

2.18 Public Domain

Overview

The *public domain* of the Inner West comprises the shared streets, squares, parks, open spaces and pathways. These spaces foster social interaction, support the local economy, and contribute to everyone's urban experience. Public open spaces also enhance community wellbeing through movement, recreation, and as a backdrop for cultural expression.

This section applies to:

- **Publicly Accessible Land and Infrastructure:** Including streetscape upgrades, civil works, and utility installations.
- **Private Land Interfaces:** Works adjoining the *public domain*, such as *setbacks*, through-site links, awnings, and frontage treatments.

Design Principles

Six core principles guide all works within and adjoining the *public domain* to ensure a cohesive, high-quality, and resilient urban environment:

- **Principle 1:** Enhance liveability and placemaking
- **Principle 2:** Promote ecological sustainability
- **Principle 3:** Activate the *public domain*
- **Principle 4:** Create accessible, inclusive, and safe places
- **Principle 5:** Foster urban cohesion and shared identity
- **Principle 6:** Embed ongoing repair and durability

2.18.1 General

Objectives

01. **Inclusive Placemaking (Principles 1, 3 & 4):** To provide safe, accessible, and vibrant public spaces that encourage social interaction, play, and cultural activity through comfortable microclimates, equitable seating, and optimised solar access.
02. **Heritage, Culture and Identity (Principles 1 & 5):** To ensure the *public domain* respects local history and heritage, celebrating Aboriginal culture and language through Designing with Country, and the integration of public art, naming, and wayfinding that fosters a shared sense of place.
03. **Functional & Connected Streetscapes (Principles 4 and 6):** To deliver high-quality, uncluttered streetscapes that provide continuous, accessible paths of travel and thoughtfully integrate private built-form interfaces and essential services.

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- O4. **Ecological Sustainability and Resilience (Principle 2):** To create safe and comfortable public spaces that encourage social interaction, optimised solar access, and design features that mitigate extreme heat and the Urban Heat Island effects and mitigate climate impacts by protecting street trees and providing opportunities for new street trees, increasing canopy cover, and incorporating "blue and green" infrastructure for water-sensitive urban design.
- O5. **Safety and Comfort (Principle 4):** To create safe and comfortable public spaces that encourage social interaction by providing quality seating, optimised solar access, and design features that mitigate extreme heat and the Urban Heat Island effect.
- O6. **Durable Design and Management (Principle 6):** To utilise high-quality, fit-for-purpose materials that are sustainable, age well, and resist vandalism to ensure a long-lasting and easily maintained *public domain*.

Controls

Design

- C1. *Public domain* works are to be designed as high-quality, safe, and cohesive environments that respond to their specific urban context. Proposals are to satisfy the following requirements:
 - a) Respond proactively to the local context by addressing gaps in *public domain* provision, aligning with relevant Council Place Plans, and ensuring use of appropriate materials and design with the immediate surroundings
 - b) Promote a safe, active environment by applying *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) principles (refer to Part 2.16) to minimise concealment points and maximise natural surveillance
 - c) Improve legibility and physical access to ensure people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can navigate public places safely and independently
 - d) Diversify and enhance the variety of public spaces within the locality while anticipating future development, proposed works, and potential pedestrian or cycling connections
 - e) Ensure design outcomes promote ecological sustainability and utilise design strategies to achieve durability and minimise long-term maintenance requirements
- C2. Larger developments are to extend the public streetscape by providing high-quality, publicly accessible areas within the private site. Larger developments include *mixed used development*, *office premises*, *shop top housing*, town centres (E1, E2 and MUI zones) significant redevelopment of large lots in R3 and R4 zones where provision of through sites links, 3000 sqm or 100 m frontage. These spaces are to be designed to match the local character and include features that improve environmental sustainability. Acceptable forms of accessible space include:
 - a) Through-site links: Direct pedestrian and cycle paths enhancing connectivity
 - b) Public plazas and arcades: Open or sheltered gathering spaces for the community

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- c) Outdoor dining and terraces: Areas that activate the building edge and encourage social interaction
 - d) Building access: Designating parts of the property for public use or thoroughfare
 - e) Sustainability features: Integrating infrastructure that addresses climate challenges, such as urban cooling or water-sensitive design
- C3. To celebrate existing features, social and built form histories, and express the cultural diversity and creative identity of the Inner West in all works to the *public domain*.
- C4. To ensure development enhances the streetscape for the extent of the street frontage by:
- a) Providing required built form *setbacks* and a built form that interfaces well with the streetscape, with associated landscaping and *deep soil zones*
 - b) Ensuring the pedestrian movement area is clear of obstacles
 - c) Integrating pedestrian entries into the streetscape design
 - d) Requiring appropriate landscaping and plantings at the interface with areas of ecological value
 - e) Residential developments (excluding *mixed use development*) are to use fencing that is at least 50% transparent above 1.2m and position active rooms (living/kitchen) or balconies to overlook the street to improve safety

Public Art

- C5. New developments with a construction cost of over \$20m are to allocate 1% of the estimated development cost value to public art. This may include:
- a) Design and delivery of public art integrated with the development
 - b) Engaging artists to design, fabricate, or deliver features in the *public domain*
- C6. Public art is to:
- a) Demonstrate artistic excellence and uphold integrity in the commissioning process
 - b) Reflect and strengthen local cultural character and place identity, employing local artists where possible
 - c) Be publicly visible or accessible, site specific and appropriately scaled to the development and its surrounds
 - d) When working with cultural communities, including Aboriginal artists and knowledge holders, engage in respectful dialogue at project formation stage
 - e) Be durable and serviceable for its intended lifespan, with a care and maintenance plan
 - f) Be commissioned and delivered in accordance with the *Inner West Public Art Guidelines for Developers*

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Lighting and wayfinding

- C7. Wayfinding is to be:
- a) Clear to all ages, backgrounds, and abilities, is provided to orientate and direct users
 - b) Consistent with wider public domain signage
- C8. Where naming is required for new development, local Aboriginal language is to be incorporated to enhance and strengthen the cultural connection to the place. This form of naming is to involve consultation with the local Aboriginal community.
- C9. Lighting installations are to:
- a) **Operational Excellence:** Utilise energy-efficient, high-quality, and durable fixtures that require minimal ongoing repair
 - b) **Safety and Security:** Enhance the safety of the *public domain* by providing uniform light levels that eliminate dark "hiding spots" without creating blinding glare
 - c) **Amenity Protection:** Minimise light spill into the night sky (Dark Sky principles) and ensure no "nuisance" light or glare spills into the windows of neighbouring residential properties
 - d) **Seamless Integration:** Be integrated into the *building's* architectural design or landscaping rather than appearing as an "add-on" or afterthought

Services and Lighting

- C10. Lighting is to comply with Dark Sky principles, utilising full cut-off fixtures to prevent light spill into the night sky or neighbouring windows, while providing uniform light for safety.
- C11. Exterior lighting installations are to:
- a) Be energy efficient, high quality, durable, and require minimal ongoing repair
 - b) Not cause nuisance or hazard
 - c) Minimise light spill into the night sky
 - d) Enhance safety and security
 - e) Be integrated into *building* design where possible
 - f) For developments with 40+ *dwellings* or for non-residential development >2,500sqm GFA, all overhead service cables along the full street frontage are to be placed underground at the applicant's expense
- C12. Mechanical plant and essential services equipment are to be:
- a) Contained within the property
 - b) Integrated with the *building* and landscape design
 - c) Located so as not to be visible from any public area

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- C13. Development Applications are to include written correspondence from the relevant supply authority confirming that arrangements have been made to underground the services. Undergrounding is required for at least one full span immediately adjacent to the site, though applicants are not responsible for property connections beyond the development boundaries.
- C14. Infrastructure, such as three phase power, waste facilities, and drinking water, are to be provided on *public land* or land available to the public on private land to support the range of expected activities and uses.
- C15. New or upgraded *public land* or land available to the public on private land is to incorporate physical infrastructure capable of hosting digital and innovative technology including, where relevant:
- a) Multifunction poles
 - b) Public Wi-Fi/5G network
 - c) Electric vehicle charging points
 - d) Provision of real time information
 - e) Renewable energy sources

Sustainability and resilience

- C16. New *public domain* works are to:
- a) Incorporate rainwater and flood attenuation (including *WSUD*), where possible
 - b) Be designed to promote and incorporate water harvesting, passive irrigation, and ground permeability
 - c) Consider the wider sustainable urban drainage network
 - d) Utilise landscaping and tree planting to mitigate urban heat
- C17. Landscape designs on public or private land are to provide the best chance for plants to thrive and form an ecosystem, through the:
- a) Retention of existing mature trees
 - b) Careful design and selection of diverse and resilient endemic vegetation
 - c) Specification of well-developed nursery stock
 - d) Supporting infrastructure such as Stratavault or structural soil, appropriate irrigation and sub-soil *drainage* with adequate soil volumes for tree roots to ensure successful growth and long life
 - e) Consideration of the changing climate

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- C18. Landscaping on *public land* and private land maximises greening opportunities including green roofs and walls, pergolas with climbers, podiums, planters, lawns and gardens, rain gardens and permeable pavement.
- C19. Vegetated buffers between traffic and pedestrian movement areas are prioritised over fencing and/or combined with other safety barriers where required.

Materials

- C20. Ensure good environmental performance where materials are to be selected based on a "whole-of-life" sustainability approach, prioritising low embodied energy, supply chain transparency, and carbon sequestration (such as sustainable timber).
- C21. Ensure Fit-for-Purpose Design with materials and finishes that are selected to suit the specific intended use of the space (e.g., non-porous, easily cleanable surfaces for dining and *market* areas) and that are resistant to graffiti and vandalism.
- C22. Ensure specifications that prioritise high-quality materials that are durable, age gracefully with minimal repair required, and contribute to a circular economy through easy repair or recycling.
- C23. Vegetation is to favour resilient, minimal upkeep, and informal species over "high-intensity" plantings that require frequent water, chemical, or manual intervention.

2.18.2 Access and connectivity

Objectives

- O7. To provide pedestrian access on the main street frontage of new developments and ensure it is clearly identifiable from the street.
- O8. To apply continuous, level-grade footpath treatments across driveways, laneways, streets, and intersections to give visual priority to pedestrians and cyclists.
- O9. To minimise the number of driveways that interrupt or disrupt footpaths.
- O10. To include new streets, lanes, and through-site links in large developments. These are to be publicly accessible and connected to the existing street network.
- O11. To enhance new and existing streets, lanes, and through-site links within and around developments by implementing *shared zones*, traffic calming treatments, landscaping, and other measures that prioritise walking and cycling over motor vehicles.

Controls

- C24. Design development within and adjacent to the public domain to:
 - a) Prioritise pedestrian and cyclist safety and strengthen active transport connectivity
 - b) Maintain and create fine-grained, walkable urban fabric

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- c) Deliver high-quality design responses that reflect the *desired future character* of the place as well as its movement corridor
- d) Apply the principles of movement and place in accordance with the *Transport for NSW Movement and Place Framework*
- e) Recognise and respect Aboriginal songlines and cultural connections to Country, and incorporate these values to improve overall design outcomes and contribute to reconciliation
- f) Consider and respond to existing landform

C25. When landscaping, plant species are to be selected and located so as not to cause encroachment of growth on pedestrian pathways, cycleways or obstruct people from accessing or disembarking from parked cars along the street.

C26. Provide active transport links on private land in developments where existing public movement corridors cannot safely accommodate them, by:

- a) Providing for public access across the land
- b) Providing ground-level *setbacks* and colonnade frontage treatments within a Town Centre

C27. Enhance movement spaces in areas with high pedestrian activity, by implementing measures that prioritise walking and cycling over motor vehicles, such as:

- a) *Shared zones*
- b) Traffic calming treatments
- c) Landscaping
- d) Other design interventions that improve safety and comfort for active transport users

Through Site Links

C28. Include new streets, lanes, and through-site links in large developments. These are to be:

- a) Publicly accessible and connected to the existing street network.

C29. **Trigger for Through-site Links:** Provide through-site links where:

- a) The street frontage exceeds 130m
- b) The site is identified for a link in Part 4 of this DCP
- c) The link is required as part of a Planning Agreement

C30. **Design of Through-site Links:** Design links to:

- a) Be located between building breaks to provide thoroughfares for the public, pedestrians, and cyclists

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- b) Prioritise pedestrian and cyclist access over vehicular access
- c) Integrate and be consistent with the surrounding *public domain* network
- d) Remain open to the sky
- e) Be clearly visible and accessible from the *public domain*
- f) Include opportunities for planting and landscaping
- g) Protect the privacy of adjacent *dwellings* through strategic building orientation and screening

C31. Provide new through-site links with a minimum width of:

- a) 5m for pedestrian and cyclist use only
- b) 6m for *shared zones* where vehicle access is permitted

Public domain interface and activation

C32. Encourage a fine-grained streetscape by incorporating visual breaks and changes in materiality. Limit the maximum length of a single building façade to 50m.

C33. Use continuity of design and materials to identify publicly accessible spaces and connect them with the broader *public domain*.

C34. Define the interface between the *public domain* and private places through built form, appropriate uses, and design treatments. Mark boundaries between publicly accessible and private spaces in subtle, celebratory ways without losing continuity.

C35. Locate the following ground floor spaces adjacent to *public domain* to maximise casual surveillance:

- a) Active spaces
- b) Non-residential components of *mixed use development*
- c) *Building* foyers
- d) Windows of *habitable rooms*

C36. Where a residential development (excluding *mixed use development*) adjoins the public domain, it is to incorporate the following design features:

- a) **Softened *Building Edges***: Provide high-quality landscaping within *setbacks* to diminish the visual impact of the *building* mass and enhance the green character of the street
- b) **Passive Surveillance**: Design upper-level balconies to overlook the *public domain*, ensuring "eyes on the street" to improve community safety

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- c) **Direct Street Entry:** Incorporate ground-floor *dwelling*s with individual street entries and clearly defined transitional spaces (such as porches or small steps) to distinguish between public and private zones
- C37. **Active Courtyards and Gardens:** Position private courtyards and landscaped front gardens along the street frontage to increase localised activity and provide opportunities for casual social interaction
- a) **Visually Permeable Fencing:** Use open-style fencing or permeable wall treatments (at least 50% transparency) to maintain a visual connection between the home and the street while avoiding blank, defensive barriers
- C38. To incorporate awnings in new developments to align with the existing built form and contribute to a cohesive streetscape experience. Ensure awnings or upper-level projections:
- a) Match awnings of existing *buildings*
 - b) Where no awnings are located in the vicinity, are a minimum of three metres above the public space and do not impact landscaping, tree canopy or the provision of new trees
- C39. To design *building* facades to:
- a) Prioritise vegetated surfaces such as green facades, living walls and retaining living walls, where possible
 - b) Integrate artworks or artist-designed features into façades or other elements, where possible

Liveability and useability

- C40. Design the public domain to be accessible, legible and organised into three functional areas:
- a) **Movement area** – unobstructed and accessible for people to move
 - b) **Activity area** – typically adjacent to movement areas in high pedestrian activity areas, for commercial, leisure or social uses (play, dwell, gather)
 - c) **Buffer area** – delivered where there is a need to separate different modes of transport to improve pedestrian and cycle safety, for green infrastructure, landscaping, and street furniture
- C41. Ensure public plazas and open spaces have adequate solar access in mid-winter, as well as sufficient shading and weather protection facilities in summer to allow the area to be used for passive recreation:
- a) 50% of the total area is to receive direct sunlight for four hours from 9am to 3pm on 21 June

Note: Where open spaces and plazas receive less this, new adjacent developments are not to create additional overshadowing on 21 June between 9am – 3pm
 - b) 20% of the total area is to be shaded (including shelters) on 21 December

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- C42. Ensure *building* materials do not result in adverse conditions in the *public domain*, such as reflected glare, downward drafts, or wind tunnels.
- C43. Light reflectivity from *building* materials used on facades is not to exceed 20%.
- C44. Provide a variety of furniture types that:
- a) Supports food consumption without purchase, including tables or other level surfaces
 - b) Allows a degree of user control and customisation
 - c) Enables people in wheelchairs to join with others
 - d) Caters for people of all ages, e.g. including arm and backrests, smaller furniture near playgrounds
- C45. Incorporate:
- a) Playful objects and activations to engage children and youth
 - b) Artworks or artist-designed features to support community cohesion, identity and placemaking
- C46. Public domain areas are to support a range of activities, including temporary uses or temporary or pop-up uses, such as events, performances, markets, exhibitions, creative initiatives etc.
- C47. Ensure parks and plazas remain warm and usable in winter, new development is not to shade more than 50% of the total ground area of any existing or proposed public open space at 12:00 pm on 21 June (Winter Solstice).
- C48. Development proposals over six *storeys* are to:
- a) Provide a wind impact assessment demonstrating compliance with pedestrian comfort and safety in relation to wind impact in the *public domain* and usable open spaces within the *building*
 - b) Incorporate all mitigation measures into the *building* design
 - c) Use wind mitigation strategies that support ground floor activation
 - d) Design balconies to minimise wind impacts and maximise useability; recess balconies on *buildings* over 45m high