

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY 17

STREET FRONTAGE DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR DISTRICT CENTRES AND COMMERCIAL AREAS ALONG ALBANY HIGHWAY

1. INTRODUCTION

- a) As part of the Council's objective to attract more people to these areas, this Policy focuses on the contribution made by buildings to the character and comfort of the immediate pedestrian environment of the shopping and commercial areas along Albany Highway and adjoining side streets.

2. AIM

- a) This Policy is to assist owners, occupiers and designer to carry out renovations or new developments for all uses in predominantly shopping areas, in order to provide appropriate building frontages of high quality design.
- b) This Policy aims to assist the Council as a basis for making decisions on developments.

3. POLICIES

- a) Location of frontages
- b) Activities adjacent to the frontage
- c) Facade design
- d) Security
- e) Heritage buildings
- f) Lighting
- g) Colours
- h) Signage
- i) Awnings and Verandahs
- j) Plant Management
- k) Alfresco dining on public footpaths

4. DEFINITIONS

- a) **Shopfronts** - are that part of a building fronting public footpaths within this area and include shops, real estate agents, travel agents, banks, hairdressers, medical and dental centres, etc.
- b) **Notable Buildings** - are those buildings which have special architectural or historic interest within the context of the streetscape and/or the surrounding Precinct's historic development. They are buildings that have heritage value whether formally listed or not.
- c) **Traditional** - that which has been accepted from generation to generation.

5. OBJECTIVES

- a) To recognise the needs of business operators to function effectively and to balance these needs with those of the community and users of the public domain.
- b) To create a comfortable pedestrian environment within visually attractive, interesting and welcoming streetscapes that are representative of the locality and community, as befits these important suburban centres.
- c) To ensure that all buildings will contribute in a positive manner to the area as a safe, secure and pleasant place to be at all times.
- d) To conserve the variety of styles, ages and types of buildings, including shopfronts, that contribute to cultural interest, historical depth and value to the area and the streetscape.
- e) To foster window shopping as a major activity, at least until midnight.
- f) To ensure that new buildings complement and enhance the locality.
- g) To ensure that all signs are in keeping with a pedestrian environment and the amenity of the immediate vicinity.

6. POLICIES

6.1. Introduction

- a) All building frontages, shops, offices, warehouses and residential units contribute to the character, atmosphere and comfort of the surrounding public spaces. Buildings that are well presented, with interesting architectural or decorative detail, good lighting and with a sense of being inhabited or used regularly contribute to make people feel welcome and secure. Such buildings also reflect well on the owners and the area.
- b) People stay out in lively urban places, remaining in the streets to sit, wait, watch, meet and talk. Buildings with irregular frontages or niches, where people can stand, sit or perch, support some of the street's social functions. Verandahs provide protection from the weather and make the street more comfortable for pedestrians. Thus buildings by their appearance and structure can contribute positively to making a shopping trip or a visit a pleasure.

6.2. Location of Frontages

a) Explanation

In urban areas such as town centres, streets enclosed closely by well designed buildings are more friendly, sheltered and secure. Streets where buildings are setback are more aloof and the buildings themselves tend to dominate at the expense of pedestrian comfort.

b) Policy

- i. generally all buildings, including corner sites, should be built to the footpath and cover the full width of the site.

- ii. bank teller machines or fast food outlets should be set back sufficiently from the boundary to accommodate queues.
- iii. on adjoining side streets, away from the corner site, the setbacks should be as far as those of the nearest residential area.

6.3. Activities Adjacent To The Frontage

a) Explanation

All street level frontages should provide interest to the passing pedestrian.

b) Policy

- i. all street level frontages should provide displays or visible activity and a high degree of architectural design detail at a pedestrian scale.
- ii. vehicle parking areas and plant rooms or service areas are not acceptable on any Highway or corner site frontage. Nor should they be placed on side street frontages unless there is no alternative,

6.4 Facade Design

a) Scale, proportion and details - explanation

Large buildings with predominantly horizontal lines create a tiring and intimidating pedestrian environment, with a sense of endless distances to walk. Vertical facade rhythms/patterns and interesting details make the walk alongside feel shorter.

b) Policy

- i. the traditional predominant buildings on corner sites, should be built to the footpath and cover the full width of the site.
- ii. the scale should be in keeping with the traditional scale of the area and a pedestrian environment.
- iii. long straight, unrelieved, horizontal lines at awning or parapet level should be broken by interesting design devices to suit a pedestrian environment and the building. Any slope in the land should be reflected in stepped awnings and parapets.

6.5 Facade Height

a) Explanation

New development need not be exactly the same height as the old, however it should be in sympathy with the existing predominant height. New development should fit into the landscape, not dominate it.

Street corners should be reinforced, buildings could be built slightly higher and/or could incorporate features such as a tower or turret to enhance their importance, an existing example would be the Broken Hill Hotel.

b) Policy

- i. any new development that is adjacent to a heritage or notable building should provide scale, proportions, parapet height, colour and amount of detailing similar to that building and so provide a harmonious context to that building.
- ii. where a heritage or notable building is a landmark building, such as the Broken Hill Hotel, any adjacent new building should not overwhelm it.

6.6. Windows/Glazing

a) Explanation

Shopfronts have a major impact on the quality and vitality of adjacent public footpaths and open spaces. Shopfronts change frequently, with new users and new images. Many changes however fail to meet the environmental/social needs of the shop's location. For example, a new shop on the Highway installs a roller door, effectively cutting out window shopping after hours. Window shopping is a major attraction for visiting the Highway in the evening and supports adjacent restaurants.

In addition it is important that glazing itself, by tinting or reflection does not obscure views into buildings from street level, thus contributing to an environment that is indifferent even hostile to the pedestrian.

b) Policy

- i. at least 60% of the total length of the facade along the footpath should be transparent. The continuity of glazing should be broken to provide interest by solid (opaque) vertical panels, framework and/or strong visual displays.
- ii. a high level of detailing or decoration in design, structure, colour and materials, should be provided to enhance the interest from the street.
- iii. windows, including shop windows, should be designed in the style of the building and detailed to provide interest for the pedestrian. Interesting stall risers, fascia and shopfront framework should be provided.
- iv. roller doors of solid material, including see through acrylic are not acceptable.
- v. reflective or heavily tinted glazing is not encouraged on any building.

6.7. Entrance

a) Explanation

Buildings with obvious and visible access (from the footpath) to upper and basement floors add an extra dimension to the street, appearing more friendly and accessible.

b) Policy

- i. entrances to a building or shop should be clearly visible and should not be obscured by columns, planting or other features. Major doorways should be evident as such, with minor entrances also easily seen.
- ii. predominant traditional entrance patterns in any street should be maintained and reinstated. Access to all new buildings should reflect the traditional access pattern of the street.
- iii. any existing front access to floors above ground level or to basements should be retained to encourage potential residential and/or mixed uses on these floors and enhance the integration of different uses by easy access.
- iv. major entrances should include access for people of limited mobility. Access will be required as under the Building Code of Australia.

6.8. Security

a) Explanation

Security is of importance, however it should not contribute to making the street feel fortified and hostile to the pedestrian.

b) Policy

- i. new developments / shopfronts should incorporate protection into the structure itself as permanent security bollards are generally not acceptable on the footpath.
- ii. additional security precautions should be designed, as a decorative element or as unobtrusively as possible, in keeping with the buildings' architectural style and materials.

6.9. Roller Doors

a) Policy

- i. roller doors/shutters of any solid material, including clear acrylic, are not acceptable on front ground floor facades.
- iii. open metal roller grills, providing they comply with the above and allow for window shopping or internal lights (offices etc.) to be seen are acceptable.

6.10 Bollards

a) Policy

Permanent footpath bollards to provide security for a shopfront are generally not acceptable.

6.11 Heritage Buildings

a) Explanation

Older buildings with their varied ages and styles are an asset that provide cultural interest and integrity to the locality's visible historical development.

Also refer to the R-Codes Volume 2 'Apartments' which may prevail over requirements in this Policy

The current list of buildings protected under the Town Planning Scheme is not exclusive. Due to the need for constant monitoring and updating of the list of heritage buildings, new buildings are periodically included in the Town Planning Scheme as their value becomes apparent.

b) Policy

- i. all recognised heritage buildings should retain any original shopfronts, entries or foyers. Front entries and stairs to floors above or to basements below a shopfront should be retained to encourage an appropriate mixing of activities, particularly residential on the upper floors.
- ii. notable building facades should be treated with the same respect accorded a heritage building, including treatment of shopfronts.
- iii. should it be necessary to replace or insert a shopfront, or other part of the facade, to a heritage or notable building then that shopfront/part should be designed to be in sympathy with the style, proportions, scale (both vertical and horizontal), materials, detailing and use of materials in and of that building.

6.12. Lighting

a) Explanation

All lighting should be in keeping with the character of the shopping area and should not impinge on the surrounding residential areas.

b) Policy

- i. shopfronts should allow a clear view into the shop or window display and should be lit after hours until midnight.
- ii. any recessed areas within a building frontage or any access way between buildings should be well lit at all times.
- iii. strobe lighting, to attract attention, is not appropriate in these areas.
- iv. rear car parking for public use should be well lit, but with regard for the amenity of adjacent residential areas.

6.13. Colours

a) Explanation

The use of complementary and naturally occurring colour will enhance and distinguish the unique character of Victoria Park and East Victoria Park as urban places rather than mere collections of buildings.

b) Policy

- i. buildings that impinge on a landscaped 'natural' environment such as the Swan River foreshore or Read Park, should seek to complement the landscape with colour.

- ii. colour should be used so that every building is different and interesting but not at the expense of its neighbours.
- iii. unpainted brick walls on heritage and notable buildings should not be painted.
- iv. on older buildings, including heritage buildings, where a brick facade has been previously painted, any new colour scheme should differentiate between brick, render and wood surfaces. Thus the original pattern of the façade can be reinstated through the use of colour.

6.14 Signage

a) Explanation

Well designed and placed signs can be an excellent introduction to a business. Often a proliferation of overlarge signs threatens to engulf streets. This causes a sense of visual chaos and a loss of the local character and identity. Others are like a crowd of people all yelling at once and not one stands out to be remembered. Others cause obstruction on the public footpath.

b) Policy

- i. all buildings should clearly display their street numbers, in a large typeface, as required under the Local Government Act.
- ii. all signs should be in keeping with the character of the building and the surrounding locality.
- iii. signs should not obscure:
 - architectural detailing including windows;
 - views of the buildings to which they are attached; or
 - views of neighbouring buildings.
- iv. signs attached to a building should be restricted to ground floor level, under awnings and the fascia of an awning. A sign above this level might be approved, if it is in keeping with the architecture; does not obscure or duplicate existing signs; and allows space on the frontage to accommodate the identity of other occupiers.
- v. roof top signs are generally not acceptable.
- vi. signs on heritage and other notable buildings above ground floor level may be permitted if the sign occupies an architectural space, such as a window or recessed area, traditionally used for signs. The sign should look as if it is made in the traditional manner.
- vii. signs attached to heritage buildings should be erected with extreme care so as not to damage old brick, render or timber work, whether painted or not.
- viii. neon and animated light signs may be appropriate in areas where night-time entertainment is a major use but not in or close to other areas where neighbouring residential amenity could be adversely affected.

Also refer to the R-Codes, Volume 1, 'Apartments' which may prevail over 'Apartments in this Policy'

- ix. all signs require a licence from the Council's Building Department Signage should comply with the relevant By-laws and Policies.

6.15. Awnings and Verandahs

a) Explanation

The prime function of verandahs is the protection of the pedestrian from the weather. Their use is encouraged. Verandah posts may be unacceptable in some places, for example where the footpath is already cluttered with traffic light poles, major road signs and bus shelters/seating etc.

b) Policy

- i. continuous weather protection along footpath is to be provided.
- ii. verandah roofs should be of solid light impenetrable material and should provide full shade and shelter from sun, wind and rain.
- iii. if verandahs are provided they, and their supports, if any, should be designed to complement the building's architecture and scale.
- iv. the retention of well established shade trees should have priority over new awnings/verandahs, which should be set back to accommodate existing mature street trees.
- v. support posts for verandahs should be set 600mm in from the kerbline.
- v. verandahs and awnings must comply with the relevant By-laws.

6.16. Plant Management

a) Explanation

The importance of shade and green plants both to the aesthetics and the comfort of the environment cannot be overestimated. The careful use and maintenance of trees, pot plans and or creepers with pots and/or appropriate frames to give care and distinction to a business frontage is encouraged.

b) Policy

- i. large shade tree planting should be provide for any customer car parking to the rear of the property. One shade free to every 4 car bays.
- ii. shade trees chosen, for rear car parks, should be species appropriate for the purpose.

6.17. Alfresco Dining on Public Footpaths

a) Explanation

Alfresco dining can contribute to making the street an enjoyable and welcoming place to be. It should however not be put in place at the expense of pedestrian use of the public footpath.

b) Policy

- i. alfresco dining should be confined in front of the applicants premises leaving a 2.5m strip parallel and adjacent to the kerb clear for pedestrians.
- ii. applications must be submitted to Council for any proposed Alfresco Dining on public footpaths or verges for assessment and determination.

*Also refer to the R-Codes, Volume 2 'Apartments'
which may prevail over requirements in this Policy*