The Designing Contextual Housing Guidelines are intended to supplement the Kingston Neighbourhood Character Guidelines, Residential Development Policy and ResCode provisions, and should be read in conjunction with these documents.

Purpose of the Guidelines
These guidelines offer a range of design techniques and suggestions to assist applicants in preparing residential design proposals that are responsive to local character. The design suggestions are intended to be illustrative rather than prescriptive. It is recognised that there may be other design solutions that meet the objectives and requirements of the Character Guidelines, Residential Development Policy and ResCode. These guidelines are intended to help applicants understand what a preferred design response might look like and to illustrate the types of design outcomes that Council is looking for.

Local Area Character
As a starting point, applicants are strongly encouraged to take a walk through the local streets around their development site, examining the local housing in the area against the character profile for that area as set out in the Neighbourhood Character Guidelines. This will help applicants to identify and respond to the major and critical character elements which contribute to local character in that area.

It is recognised that localised exceptions to the character profile of the Neighbourhood Character Area as a whole may exist. The Neighbourhood Character Guidelines and design suggestions contained within this document do not replace the need to consider very local and site specific factors and characteristics.

Responding to Site Context
Planning applicants are ultimately required to demonstrate how their development proposal responds to the site’s neighbourhood context, having regard to the character profile contained within the Neighbourhood Character Guidelines and any local and/or site specific characteristics which exist. It is not sufficient to merely accommodate one or more of the design suggestions contained within the Neighbourhood Character or Designing Contextual Housing guidelines.

Discussion with Council Planners
Planning applicants are encouraged to discuss their development proposal with a Council planning officer at an early stage to ensure that the objectives and requirements of the Neighbourhood Character Guidelines, Residential Development Policy and ResCode are taken into consideration.

Straight to Advertising & Referrals - STAR – Kingston’s new fast track planning process

During the assessment of your proposal a planning officer may believe that your application would be suitable for our STAR program and invite you to participate.

Our STAR program reduces processing timeframes and encourages cooperation between applicants and Planning Officers to identify and resolve issues prior to lodgment.

By successfully participating in the program, Council will commit to preparing, referring and issuing the advertising direction for your application within 10 business days from the date of lodgment. More information on the STAR program can be found on our Pre-Application Services fact sheet.
The ‘Big House’

One of the principal threats to neighbourhood character is the redevelopment of single dwelling lots for medium density housing. The perceived lot pattern and building footprint design suggestions below detail ways of accommodating two or more dwellings within a building form and curtilage that is consistent with the character of a single dwelling on a single lot. This is commonly known as the ‘big house’ concept.

Perceived Lot Pattern

The predominant lot pattern for much of Kingston relates to single dwellings. Medium density housing developments often present a different lot pattern, which can detract from the neighbourhood character. However, if two or more dwellings are combined into a built form that retains the appearance of a single dwelling when viewed from the street, it is possible to increase the number of dwellings on a lot and respect the existing lot pattern. The surrounding private open space areas should also be designed to present the appearance of a single curtilage.

Building Footprint

Neighbourhood character is primarily experienced from the street. The siting of a building and its footprint is important, particularly in streetscapes of detached and semi-detached dwellings where they are an identifiable character element.

Building footprints may vary towards the rear without necessarily detracting from neighbourhood character.

Roof Shape

The roof shape of any new development should be respectful of the prevailing neighbourhood characteristics in terms of materials, roof form and pitch.

The incorporation of eaves is encouraged, particularly where this is a characteristic of the neighbourhood.

Front Boundary and Garden

The front setback area and garden areas of developments play a critical role in contributing to streetscape character. The design of front setback areas should:

- Retain established trees and vegetation.
- Minimise Hard surfacing.
- Provide appropriate landscaping to compliment the new dwelling[s].
- Incorporate at least one (1) advanced tree with a spreading canopy.
- Ensure that fence heights are a maximum of 1.2m in height in order to provide a visual connection with front landscaped gardens. Fencing should incorporate the use of splayed corners, to improve lines of sight for vehicular and pedestrian safety, and provide improved areas for landscaping.
• Ensure that dwellings visually address the street, in order to provide a good visual interface between the public and private realm.
• Contribute towards the mandatory Garden Area Requirements

![Image of Suggested Landscaping Treatment – Option 1]

![Image of Suggested Landscaping Treatment – Option 2]

All planning applications lodged for consideration by Council should include a landscaping concept plan

**Driveways**
Residential parking areas and access driveways should be located and designed so that they have minimal visual impact on the streetscape, yet still provide satisfactory turning circle areas in order for vehicles to exit the site in a forward direction.

Design suggestions for parking areas and access driveways include:
- Narrowing driveway widths to a minimum of 2.6m and 500mm from property boundaries (where workable turning circles are available) in order to utilise the additional area on either side of the driveway for landscaping
- Using of a variety of different textures, colour and materials. Large areas of hard surfacing can be broken up through changes in materials and colours. Some suggestions include:
  - Coloured concrete in a colour to co-ordinate with dwellings.
  - Asphalt with brick edging.
  - Brick Paving.
  - Exposed aggregate.
- Softening the edges of driveways through the use of low level landscaping which overhangs driveway edges and reduces the appearance of hard surfacing.
- Shared crossovers with adjoining properties are discouraged.

**Garages and Carports**
Garages and carports can be visually dominating and inappropriate to the design of dwellings and often have a negative impact upon streetscapes.

A number of methods can be readily utilised to reduce the impact of garaging. It is preferable, where possible, to site garages and carports behind the main dwelling so that they are not clearly visible from the street.

There are a number of garage door options available, the preferred styles being: hinged door, horizontal sliding door, concertina door and panel door.
Design suggestions for garages and carports include:

- Articulating garages and carports to incorporate features of the dwellings such as materials, design, roof form, roof pitch etc.
- Where possible, construct or integrate garages within the roofline of the main dwelling.
- Ensure that Garages and carports are set back behind the main line of the dwelling.

Duplex Dwellings / Side by Side

Duplex and side by side dwellings should be designed having regard to neighbourhood character. In areas where side boundary setbacks are a characteristic of the area this should also be incorporated into the development design.

As with all forms of development, the dominance of garages as viewed from the streets should be reduced and can be achieved through the setting back of garages from the front wall of the dwellings. It is critical that duplex dwellings have a visual interconnection (including habitable windows presenting to the street) and address the street, and that they do not present merely as garaging and front doors only. Staggered front building lines and variation in design and materials will all contribute an improved final outcome.

Duplex and side by side developments should be orientated so that rear private open space areas are orientated north, and provide for the minimum mandatory garden area requirements.

Storage Facilities

Storage Areas should not be located within the private open space dimensions specified within the Schedule to the General Residential 1 zone.
Material and Finishes
The surface treatment of all visible wall elevations of new developments should be articulated to provide both visual interest, and reduce the bulk and massing of new developments. There are a number of techniques which can be successfully and be quite readily incorporated into developments to achieve excellent design outcomes, and which show respectfulness to neighbourhood character and improve the appearance of the final development outcome.

Design techniques to achieve surface articulation may include:

- Changes in materials, colours and/or finishes.
- Use of mouldings and banding.
- ‘Stepping in’ and breaks in large sections of walls.
- Using brickwork for lower sections of walls with upper sections in render or weatherboard.

Other Building Features
Identifiable building features that are a characteristic of the neighbourhood area should be incorporated into the design of new developments to maintain and enhance neighbourhood character. Building elements do not necessarily have to be reproduced exactly, but should be reflected in the building design in a respectful and innovative manner where appropriate. Such elements may include porches, verandas, window forms, and the use of external building materials, etc.