

Maldon Design Guidelines Planning Scheme Amendment Frequently Asked Questions



What are the Maldon Design Guidelines?

The guidelines assist permit applicants (including property owners, architects, planners and builders) in preparing designs for new buildings or works or alterations to existing buildings. They also assist Council's statutory planners and heritage officer in assessing planning applications in Maldon.

From 2018 to 2020, Council carried out a review of the guidelines in collaboration with urban and heritage advisors, and input from the Maldon Design Guidelines Project Advisory Group. This led to an updated version of the guidelines.

Council adopted the final updated guidelines at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 15 September 2020. The updated guidelines bring the guidelines up to date with today's planning policy and legislation. They provide design criteria for new development in Maldon covered by a Heritage Overlay, including the heritage precincts and the areas affected by the Significant Landscape Overlay Schedules 1 and 3.

What is a planning scheme amendment?

To make the guidelines an official document, Council did a planning scheme amendment to get the updated guidelines into the planning scheme. The planning scheme has all of the controls for land use and development that is allowed to happen in the Shire as well as Victoria. Controls like building heights, landscaping requirements, and in this case, heritage design guidelines.

A planning scheme amendment is a change to the planning scheme, meaning Council has changed the controls for land use and development by including the guidelines.

While this planning scheme amendment was only for the guidelines, Council can undertake other types of planning scheme amendments to:

- Rezone land;
- Apply or remove a planning overlay to land;
- Change or introduce a local policy; and/or
- Make minor changes to a zone or overlay through a schedule to the zone or overlay.

In general a planning scheme amendment will take 18 months from when Council begins the legal process, until the final step when it is approved by the Minister for Planning at the State Government level.

An amendment follows a legal process which involves a number of steps like those noted in the image below.



For the guidelines amendment, it took Council 2 years to complete. On 30 March 2023, the Minister For Planning officially approved the amendment to allow the updated guidelines to be included in the planning scheme. The Minister called the amendment “C96malx”.

What is planning scheme amendment C96 – Maldon Design Guidelines?

Amendment C96malx seeks to amend several sections of the planning scheme that are called the Planning Policy Framework, the Schedule to the Significant Landscape Overlay and the Operational Provisions to insert the updated guidelines, to replace the existing guidelines that put in the planning scheme back in 1998.

As the updated guidelines have already been adopted by Council, Amendment C96malx does not change the content of these guidelines but rather introduces them into the planning scheme.

You can view the amendment documentation on Council’s website, by visiting <http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/MaldonDesignGuidelines>

What Land is affected by the amendment?

The amendment applies to all land included within the Maldon township boundary which is covered by one of the following:

- Precinct Heritage Overlay (HO) schedules, including:
 - HO443 - Maldon Historic Reserve.
 - HO444 - Maldon Historic Residential Area.
 - HO445 - Maldon Historic Central Area.
- Site-specific Heritage Overlays; and
- Significant Landscape Overlays Schedule 1 (SLO1) and Schedule 3 (SLO3).

How can I find out if my property is covered by the Heritage Overlay or Significant Landscape Overlay?

If you are unsure if your land is within these areas, you can visit planning.vic.gov.au and search for a Planning Report. Alternatively, please contact Council’s Statutory Planning team on 5471 1700

Why was the Maldon design guidelines amendment required?

The amendment was needed to legally update the guidelines and provide detailed design criteria for new development in Maldon. The updated guidelines improves their overall usability significantly when you compare them to the existing guidelines which were made decades ago and are now out of date.

The amendment and the new guidelines will assist both permit applicants (including property owners, architects, planners and builders) in preparing designs for new buildings or works or alterations to existing buildings, as well as Council’s statutory planners and heritage officer in assessing planning permit applications in Maldon. The guidelines encourage buildings that complement the historic character of Maldon and do not dominate or compete with the cultural significance of the place.

Was there community consultation on the guidelines?

Yes there was indeed. A draft version of the guidelines was released for public consultation in February 2020, along with a background paper. Over a six week consultation period, Council’s Strategic Planning team did a lot of community activities to inform and engage the Maldon community in discussions about the draft guidelines. This included two drop-in sessions in Maldon, a survey, three guided walks through Maldon’s town centre with Council’s heritage advisor, and meetings and conversations with community groups, government agencies and referral authorities.

In addition to survey responses, Council received a number of written submissions from individuals including Maldon residents, business owners and historians, and design and heritage professionals and the National Trust. Feedback on the updated draft guidelines was also provided by the community at two community drop-in sessions in Maldon.

The Strategic Planning unit considered the details of this feedback and key changes were made to the updated guidelines as a result.

Will the areas covered by the Heritage Overlay or Significant Landscape Overlay in Maldon change because of these updated guidelines?

No, there are no to the areas covered by the Heritage Overlay or Significant Landscape Overlay.

How will this impact building or development within the Heritage Overlay or Significant Landscape Overlay?

The amendment will not result in any changes to the need for a planning permit for development in areas covered by the Heritage Overlay or Significant Landscape Overlay in Maldon. The updated guidelines will provide greater assistance to property owners, architects, planners and buildings in designing new development in these areas.

How will these guidelines affect planning applications?

The guidelines will assist Council's statutory planners and heritage officer in assessing planning applications in Maldon because they are a much better set of guidelines than what Council officers have been using for the last few decades. You can find more information on the permit application process by visiting Council's [understanding planning permits](#) page.