

URBAN DESIGN OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL CITY ZONE

This policy applies to land in the municipality excluding the Capital City Zone and the Docklands Zone.

Policy Basis

Melbourne's buildings, streets, open spaces and landscape features combine to give the municipality its unique appearance and feeling.

It is important that the valued aspects of the City's character are not lost through redevelopment. Where the built form character of an area is established and valued, new development must respect this character and add to the overall quality of the urban environment.

In areas where built form change is more substantial, a new and equally attractive environment must be created. The Municipal Strategic Statement identifies areas where there is a desire for built form change and a preferred new built form character. The Design Objectives and Built Form Outcomes in the Design and Development Overlays also guide the scale and form of development in the creation of a new built form character. The Municipal Strategic Statement sets out the objectives for built form and heritage.

Objectives

- To ensure that the scale, siting, massing and bulk of development complements the scale, siting, massing and bulk of adjoining and nearby built form.
- To ensure that the height of buildings relates to the prevailing patterns of height and scale of existing development in the surrounding area.
- To reduce unacceptable bulk in new development.
- To ensure that buildings on prominent sites are designed to achieve a high standard of design which reflects the importance of their location and extent of their visibility.
- To ensure that building design including the use of materials and activities at the ground floor frontages of buildings creates and improves pedestrian interest and engagement.
- To ensure that development includes architecturally integrated building tops.
- To ensure that development uses design and detail to ensure all visible facades (including the rear and sides of buildings) provide a rich and positive contribution to the public realm.
- To ensure that development avoids ambiguity and conflict in the design of fronts and backs of buildings.
- To ensure that development contributes to a pedestrian and vehicular network which ensures pedestrian movement and amenity is a priority and strengthens networks of pedestrian pathways through an area.
- To ensure that development maintains and enhances traditional street patterns of projecting cornices, and allows projecting balconies and canopies where they follow an existing pattern and/or contribute positively to the public realm.
- To ensure that development promotes building forms that will minimise the adverse impacts of wind in surrounding public spaces and provide weather protection where appropriate.
- To ensure that development creates and maintains a high quality landscape setting.

Policy

It is policy that:

Scale

- The relative size of buildings and their parts be considered in terms of human scale, building scale, subdivision patterns, and building location and alignment.

- The scale of new development is encouraged to respond to the scale of surrounding development both in terms of its overall dimensions and the size of its individual architectural elements.
- In areas where the desire for built form change has been identified, the scale of new development is encouraged to respond to the scale of the emerging preferred new built form.

Context

- Buildings and works are encouraged to respond to the building and settlement pattern of the surrounding area acknowledging that any development is part of a larger setting and that each setting is different.
- In areas where the desire for built form change has been identified, new buildings and works should consider the potential for other development to occur in the immediate environment and respect the ability for surrounding sites to be at least equally developed.
- An application will be assessed against the qualities of contextual response being scale, building grain, building location and alignment, and heritage.

Building Height

- The height of new development should respect the existing built form of the immediate surroundings.
- In areas where the desire for built form change has been identified, the height of new development is encouraged to respond to the height of the emerging preferred new built form character.

Building Bulk

- The massing and design of large new buildings is discouraged from overwhelming the built scale of any important pattern and character of existing built form.
- The articulation of a building's form and surface treatment is encouraged to moderate the apparent bulk by using techniques such as :
 - creating contrast between recessive and projecting elements of a building's various frontages;
 - the apparent subdivision of its street frontages to reflect neighbouring frontage subdivision patterns; and
 - the break-up of a building's overall volume into a number of sub-volumes to modify its perceived size.
- Where these techniques are ineffective, other techniques including dimensional constraints such as setbacks and reshaping of the building form are encouraged.

Large and Prominent Sites

- New development in prominent locations will be encouraged to use building design, including the design of certain building elements as well as other techniques of perceived scale and contrast to acknowledge this prominence.
- Building siting should be used to contribute meaning and positive effect to the public realm but not at the expense of the important contextual qualities of the built surroundings of the development site.
- Developments on large sites are encouraged to provide laneway and pedestrian through block links.

Street Level Frontages

- In commercial and mixed use areas, ground floor occupancies to street frontages of new development are encouraged to directly engage with the street and be visually evident from the street.

- In circumstances where the immediate potential for active use is limited, building design is encouraged to make provision for the ultimate conversion of ground floor frontages to active uses.
- The design of residential and institutional buildings is encouraged to provide ground level interest to engage with the street through a direct relationship of ground floor entries, front doors and windows at or adjacent to the street.
- Solid roller shutters are prohibited on shopfronts. Open mesh security or transparent grills are preferred and should be mounted internal to the shopfront.

Fronts and Backs of Buildings

- The fronts and backs of buildings are encouraged to be developed in ways that connect with and acknowledge the prevailing structure of neighbouring public space.
- Development is encouraged to give prominence to the principal street entrance and frontage of a building.
- Building design is encouraged to acknowledge local access patterns when locating front and rear entrances and associated activities.

Building Tops

- All roof elements including plant, lift over-runs, and other building services are encouraged to be absorbed within the overall building form or be included as part of overall roof design.

Visible Facades and Blank Walls

- Design consideration is encouraged to compose and articulate all visible frontages of a building.
- The development of a blank building wall along street frontages or that is visible from streets and other public spaces is discouraged.
- The visible service areas (and other utility requirements) of a building are encouraged to be treated as an integral part of the overall design and fully screened from public areas.

Pedestrian Connection and Vehicle Access

- The design of new development is encouraged to maintain and enhance the existing form of pedestrian access of the development site unless it can be demonstrated that it can be relocated to achieve an equal level of pedestrian amenity and accessibility.
- The design of new development is encouraged to provide for new pedestrian links and laneways where there is an absence of such connections.
- Where new development involves the master planning or development of very large sites, it is encouraged that a subdivision pattern of publicly accessible streets, pedestrian links, laneways and appropriate public spaces will be achieved.
- Discourage alcoves to ensure safe pedestrian environments.
- Encourage access, lighting, visibility, and surface detailing to ensure a safe and interesting pedestrian environment.
- The design of new vehicular and pedestrian networks both within and surrounding a development is encouraged to minimise traffic conflicts with pedestrians.
- Vehicle crossings to pedestrian footpaths are encouraged to:
 - be limited to the minimum necessary for access requirements;
 - avoid, where possible, the aggregation of vehicle crossings.
- New vehicle crossings are discouraged in many heritage streetscapes.

Building Projections

- Enclosed floor spaces overhanging the public space are generally not encouraged.
- Open balconies/canopies, projecting cornices and other similar building elements that overhang public space beyond a building's boundaries are discouraged, except if they follow a local pattern, contribute positively to the design outcome and to the safety of public spaces, are discreet rather than prevailing elements of a building's design and provide evidence of the building's occupation. Projections over laneways are discouraged in circumstances where they would detrimentally impact on the servicing requirements of the lane.
- Enclosed floor space and balcony projections are discouraged at first floor level or at a clearance height less than 5 metres from any public space.

Protection from Wind and Rain

- The design of new development is encouraged to consider the possible wind effects of building proposals on their surroundings.
- In areas where there is an established pattern of continuous weather protection along a street, the design of new development is encouraged to reinforce this pattern.
- Weather protection need not be provided where it would interfere with the integrity or character of heritage buildings.

Landscape

- New development is encouraged to respect and maintain the garden or landscape character of an area where this is a dominant feature of the neighbourhood.
- New buildings are encouraged, where possible, to retain existing mature trees and to provide opportunities to enhance the landscape features of the area. In circumstances where mature trees are removed, developers are encouraged to incorporate suitable replacement planting.

Access and Safety in Public Spaces

- Public spaces should be designed to be easily accessible and available for public use.
- Design of public spaces should ensure safe and adequate access for people with disabilities.
- Pedestrian circulation and through-access in public spaces should be designed to allow ease of access.
- Active uses are encouraged to abut the street and public spaces so as to increase interest, use, and the perception of safety.
- Lighting is encouraged to be provided to improve safety.
- Alcoves and spaces that cannot be observed by pedestrians are discouraged.
- Building lighting design is encouraged to be fully integrated and contribute to the public amenity.
- On major streets and other areas of pedestrian activity, windows at ground floor level should be maximised to provide surveillance.

Definitions for the Purpose of this Policy

Scale: the relative size of development both in terms of its overall dimensions and the size of its individual architectural elements in comparison to those of its surrounds.

Building grain: the characteristic pattern of land subdivision and related built form within an area. It makes specific reference to frontage widths along the edges to streets, laneways and other public spaces. Distinctions are made between *fine grain* patterns where consistently narrow frontages are accompanied by finely detailed building frontages and *coarse grain* patterns where the frontage widths are wide and building frontages are less articulated and detailed in their aspect.

Building alignment and location: the location and alignment of individual buildings and their related outdoor spaces relative to the established composition patterns of streets, laneways and other public spaces within a particular area.