



Australian Government  
National Capital Authority



# LANDSCAPE AND SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES

## Deakin/Forrest Residential Area Precinct Code

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# Contents

Introduction	3
Context	3
Application	4
Landscape	5
Private open space	6
Vehicle access and car parking	6
Hedges and fences	7
Setbacks	7
Block amalgamation	7
Sustainability	8

# Introduction

The National Capital Plan (the Plan) identifies areas of land that have the special characteristics of the National Capital to be Designated Areas. The Deakin/Forrest Residential Precinct is one such Precinct within the Designated Areas. The importance of the Deakin/Forrest residential area stems from its frontage to the Main Avenue of State Circle and close proximity and relationship to Parliament House, its location within the Griffins' land axis, and as an example of twentieth century 'Garden City' planning concepts that the Griffins' adopted in their design for Canberra.

There is a National Capital interest in ensuring that development surrounding, and in close proximity to, Parliament House is of the highest design quality.

As set out in the National Capital Plan, the objectives for the Deakin/Forrest Residential Area Precinct (the Precinct) are:

1. The residential areas of Deakin and Forrest that lie between State Circle and National Circuit will maintain and enhance the character of the National Capital and will be planned and developed in accordance with its national significance.
2. The principle residential character of the area and the use of the land primarily for residential purposes are to continue.
3. Design of buildings in proximity to the Prime Minister's Lodge must reflect the dominant

urban design character of the locality.

The general development conditions include:

- » The principal residential character of the area and the use of the land for residential purposes are to continue.
- » Development throughout the area, except for sites fronting State Circle, should not be more than two storeys in height and generally no more than eight metres above the natural ground level.
- » Development throughout the area, except for sites fronting State Circle, should have a maximum plot ratio of 0.4.
- » Design of buildings in proximity to the Prime Minister's Lodge should reflect the dominant urban design character of the locality.

## Context

Over the past 10-15 years, brownfield redevelopment of the area has seen changes to the form and scale of the built environment, resulting in increased hardscape and subsequently decreased soft landscaping. The National Capital Authority (NCA) is concerned that key characteristics of the Precinct are being eroded due to the cumulative effects of recent redevelopment. The NCA is committed to ensuring that the Precinct continues to exhibit the 'Garden City' and 'City Beautiful' principles on which the Precinct was originally based.

The Deakin/Forrest Residential Area Precinct Code - Landscape and Sustainability Guidelines have been developed to provide greater clarity on the general landscape and sustainability provisions of the National Capital Plan. The Guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the National Capital Plan.

# Application

The Guidelines apply to the area identified in Figure 1. They are advisory only and supplementary to the Plan. Their aim is to provide advice about the intended planning and design of the precinct.

They also provide guidance about the issues the NCA is likely to take into account when considering works approval applications.

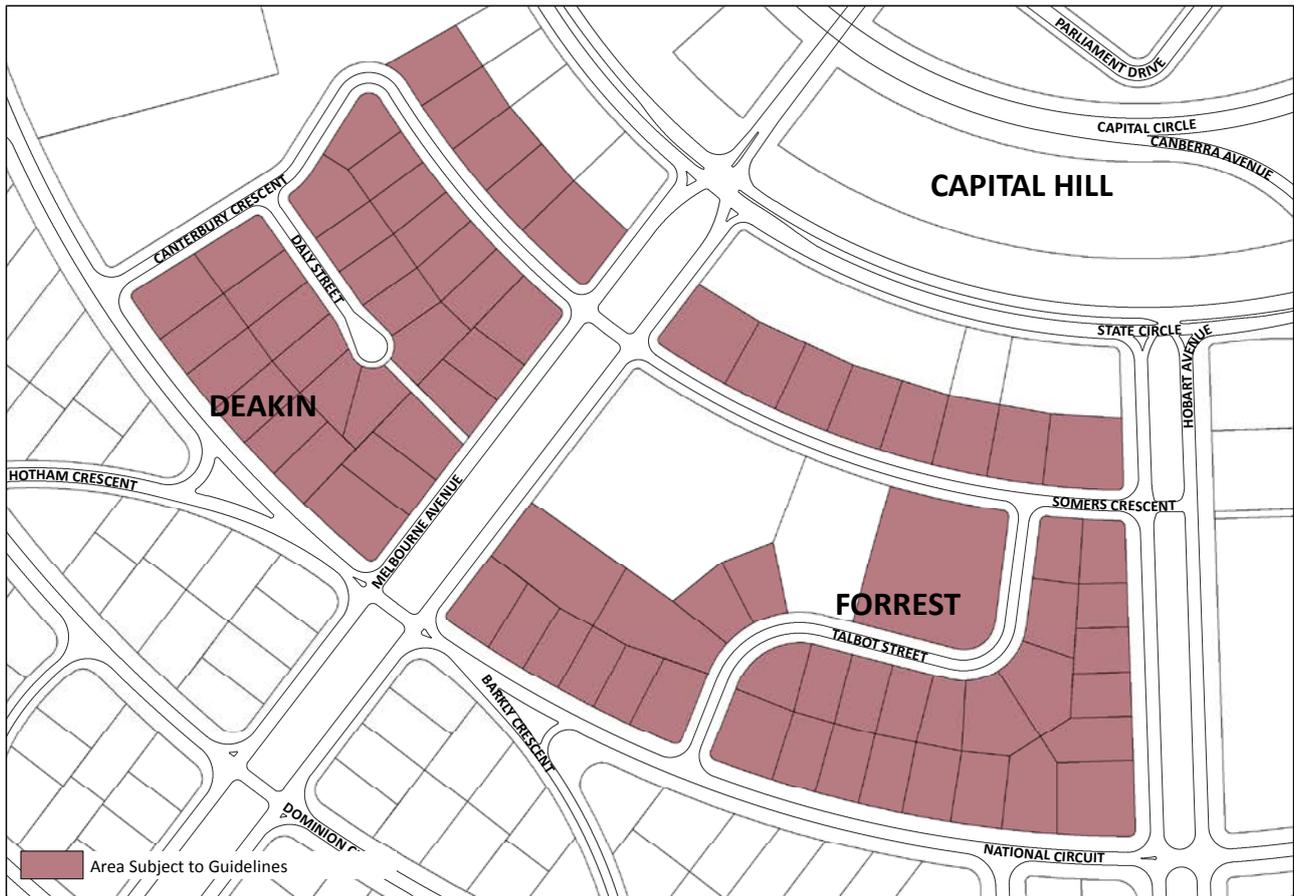


Figure 1: Area subject to Deakin/Forrest Residential Area Precinct Code - Landscape and Sustainability Guidelines

# Landscape

Proposals for redevelopment of a block should be accompanied by a landscape plan prepared by a Registered Landscape Architect.

Not less than 40% of total site area should be for soft planting area. Soft planting area means an area of permeable land within a block covered by trees, grass or lawn (not including synthetic turf), garden bed, shrubs (including hedges) and the like. Soft planting area does not include any area covered by buildings (including basement), swimming pools, vehicle parking or manoeuvring areas (whether permeable or not), or any other form of impermeable surface.

Generous areas of soft planting should be provided to surround or encircle each dwelling. The NCA may consider partial encircling of a dwelling where it can be demonstrated that the total site area for soft planting on the block, as a whole, substantively exceeds 40%.

A composition of soft landscaping should be provided between the building line and the front property boundary (or boundaries in the case of corner blocks – a corner block means a block with more than one street frontage). Soft landscaping may include trees, shrubs, grass and garden beds. Hard surfacing, other than for pathways and driveways, should be avoided. The combination of new and existing trees should be capable of providing at least 15% canopy coverage of a site when trees are mature.

Trees should be selected to contribute to energy efficiency by providing substantial shade in summer, especially to west facing windows, and admitting winter sunlight to outdoor and indoor living areas, especially to the north.

Written advice from the landscape architect should be provided to ensure plant species selected are suitable to the site conditions and scale of development and are able to grow to full maturity.

The NCA may request landscape details/sections to demonstrate that the soil profile and location of planting proposed in the design is fit for purpose.

Established trees should be retained where possible. The NCA will consider tree removal only where an arborist report demonstrates that:

- » a tree is in ill health or in decline;
- » a tree poses a threat to resident or public safety;
- » a tree is pest species or unsuitable for the Canberra climate;
- » a tree is restricting the growth of other vegetation; and/or
- » site and building design can be improved by the removal of trees.

In these circumstances, the National Capital Authority's preference is for new trees to be planted elsewhere on site.

A Tree Management Plan is to accompany landscape plans, outlining tree protection measures during construction activity for existing trees proposed for retention, including protection of street trees within the verge.

## Private open space

The following provisions are relevant for proposals consisting of more than one dwelling.

Each dwelling should have an area of principal primary open space located at ground floor level, with a minimum dimension of four metres and minimum area of 20m<sup>2</sup>. Reasonable privacy of principal private open space of each dwelling should be demonstrated.

Private open spaces should be oriented predominantly to the north, east or west.

Private open space should provide sufficient space for deep rooted planting, particularly trees with deep root systems. A minimum of one canopy tree (capable of achieving a crown diameter of a minimum of eight metres when mature) should be provided in the private open space of each dwelling.

## Vehicle access and car parking

No increase in the number or width of verge crossings is generally permitted. The exception to this is for corner blocks where individual access may be provided to each dwelling.

Driveways should integrate with front garden planting to reduce the visibility of the driveway from the street.

Driveways should be a single-vehicle width (<3.6m) between the front boundary and building line and have a uniform surface of subdued charcoal or earthen tones. Gravel, brick, clay or concrete pavers or bitumen are preferred surface finishes.

Verge crossings should have a bitumen surface. Where existing verge crossings are surfaced in a material other than bitumen, consideration should be given to replacement. Where required, the replacement of existing bitumen verge crossings with new bitumen is required.

A minimum of two off-street car parking spaces should be provided for all new dwellings.

To avoid parking dominating the streetscape, garages and carports should be located behind the main building façade. Other elements of the dwelling design should dominate the streetscape.

## Hedges and fences

The planting of hedges along front boundaries and alongside boundaries forward of the building line, to separate the public and private domains, and which 'frame' views to dwellings and front gardens, are encouraged.

Replacement or new hedge species should be evergreen and of appropriate scale and shape to form a border of typically not more than 1.2 metres in height.

Retaining walls or earth mounding visible to the street should only occur where they will not have an adverse impact on the streetscape character.

Sheet metal fencing is not appropriate between buildings and side boundaries or at any location visible to the street or adjacent public domain.

Fences and gates between buildings and side boundaries should be:

- » set at least 0.6 metres behind the building line
- » a maximum of 1.8 metres in height above natural ground level
- » timber paling, timber lattice, brush, open mesh or metal railing.

Side and rear boundary fences and gates should:

- » not extend forward of the building line
- » be a maximum of 1.8 metres above ground level
- » be timber paling, timber lattice, brush or open mesh metal railing.

Proposals for fences and gates alongside and rear boundaries in excess of 1.8 metres in height will be subject to special consideration by the National Capital Authority.

## Setbacks

Where structures are provided as part of private open space (such as alfresco dining areas, pergolas, swimming pools and the like), these should be set back in accordance with the setback provisions outlined in the Design and Siting General Code of the Plan. The NCA may consider alternative setbacks where it can be demonstrated that the privacy of neighbouring dwellings is maintained.

## Block amalgamation

In order to maintain subdivision patterns, block amalgamation and subdivision is generally not permitted.

# Sustainability

The design of buildings should demonstrate a high standard of sustainable design. Design responses could include:

- » living areas oriented to the north
- » design of eaves and awnings to provide shade for window during summer
- » selection of building materials and colours which absorb less heat in summer
- » insulation of walls, ceilings, floors and roof spaces
- » use of smart glass or other technologies on north and west elevations
- » installation of photovoltaics on buildings to generate electricity.

Proposals should demonstrate overshadowing or impacts to privacy of neighbouring properties is minimised, including to both dwellings and open space.

New development should be located and oriented to maximise visual privacy between buildings on site and for neighbouring properties.

New development should ensure that building separation does not impact on the solar access of neighbouring properties.



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