

Dudley Design Guide

This design guide is subject to review and updates pending Council decisions on suburban intensification, expected December 2025.

What is Dudley Character Area?

Dudley is identified in the Christchurch District Plan as a Character Area. It has qualities that make it distinctive and appealing resulting in an attractive and memorable area. The distinctiveness is created through the combination of the character of houses and their surroundings.

The purpose of the Character Area is to ensure the special qualities are identified, retained or enhanced, when people choose to make changes to or redevelop their property.

The Dudley area has been significantly impacted by the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury Earthquakes. Redevelopment both before and after the quakes has seen some changes to houses and sections within Dudley area, that are not complementary to, and otherwise undermine, the still strongly recognisable character of the area. For example, the construction of garages in front gardens or the erection of high fences along the street boundary. These changes can affect the character values of the area for residents and visitors.

The role of the Design Guide

To provide an overview of the special qualities of Dudley and a series of corresponding design principles, which give direction to the development or alteration to houses and sections.

The design principles support and supplement District Plan policies, rules and matters. Development proposals⁺ that require resource consent^{*} are informed by the design principles in this guide, and consequently reviewed against the matters in the District Plan. This guide does not cover every contributing design detail.

If you are considering making changes or rebuilding in the Dudley Character Area it is advised that you seek urban design and planning advice (pre application advice) from the Council early in the design process.

⁺ *Development proposals include changes to the existing site and building, or construction of a new building, for example.*

^{*} *For further District Plan advice please contact Christchurch City Council on (03) 941 8999 and ask for a Duty Planner, or for design assistance ask for an Urban Designer.*

Area overview: Dudley

Dudley has city-wide significance as an intact residential neighbourhood, strong landscape features, consistent house sizes and styles. The key elements that contribute to Dudley's character are:

- A memorable geography with a regular north-south street grid disrupted by Dudley Creek which meanders through the centre of the area.
- Some variation in character from narrow leafy Dudley Street to wider more open streets, the meandering waterways and its adjacent open space.
- High levels of street amenity with established front gardens, mature street trees (especially on Dudley Street and along Dudley Creek), grass and shrub planted berms.
- Generally an intact original subdivision with generous section sizes and a general spaciousness.
- Consistency in building age and style. The original subdivision was comprehensively developed as a result of the construction of the St Albans Park and North Beach tram routes. Many of the original houses date from the early 20th century and are single-storey wooden villas and bungalows.
- The size, form and scale of houses, the roof profile and location of houses on sections are generally consistent along streets.
- Architectural detailing that contributes to a richness in house design and consistency is established through the location, scale and proportion of windows and entrances.



Map of Dudley Character Area – Operative 2 December 2024

Designing to the character of the area does not need to be about replicating original houses. Consider how key elements contribute to the character of Dudley. How might they be incorporated into the design so that new houses and the surrounding landscape complement the existing? This will help ensure that the development reinforces the character of the area future generations can appreciate.



Example of a bungalow on Slater Street.

Area context

This guidance relates to sections 14.15.23 and 8.6.1 of the District Plan.

The area’s context is the neighbourhood environment that makes up Dudley. It includes the street and block layout, the underlying landscape features, heritage associations and the overall visual coherence of the streets, gardens and houses.

Street and block layout

While there was damage to the area as a result of the Canterbury Earthquakes, the original subdivision of Dudley is relatively intact. The majority of sections across the area have not been further subdivided, retaining large sections with mature trees that sets up a regular spacing and pattern of houses, fencing and front gardens along the street.

Design principles:

- Reinforce existing orientation and layout of sections.
- Section widths when viewed from the street should be consistent with adjacent sections along the street.
- When subdividing, share the driveway, retain side gardens and a single boundary fence and between houses.

Landscape and natural features

Dudley Creek is a defining feature and important open space for this Character Area. Extensive recent work along the banks of the waterways in Dudley have opened up spaces that contribute to the amenity and value of the area for the community and residents.

A feature of Dudley is how existing sections engage with the waterways. Houses face Dudley Creek and tributaries, vegetation is low but extensive and bridges, both vehicle and pedestrian, span the creek creating a strong visual and physical connection. Redevelopment of sections that are located adjacent to the creek should continue to embrace it as a defining feature of the area’s landscape.

Design principles:

- Orientate houses to overlook the Dudley Creek and walkways along its banks.
- Integrate pedestrian and vehicle bridges with footpaths along the bank and design for slow vehicle speeds.
- Retain and enhance mature vegetation along the creek edge including trees and shrubs.
- Avoid fencing in the waterways and where fences are necessary retain heights to 1m or less.

Vegetation and street amenity

Established vegetation including trees, shrubs, hedging and lawns within front and rear gardens are a feature of Dudley.

Mature street trees especially on Dudley Street and along the waterways contribute significantly to the Character Area by creating micro-climates, shade and an attractive appearance.

Design principles:

- Retain existing mature trees and vegetation within gardens. However ensure vegetation does not screen views of houses from the street.
- Locate driveways so that they do not interfere with street trees including their root systems.
- Allow for future tree planting and avoid changing the regular spacing of trees along the street.



Site design

Balance of house and garden size

A feature of Dudley is the consistent balance between house and garden size. The area has a general spaciousness when viewed from the street with modest house footprints, generous separation between houses and gardens that contain substantial vegetation.

Design principles:

- Maintain similar building footprint size with existing houses in the Character Area.
- Ensure gardens are of sufficient size to provide for mature trees and vegetation in particular within front and side boundaries.
- Allow a minimum of 3m planted zone to front boundaries which primarily consists of trees and shrubs.
- Allow sufficient space between houses so that separation distances are consistent in the Character Area, vegetation is retained in side gardens and views towards the rear of sections are possible.

House setbacks and orientation

Houses within Dudley are located with consistent setbacks along streets and orientated to face the street. New houses should reaffirm this building edge, which contributes to the engaging pedestrian environment within the Character Area.

Design principles:

- Align new houses with existing adjacent houses along the street.
- When some minor variation to street setback exists, align with the predominant adjacent group of houses.
- Orientate house, entrances, windows and porches to face the street.
- Ensure setbacks are not compromised by additions to existing houses.

Street boundaries

Original houses in Dudley contained low or no fencing on the street boundary, and this openness remains today. Low or no fences allow good visual connection between houses and streets contributing to a sense of neighbourliness and promotes safety.

However, the erection of high fencing along the street more recently in Dudley restricts visual connection to houses undermining the quality of the street environment. Redevelopment of existing sections should aim to achieve an openness along streets.

Design principles:

- Ensure consistent boundary conditions are maintained along the street and fence heights are consistently 1m or less.
- Consider fencing materials that are complementary to the materials of the house.
- Ensure views to and from houses are maintained and not screened by fencing or vegetation.

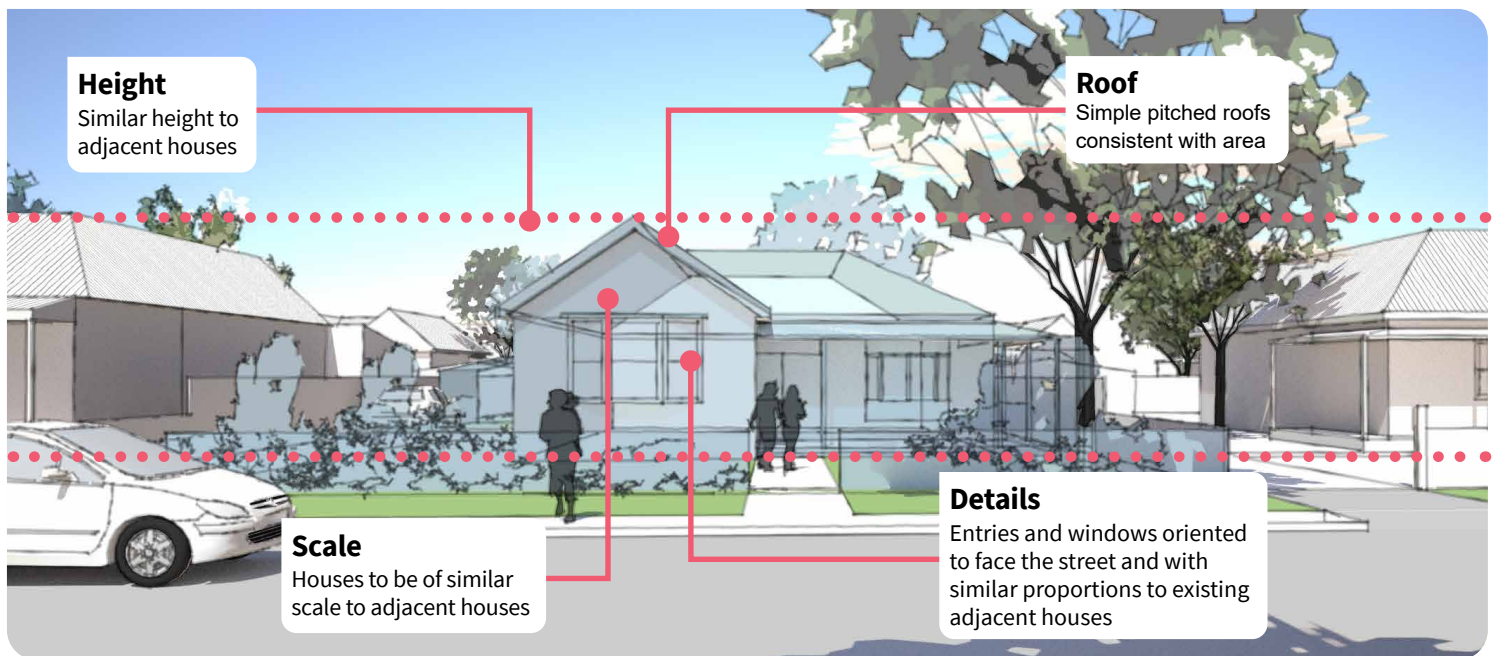
For further guidance refer to Building a Fence Design Guide available on the Christchurch City Council website.

Access parking and garaging

Original houses in Dudley contained vehicle parking to the side or rear of houses. However more recent development has resulted in vehicle garaging and parking in front gardens. This significantly undermines the character of the area by creating blank walls (from garages), resulting in the removal of front yard vegetation and by reducing the visibility of houses from the street.

Design principles:

- Locate garages to the rear of sections or at least behind the front edge of houses.
- Garages should be separate buildings to the main house.
- Coordinate garage and house design in terms of form, materials and colour.
- Do not locate parking between the house and the front boundary.
- Driveways should be discrete and not compromise outdoor living spaces.



Building design

Scale and form

The height of a house and its size are key factors in determining what impact the building will have on its immediate surroundings within the Character Area. This includes how it is perceived from the street and by neighbours, and how successfully it fits with the character of the neighbourhood.

Houses in Dudley are generally single storey, stand alone buildings with modest footprints and low-pitched hip and gable roofs.

Design principles:

- New houses should be single storey, consistent with the height of existing houses in the Character Area. If two storey, build predominantly within the roof form.
- New houses should be similarly scaled and proportioned to existing houses and have similar sized footprints.
- When altering houses, extend towards the rear of the section and building to avoid intruding into the street setbacks.
- Ensure houses in the Character Area have low-pitched gable or hip roofs that are consistent with adjacent houses.



Early 20th century weatherboard dwelling with veranda, symmetrical large front windows, low fence and path to the front door

Architectural detailing

Architectural detailing is often one of the most noticeable expressions of a Character Area. Details are eye-catching and the style or age of houses can be recognised from them.

Houses in Dudley have a range of architectural detailing including weatherboard cladding and corrugated iron roofing, bay and box windows, and occasional shingle detailing on gable ends. A variety of detailed entry features, verandas and porches which are consistent with the 20th century villas and bungalows are also features of the character area.

Design principles:

- Existing houses should be maintained to retain the richness and texture of detailing including attention to window, entrance and façade design.
- Additions and alterations to existing houses should be compatible with the overall proportions and detailing of the original house.
- New houses to reflect existing houses in terms of the proportions and overall style of the window, entrance space and doorway, façade and roof edge details and materials.



A contemporary house illustrating area characteristics including entry porch, gable end and a large window facing the street, low fence and planting