

Englefield Design Guide

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

What is Englefield Character Area?

Englefield is identified in the Christchurch District Plan (District Plan) as a Character Area. It has qualities that make it distinctive and appealing resulting in an attractive and memorable area, with heritage value. 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.

Over time, there have been some changes to houses and sections within Englefield, that are not complementary to, and otherwise undermine, the still strongly recognisable character of the area. For example, especially on Gilby Street where some development has occurred that is not complementary in scale, form or detailing of the buildings. 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 Englefield 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 Englefield 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.



Map of Englefield Character Area

Area overview: Englefield

Englefield has city-wide significance as an intact residential neighbourhood of historic importance for Christchurch, containing some of the earliest houses in the city. The area has a strong sense of place and identity. The key elements that contribute to the Englefield's character are:

- A memorable layout with narrow streets, small sections and narrow street frontages, and an intimate relationship between houses and the streets.
- Historic significance for Christchurch and listed by Heritage New Zealand (Englefield Historic Area).
- Distinct house types that date to early settlement of Christchurch. A high proportion of original houses remain including Victorian workers cottages dating to the 1870s particularly on Hanmer Street, villas and later bungalows interspersed with cottages on Gilby Street and Elm Grove.
- High levels of street amenity with richly planted cottage gardens providing colour, texture and layering along the street edge, as well as trees, shrubs and low vegetation within the street.
- The size, form and scale of houses, the roof profile and location of houses on sections are consistent along streets.
- Houses in the area contribute to a sense of neighbourliness with low boundary fencing, porches and verandas and unobstructed views of the houses from the street.
- Architectural detailing contributes to a richness in house design and consistency is established through the location, scale and proportion of windows and entrances.

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 Englefield. 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.



Examples of Victorian workers cottages on Hanmer 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 Englefield. It includes the street and block layout, the underlying landscape features, heritage associations and the overall visual coherence of the streets, gardens and houses.

Heritage associations

Englefield is an important area for its associations with early settlement of Christchurch. Many of the houses date back to the late 19th century, and the building style and physical form including size are a representation of early settlement.

Respecting these heritage houses through sympathetic scale, size and location of new development will help to retain the special impression that the neighbourhood creates.

Design principles:

- Consider the overall qualities of original houses and how they might inform the design of new houses.
- Design houses and boundary fencing such that they do not overpower, cast shadow or box in adjacent original houses or heritage values.

Street and block layout

The original block, street and section layout of Englefield is relatively intact with small back to back sections orientated in an east to west direction.

The majority of sections across the area have not been further subdivided, resulting in original sized sections which sets up a regular spacing and pattern of houses, fencing and front gardens along the street.

Design principles:

- Retain existing orientation and layout of sections.
- Retain existing section sizes, as a reduction or increase in section size will likely result in a change in house form and location of houses on sections.
- Section widths when viewed from the street should be consistent with adjacent sections along the street and the original subdivision pattern.

Vegetation and street amenity

Richly planted front gardens with trees, shrubs, hedging, climbing plants and herbaceous low vegetation are a feature of Englefield. These cottage gardens contribute significantly to the amenity value of the area for residents and visitors.

Design principles:

- Reinforce and enhance existing mature vegetation within front gardens.
- Consider vegetation that is of a scale and type that will contribute to the scale and amenity of the street.



Site design

Balance of house and garden size

A feature of Englefield is the consistent balance between the size of houses and gardens. House footprints are small and proportional to the small size of sections. Houses are located in the front half of sections with larger rear gardens and mature trees creating a backdrop when viewed from the street. Smaller front gardens contribute to the richness and texture of vegetation at the street boundary.

Design principles:

- Maintain similar building footprint size and proportionality with gardens in the Character Area.
- Focus development in the front half of sections allowing small front gardens and larger rear gardens (with sufficient space for trees).
- Avoid developing blocks of flats such as those at 7,9,11 and 15 Gilby Street, which compromise rear and front garden space and undermine the character of the area.
- Allow a minimum of 3m planted zone to front boundaries that contributes to the richness, texture and colour of vegetation along the street.

House setbacks and orientation

Houses within Englefield are located with consistently narrow setbacks along streets and are orientated to face the street. This results in an intimate relationship between houses and 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 occurs 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

The consistent height, diversity of materiality, texture and style of boundary conditions are an important feature of Englefield. Materials vary from property to property and include timber picket fencing, low brick or stone walls, iron railings, hedging and vegetation or a combination of these.

Fencing is consistently low, allowing good visual connection between houses and streets, contributing to a sense of neighbourliness and safety.

Design principles:

- Ensure fence heights are consistently 1m or less.
- Ensure views to and from houses are maintained and not screened by fencing or vegetation.
- Maintain diversity in materiality and focus on the quality of fence design and details.

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

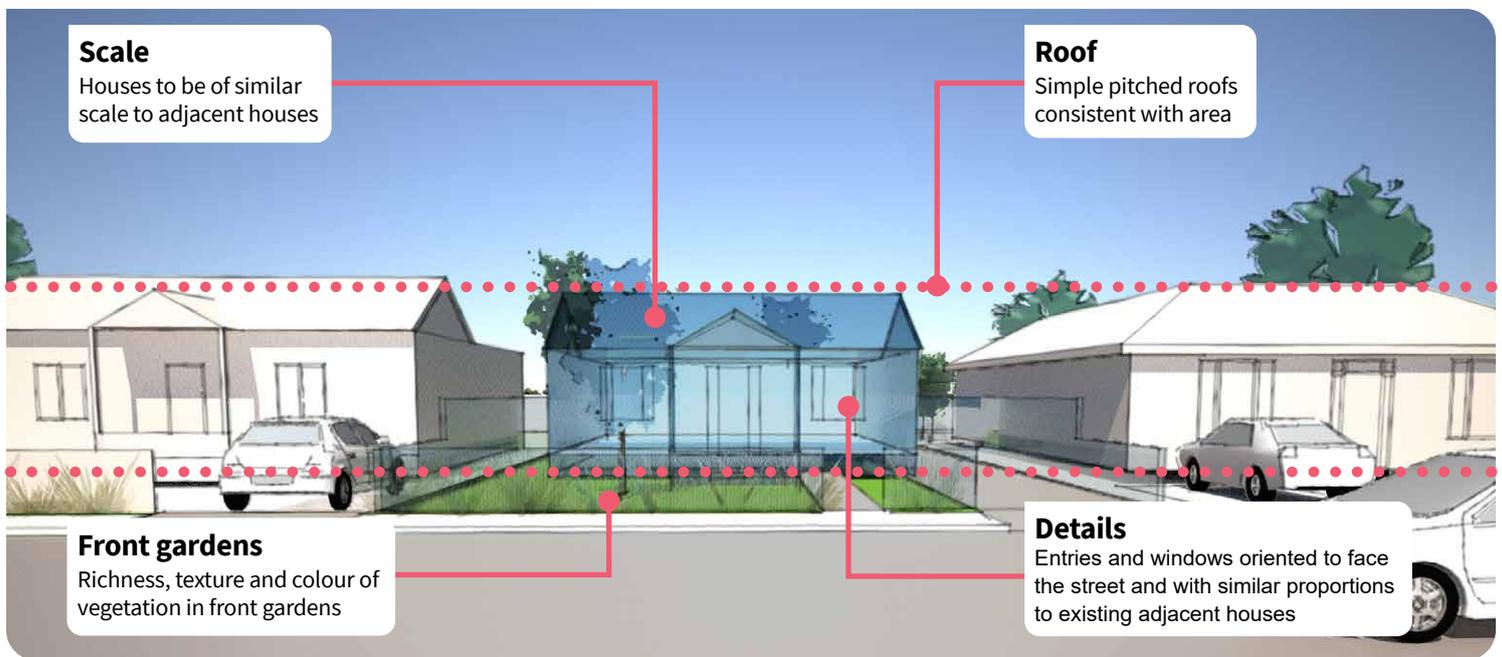
Access parking and garaging

When garages are present in Englefield, they are generally small and located to the side or rear of houses. This avoids undermining the character of the area.

Some discrete off-street parking is located in front setbacks adjacent to side boundaries but generally doesn't compromise the quality of front gardens.

Design principles:

- Locate garages to the rear or side of houses and coordinate garage and house design in terms of form, materials and colour.
- Driveways should be discrete and not compromise front gardens.
- Off-street parking should be direct, discrete, and adjacent to side boundaries to minimise impact on front gardens.



Scale
Houses to be of similar scale to adjacent houses

Roof
Simple pitched roofs consistent with area

Front gardens
Richness, texture and colour of vegetation in front gardens

Details
Entries and windows oriented to face the street and with similar proportions to existing adjacent houses

Building design

Scale and form

The height and size of a house 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 Englefield are generally single storey stand-alone buildings with small or modest footprints and pitched hip and gable roofs. The Victorian workers cottages on Hanmer Street all have pitched roofs with gable ends, expressed in a perpendicular orientation to the street.

Design principles:

- New houses should be single storey, consistent with the height of existing houses in the Character Area.
- 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 street setbacks.
- Ensure houses in the Character Area have pitched gable or hip roofs that are consistent with adjacent houses and the same style of house.

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 Englefield have a range of architectural detailing and are consistent with the type of house. The Victorian workers cottages are simple in form, and include detailing such as weatherboard cladding and corrugated iron roofing, front porches and entrance features, and sash windows either side of front door that face the street. Villas and bungalows include detailing such as weatherboard cladding and corrugated iron roofing, sash and bay windows, occasional shingle detailing on gable ends, a variety of detailed entry features, verandas and porches.

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.
- Design new houses to reflect existing houses in terms of the proportions and overall style of the windows, entrance space and doorways, façade and roof edge details and materials.