

Piko Design Guide

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

What is Piko Character Area?

Piko 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. 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 Piko, 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 and reserve boundaries. 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 Piko 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 Piko 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: Piko

Piko has city-wide significance as an intact residential neighbourhood with a strong sense of place and identity. This comprehensively designed state housing development, established in the late 1930s, has historical importance. The key elements that contribute to the character of Piko are:



Map of Piko Character Area

- A comprehensively designed state house subdivision with intact layout and original houses.
- A memorable layout where houses align and face onto the curving crescents and back onto public open spaces, distinctive from the regular grid of the surrounding area.
- Two distinct areas with primarily two storey row and duplex houses on Shand Crescent and Tara Street, and single stand-alone houses on Piko Crescent.
- High levels of amenity with mature vegetation and landscape features in three large reserves, established front gardens, mature street trees and grassed berms.

- The size, form and scale of houses, the roof profiles and location of houses on sections are generally consistent along streets.
- Houses in the area contribute to a sense of neighbourliness, with low boundary fencing and unobstructed views to and from the houses and the street.
- Architectural detailing contributes to the interest and unity in house design, and consistency is established through the location, scale and proportion of entrances and windows.

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 Piko. 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 row of houses on Shand Crescent



Example of duplex houses on Shand Crescent



Example of a house on Piko Crescent



Example of the attention to front entry detailing

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 Piko. It includes the street and block layout, the underlying landscape features, heritage associations and the overall visual coherence and unity of the streets, gardens and houses.

Street and block layout

The original block, street and section layout of Piko is generally intact with houses orientated along the curving Piko Crescent and Shand Crescent. Section widths at the street boundary are consistent, which sets up a regular spacing and rhythm of houses and front gardens along the street.

Some subdivision has occurred with new houses located behind the original houses, separate driveways and associated fencing. This has resulted in a reduction in the widths of front and side gardens and vegetation, and in some cases the location of garages in front gardens has had negative impact on the character of Piko.

Design principles:

- Reinforce existing orientation and layout of sections.
- Ensure section widths are consistent with the original subdivision and adjacent sections along the street.
- When subdividing, have a shared driveway with planting along its edge on the site boundary.

Landscape and natural features

Shand Reserve, Paeroa Reserve and Harrington Park are significant open spaces within Piko. These parks provide a sense of spaciousness, landscape quality, recreation and play spaces, which are important features of the area's character.

Design principles:

- Houses to face both street and reserve boundaries with windows overlooking both, and front doors facing the street.

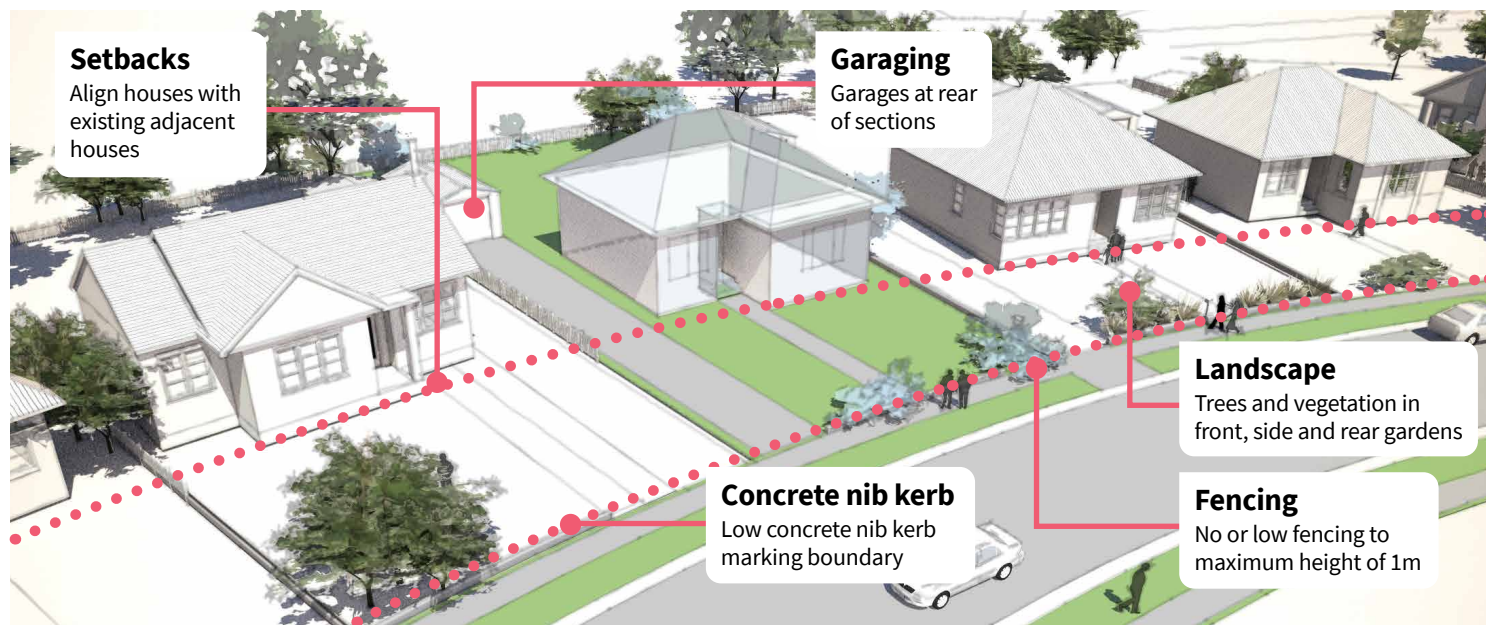
Vegetation and street amenity

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

Mature street trees within open space reserves in particular, 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.
- Maintain separate pedestrian front gates and pathways from the street.



Site design

Balance of house and garden size

A feature of Piko 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 large front, rear and side gardens.

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 sufficient space between houses so that separation distances are consistent in the Character Area.
- Retain side gardens and views towards the rear of sections.

House setbacks and orientation

Houses within Piko 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

Sections in Piko generally have no or low fencing along the street frontage, allowing good visual connection between houses and streets. This contributes to an inclusive neighbourhood which promotes safety.

In the absence of fencing, sections in Piko have raised concrete nib marking the boundary.

Design principles:

- Ensure consistent boundary conditions are maintained along the street and fence heights are 1m or less.
- Maintain existing raised concrete nib kerb as a boundary feature.
- 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.

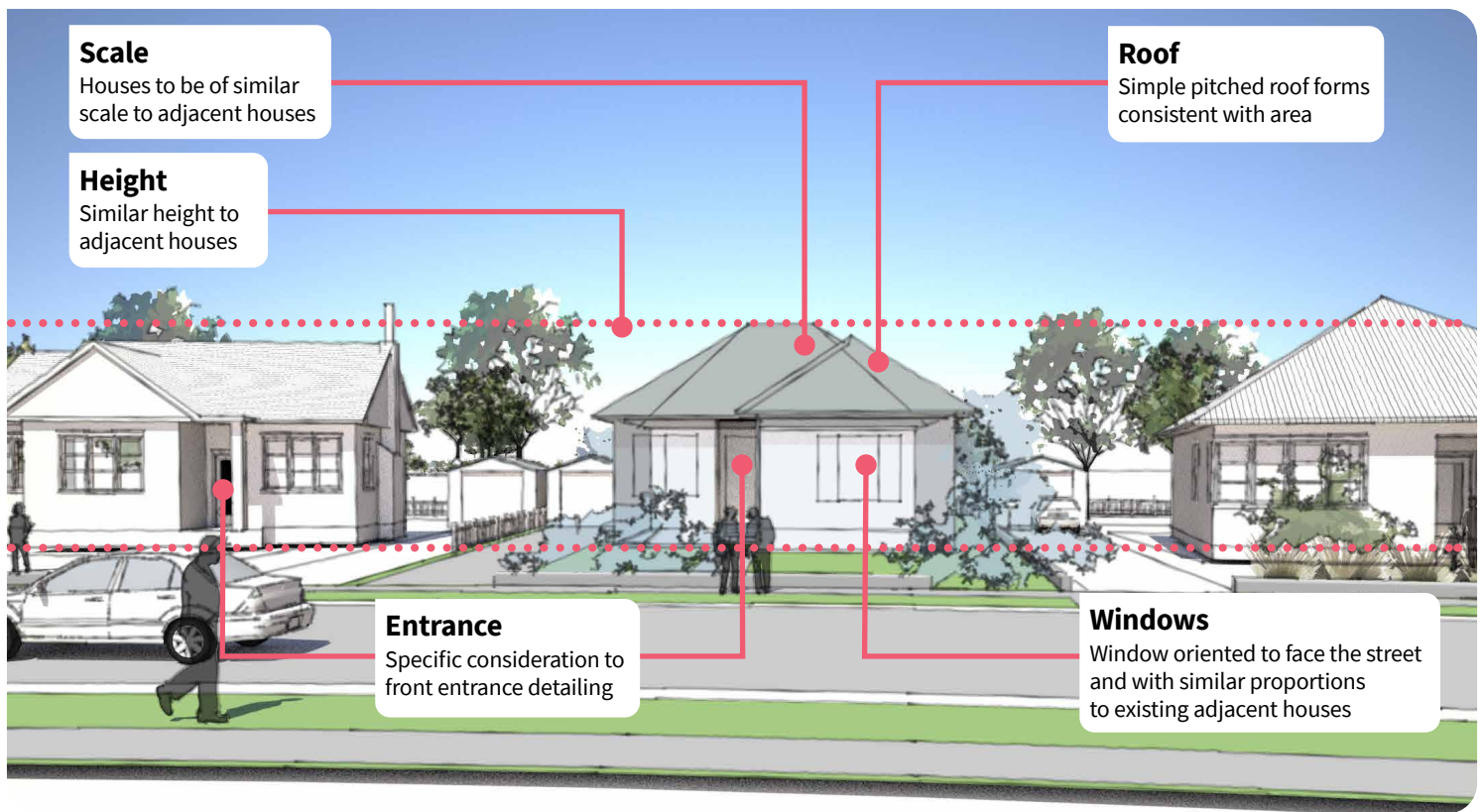
For further guidance refer to Building a Fence Design Guide available on the Christchurch City Council website.

Access parking and garaging

Parking and garages were not an original feature of Piko. The impacts of the introduction of parking in Piko has been minimised by the location of vehicle garaging and parking to the side or rear of houses. Garages in Piko are generally stand-alone buildings and separated from the house.

Design principles:

- Locate garages to the rear of the section 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.
- Ensure small sized garages consistent with existing garages in the Character Area.
- Do not locate parking between the house and the front boundary.



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 on Shand Crescent and Tara Street are primarily two storey, larger row and duplex houses and on Piko Crescent single stand alone modest sized houses. Generally houses have pitched hip roofs with the occasional gable end.

Design principles:

- New houses should be a consistent height (and number of storeys) with existing houses in the Character Area and adjacent houses on the street.
- New houses should be similarly scaled and proportioned to existing houses and with similar sized footprints.
- Additions to existing houses should be consistent with the overall form and scale of the original house.
- When altering houses, extend towards the rear of the section to avoid intruding into street setbacks.
- Houses in the Character Area have simple pitched roofs.

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 Piko have a range of architectural detailing which is in general consistent with state housing of the 1930s and 1940s. Some special features such as the individual attention to detail around entrances and the combination of materials are unique to Piko.

Detailing such as timber weatherboard, brick, or stucco cladding and corrugated iron or concrete tile roofing feature throughout. Finer ornamental detail to entrance awnings, porch columns, and front doors provide features to each house. Simple window details, but with consistent proportions and location on houses, are common throughout the 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 proportionality and overall style of the window, entrance space and doorway, façade and roof edge details and materials.

