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NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES AND COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS URBAN DESIGN POLICY

This policy applies to all land within the neighbourhood centres and commercial corridors identified in Map 1 to Clause 21.02.

This policy does not apply to the:

- Camberwell Junction Activity Centre.
- Glenferrie Activity Centre.
- Kew Junction Activity Centre.
- West Hawthorn Area.
- Tooronga Village.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Design and Development Overlay Schedules 16 and 17, as appropriate.

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Policy basis

Neighbourhood centres and commercial corridors provide an important social, economic, environmental and infrastructure role in the municipality, and enhance the City's desirability as a great place to shop, work, meet, relax and live.

This policy has been derived from, and implements the provisions of, the Neighbourhood Centres and Commercial Corridors Guidelines, 2014.

This policy ensures that development promotes sustainability, improves functionality, accessibility and improved integration with the public realm, and addresses scale and identity through site responsive design.

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Objectives and strategies

Objectives

To achieve excellence in design and high quality, contemporary architecture that efficiently utilises the site, enhances the character of the centre or corridor and enhances the public realm.

To ensure active ground level frontages and vibrant street level activity.

To ensure building design embodies the highest environmental standards, adopts innovative ways to achieve ecologically sustainable outcomes, and achieves the highest level of durability, robustness and adaptability throughout the building life cycle.

To ensure development is designed to protect the residential amenity of future residents of the development.

To ensure development does not detrimentally impact on the amenity of residents of adjoining properties.

To ensure that the amenity, character and sense of openness of service lanes is protected and enhanced.

To ensure new development respects and enhances heritage buildings and precincts.

To improve traffic management and car parking.

Strategies

It is policy to:

Façade articulation and detailing

- Facilitate a high level of façade articulation and design treatments that:
 - maintain the fine grain shop front patterns of existing retail and commercial premises
 - distinguish recessed upper level built form from the main building façade
 - provide variation to surface alignment and materials.
- Require active ground level frontages and vibrant street level.
- Provide architectural detailing that accentuates prominent corners at key intersections or other places of community significance.
- Ensure that the combined effect of the height, setbacks and design treatment of new buildings do not dominate a heritage place on or adjoining the site.
- Provide external lighting that enhances the architectural features of the building and complements lighting in the public domain without causing unreasonable off-site amenity impacts.
- Avoid blank side walls and require visible faces of buildings to be articulated and visually interesting with a mixture of materials and finishes.

Integration with the primary and side street frontage, and public realm

- Allow the upper levels of buildings to cantilever over a ground floor setback if the projection extends no further than the property line, is cantilevered (with no columns), and maintains a minimum clearance of 3.5 metres above a footpath or 4.5 metres above a vehicle accessway (or otherwise agreed by Council engineers).
- Require ramps or steps to be contained within the building or property boundary where they are necessary.
- Support ground floor dwelling entries that are distinct and subordinate to the ground floor retail/commercial frontage.
- Avoid disrupting the retail/commercial frontage of key retail environments by requiring secondary pedestrian access to upper level building spaces (e.g. to shop-top dwellings) to be provided from side streets or rear laneways.
- On corner sites, facilitate ground floor residential entries to be located on the side street rather than the primary retail/commercial frontage.
- Create residential premises at upper levels that address the street.
- Require the minimum extent of transparent glazed windows or doors along ground floor frontages onto a street (calculated on a per building basis) to be 75% in the Commercial 1 Zone.
- Ensure that on large sites, the length of any part of the ground floor frontage without windows is not greater than 10 metres, and such walls are well articulated with high quality materials and finishes.
- Avoid service spaces (storerooms, toilets, lifts, garages) and windowless activities (e.g. cinemas) from being located at the ground floor along street frontages.
- Require street setbacks of developments to complement the street setbacks of a heritage place on or adjoining the site.

Weather protection to footpaths

- Support the incorporation of weather protection for pedestrians along street frontages in the form of verandas, awnings or canopies over the footpath, maintaining a minimum clearance of 3.5 metres above the footpath level and 0.75 metres from the back of kerb (or otherwise agreed by Council engineers).
- Require new verandas to achieve continuous unbroken pedestrian weather protection.
- Require verandas to be integrated with the design of the building and to provide architectural features and/or materials that complement the streetscape.
- Require verandas to be cantilevered to avoid obstructive post/columns or perceived privatisation of the public domain.
- Ensure that on sloping sites, verandas step down to follow the slope of the street and special consideration is given to the detailed design of the junction at the level changes.

Service lanes and laneways

Ground level setbacks

- Avoid ground level setbacks along service lanes, unless the same setback can be provided on adjoining properties to create a consistently wider, accessible and attractive service laneway.
- Require laneway surface materials and interface treatments to be used in the ground level setbacks of adjoining residential areas.
- Avoid unenclosed setbacks for rubbish and recycling bins, loading bays and service/utility areas fronting onto service laneways. Waste and recycling facilities should be concealed within secure dedicated enclosures that are integrated into the design of the building.
- Minimise buildings and works encroaching into service lanes.
- Maintain and enhance the intimate environment of service lanes by requiring higher built forms to be set back from the service lane.

Upper level setbacks

- Maintain and enhance the intimate environment of service lanes by requiring higher built forms to be set back from the service lane.

Abutting residential zones

- Support development that contributes to an improved interface between the neighbourhood centres and the established residential areas through providing for a recessed and articulated development and an appropriate scale.
- Avoid windows and balconies overlooking private open space or habitable rooms on the opposite side of the service lane.

Vehicle and pedestrian movement and parking

Vehicular access to sites

- Facilitate sites with access from a service lane providing all vehicular access to the site from the lane.
- Avoid the creation of driveway crossovers from other streets unless:
 - the service lane is too narrow for vehicular entry and cannot be widened as part of the development proposal, or

- the traffic volume generated by the development would exceed the capacity of the service lane, as determined by a qualified independent traffic engineer and Council's engineers.
- Require development to provide car parking in basements where feasible, and to the rear of properties where laneway access is available.

Pedestrian entries from service lanes

- Avoid pedestrian access from service lanes when:
 - the pedestrian access interferes with the servicing functions of the lane for other properties
 - bluestone pavers or other uneven pavements of the service lane prevent access to the entry by people with limited mobility
 - there is no public lighting to the service lane between the street and the proposed entry, and the new development cannot provide for new lighting along this length.
- Support secondary pedestrian entries along service lanes where practical and appropriate, and where a service lane abuts car parking or public open space, to increase activity and connectivity.

Links and extensions of service lanes

- Require setbacks to remove laneway dead ends and facilitate vehicular through-links. The alignment, width and paving of the service lane should be continued through any such lane extensions.

Frontages onto public open space and public car parks

- Support developments using any lane or other public right-of-way located between the subject site and the adjoining public open space as a second street frontage.
- Only allow the use of an existing public open space pathway along the shared boundary for pedestrian access to entries of adjoining properties if:
 - Doors and gates do not swing open into the path
 - The path width is able to accommodate the pedestrian and bicycle volumes that may be generated by the development.

Shared side and rear boundaries

- Encourage the following design outcomes when the subject site does not abut or adjoin a Residential Zone:
 - Zero lot lines along shared side and rear boundaries for walls without habitable room windows unless the adjacent property includes dwellings with their primary or secondary outlook orientated towards the subject site.
 - Where blank side walls will be visible from the public realm, visual interest should be provided through the use of varied materials or finishes.

Overshadowing and overlooking

- Minimise the impacts of overshadowing and overlooking on the amenity of adjoining residential properties and habitable room windows.
- Retain the visual privacy of adjoining dwellings.
- Minimise overshadowing of photovoltaic panels or solar hot water collectors located on the roof top of adjoining dwellings within a Residential Zone between 9am and 3pm at the equinox.

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Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application, the responsible authority must consider the following, as appropriate:

- Whether the development is consistent with the *Neighbourhood Centres and Commercial Corridors Guidelines, 2014*.
- Whether the proposal makes a positive contribution to the image and character of the centre and its pedestrian environment.
- The impact of the proposal upon local traffic management and car parking.
- Whether the proposed development is appropriately designed to reduce amenity impacts on adjoining residential properties.
- Whether the proposed development is appropriately designed to reduce visual bulk on service lanes/laneways.
- Whether the combination of heights, setbacks and design treatment of new buildings is sympathetic to a heritage place on or adjoining the site.
- Whether the design of the development supports the provisions of this planning scheme, in particular Design and Development Overlay Schedules 16 and 17.

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Reference documents

Neighbourhood Centres and Commercial Corridors Guidelines, City of Boroondara, 2014.