

## **POLICY**

### **1. Purpose**

Development applications within the Town of Victoria Park are assessed in accordance with the Town's planning and legislative framework. The aim of this document is not to replicate development requirements outlined in other Town of Victoria Park documents or State Government documents such as the Residential Design Codes. Rather, its purpose is to outline only the additional requirements that a development proposal must satisfy in order to be considered favourably in terms of concessions on prescribed plot ratio, height, recession plan, and setback requirements.

Concessions on planning requirements are often sought for Multiple Dwellings and Mixed-Use developments in the Town. This is largely driven by the metropolitan-wide objective to increase population densities in appropriate inner urban areas.

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline the matters that will be considered by the Town in dealing with concessions to planning requirements for new:

- Mixed use developments;
- Multiple Dwelling developments; and
- Non-residential buildings.

The benchmark for achieving a concession for planning requirement is deliberately set high, well beyond compliance levels. Strata-titled residential developments have a very long life and the Town of Victoria Park seeks to encourage this form of efficient inner city living while at the same time ensuring that:

- The amenity for multi-residential occupants and their long-term wellbeing are maximised;
- New developments exhibit a well-mannered response to neighbouring properties; and
- The Town's changing urban character is significantly enhanced.

### **2. How a concession on planning requirements can be achieved**

The Town of Victoria Park's "Design Guidelines for Developments with Buildings Above 3 Storeys in Height" sets the minimum standards for such developments in the Town. A compliant development proposal which accords with the guidelines (where applicable), other Council Policies and the Residential Design Codes already sets an acceptable standard. Development proponents are expected to satisfy these standards without any expectation of being granted any relaxation.

In order to be considered for a concession on planning requirements, a proponent must be able to demonstrate how a development proposal meets superior standards across all of the following areas:

- a) Response to local character and townscape;
- b) Contribution to the existing streetscape;
- c) Impact on the adjacent public realm;
- d) Site planning and building block layouts ;
- e) Internal apartment design;
- f) Long-term building performance and services; and
- g) Development overall.

Achieving a superior standard means better practice in design is clearly evident in terms of the development's function, appearance, and its contribution to its locality.

Planning concessions will normally only be considered when the development proposal fits within the site's development envelope, where this is prescribed. In many locations development envelopes are determined by the Town to ensure the provision of amenity for streets and neighbouring properties. If a proponent seeks to vary the prescribed building envelope in a minor way by reducing a setback or increasing height, then it must be demonstrated that this variance will achieve a better outcome for the site without adversely affecting the neighbouring properties and the street.

### 3. Criteria for concessions

The following section describes how superior development standards can be achieved. In each section, a key evaluation question appears followed by a number of points each describing better practice that must be clearly evident in the proposed development.

The degree to which a development satisfies the criteria will be assessed by the Town's Design Review Committee and Planning Officers and this will determine the degree of concession granted to the planning standards i.e. the greater the degree of design excellence, the greater the extent of concessions supported.

As part of an application for planning approval, applicants are to provide a written response addressing each of the criteria described below.

#### a. Response to local character and townscape

*Does the development integrate particularly well into its local context?*

Superior standards required:

- i. the proponent clearly demonstrates that an appropriate strategy has been devised to manage site sensitivities; and
- ii. the proponent demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the desired character of the precinct and this understanding is reflected appropriately in their proposal.

#### b. Contribution to the existing streetscape

*Does the development make a significant positive contribution to the streetscape and, does it set a high standard to be emulated by others?*

Superior standards required:

- i. if the street is in an area where the urban form is undergoing a planned change, such as along Albany Highway, Burswood Road or the Goodwood Parade area, then the development must demonstrate how it sets a new high standard of architecture for the street which, if emulated by others, will set a high standard of development along the street. A high standard of architecture in terms of streetscape appeal means that the design is well resolved in terms of its roof form, massing, fenestration arrangement, balcony detailing, ground level detailing, scale, proportion, enclosure and external finishes including materials, colour and texture (Refer Figure 1 and 2);



ii. **Figures 1 and 2.**

The developments shown above are regarded as good examples of mixed-use developments fronting main streets. The elevations exhibit a consistency of horizontal and vertical elements; they are well modulated into small human-scaled elements, and, they **layer** the façade, which provides a desirable transition between the street and apartments.

**Figure 3.**

The development shown below is regarded as a good example of an apartment development located off the main street or in areas along main streets where commercial or retail use at ground floor is not appropriate. Apartments are taken to ground level where a small transition space between the footpath and apartments creates a clear definition between public and private domain.

Also refer to the B-Codes, Volume 2 'Apartments' which detail further requirements in this Policy



- iii. the development must demonstrate good manners in its relationship with neighbouring properties. When a significant height difference is proposed between new buildings and adjacent lower density housing, then the development must step down to reduce the height difference;
- iv. the interface of the development as a whole must be well resolved in terms of its composition of elements;
- v. all elevations must be well resolved, which is particularly important if the development will be taller than its neighbours prior to the development of adjacent sites. (Refer Figure 4 and 5)



#### **Figures 4 and 5.**

The buildings shown above are regarded as good examples of elevations facing a right-of-way or dedicated rear access way. These buildings make a positive contribution to the access ways and to neighbouring properties, as well as providing an attractive secondary entrance. As more properties develop and face these access ways they will develop a desirable character of their own.

- vi. public art is provided and integrated into the building design.

#### **c. Impact on the adjacent public realm**

This section mainly applies to the developments in mixed-use areas, including Albany Highway, Burswood Road and the Goodwood Parade area.

*Does the development make a significant positive contribution to the quality and character of the public realm for the long term?*

Superior standards required:

- i. the development avoids shadows being cast on the opposite footpath at midday at any time of the year;
- ii. where a retail use is proposed at ground level, the design must facilitate good street activation and in the case of food and beverage uses proposed at ground level, the development should enable the potential for alfresco dining (Refer Figure 6);



#### **Figure 6.**

This is regarded as a good example of how street level retailing can enliven street activity during operating hours while still providing street character after hours. It succeeds because of its fine-grained detailing, materials, and colour and scale.

- iii. where office use is proposed at ground level, the design must facilitate transparent frontages and discourage the use of blinds to provide privacy to office workers;
- iv. there must be no abrupt change in level between the footpath and the ground floor of commercial development unless the site topography demands a level change, in which case the change must be well resolved;
- v. at the transition between public and private land, hard and soft landscape elements including paving materials, vegetation, lighting, bollards, and awnings must be of a very high standard and create an inviting place to be (Refer Figure 7 and 8);



#### Figures 7 and 8

In both images above a pedestrian level space has been created which is appealing. The transition space between footpath and building edge has been developed in different ways to suit the function of each building. In each case the impact of the building on the public realm level significantly improves the quality and character of the street.

- vi. where a building adjoins a public footpath with a commercial interface, the building must provide shade and shelter for pedestrians (although the use of canopies, loggias, etc);
- vii. the treatment of adjacent verges should achieve a high standard of finish and amenity;
- viii. vehicle entry points must be located to minimise disruption to the pedestrian movement network in the adjacent public domain; and
- ix. signage and letterboxes should be of a high standard and are well integrated into the development.

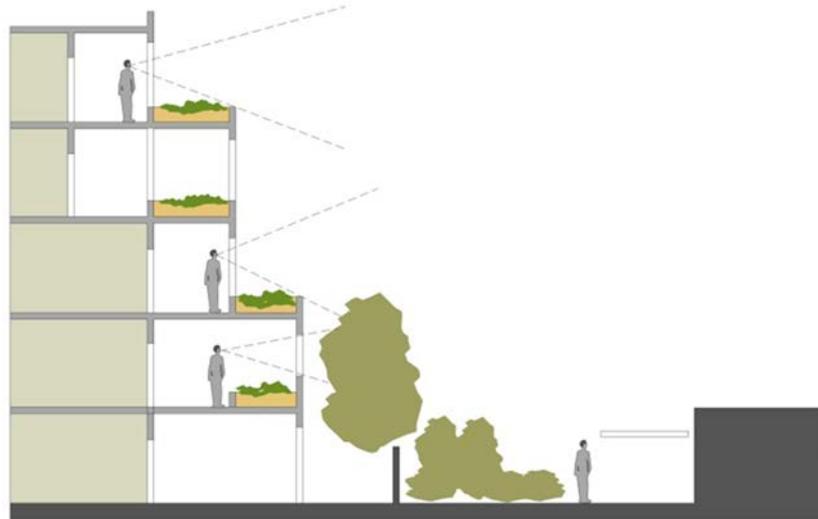
#### d. Site planning and building block layouts

*Does the development provide superior amenity for residents and visitors while minimising impacts on neighbours?*

Superior standards required:

- i. in mixed-use developments, residential and commercial entries must be separated and each must be well defined and appealing,
- ii. the entry experience from the street for both residents and visitors should avoid the use of long or convoluted corridors linking the front door to elevators and stairs;
- iii. open stairs linking floors should be provided in low-rise developments to enable ease of access between floors which minimises reliance on lifts and fire stairs;
- iv. corridors with apartments arranged on either side should be minimised and where they are necessary, the corridors must be wide, naturally lit and well ventilated;
- v. if more than one building block is proposed on the same site then the blocks must be positioned far enough apart to create a pleasant open air courtyard;

- vi. if more than one building block is proposed on the same site and the site has a rear ROW, then the ROW must be regarded as a second frontage with an appropriate built interface and possible secondary entry. Over time this enables the ROW to become an attractive, functional and active lane. Additionally, residents will benefit from an external outlook rather than the introverted outlook which usually results when buildings are designed to face into a development;
- vii. where buildings are proposed on a site with no rear laneway access, and there is a residential interface to the rear, the bulk of the building shall be located towards the front of the site;
- viii. approaches to apartments should avoid passing bedroom windows of adjacent apartments, but if unavoidable, the design should provide privacy measures that do not detract from the amenity of the residents;
- ix. if windows or balconies overlook neighbouring properties then the development must demonstrate how it reduces these impacts beyond simply complying with the Residential Design Codes (Figure 9); and



**Figure 9.**

This section shows two ways of preventing overlooking of adjacent private open space. At ground level, dense landscaping will provide privacy up to the first floor. Above this the position of viewer can be set back from balcony edges by using wide planter boxes which that are shallow enough to allow good outlook but wide enough to offer privacy to neighbours. A step in the building may be required as the height increases where light wells are used as the main source of natural light to living areas and bedrooms they must be of an acceptable size, function and amenity.

**e. Internal apartment layouts**

*Do internal layouts of apartments provide maximum amenity and usefulness for the residents in the long term?*

Superior standards required:

- i. combined living and dining areas that have a minimum width of 4m with a minimum area of 25m<sup>2</sup>, main bedrooms that have a minimum width of 3m and a minimum area 12m<sup>2</sup> and no bedroom that has a dimension less than 3m, excluding the space occupied by built-in-robos;
- ii. no ceiling height in any room is less than 2.7m excluding bathrooms, which may be reduced to 2.4 m;
- iii. rooms that have multiple functions must be large enough to enable each of these functions to occur simultaneously and safely. An example is where a kitchen and dining area are collocated and the space also serves as the main access to a major living space (Refer Figure 10);



**Figure 10**

This plan shows how a combined living, dining and kitchen area can be planned to enable each space to function comfortably and safely while still ensuring good direct access to the outdoor living area.

- iv. the use of high-level windows as the sole source of natural light to habitable rooms should be avoided;
- v. the use of internal bedrooms with no direct access to natural light should be avoided, but where included in a development must not occur in more than 10% of apartments;
- vi. the development must provide built-in cupboard spaces within apartments beyond the external store required in the Residential Design Codes;
- vii. balconies should have a minimum useful area exceeding the minimum area required by the Residential Design Codes and access to the balcony from the primary living space must be convenient and generous;
- viii. the majority of balconies must have an outlook to the street, a ROW or a large internal courtyard;
- ix. laundry facilities must not be built into a cupboard which opens directly onto a habitable room;
- x. apartment entries should be recessed where accessed directly off corridors; and,
- xi. apartment entries from a common corridor should not open directly into living areas.

**f. Long-term building performance and services**

*Does the building provide maximum environmental comfort for residents while still achieving high levels of energy efficiency?*

Superior standards required:

- i. all living areas must have a large window offering direct natural light and ventilation;
- ii. good natural cross ventilation must be achievable through at least 75% of apartments (for the purposes of definition, cross ventilation is deemed to be where an apartment has openings on two external walls);
- iii. solar access to living areas and balconies must be maximised; and,
- iv. the integration of mechanical plant, ducting and other service infrastructure must be well resolved and visually discreet.

**g. Development overall**

*Does the development, in overall terms, earn consideration for a relaxation of planning requirements?*

Superior standards required:

- i. the development must clearly demonstrate that the individual criterion listed in the above sections have been addressed; and
- ii. as a whole, the development is well-considered and fully resolved.

**4. Variations to planning approvals**

Where planning approval is granted for a development, and then variations to that approval are subsequently proposed, the proponent must provide a statement disclosing all changes to the plans, elevations and any other information submitted and approved as part of the planning application with justification for those variations and a statement of the impact of those variations in the context of the provisions of the guidelines.

The variations will be assessed by Council Officers and the Design Review Committee who must be satisfied that the justification for any concessions granted in the original planning approval can still be supported as a result of the variations proposed to the planning approval. Council Officers and the Design Review Committee will not support any variations to planning approvals that result in a reduction in the overall development standard from that previously approved.

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