



# Darebin Heritage Guide

## 25: ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS



**M**ost existing buildings in the City of Darebin have undergone, or are likely to undergo, some change or alteration at some stage in their life.

Most alterations result from one or more of the following reasons: the need for more room, the modernisation of facilities, changes in lifestyle or family circumstances, investment, fashion and other reasons. Most of the existing alterations and additions have been undertaken without specialist design advice. Because many of these works relate to the rear of buildings, there has been less concern with the appearance and compatibility of the new work with the original structure and adjacent buildings.

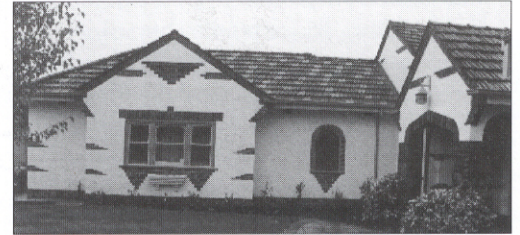
Another trend has been the second storey addition or attic alteration. Often this has led to an unfortunate compromise of the design, or stylistic integrity, of the original building. Changes of this nature can also have a detrimental impact on adjoining buildings or compromise the quality and integrity of a streetscape; particularly a period streetscape. An appropriate heritage alteration is one that fits in well, or appears to be a part of the original building, and does not intrude on neighbouring properties or the larger area.

### Design Approaches

Alterations and additions to a building can be carried out in a heritage manner by using the same materials of the original structure, and by avoiding the removal and destruction of important elements such as verandahs, windows, gables and chimneys.

There are two basic design approaches that can be applied when considering alterations and additions. The first is to reproduce the original building design elements, while the alternative is to carry out works in a neutral contemporary (modern) design.

In general where there is evidence of altered or missing building fabric, this should be restored or reconstructed where



*Original details and design elements have been reproduced in this addition to a 1920s English style house.*

the facade in question is an important part of the streetscape (or landscape). Where such alterations are not visible from streets and lanes, an interpretive modern design approach could be applied. However, this should still respect (or have regard for) the character of the existing original building and its surroundings.



*Addition and alterations have reproduced original English style elements and used matching materials and finishes.*

### Previous Alterations

In some instances, previous alterations have resulted in substantial change to the character, or style, of a building resulting in a new, or hybrid, style. For example, a Federation period house may have been modernised between the wars with a new porch or portico and the previously exposed red brickwork covered with rough cast or stucco render.

Such alterations may have resulted in a total change in appearance of the original building which may be of significance in its own right. In such cases, it is usually



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preferable to retain the altered building rather than attempt a reconstruction.

Where the facade has been substantially altered in a manner that detracts from the appearance of the building, for example, by substantially altering the form, materials and details, and it is not feasible to reconstruct the original facade because of cost constraints and/or lack of evidence of original details, the most appropriate action may be to design a new contemporary facade. In such circumstances the critical design objective is to relate the new facade to both the existing building and adjacent buildings in a sympathetic manner.

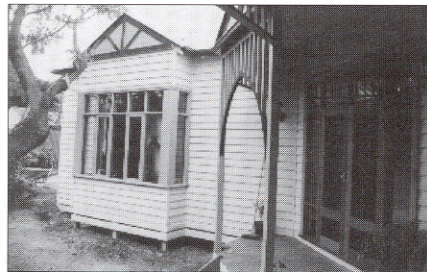
Many streets in the municipality have a coherent streetscape or urban character. New facades should be designed in a manner that relates to the scale, form and materials of the original and adjacent buildings so that the street retains its continuity. This does not mean that design individuality cannot be expressed or be evident when such a building is viewed at closer range, as long as the facade does not intrude into, or fragment, the existing streetscape. It is important, however, that this approach does not result in the poor imitation of the earlier building stock in the area, the wholesale copying of facades, or inappropriate repetition of earlier detailing. When using such an approach, reference should be made to Darebin Heritage Guide No.27, "Residential Infill".

### Rear Facade Works

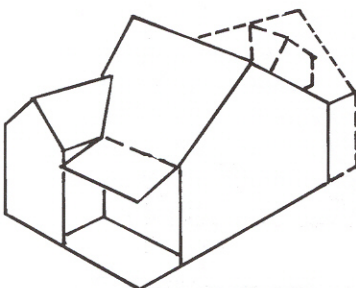
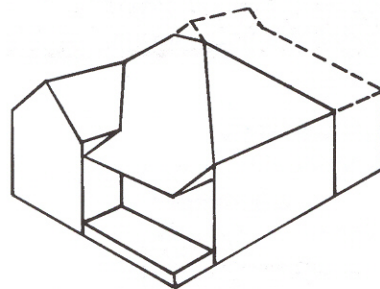
In many parts of the municipality laneways and side streets present an alternative face of the suburb and, as with the main streetscapes, have their own qualities and interest, i.e. the inter-relationship of buildings, gardens and backyards.

In terms of the overall appearance and character of the suburb, rear facades are generally of less importance than the front of the building, and as a consequence are

an aspect of new works which provide greater scope to add or alter without the constraint of the original design or detailing. This, however, should not imply that the appearance of the rear of buildings is of no concern to the heritage significance of the suburb. Where alterations and additions at the rear of buildings become visible above fencelines, from rear lanes or streets, such works can be carried out in a manner that is sympathetic to the surroundings. In most instances, the critical design considerations are the roof form, materials and the size and proportion of window openings.



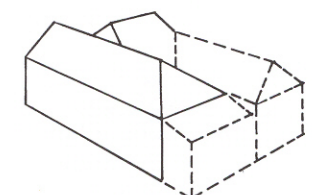
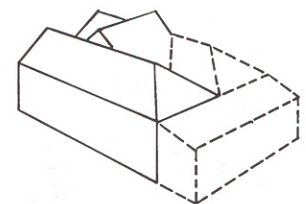
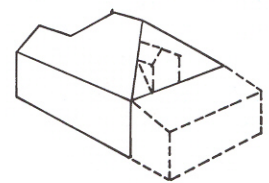
*Sympathetic rear addition with matching roof form and materials. Gable, window and verandah details have maintained the traditional Federation character.*



*Some appropriate two storey additions.*

### Roofs

In general, it is desirable to extend in a manner that relates to the existing roof form of the building or follows the traditional design approaches to such additions. Hip, gable and skillion roofs should be used in preference to large expanses of flat roof; avoiding the "box-on-the-back" that has been common in recent years. Preferred materials are slate, corrugated iron, terracotta tiles, or cement tiles for interwar houses. Materials such as tray steel deck roofing should be avoided. Ridge heights, parapet and eaves lines and details, as well as verandah lines and details should relate to the original building. The pitch of the roof is also important and should relate to the existing roof pitch. Typical hip and gable roofs of the 19th and early 20th century have pitches between 25 degrees and 35 degrees. Typically, main roof pitches on late Victorian and Federation buildings were in the order of 30-35 degrees, while main roof pitches on interwar buildings were shallower and in the order of 25-30 degrees. Victorian and Federation skillion roofs had typical roof pitches of 12-15 degrees. Skillion roof pitches



*Appropriate forms for single storey rear additions*

associated with interwar buildings were of a similar pitch, but flat roofs over bay windows and verandahs had a shallow pitch of approximately 2 degrees.

## Openings

Door and window openings should maintain the original scale and spacing of existing openings using the vertical, rectangular form and proportions of Victorian, Federation and interwar window and door elements. This is of particular importance where the windows are at first floor level, or above. Horizontal window elements should also be avoided, other than where they can be grouped to form discreet patterns by themselves, and they cannot be viewed with windows of adjacent facades.



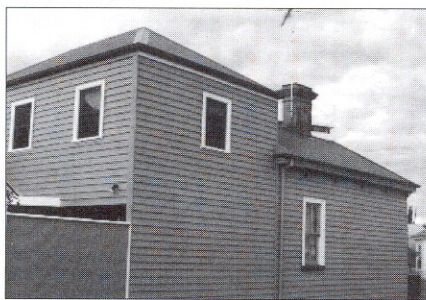
*Roof form is critical. Matching roof materials, pitch, gable details, as well as a matching chimney have produced a convincing attic alteration and addition.*

## Two Storey Additions

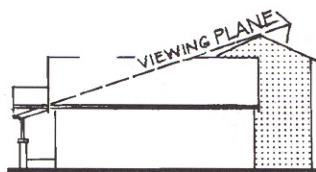
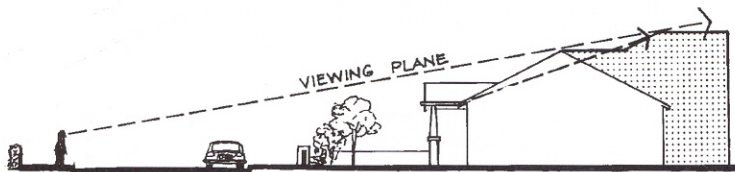
Where two storey additions are proposed, careful consideration should be given to the visibility of the proposed additions and their impact on adjacent buildings. Viewing planes or sightlines should be used to assess the impact of proposed two storey additions from various locations around the building.

## Outbuildings

Outbuildings and garages attached to Victorian or Federation period buildings should be carefully designed to fit in with the existing buildings. Smaller structures, such as sheds, are best treated simply with a corrugated iron skillion roof set at a pitch of between 10-30 degrees. Walls should be in brick, corrugated iron or square edge weatherboards. The same applies for outbuildings attached to interwar buildings, except that garages may sometimes be sited at the side of the



*Rear addition to Victorian timber Villa. Note roof form, matching materials and window proportions.*



*Two storey additions are preferred at the rear of existing buildings and should continue the form of the original building.*

house instead of the rear yard. Refer to Heritage Guide No.26, "Garages and Outbuildings".

The design of larger outbuilding structures needs to be considered in the context of the area characteristics and with regard to the visibility of the proposed building. Such buildings should generally have wall, roof and opening details that fit in with the original surrounding buildings. Roof pitches of between 25-35 degrees are preferred, with roof materials such as corrugated iron, slate and terracotta tiles to complement the main building on the site. Flat roofs may be considered where they are situated behind a parapet wall or garden wall. In general, multiple gables, gable and skillion, or hip roofs are preferred.

Preferred materials for garage doors are vertical timber linings, particularly where the building faces a street or laneway. Roller doors and metal tilt up doors that are not of, or reflect, original materials and design are not preferred, refer to Darebin Heritage Guide No. 26, "Garages and Outbuildings".



*Car port attached to the side of a Federation bungalow using roof form and design elements of the original house.*

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### References

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- I. Stapleton, *How to Restore The Old Aussie House*, Flannel Flower Press, 1991.
- B. Raworth, *Our Inter War Houses: How to recognise, restore, and extend houses of the 1920s and 1930s*. National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1991.



*New garage located in rear yard facing side street attached to Federation bungalow. The modern tilt action door is paneled to imitate the appearance of traditional doors.*