



# FRONT FENCING

The City of Victor Harbor's objective for the use of front fences is to improve amenity for residents and ensure fences contribute positively to the streetscape and to the appearance of adjacent buildings.

Front fencing design has implications for streetscape appearance, privacy and security. It has the potential to be a dominant design element and requires careful thought in the design process.

Fencing defines territorial boundaries, provides a safe area for children to play and offers some acoustic and visual privacy. However, front fences can also unduly dominate a street and their design may not always be in keeping with the streetscape and built character. They can reduce pedestrian amenity and opportunities for social interaction in the street and prevent resident surveillance of the street and of homes for security.

## Design approach

For housing where space is at a premium, fencing may allow better use of the front yard. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to allow high front fences and walls, such as when the most desirable area of private open space faces the street (eg best solar orientation) or where noise generated by traffic is high.

In many areas, particularly in new, developing areas or where coastal views are desired, front fencing forward of the building line may not be warranted or desirable. The resultant streetscape has a more open, landscaped character which can be most attractive, particularly if significant landscaping of the front garden area takes place. In these situations garden design and planting can effectively define the front property boundaries, while their approach can encourage residents to maintain the verge down to the street kerb.

In established areas where residential densities might be higher and/or fences more characteristic, front fencing can help integrate streetscape or integrate new housing within a new housing project.

## Privacy and territory

The traditional Australian approach to gardens is for the front yard to function as a semi-public space. This role conflicts with the desire generated in many housing developments for the private open space facing the street to be enclosed. A means to resolve this dilemma may be to provide partial high privacy screening from the street whilst maintaining some degree of visual connection and overall design cohesion.

It is generally preferable for fencing to be sited at the property boundary to give a clear definition of both territory and responsibility for care and maintenance of land on the street side of the fencing.

## Safety and surveillance

Designing for security means maintaining the opportunity for casual surveillance of the street by residents from their dwellings or front yards. This has implications for the height, extent and transparency of fencing.

A solid wall fence of 1.8m in height can occupy the whole frontage when on a main arterial road to prevent noise and offer privacy, however it must contribute to the streetscape and to adjacent buildings.

It is preferred by Council however, to generally make the fence transparent for security reasons (refer to Figure 1).

## Design criteria for fencing

- The design and materials of fences and walls abutting streets (excluding service lanes) should:
  - be compatible with the associated development and with attractive fences and walls in the locality; and
  - enable some presentation of buildings to the street to enhance safety and surveillance.

- Front fences and walls should assist in

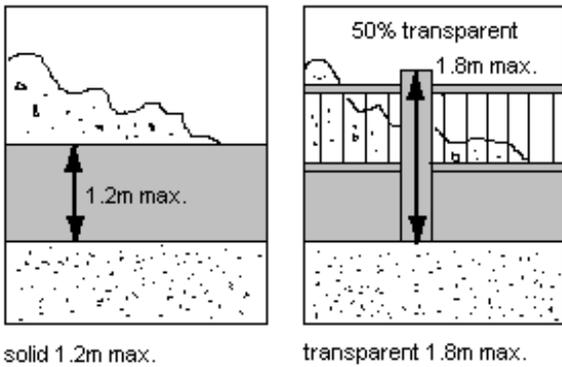


Figure 1: Higher front fences should generally be partially transparent.

- highlighting entrances to buildings.
- The design and materials of front fences and walls should be compatible with the associated development and with attractive fences and walls in the nearby visible locality.
- The use and/or design of fences and walls in streetscapes of significance should be appropriate to the heritage context.

## Do I need approval for fencing?

Under the Development Act 1993, you need approval for the following:

- Any fence exceeding 2.1 metres in height (measured from the lower of the two adjoining finished ground levels);
- A fence that exceeds (or would exceed) one metre in height within 6 metres of the intersection of two boundaries of the subject land (where both boundaries face a road), other than where a 4 x 4 metre corner cut-off has already been provided and exists (and is to be preserved);
- A masonry fence that exceeds (or would exceed) one metre in height (measured from the lower of the two adjoining finished ground levels);
- A fence that is (or is to be) a safety fence for a swimming pool which is approved for construction, or requires approval for construction;
- A brush fence that is situated within 3 metres of a dwelling or other habitable building.

## Want to know more?

The above information is advisory and a guide only to give you a general understanding of the key points associated with the development assessment system. It is recommended that you seek professional advice or contact the City of Victor Harbor regarding any specific inquiries or for further assistance concerning the use and development of land. Being properly prepared can save you time and money in the long run.

While care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of material contained in this publication, no responsibility will be accepted for any errors or omissions.

### City of Victor Harbor – Contact details

1 Bay Road  
 PO Box 11, Victor Harbor SA 5211  
 Telephone: (08) 8551 0570  
 Facsimile: (08) 8551 0501  
 Email: [localgov@victor.sa.gov.au](mailto:localgov@victor.sa.gov.au)  
 Website: [www.victor.sa.gov.au](http://www.victor.sa.gov.au)