

Boroondara Design Excellence Guide

October 2023





Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Boroondara acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and original custodians of this land, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



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Design (cover): Clinton Murray Architects.
Photography (cover): Peter Bennetts.

Design (left): ANGLE and Edition Office.
Photography (cover): Rory Gardner / Ben Hosking.



Design: Pitch Architecture & Design.
Photography: Chris Murray.



Introduction

High-quality design is supported and celebrated in all buildings, places and spaces across the City of Boroondara.

This document is for anyone who wants to build in the City of Boroondara including residents, developers, property owners and architects.

It is also for our general community, councillors and Boroondara City Council staff to have a shared understanding of what we expect from development in our city.

The design quality of a proposal and its impact on a neighbourhood is also important for planning approvals.¹

This document provides guidance on a range of development types from small extensions in heritage areas to large mixed use developments in activity centres.

The document defines design excellence based on five principles drawn from state and local planning policies, as well as best practice guidance. Information in this document is consistent with Boroondara's planning scheme and links are provided to relevant sections.

We encourage you to read this document in the early stages of planning your project. No matter the scale or type of development, these principles should inform your design.

¹ Charter Keck Cramer, 'The Value of Good Design', 2013, Charter Insight, Melbourne.

What is design excellence

Our everyday lives are affected by the places around us. The qualities of these places – our buildings, streets and parks – shape our interactions, experiences and wellbeing. ²

Design excellence is about striving to make a positive impact on our city. Everybody has a responsibility to ensure we have a positive impact on how Boroondara looks and feels, no matter how small our contributions might be. This could include the materials you use on your house, the tree you plant in your front yard, where the windows go in a new building.

Design excellence is not just about the appearance of a building or space – importantly, it is also about its functionality, safety, energy efficiency and using durable materials that last.

²Office of the Victorian Government Architect, 'The Case for Good Design', 2019, OVGA, Melbourne.



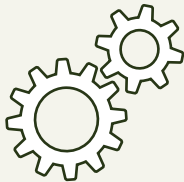
Design: Ascui & Co Architects.
Photographer: Justin Alexander

Principles of design excellence



Considering context

Design a development that's right for its location, complements the physical, natural, social and economic environment.



Sustainable architecture

Design a development that uses renewable resources, reduces operating costs, energy use and waste.



Building quality

Use high-quality materials that are durable and contribute positively to the look and feel of your neighbourhood.



Local ecology

Design a development that contributes to creating neighbourhoods that are green, healthy and full of life.



Liveable and vibrant places

Connect your development with surrounding streets and public places to make your neighbourhood safer, more attractive, active and easy to get around.



1. Considering context



A thorough understanding of your site is the starting point for contributing to distinct places.³

Building something new or improving an old building requires focus. It is important to remember that your project sits next to other buildings and spaces. Your project is likely to be part of a whole street, neighbourhood and shopping area. It is important to think of this at the beginning of your project and consider how it will fit into the surrounding community.

It is important to:

- ensure your project reinforces (rather than undermines) the positive elements of the local community, character and identity
- think about and work with the existing site attributes – its solar orientation, soils and geology, drainage patterns, trees and landscape, and wind direction
- ensure materials, design and relationship to the street are respectful to what is already there.

³ Llewelyn-Davies, 'Urban Design Compendium', 2000, English Partnerships, London.

Best practice resources:

Urban Design Charter <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/guides/urban-design-guidelines-for-victoria/new-to-the-urban-design-guidelines>

Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/guides/urban-design-guidelines-for-victoria>

Good Design and Heritage <https://www.ovga.vic.gov.au/good-design-heritage-issue-7>

Design (right): Idle Architecture Studio.
Photography (right): Luke Ray



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1.1 Neighbourhood character



It is vital that your development project acknowledges and appropriately responds to the unique and recognisable character of different neighbourhoods, and their contribution to the overall look and feel of Boroondara.

High and low change areas

Some areas can have a higher level of change than others. The Boroondara Housing Strategy and Council's Housing Framework provide direction about appropriate locations for different types of housing.

Properties within the Neighbourhood Residential Zone will be less able to absorb change than areas within the General or Residential Growth Zones.

Support the character of established neighbourhoods

While it is important to understand the existing context and positive character elements of a neighbourhood, design excellence is not about simply replicating what is already there.

To contribute positively to the look and feel of an area, consider the design of properties on the street and surrounding streets.

New development should respect, respond to and make a positive contribution to the precinct's preferred character.

When designing your house or extension, consider:

- lot patterns and sizes
- the setback of houses from the front, side and rear
- architectural styles and design details such as roof forms and materials
- the overall scale and massing of houses (including heights and separation at upper levels)
- landscaping, trees, front gardens and fencing styles
- how to avoid the loss of mature trees and provide space for new canopy trees
- how cars are accommodated.



Tools and policy support:

Boroondara Housing Strategy <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/planning-building/planning-and-heritage/planning/planning-controls-and-strategies/boroondara-housing-strategy>

Understanding Neighbourhood Character <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/planning-building/planning-and-heritage/planning/planning-controls-and-strategies/neighbourhood-character-study>

Guide to Retaining Neighbourhood Character <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/planning-building/planning-and-heritage/planning/guidelines-design-and-construction/guide-retaining-neighbourhood-character>

Boroondara Neighbourhood Character Study <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/planning-building/planning-and-heritage/planning/planning-controls-and-strategies/neighbourhood-character-study>

Planning Scheme - Built Environment <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/15.01>



New development integrates and respects the character of the neighbourhood. Design: Homeowners Maria and Carl, Neil Architecture and Phillip Johnson Landscapes. Photography: Luke Ray

1.2 Heritage matters



If your building is within a Heritage Overlay, it means that any changes will need to be assessed carefully to ensure they're respectful of the existing neighbourhood character and heritage features.

Considering heritage

Our built heritage plays a big role in Boroondara's collective identity. Therefore, we strive for excellent design and high-quality architecture to protect important heritage elements.

Careful consideration of the heritage value of your house early in the design process will allow the preservation of those elements while also providing a contemporary liveable home.

Heritage Overlay

The Heritage Overlay is applied to properties that have heritage significance either as an individual property or as part of a larger precinct.

Council's local heritage policy aims to preserve those important heritage elements and to allow changes where appropriate.

Alterations and additions

In designing your alterations and additions:

- design and locate extensions at the rear of the house or building so they do not significantly affect the public view of the building
- retain and do not obscure the important heritage elements of the house or building
- use materials and finishes that are complementary to the fabric of the house or building
- incorporate design details that complement the house or building, such as windows, doors, architectural features and verandahs
- retain original or early fences, gates and outbuildings
- locate new carports, garages and outbuildings to the rear of the house.



Tools and policy support:

Boroondara Heritage webpage <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/planning-building/planning-and-heritage/heritage>

Planning Scheme - Heritage Clause 15.03 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/15.03>

Planning Scheme - Heritage Clause 43.01 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/43.01>

At Home with Heritage: A Considered Approach to Renovating Your House (Heritage Victoria, 2021) <https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/research-projects/at-home-with-heritage/>



New development responds to and respects the existing heritage building. Design: Kennedy Nolan Architects. Photography: Derek Swalwell.

1.3 Protecting amenity



Ensure your project does not negatively impact on the amenity of other properties and surrounding public spaces, including streets.

Avoid overshadowing

The form and size of your building should consider sunlight access to adjacent properties and open spaces. This is particularly relevant to windows and private open spaces, such as backyards. It also ensures that direct sunlight access to public plazas and parks is not compromised.

Privacy by design

If done well, privacy screening can be an effective way to prevent overlooking in accordance with Planning and Building Standards. However, designing new buildings to avoid overlooking from the beginning is a better solution than having to install them after building is complete.

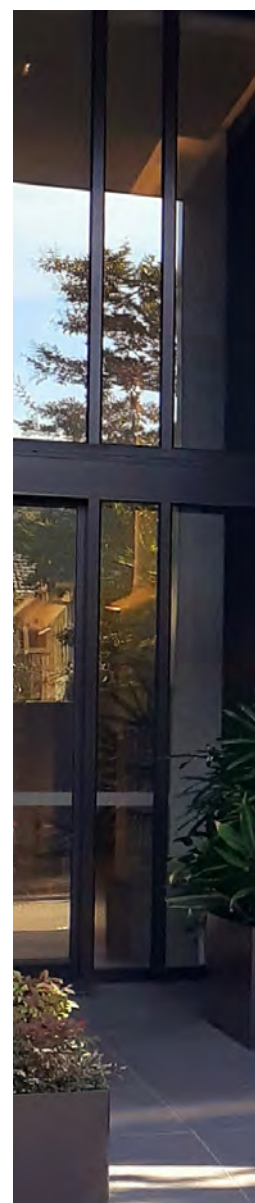
This involves orienting living areas towards the street side of the building, checking sight angles, and/or using facade design that allows both privacy and views.

Avoiding noise and smells

It's important to locate bedrooms away from potential noise sources.

Locate equipment such as air-conditioning units and extraction vents on rooftops or in basements where possible. Make sure they aren't next to your neighbours' private open spaces, bedrooms or any other sensitive locations.

Where your development includes tenancies that promote nightlife, minimise impact on neighbours. This could include double glazing, vibration control systems, an airlock-style entry and acoustic fins.



Tools and policy support:

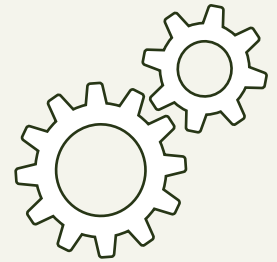
Understanding the Residential Development Standards ResCode, June 2015 <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/guides/planning-practice-notes/understanding-the-residential-development-provisions>

Planning Scheme - Amenity Impacts - Clauses 54.04 and 55.04 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/54.04>



Privacy done well with planting screening and living areas orientated towards the street. Design: Hayball.

2. Sustainable architecture



Buildings use a lot of energy and water and contribute significantly to our city's climate impacts. It is important for buildings to function as efficiently as possible to minimise resource use and reduce maintenance and operating costs.

Carbon emissions generated from the construction and operation of buildings are one of the largest contributors to climate change. The Boroondara Climate Action Plan supports the community to reduce net carbon emissions by 60% by 2030 (compared with 2020 emissions) and by 100% actual emissions by 2040.

It is important to:

- acknowledge that each development project is part of the wider ecosystem at a local level and cumulatively at a global level
- carefully plan buildings, select products and design systems that are easily adaptable to changing needs
- focus on energy conservation, water resilience and carbon footprint reduction.

As a member of Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE), the City of Boroondara encourages your development to incorporate sustainable design measures by completing the Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) during the planning process.

Best practice resources:

Your Home - Passive Design <https://www.yourhome.gov.au/passive-design>

Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) <https://bess.net.au/>

Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) <https://www.nathers.gov.au/>

Sustainability in Planning <https://www.casbe.org.au/what-we-do/sustainability-in-planning/>

Design (right): Homeowners Maria and Carl, Neil Architecture and Phillip Johnson Landscapes. Photography: Luke Ray



2.1 Passive design



Buildings need to be designed to naturally provide the right amounts of light, heat and ventilation with minimal reliance on mechanical systems.

Use natural resources

There are now many options for generating your own renewable energy. Solar panels can be added to some roofs, facades or shade structures, and geothermal (energy generation) can be viable depending on your project scale and location.

Temperature

Use good-quality insulation in your building. The more efficient the insulation (known as R-value), the greater the comfort in your living space and the lower your annual energy costs.

Natural ventilation

Incorporate natural ventilation by considering usual wind direction, and allowing for openings on opposing sides of your building. Hot air rises, so you can also use ceiling vents to create extra airflow upwards through stairwells or voids.

Sunlight

Consider your building's orientation. Avoid large south-facing glazing that loses heat in winter. Ensure windows to the north, east and west use external shading or louvres to reduce the impact of the hot summer sun. They should also be positioned to let winter rays in to warm your home in colder months.

All interiors should be well-lit with daylight, comfortably exceeding minimum Building Code of Australia requirements.



Tools and policy support:

Planning Scheme - On-site Amenity and Facilities Clause 55.05 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/55.05>

Planning Scheme - Building Design - Clause 15.01-2S <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/15.013>

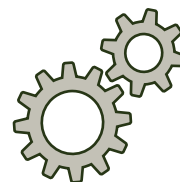
Planning Scheme - Renewable Energy Clauses 19.01/2S/R <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/19.01>

Building Code of Australia <https://ncc.abcb.gov.au/>



Building with good access to sunlight for well-integrated solar panels as well as natural ventilation.
Design: Clinton Murray Architects. Photography: Peter Bennetts.

2.2 Adaptive re-use



Demolishing buildings and new construction can waste valuable resources. Reducing the amount we demolish and re-using building materials can have a positive impact on the environment, local neighbourhood character and project budgets.

Honour the past while looking to the future

Boroondara is privileged to have many heritage buildings that contribute to our city's unique character. It is important we continue to appreciate and protect them for current and future generations.

Alterations can be made to heritage buildings. However, there are guidelines and policies in place that must be followed. Alterations and maintenance should have minimal impact, protecting and respecting the heritage value of the building and significant heritage elements.

Use what is already there to save time, money, resources

Using existing buildings and/or materials, and incorporating them into new development where possible, saves time and money. Doing this can reduce some steps like groundwork, foundations and structural works.

Design for flexibility

Flexible design allows for buildings to be altered to suit individual preferences and changing needs over time, for example, being able to age in your home.

A modular structure, flexible internal partitions and generous floor-ceiling heights allow spaces to be reconfigured internally without the need to demolish and rebuild.



Tools and policy support:

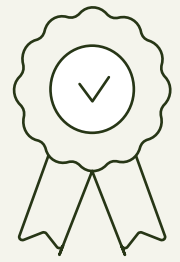
Planning Scheme - Built Environment Clause 15.01 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/15.01>

Planning Scheme - Heritage Clause 15.03 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/15.03>



New buildings can respectfully be integrated into older buildings, adding extra interest. Design: Robson Rak Architecture & Interior Designers. Photography: Luke Ray

3. Building quality



What you build will likely be there for a long time - and hence people will also have to see it for a long time! Strive for beauty and visual interest in your project.

Boroondara is home to beautiful neighbourhoods, streets and buildings. Any development should enrich the qualities of the existing area.

Durable, high-quality construction materials not only require less maintenance over time, they are also visually appealing.

Building high-quality houses ensures that they can function well and look attractive for a long time. Trying to save money by using cheaper materials will often result in buildings that will deteriorate quickly and diminish their appeal. They may also become difficult to maintain and will lose their value quicker.

It is important to:

- respect neighbouring buildings and respond positively to them
- consider how your building's facade appears – as viewed from near and far – the details matter!
- choose quality building materials to ensure your project is cost-effective, durable, safe, sustainable and visually appealing
- look for ways to include services like fire hydrant booster systems and air-conditioning units into the building design.

Best practice resources:

Better Apartments <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/better-apartment-designs-our-neighbourhoods>

Your Home - Materials <https://www.yourhome.gov.au/materials>

The Case for Good Design: Housing <https://www.ovga.vic.gov.au/case-good-design-housing-guide-government>

Design (right): Clinton Murray Architects.
Photography: Peter Bennetts.



3.1 Selecting quality materials



Using quality building materials, both in the construction of the building as well as the exterior, is essential for your long-term investment and health and safety.

Variety of tone and texture

Materials that are too uniform don't have enough detail to engage the human eye. Instead, opt for materials that have a natural and subtle variation to their tone and texture, creating enough visual interest to allow the eye to rest. Textured materials also create visual interest by casting subtle shadows over the facade.

Transparency and depth

Facades that allow you to catch subtle glimpses of something beyond add an enjoyable sense of depth and dynamism to the public realm.

Hit-and-miss brickwork, louvres, battens, curtains, screens or semi-opaque cladding are examples that can be combined with glazing and/or further facade layers to make this work in the Melbourne climate.

Age with grace

Choose materials that are durable. You may also want to consider materials that gain an intentional aged appearance, changing and improving over time.

Painted and rendered surfaces age poorly and need a lot of maintenance. Consider using materials that can be exposed to the weather well, without requiring regular refinishing.

Low embodied energy

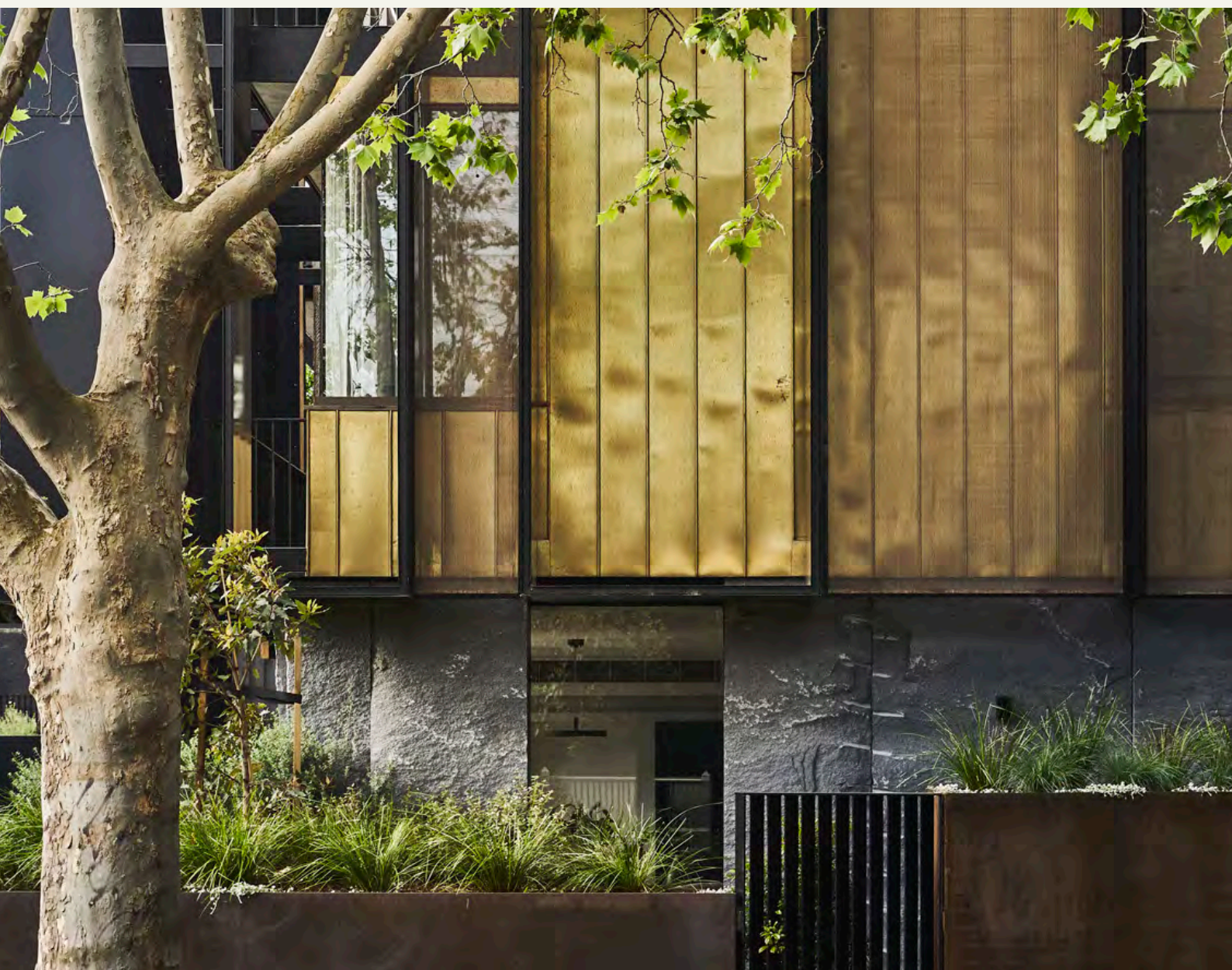
Ideally, use materials that are recycled or re-used. If using new materials, choose ones that have low embodied energy or are locally produced.



Tools and policy support:

Planning Scheme - Built Environment Clause 15.01 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/15.01>

Planning Scheme - Detailed Design Clause 55.06 and Clause 58.06 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/55.06>



High-quality materials combined with clever lighting creates visual interest. Design: Splinter Society Architecture. Photography: Sharyn Cairns.

3.2 Services in the public realm



The appearance of otherwise well-designed buildings and places can be degraded by poorly positioned or highly visible utility services. Utilities should be located in less visible places. If this isn't possible, then make it an interesting design feature.

1. Design services as part of facade

Make any cabinets, switchboards and meters a positive, integrated part of the facade design, rather than an afterthought.

2. Keep services to a minimum on the ground floor

The ground floor of your building is the most valuable and impactful space. It makes sense to place any services you can elsewhere, such as in underground parking levels, on rooftops or in the middle of above-ground floorplates.

3. Integrate waste management

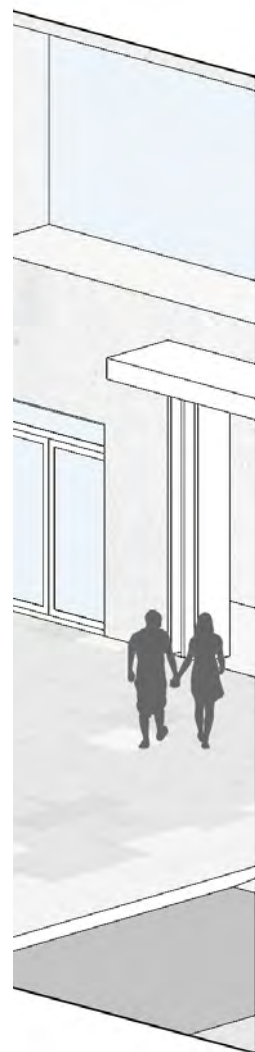
Design and locate waste facilities in places that are harder to see and smell and so they do not get in the way of pedestrians. Bin storage areas should be hidden from public view.

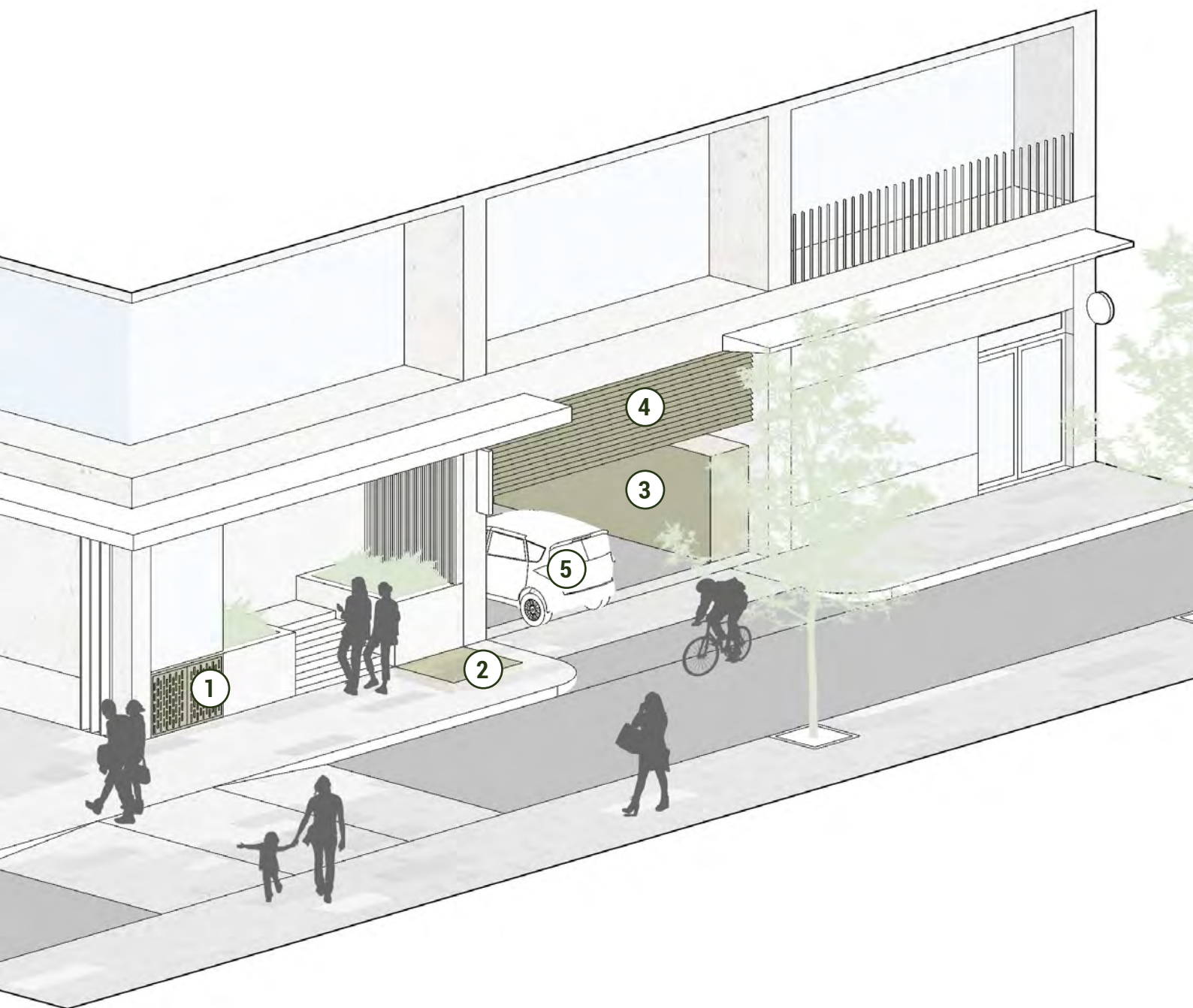
4. Hide your AC

Air conditioning units should not be visible from the public realm and certainly not on the main facade of your building. Where possible, hide equipment from view, such as the side or rear of the building. Use screens or an integrated building system that doesn't need an air-conditioning unit on every balcony.

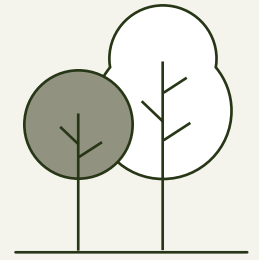
5. Loading bays

Consolidate loading lanes, bays or facilities in one location at the rear (where there is rear access). Platform lifts should be avoided in public spaces, where they gather litter and can become unsafe spaces.





4. Local ecology



In Boroondara, we highly value our green spaces and trees. Protecting these and adding more should be a priority of the design process.

Trees, landscaping and green spaces offer so many benefits to an urban environment that their importance cannot be overstated. They change over time – size and seasons – creating interest and variation, and generate habitats for wildlife. Trees and plants create a more pleasant walking environment, improve air quality, reduce urban heat island impacts, and provide shade and protection from the weather. They also reduce stormwater runoff, wind speed, and noise and light pollution, soften harsh built forms and paving, and improve street appearance (adding value to an area).

It is important to consider:

- how trees and landscaping can be kept and enhanced in your development
- that your greenery contributes to the green network as part of a whole city or region – we all have a part to play in the collective challenge of climate change
- how stormwater can be managed on your site and be optimised in your landscape design.

Best practice resources:

Sustainability in Planning <https://www.casbe.org.au/what-we-do/sustainability-in-planning/>

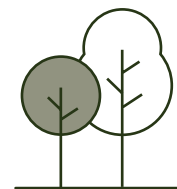
Designing for a Cool City - Guidelines for Passively Irrigated Landscapes <https://watersensitivecities.org.au/content/designing-for-a-cool-city-guidelines-for-passively-irrigated-landscapes/>

Fishermans Bend Integrated Water Management (IWM) Case Studies <https://www.fishermansbend.vic.gov.au/framework/fishermans-bend-integrated-water-management-iwm-case-studies>

Image credit (right): James Thomas.



4.1 Urban forest



Providing significant tree coverage and vegetation is a priority in creating a cool, green city.

Your trees count

Removing a tree or two on your site may not seem like a significant loss, but overall can result in losing lots of tree cover across the city. Our urban forest is vital not only to our city's character but also in minimising climate impacts and habitat loss.

Native habitat

Plant trees and plants that will help bring birds, insects and wildlife to your garden. Choosing larger native trees is particularly beneficial for endangered species of possums and owls.

Learn how your green spaces connect to biodiversity corridors, and how the species you choose can make it easier for wildlife to travel across the city.

Managing trees

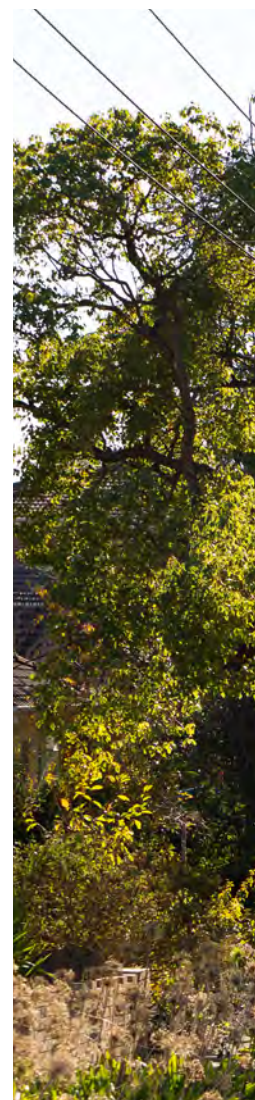
The impact of tree roots on buried utilities and drainage systems can be managed through root barriers, specialised soils and other root management systems. This allows for the continued growth and health of the tree without impacting on your property, the street and utilities.

Maximise canopy

Select tree species that will grow to provide generous canopy and contribute to habitat and urban cooling.

Protect mature trees

Mature trees are incredibly valuable. One of the first steps in any development process should be to identify any on your site and plan your building layout and construction schedule to ensure they are protected.



Tools and policy support:

Protected and Significant Trees <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/waste-environment/trees/protected-and-significant-trees>

Urban Biodiversity Strategy <https://URL>

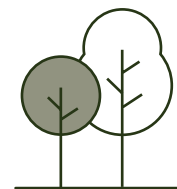
Planning Scheme - Built Environment Clause 15.01 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/15.01>

Planning Scheme - Landscape Objectives Clause 55.03-8 and Clause 58.03-5 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/55.03>



Tree canopy and landscaping in private front gardens are vital to retain character and minimise climate impacts and habitat loss. Image credit: James Thomas.

4.2 Greener buildings



Integrating authentic greenscapes into the building design will help offset emissions, reduce urban heat, improve air quality and visual amenity. Invest in quality landscaping to add value to your property.⁴

1. Green roofs

A green roof can help manage rainwater, regulate temperatures, improve a building's energy performance and also encourages biodiversity in the city.

2. Appropriate vegetation

Select diverse range of species that are viable for the environment, climate resilient, native, provide habitat and don't require a lot of water.

3. Areas of deep soil

Deep soil zones allow us to plant significant vegetation. Given soil can be heavy and may need drainage, it needs to be designed and incorporated into your structural design.

4. Front yards

Try using trees and plants rather than solid fencing to create privacy.

5. Drainage

Gardened areas within buildings must be designed with adequate drainage systems, especially when directly above indoor living areas.

6. Vertical greening

Incorporate vertical greening systems where possible and appropriate to create new habitat for local flora and fauna, soften the look of your building, reduce noise and improve air quality.

7. Balconies and terraces

Provide space, access to sunlight and drainage for balcony or terrace gardens so people can still have a connection to nature and gardening opportunities.

Balconies can act as shade structures to reduce heat load on walls, and also improve passive surveillance and vibrancy of the street.

⁴Niemiera, A.X., 'The Effect of Landscape Plants on Perceived Home Value', 2009, Virginia Cooperative Extension, 426-087 Virginia Tech and Virginia State University.

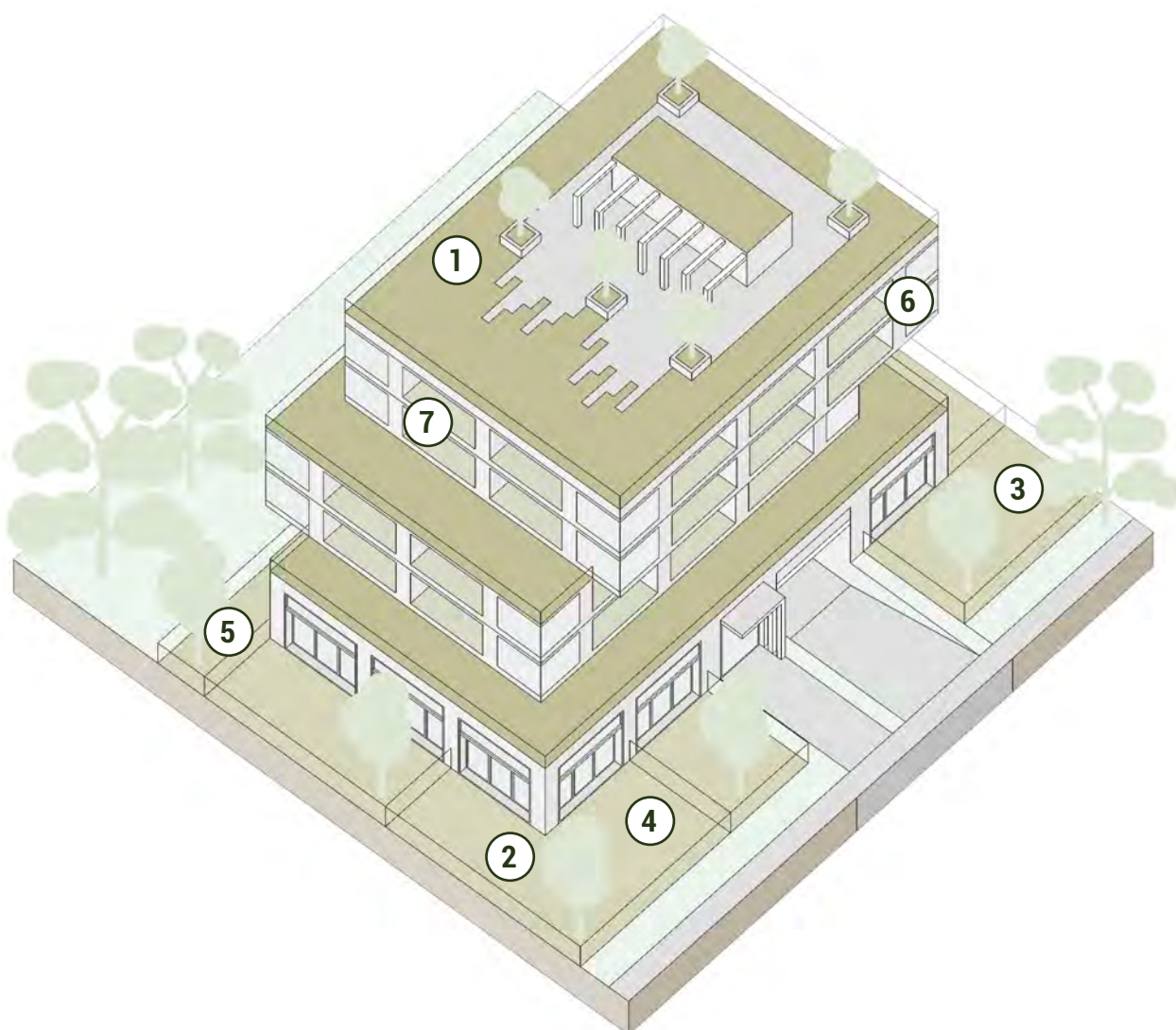
Tools and policy support:

Protected and Significant Trees <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/waste-environment/trees/protected-and-significant-trees>

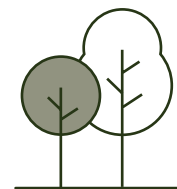
Urban Biodiversity Strategy <https://URL>

Planning Scheme - Built Environment Clause 15.01 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/15.01>

Planning Scheme - Landscape Objectives Clause 55.03-8 and Clause 58.03-5 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/55.03>



4.3 Smart water management



In our drought-prone climate, using water wisely is vital. Consider incorporating smart water management solutions that are also useful and look great.

Harvest rainwater

Consider collecting rainwater that falls on large surfaces of your building like roofs, balconies, terraces and paved areas. These areas requires a drainage system, making it easy to direct water into a tank.

Passive irrigation

Make sure your landscaped areas can be irrigated by rain by using rainwater retention systems (such as rain gardens) that collect and hold water for longer periods. This allows plants to have a sustainable source of water in dryer months.

Greywater

Install a greywater recycling system to re-use greywater (like from your shower or laundry) in your garden, keeping your plants healthy even when water restrictions are in place.

Permeable surfaces

To minimise your property's contribution to pollution runoff, avoid large paved areas (such as car parks or driveways) in favour of semi-permeable paving.

Choose your plants carefully

Choose plants suitable to treat stormwater, improve climate resilience, and enhance your landscape design.



Tools and policy support:

Planning Scheme - Permeability and Stormwater Management Clause 55.03-4 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/55.03>

Planning Scheme - Stormwater Management in Urban Development 53.18 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/53.18>

Planning Scheme - Integrated Water and Stormwater Management Clause 58.03-8 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/58.03>



Permeable surfaces and careful planting maximise rainwater, reduce runoff and provide developments with meaningful landscaping. Design: ANGLE and Edition Office. Photography: Rory Gardner/Ben Hosking.

5. Liveable and vibrant places



Streets and public places play a vital role in how we feel about and value a neighbourhood. They must be attractive, safe and easy to get to and be integrated physically and visually with their surroundings.⁵

How buildings, landscapes and movement networks (for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and cars) are designed greatly influences the character, sense of place and functionality of streets and public places.

It is important to:

- consider how your building interacts with the street – are you making a positive physical and visual contribution?
- encourage ‘eyes on the street’ for safety. Windows facing the street suggest a human presence without negatively impacting on the privacy of the owner.
- design your site to ensure a valuable contribution is made to a convenient and pleasant experience for people.

⁵Llewelyn-Davies, ‘Urban Design Compendium’, 2000, English Partnerships, London.

Best practice resources:

Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/guides/urban-design-guidelines-for-victoria>

Creating Safe and Inclusive Public Spaces for Women <https://whe.org.au/creating-safe-and-inclusive-public-spaces-for-women/>

Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach <https://universaldesign.ie/built-environment/building-for-everyone/>

Image (right): Don Arcade, Hawthorn.



5.1 Quality public spaces



Buildings have an important role in creating activity that keeps our city safe and bustling at street level.

Contribute to the public realm

A crucial component of a building's design is how it contributes to the overall 'urban architecture' – that is, its positive contribution to the public realm – not just what 'style' of architecture it is.

All projects, particularly large-scale ones, should contribute to making the public realm a better place for everyone. This can be through creative design and quality architecture, public art, interesting materials and lighting, generous landscaping, or even creating new pedestrian connections through the site.

If there are large blank walls, consider covering them with art.

Animating the street

To create safe and vibrant streets, it's essential that medium and large-scale developments include some ground-floor uses that attract a regular turnover of visitors. This can be achieved by choosing the right types of uses and tenants. Consider what might be missing in your neighbourhood, and balance tenancies to create activity in the evening as well as during the day.

Universal design

Universal design means designing places that are flexible, adaptable and meet the needs of people today and in the future.

Universal design usually does not add extra costs to a project. Using universal design principles can often save costs by reducing dependence on mechanical features that require maintenance, and by reducing the need to retrofit features to comply with legislation.⁶



⁶ VHBA, 'Universal Design', February 2022, VHBA, viewed 7 April 2022, < <https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design> >.

Tools and policy support:

Planning Scheme - Sustainable and Safe Transport 18.01-3S <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/18.01>

Planning Scheme - Sustainable Personal Transport 18.01-3L <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/18.01>

Council's Disability Action Plan <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/community/community-health-safety-and-wellbeing/accessibility-and-inclusion/disability-action-plan>

Council's Bicycle Strategy <https://engage.boroondara.vic.gov.au/bicycle-strategy>



Streets are more animated with outdoor dining, colourful umbrellas and plant boxes.
Image: Grace Street, Hawthorn.

5.2 Active street life



Design has a wide range of tools and solutions to facilitate and promote public realm activation. Increased foot traffic will have a positive impact on business, residents and visitors alike.

1. Build on activity

Locating your tenancies close to existing pedestrian activity or open spaces, such as shops or cafes, bike paths, playgrounds, daycare centres, parks or plazas will benefit your tenancies. Consider setting your building back from the property edge to create a bit of extra room for people. Outdoor spaces attract visitors and invite them to linger.

2. Welcoming entrances

Building entrances should be convenient and easy to identify, be generously sized and well lit so they are inviting day and night. To encourage foot traffic, provide as many entrances to your building as is practical. Have separate entrances for each ground-floor tenancy, and for residential components.

3. Transparency

Being able to see lively internal spaces from the outside contributes to a vibrant street life and encourages potential customers to enter.

4. Microclimate

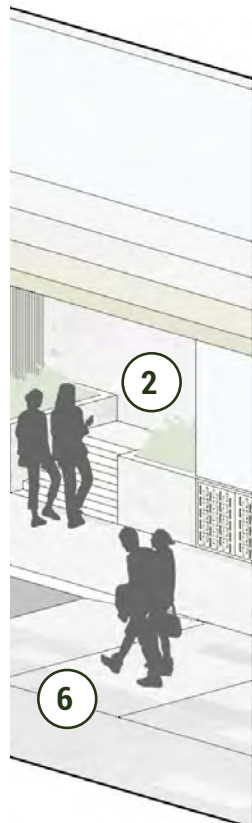
Consider landscaping, shade structures and/or setbacks to ensure a comfortable amount of sunlight and shade. Reduce the impact of wind and noise to also encourage people to linger.

5. Protection from the elements

Protect pedestrian routes from midday sun, rain and wind with awnings, careful design so that walking is appealing whatever the weather.

6. Accessibility for all

Designing your space for people of all abilities will benefit everyone.

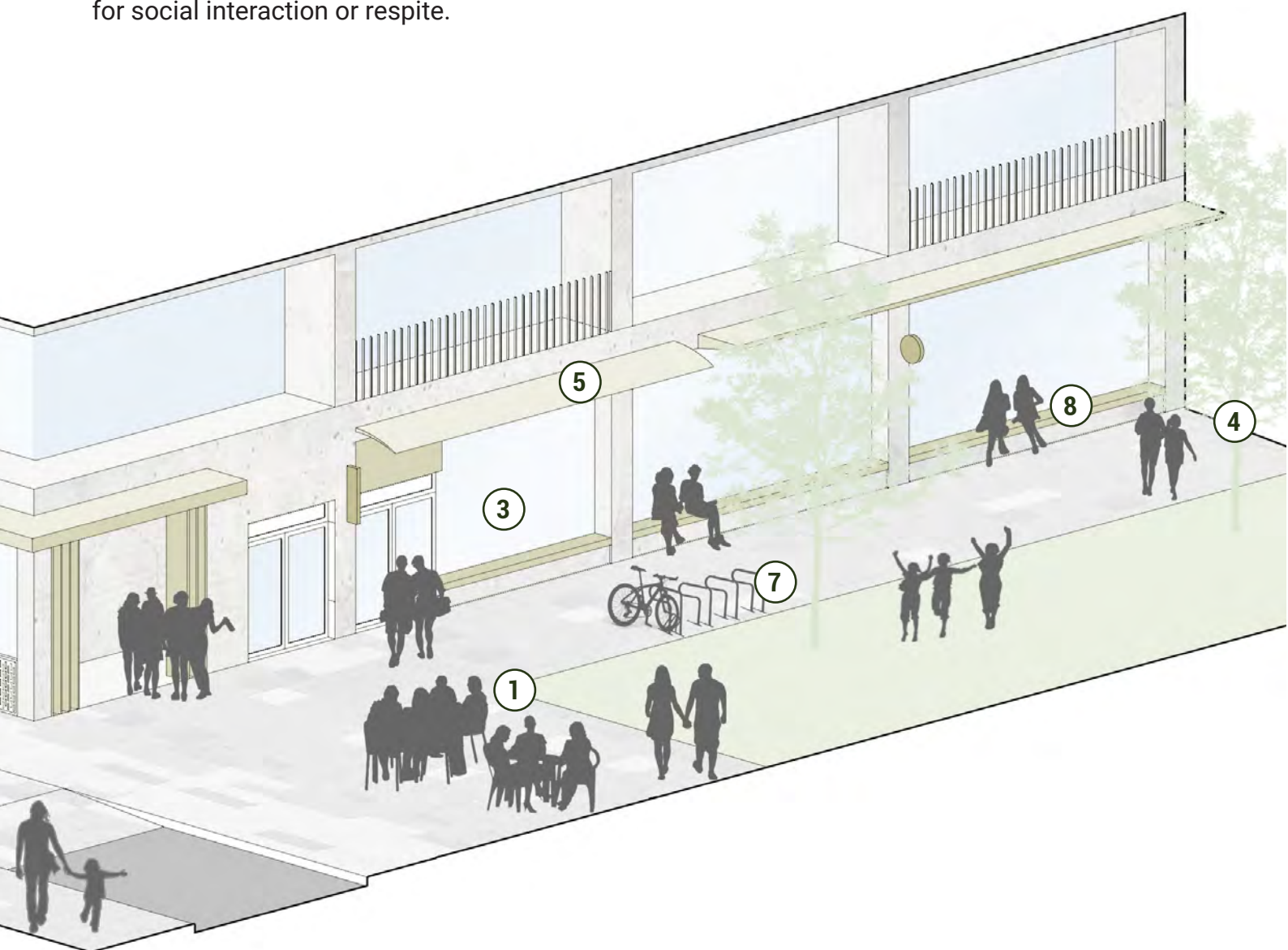


7. Cycling facilities

If your development contains commercial space or workplaces, facilitate commuting with showers, lockers and a clearly marked dedicated entry. Easy-to-access and secure bike loops for quick visitor bike parking should be on street level, near entrances or busy tenancies.

8. Spaces for life to thrive

Help contribute to an environment where people want to be – seating, public art, trees and, if appropriate, play equipment all contribute to opportunities for social interaction or respite.



5.3 Safer places



People feel comfortable and confident using public spaces where there is good visibility and lighting, where they feel they can be seen and heard by other people.⁷

Friendly fences

Avoid tall and solid fence designs. Clearly show what is private property through screens or battens that allow visibility between your front door and the street. Where possible include landscaping and consider adding a bench seat or other small amenity to the streetscape.

Strategic lighting

Provide low-level lighting to public paths and circulation spaces. The light should be of a brightness and colour that makes these spaces inviting to visit and adds character to the building's exterior. Lighting should also be positioned to illuminate faces of passers-by, contributing to a sense of safety.

Living rooms to the front

In residential developments, position main living spaces so they look onto streets, lanes or parks. This not only makes these public spaces safer for everyone, but means great views. There are plenty of smart design solutions that mean you don't have to compromise on privacy.

Support passive surveillance - 'eyes on the streets'

Public spaces feel safer and are used more when there are opportunities for informal surveillance of the space. Arrange the public space to allow direct, clear sightlines from surrounding areas into and through public spaces.

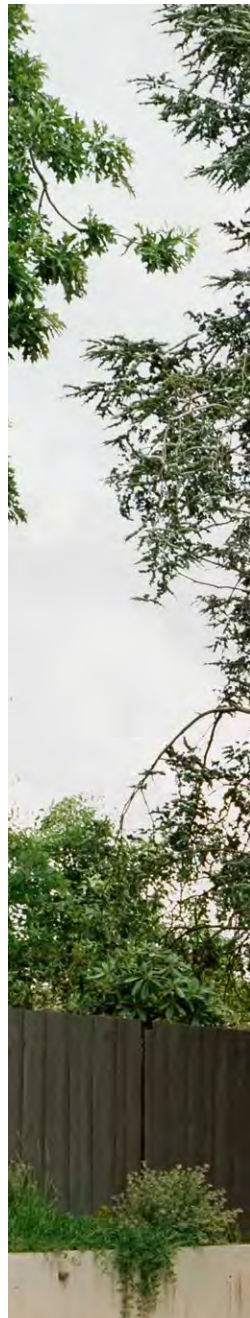
It's also important to choose trees and plants planting wisely and maintain them regularly.

Avoid blank walls, nook and crannies

Blank walls make the streets alongside them feel unsafe and lacking in character. Minimise the length of walls without any doors or windows.

Avoid any recesses, concealment spots or dead ends in your building design.

Ensure there is adequate lighting around your building, not just the front entrance.



⁷ Llewelyn-Davies, 'Urban Design Compendium', 2000, English Partnerships, London.

Tools and policy support:

Planning Scheme - Built Environment Clause 15.01 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/15.01>



Having 'friendly fences' and living spaces overlooking the street provides passive surveillance without compromising on privacy. Design: ANGLE and Edition Office. Photography: Rory Gardner/Ben Hosking.

5.4 Integrating vehicles



How you accommodate vehicles has a significant effect on the quality of the place. It is essential to incorporate vehicles and their requirements without dominating everything around it.

Minimise the impact

Put car parking and/or entrances to car parks to the side of a residential building to minimise the visual impact. If a building has multiple frontages, put car parking entrances on secondary streets or laneways where possible.

Minimise the number of entrances so as not to impact pedestrian experience and safety. Include surface treatments that emphasise pedestrian right-of-way and design that allows exiting drivers to easily see pedestrians.

Future-proofing mobility

Development should consider how to accommodate many forms of mobility (such as electric vehicles – including charging stations – e-scooters, motorbikes, car share services) while also being flexible for emerging technologies.

Put the ‘park’ into carpark

Incorporate permeable green pavers, trees and vegetation into car parks.

Soften and screen

Putting car parking in basements is generally encouraged to hide cars from view but requires careful design to ensure it doesn't dominate the facade of the building and street.

Minimise the entry gradient wherever possible to reduce the need for retaining walls. Soften gradients with landscaping and integrate the gate/entry door into the overall design.

If above-ground parking is proposed, it should be ‘wrapped’ behind built form that allows for other uses around the outside.

Rationalise parking

The way we travel is changing: away from the private car in favour of public transport, cycling, car sharing and micromobility. Therefore, it is important to plan ahead for a decrease in parking demand, building only as much parking as necessary, and allowing for future adaptation of parking levels to residential or commercial uses.



Tools and policy support:

Planning Scheme - Car Parking Clause 52.06 <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Boroondara/ordinance/52.06>



Car park entry is set back from the street and integrated into the building. Design: Bryant Alsop.
Photography: Emily Bartlett





The Auburn Apartments, Hawthorn, VIC. Design: Splinter Society Architecture. Photography: Sharyn Cairns.

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