be able to access an eco-loan, which could generate reductions in your interest costs on your mortgage.
- Building within the parameters of the handbook requirements will ensure that your home reaches it's full potential in terms of capital growth, and this will be supported by other similar-styled neighbouring homes.
- This design process is a wonderful leadership opportunity in which you can demonstrate to other people the power of thoughtful and intelligent eco-friendly design.

Understanding the guidelines of the handbook

In this handbook there are three key levels of guidelines that you need to be aware of. These are underlined in the text and are explained below:

Shall (shall not) means that the guidelines are compulsory.

May means that some interpretation of the requirements is permitted.

Encouraged means that you are not required to comply, but we would like you to consider this in your design.

Composition of the building committee

The village building committee will be initially made up of a representative of the developer (Eltham Ecovillage Pty Ltd), the architect and a town planning consultant. Other community members or personnel may be appointed to the committee during the design and building process. It is envisaged that at some stage the stewardship will be handed over to the community via the Body Corporate to ensure that design submissions or changes to design are appropriate and will be approved.

The committee's role is to act as a guide for community members in making their design submissions. The committee will then review these designs and make suggestions for any changes or improvements as required.

It is the intention of the committee to provide a service that promotes quality of design and reflects village requirements and themes and through which community members can achieve the best outcomes in the design process. The committee will work in conjunction with the Nillumbik Shire Council as required to provide this service to community members.

What is not included in the scope of this committee?

Any conflict that may arise between neighbours is not considered the direct responsibility of the building committee. If a request for assistance in this regard is made, the building committee may agree to mediate the process. A separate fee may be payable.

Amendments or changes to the design that cause a matter to be referred to the Council will be managed at the cost of the individual lot owner who wants to make such changes.

Building design requirements

Building character

Objectives: To create a group of buildings and gardens which together create a sense of being in a peaceful semi-rural village. Structures will mainly be constructed of the natural materials and finishes that have a proud history in the Eltham area, and may combine rural and suburban elements.

Contemporary design is encouraged, as is the individual interpretation of regional historical elements, i.e. the 'muddie' (mud-brick building) and the veranda. Reproduction for its own sake is discouraged, as is the carbon-copy approach to historic building periods.

In pursuit of a high-quality built form, which is more influenced by harmony with the environment and the use of natural materials than technology, expediency and fashion, certain colours, materials and forms have been excluded from the list of suitable materials.

Design and siting requirements

The following sections detail the design and siting requirements for your home. The initial statement in italics in each section describes the primary objectives of that design element. The text below and accompanying illustrations detail the specific requirements.

A proposed variation to the guidelines will be assessed in terms of its impact on neighbourhood amenity, the intent of the guidelines and the DWV's goals (stated earlier).

Environmentally based initiatives will be considered favourably.

Review process for amendments

- The DWV's architect and other DWV team members will assess minor variations.
- Where it is felt that a proposed amendment has merit but is significant enough to seek further input, we may refer to the DWV design review Committee. This committee is made up of a number of DWV residents and staff and is used to broaden the input into any debate around variations to the guidelines.
- Any significant variation, once approved by the committee, may also involve a separate town planning application.
 - Special conditions: Where any special conditions apply to a particular allotment these are noted in Appendix 1 (to be read in conjunction with the Section 173 Agreements).

Please note: The DWV architect and the DWV design team have absolute discretion in the interpretation of these guidelines.

The home and garage building envelopes

Building parameters

Objectives: To ensure adequate setbacks from all boundaries, good solar orientation, maintain privacy, reduce overshadowing, provide for adequate outdoor living space and enhance the streetscape.

- Homes and garages shall be sited within the relevant building envelope where shown for your allotment.
- Eaves shall remain within the allotment boundaries, but may extend outside the nominated building envelope.
- Where approved, veranda's, pergolas, awnings, decks and bay windows may extend outside the building envelope.
- Buildings shall be set back from the access road kerb a minimum of 1.0 metre.
- Reduced setbacks may apply on laneway and village green boundaries.
- Garages may be built to the allotment boundary where indicated by the position of the envelope – note that height and length restrictions apply. Where approved, the garage may extend into the home building envelope.
- The minimum building setback to boundaries varies with each allotment. The committee will consider any building envelope variation that can be demonstrated to improve solar access to allotments, including adjacent allotments.

Building heights

Objectives: To preserve the visual character of the landscape; to minimise the potential for overlooking and overshadowing; to preserve views to and from adjacent parkland.

- Buildings shall not be higher than the maximum height specified for each allotment (refer Plan of Subdivision PS543583S).
- The maximum building height from natural ground level varies with each allotment due to the differing location and setbacks of buildings and building envelopes on the adjacent allotments and properties. The general maximum building height is 9.0 metres.
- For any structure, the maximum wall height measured from natural ground level to top of gutter shall be 3.6 metres where the wall is on a side or rear boundary.

Some important things to consider in the design of your home and garden

- Be very clear of your total budget for the building of your home. Check with lenders what sort of repayments you could expect for the loan you require.
- Smart house designs require less space and materials but achieve compact and flexible rooms and spaces, with lower running costs. For example, design a separate studio instead of another bedroom. This could be used for teenagers, extra guests, as an art studio, a workplace or a shed.
- Owner-building can save you costs but make sure you understand the extra commitments that you will need to make. Talk to other owner builders, or take a course or seminar before deciding to follow this path.
- Embrace Permaculture in the design of your garden.
- Indigenous gardens require less water and reinforce Eltham's unique environment.

Lot and floor levels

Objective: To protect homes from the effects of stormwater runoff and meet Melbourne Water requirements.

- DWV's surface and stormwater management has been designed as an integrated system. General gradients across lots shall be maintained.
- Where the home design requires raising or lowering the existing ground level this should be confirmed with the DWV architect.
- The minimum floor level requirement for the entire development shall be 168.1 AHD (Australian Height Datum). This applies to houses, garages and other outbuildings.

Building form

Objective: To minimise the visual bulk of the home by the creation of a variety of intimately scaled building forms that do not dominate the streetscape.

- While the committee does not wish to limit the creativity of designs, buildings with pitched roofs and generous eaves are encouraged.
- Buildings shall have eaves of minimum 600mm generally, 700mm optimally, though this may be varied where walls abut boundaries or other structures, or where shading of walls and windows is effectively treated through an alternative design response.
- Building works shall be of an appropriate village scale. Bulk shall be minimised through the use of articulation, materials, colours and details, as well as the innovative layout of interior space. Buildings shall not have large plain facades.
- Smaller allotments shall not have large or pretentious homes, out of keeping with the village character. The design intention is for a range of house and allotment sizes to create a variation in housing stock to ensure the diversity of the village.
- Inappropriate reproduction or mimicked styles from the past, especially Georgian, Tudor, Federation or Victorian, shall not be approved.
- Building forms that respond to the slope of the hill are strongly encouraged on sloping blocks.
- Roof bulk shall be minimised through the use of smaller roof forms rather than large roof areas.

