

Multi-storey Residential Developments

Design Guidelines

Development typology

Please note:

These guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive. Instead, the principles contained in this document are meant to guide property owners, City officials, designers, developers, architects, planners and community members in managing and improving the principles expressed in the Urban Design Policy. The intended purpose is to collectively create sustainable, safe, contextually appropriate environments for the betterment of the City and its users.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and quality of the information in this document, as well as the alignment with other City policies and guidelines available at the time of production. The City cannot be held responsible, and will not be liable, for any errors or omissions contained herein.

In no event will the City be liable for any loss or damage that may arise from the use of these guidelines.

Many of the images used in this document are taken from real world examples, adapted to show the principles of the guidelines presented.

For the purpose of this guideline, multi-storey residential developments are characterised as developments that are usually within **established suburban areas** with neighbouring context consisting of **predominantly single-storey dwellings**. Other criteria by which multi-storey residential developments are defined include the use of singular vehicle access points and the absence of mechanical vertical circulation within the built form (maximum 4 Storeys).

Multi-storey Residential Developments have become increasingly popular for first-time homeowners, and as a result allow for affordable ownership within an established suburban area. To increase the marketability of these developments, a high on-grade parking ratio is provided, resulting in limited meaningful and functional recreation space.

The guideline seeks to promote good urban design principles and provide policy orientated guidance to ensure that the proposed development is well integrated, fosters a positive interface at a human scale and respects the neighbouring context.

Endorsed by:

.....

Executive Director
Spatial Planning & Environment

.....

Director
Spatial Planning & Environment

Rev. no	Date	Description
v1	01.01.2026	Date of release

What and where?

Multi-storey residential development can be generally characterised by:

- A site area between 800 - 3000sqm.
- Often referred to as 'gentle densification' and often replaces single residential buildings.
- These developments range in scale and but are typically 2-4 storeys

Multi-storey residential developments are generally located:

- in well-established areas and embedded within an existing suburban context.
- a few blocks away from a 'high street', such as a main road or an important mobility corridor.
- where the neighbouring context usually consists of (usually larger) single storey dwellings.

What kind of developments are we trying to create?

Multi-storey residential developments that:

- ensure the support of the underlining urban structure
- ensure a positive and meaningful street-to-door experience
- create and promote ground-floor activation along its public facing interfaces such as streets, parks, and public green open spaces.
- prioritise the above to avoid on-site parking from creating 'dead space' between the building interface and street
- create and promote an environment that is sensitive to a human scale and contextually responsive
- create meaningful recreational space that contributes to the quality of life of the development tenants
- prevent privacy encroachment on neighbouring sites.

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Key definitions

These definitions are shorthand and should be read in conjunction with the Urban Design Policy (2024).

Articulation (of facades): Variation in building surfaces to create visual interest and respond to context.

Built-to lines: Prescribed lines on a site plan where buildings must be constructed, often to maintain street alignment.

Departure (building line relaxation): A formal request to deviate from prescribed building lines or zoning regulations.

Drying yard: Outdoor space designated for hanging laundry, often in residential developments.

Erf: The term used for a plot of land or property.

Façade rhythm: The pattern and repetition of architectural elements on a building’s exterior.

Functional open space: Usable outdoor areas designed for recreation, socializing, or other activities.

Gentle densification: A planning term referring to increasing housing density in a subtle, context-sensitive way.

Green/blue network: Ecological infrastructure including green spaces (parks, trees) and blue spaces (rivers, wetlands).

Ground floor activation: Design strategy to make ground-level spaces lively and engaging, often through retail or communal uses.

Hierarchy of corridors, streets, nodes: Planning concept describing the importance and function of different urban routes and areas.

Human scale: Design that considers the proportions and needs of people, making spaces feel comfortable and accessible.

Active interface: A building edge, facade or frontage that has habitable spaces that connect well with the public realm. It includes a mix of uses and spaces facing the public realm, with doors, windows, balconies and clear shopfronts. These interfaces are intentionally designed to encourage public accessibility as well as physical and visual interaction with the public realm.

Positive interface: A building edge or facade that includes windows, balconies and overlooking features that encourage interaction, safety and passive surveillance.

Pedestrian-friendly interface: A building edge, facade or frontage that prioritizes the needs and safety of people walking. These interfaces should create a pleasant pedestrian experience. Landscaping and overlooking features can be used to create these interfaces.

Legibility (urban): How easily people can understand and navigate a space.

Mixed-use development: A development that combines residential, commercial and/or other functions in one area or building.

Mobility corridor: A major route designed to support various modes of transport, including public transit.

On-grade parking: Parking located at ground level.

Public realm: All publicly accessible spaces including streets, parks, and plazas.

Perimeter block: A building layout that encloses a central courtyard, often used in urban housing.

Semi-basement parking: Parking partially below ground level, often requiring landscaping to mitigate visual impact.

Stilted parking: Parking located under a building raised on columns, often visible from the street and public realm.

Typology matrix: A classification system grouping different types of developments for guideline purposes.

Urban structure: Refers to the spatial arrangement and organization of urban elements like streets, buildings, and public spaces.

Visual permeability: The ability to see through boundaries (e.g., fences), promoting openness and safety.

Introduction

Guidelines are intended to provide the 'how' to the Urban Design Policy, which emphasises the 'what' and the 'why'. In general terms, guidelines are required for where there may be ambiguity, or where there are multiple interpretations of a policy, strategy or by law.

Purpose of the guidelines

The Urban Design Guidelines are developed as a suite of documents. These documents serve as part of the approved Designing Quality Places: Urban Design Policy for the City of Cape Town (2024). The intention is that the guidelines are flexible so that they can be updated and reviewed periodically. The executive director will be consulted on any updates to these documents, and will be responsible for implementing the contents of the guidelines as a decision-support tool. The executive director will report periodically on the implementation of the policy and guidelines to the relevant political oversight bodies, and will provide an overview of the current decision-support tools, as required.

The guidelines are intended to:

- serve as a facilitative document that assists in understanding the 'how' of the Urban Design Policy.
- supplement and streamline commenting.
- function as educational material that contextualises and explains how each development decision impacts the City and its users as a whole.
- encourage creative and innovative solutions to design challenges by 'demystifying' how good urban design principles can be achieved.
- promote early engagement with the City's Urban Planning and Design Department and the Urban Design Branch.
- be a clear, easy-to-read and user-friendly document.

It should be emphasised that the guidelines illustrated and explored in this document show a potential design solution. The principle of the guideline can be explored, changed and altered by anyone to achieve the same result in a different way.

The value of high-quality urban design

The international community recognises the importance of high-quality urban design in boosting the economic vitality of towns and cities. Effective urban design policies have been pivotal in transforming cities, driving economic development, and fostering social rejuvenation. High-quality urban design enhances the sense of place, pride and security within a community. It makes settlements more efficient by building on existing strengths and complementing the variety of resources available, leading to better resource use and greater economic vitality.

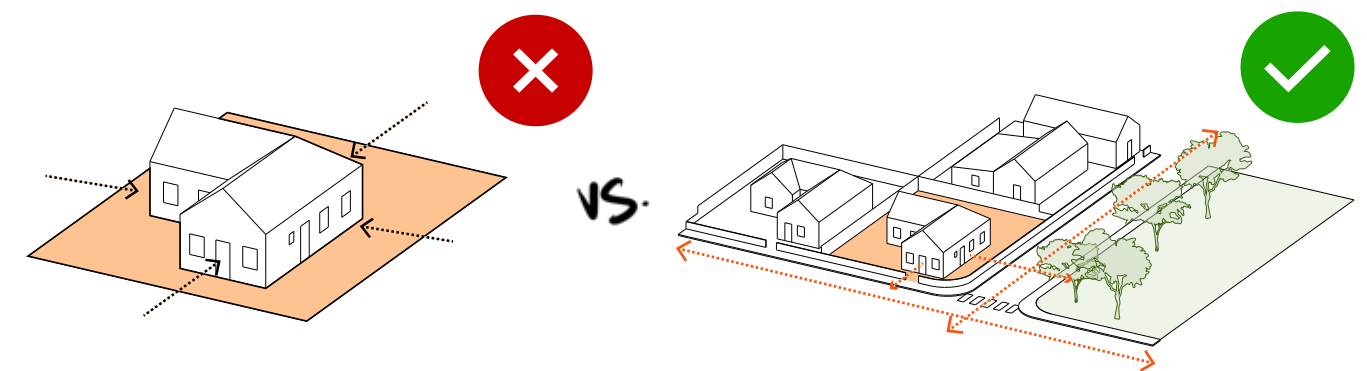
Attractive, well-designed spaces draw investments and stimulate economic growth. Conversely, poorly designed public spaces can negatively impact the environment, economy, and community. They can degrade natural resources, limit employment opportunities, and impose social costs. Residents in poorly designed areas often lack pride in their surroundings, perceive them as unsafe, and experience ongoing degradation and marginalisation.

Well-designed urban projects promote mixed-use activities, enhancing a city's adaptability and resilience in changing economic climates. Quality, safe and secure public spaces encourage exercise, walking and cycling, increasing street activity. This makes urban areas hubs of economic interaction the foster enterprise, innovation and tourism.

Building design vs urban design

Urban design is about creating better places for people by shaping buildings, spaces and infrastructure to improve the function, feel and form of towns and cities. It focuses on ensuring that the connections and relationships between buildings and spaces, public and private areas, and natural and built environments work well and efficiently as urban areas grow and develop. Urban design takes into account aesthetics, social, environmental and economic impacts, as well as the identity, character and heritage that define towns and cities.

Urban design can be applied at various scales, from large towns and cities to individual streets and buildings, and their surrounding landscapes or urban spaces. On a larger scale, it looks at how different parts of a city are connected and integrated, and where synergies between different activities can be created. On a smaller scale, urban design ensures that elements, such as street furniture and other features, are placed to support diverse uses and people, contributing to their continued use, comfort and safety, and the overall appearance of the community.



How the guidelines are structured

The guidelines are intended to be facilitative documents that assist in the processes of development and design. As such, the overall collection of guidelines should speak to a multitude of development **typologies** that are common within the city. A **matrix of typologies** has been developed, which looks to **identify, categorise and group** types of developments so that guidelines specific to those typologies can be produced. This matrix will be an evolving list that can and should respond to the ongoing trends and evolution of development across the city.

Matrix of Typologies:

Residential developments toolkit

Mixed-use, multi-storey developments
Multi-storey residential developments
Single residential
Gated residential developments
Residential infill developments
New development areas (NDAs)
Small-scale rental units (SSRUs)

Economic developments toolkit

Retail Developments
Infill high-rise developments
Neighbourhood mixed-use commercial precinct
Trading

Business park/ Industrial Precincts toolkit

Industrial precincts
Business precincts

Public space handbook

Green open space
Dignified spaces
Public parks
Urban public squares

Community facilities handbook

Community facilities
Clinics
Schools and ECDs

Institutional facilities handbook

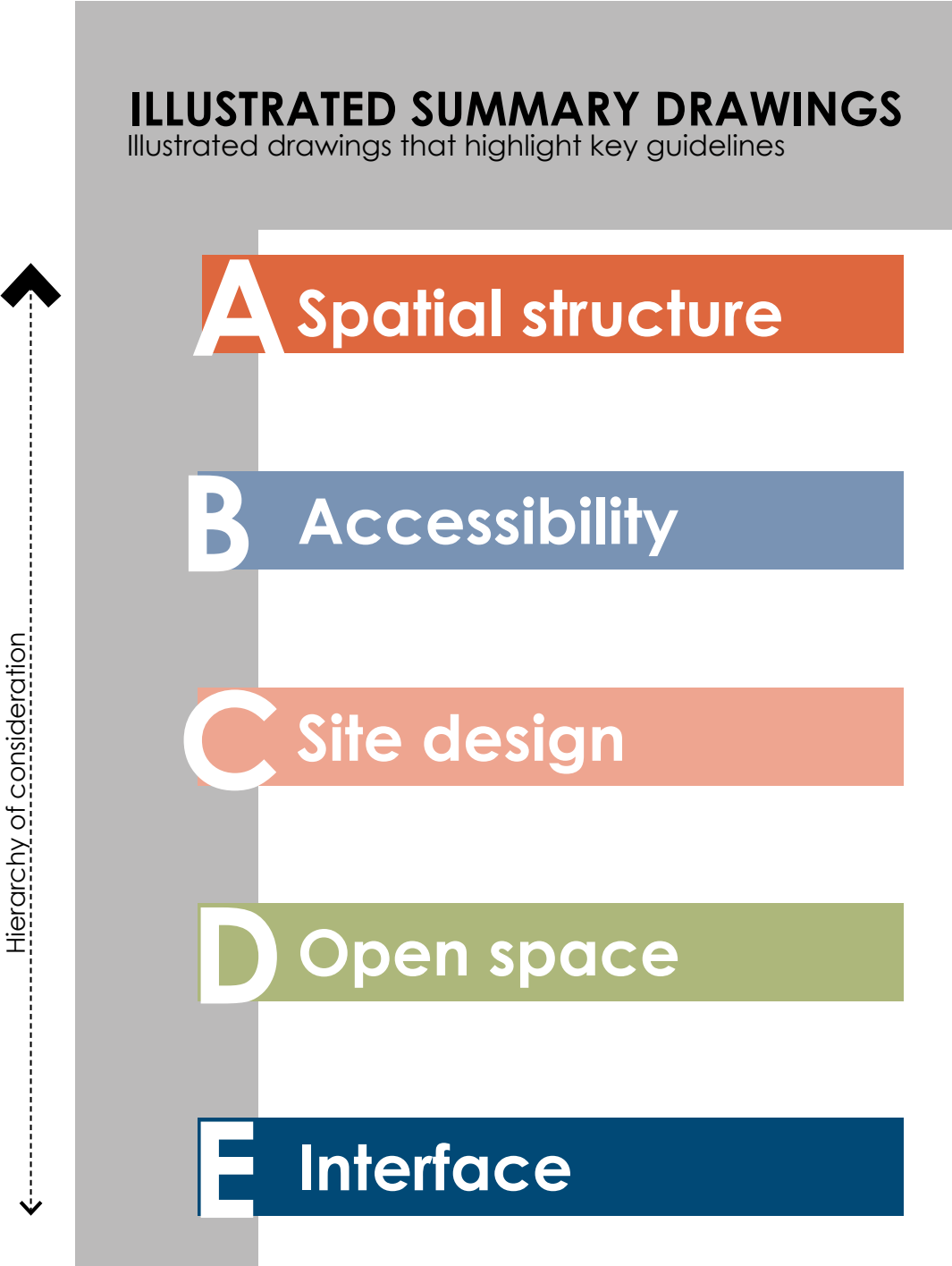
Transversal handbook:
Human settlements
Complete streets

Why the guidelines are structured in this way

All Urban Design Guideline documents are structured under **five main themes**, namely structure, accessibility, site design, open space and interface.

Urban designers use these themes as guiding principles when assessing development proposals.

For ease of reference, the guideline themes are provided in a hierarchical sequence; from large-scale site considerations to small-scale built form details. However, it is important to emphasise that all of the themes relate to each other and should be considered in an iterative manner in the planning and design process for a new development project. For example, decisions on the type and choice of boundary wall treatment, which are discussed in the 'interface theme', relate to the site's location, which is discussed in the 'structure theme'. When applying and using the guideline document, users will need to consider all of the themes and consider how they relate to each other in the final formulation of a design proposal.



How to read this guideline document

The guidelines are constructed using a few elements. This is done to create a document that can be easily understood and clearly expresses not only a specific guideline, but the thinking behind that guideline.

A

Spatial structure

{Text for illustration purposes}
tatempos aut autem quam ventia cus molendae earumet velent accati a a num ius dendaecto te aut doluptatiur, ulluptate pe plit ut quissim inienimus ipsant quo ipsandi gniendam excerepra peraept aectem eos inienihic tem restibeaque nossit assum repudam vid mos quidus, toreres maximet eum aut auda dis que accum, santem rero totat vendit, omnihit, sequidiciur? Accaborum nulpa verum abores excea sum que senti beatem

Theme
Each guideline document is made up of **5 five themes**.

This descriptor note aims to express the specific theme and how it relates to the identified typology. It looks to explain why that theme is important to the development typology, and what the general principles are and how they are explored and expanded upon in the proceeding guidelines.

Approach A1:
{Text for illustration purposes}
Lo blaccuptas quamusae nem dent is am hilloribus et eria con conse porro intotat aquatur aliqui doluptate voluptatus magnimusam ipicimus aut optatur, si te eum commolu ptatios

Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)
{Urban Design Policy statement number}

Approach
The approach aims to describe the intended outcome for a specific set of guidelines. This section helps to understand the reasoning behind the specifics of a guideline, and relate it back to methods of achieving good design.

A reference to specific policy statements, held in the Designing Quality Places: Urban Design Policy for the City of Cape Town (2024), helps to place these guidelines and their relationship to the Urban Design Policy (2024).

Prospecting and speculating
A.1.1 *{Text for illustration purposes}*
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Guideline & Sketch
Specific guideline points are provided to explore potential design solutions that achieve the policy's principles and objectives.

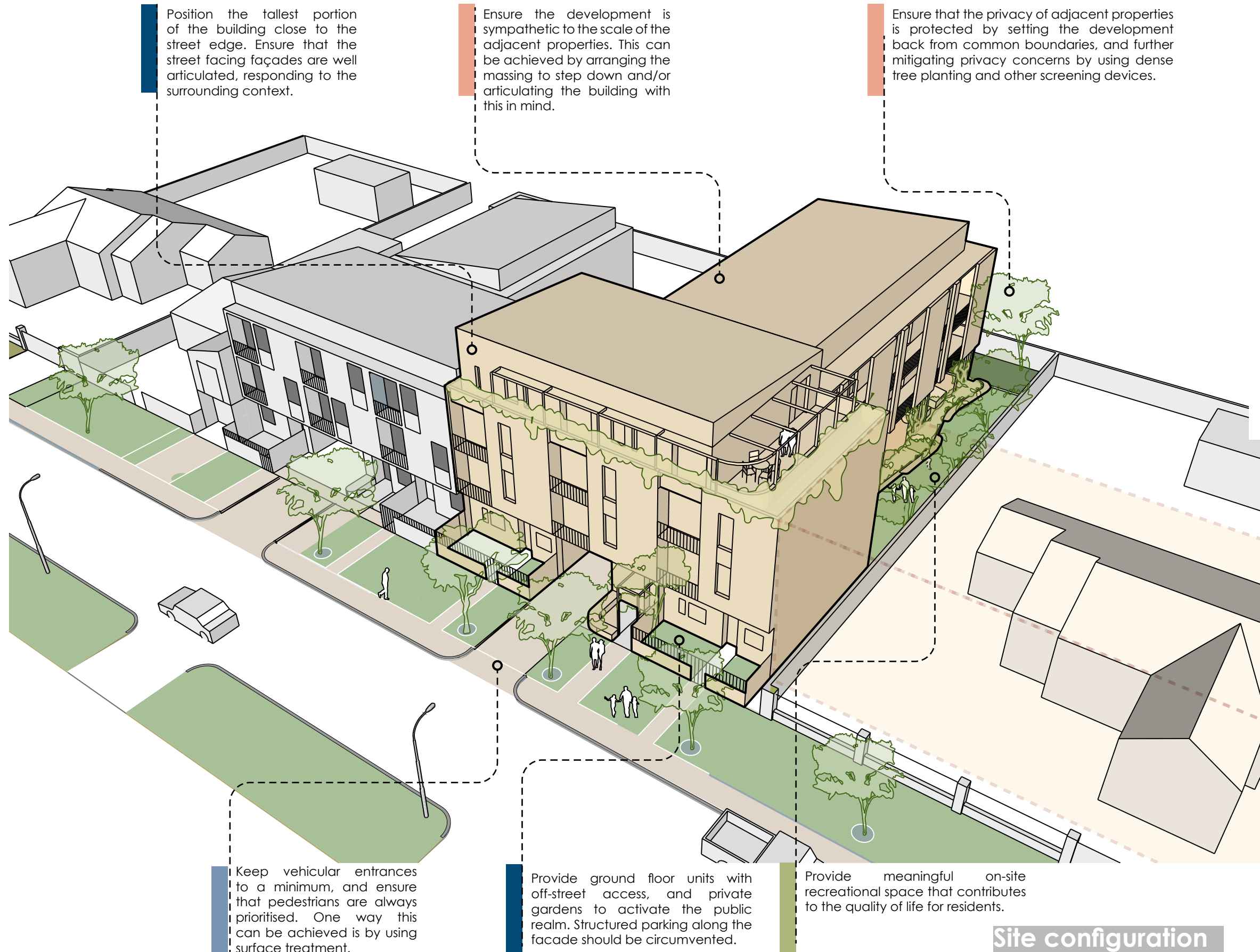
In many instances, an illustrative example is provided that captures the guideline in a diagrammatic form.

Image & Annotations
Annotated images are used to visually clarify what a potential guideline(s) is. Annotations highlight key features or design elements that help readers grasp what a 'real-world' example of a guideline would look like.

Multi-storey residential developments

Core guidelines: Illustrated summary

The images and accompanying annotations below outline key design guidelines that should be carefully considered when planning and designing a multi-storey residential development.



How can the site be occupied to maximise public good?

Contextual location of a development places an important role in how it is developed appropriately. Often, erven are redeveloped into small blocks of flats along the second and third blocks from the activity corridor.

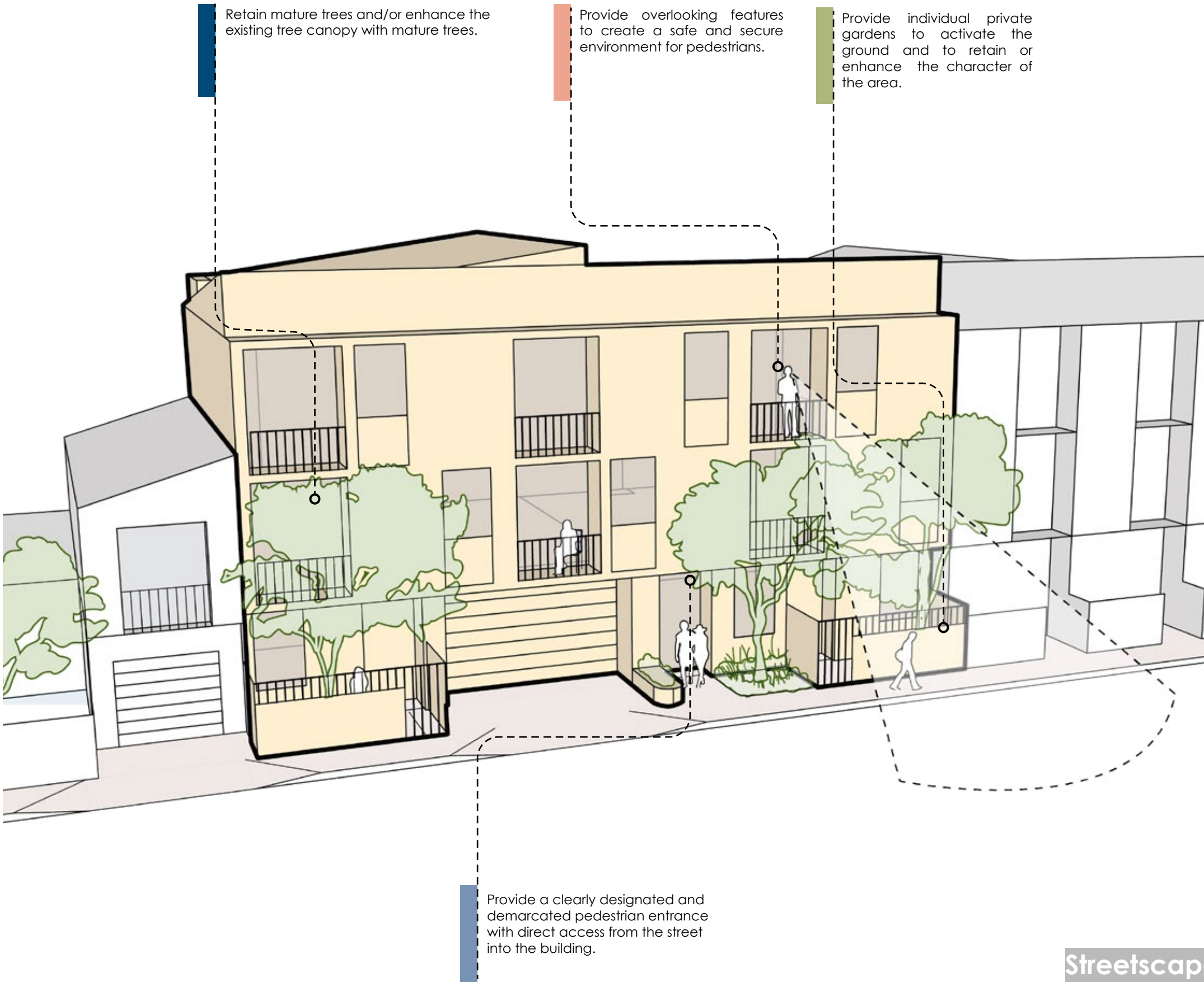
Due to the constraints of the erf size, zoning envelope and over-bulking of the site, the redevelopment proposals have a similar outcome of a central 'T-shape' built form and a car-centric environment on the ground floor.

As illustrated in the image, a departure (street building line relaxation) is encouraged to accommodate all required parking at the rear of the site. A positive interface is thus ensured and a safer environment is created for pedestrians. Depending on the specifics of each site, departures from the Development management scheme could be required to achieve the specifics suggested.

Multi-storey residential developments

Core guidelines: Illustrated summary

The images and accompanying annotations below outline key design guidelines that should be carefully considered when planning and designing a multi-storey residential development.



How should the development address the public realm?

Developments should aim to make streets feel safe, active, and welcoming by carefully designing how homes connect to the street- what we call the street interface.

This means placing doors, windows, and balconies so that they face onto the street, allowing residents to keep an eye on what is happening and naturally increasing safety. Positioning front doors that open directly onto the street, along with stoeps, and small gardens that invite social interaction and encourage people spending time outside.

Low or see-through fencing keeps things open and neighbourly, while good lighting helps people feel safer after dark.

Pavements with trees for shade, and places to sit help create a comfortable, people-friendly environment. When a street supports walking, play, conversation and daily life, it becomes more than just a space for cars to drive. It becomes a lively community space.

Streetscape

A Spatial structure

The location of multi-storey residential developments is often driven by market demand in a particular area. The term structure refers to the urban structure related to the way a particular site is located within the broader context of a neighbourhood and city. This is important when gauging the developments appropriateness relative to its context and scale in response to the surroundings.

Approach A1: Site appropriateness for intended use

Considering the urban structure of the area can enable a developer to take advantage of nearby neighbourhood amenities and assist in the creation of a more context-specific and desirable development. This can be achieved in the following ways:

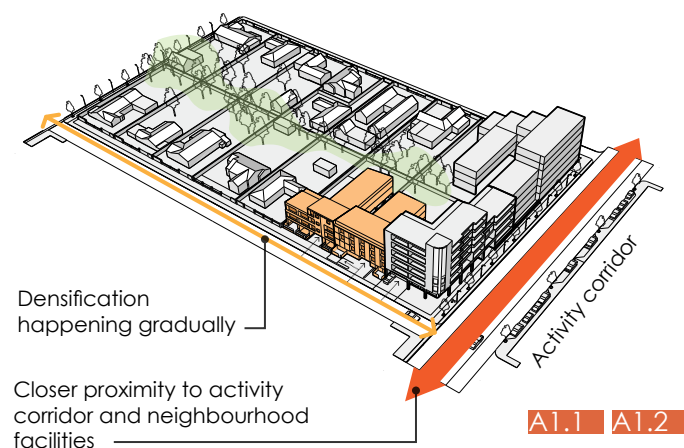
Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS1.1; PS1.2; PS1.3;
PS1.6; PS1.7; PS1.9;
PS1.10; PS5.4; PS9.1;
PS9.2;

Location and context

A1.1 Parts of the city are undergoing rapid growth, with some areas envisioned for increased density. When assessing appropriateness, developments should support the City's vision for the area, taking into account the hierarchy of corridors, streets, nodes, and intended land uses. Respond to the site's role in relation to higher order spatial planning.

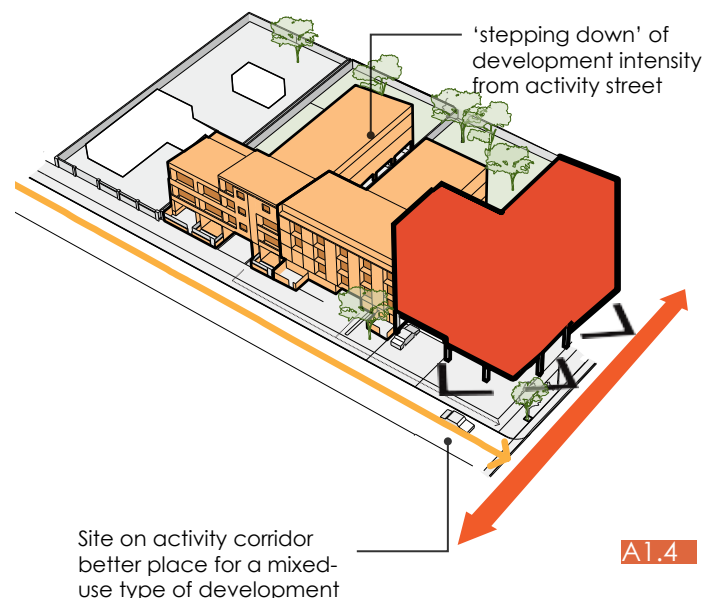
A1.2 Design developments so that they are informed by their specific location and context. Each site requires a tailored approach to create a development that positively contributes to and enhances the surrounding environment.



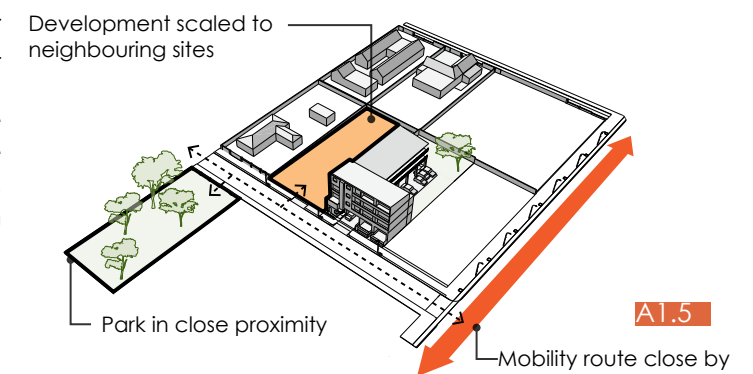
Connectivity to surrounding urban fabric

A1.3 Locate multi-storey residential developments in well-located residential areas close to activity streets and public transport. Other residential typologies may be more appropriate for different urban contexts.

A1.4 Developments on busy streets or in high-activity areas should make use of a mixed-use approach, with shops or businesses at street level and housing above.



A1.5 Understanding the proposed development site's relationship to nearby amenities - such as parks, transport interchanges, and employment hubs - can significantly enhance its marketability. This insight also allows for more responsive design decisions. For example, proximity to a local park may justify a reduction in on-site recreational space.



An example of a multi-storey residential development in a rapidly developing context. Ground floor units looking onto the street contribute to the quality of the public realm; Ilitha Park, Khayelitsha



An example of a multi-storey residential development completed in the early 1990's integrates with 19th century urban fabric; Springfield Terrace District Six

B Accessibility

Good urban environments offer a high degree of legibility, allowing users to more easily navigate spaces and understand their surrounds better. The way different users access their homes in a multi-storey residential development plays a crucial role in shaping how the development is experienced. Not only does accessibility impact the internal functioning of the space but more importantly it impacts the relationship with the surrounding public environment.

Approach B1: Promote and prioritise pedestrian access and comfort

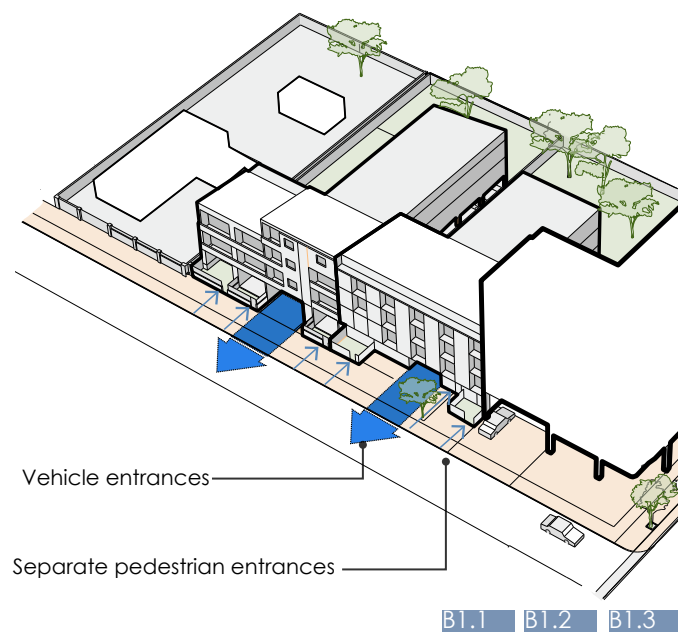
Pedestrians and users of non-motorised forms of transit should be prioritised over private cars.
This can be achieved in the following ways:

Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS3.2; PS4.1; PS4.4;
PS4.6; PS4.7 PS6.1

Pedestrian movement and active mobility

- B1.1** Provide a clearly designated and demarcated pedestrian entrance from the street into the building.
- B1.2** Separate pedestrians from vehicles by having clearly designated and demarcated pedestrian pathways and entrances. This can be done using planter beds or low walls.
- B1.3** Ensure that a comfortable pedestrian experience is created through designing for a human scale by including elements such as canopies and soft landscaping where appropriate.
- B1.4** Include a clear and safe spaces where bicycles can be parked.
- B1.5** Design pause spaces near or integrated with pedestrian entrances to accommodate activities such as gathering belongings, waiting for entry, or waiting for e-hailing pick-ups. These spaces should be covered and located at the entrance.



Pedestrian scale and legibility

- B1.6** Create a pedestrian environment that integrates with and contributes to the public realm by ensuring the street-facing edge of the development is scaled in relation to the human body.
- B1.7** Create a legible pedestrian environment by treating pedestrian entrances as architecturally articulated front doors to the development.
- B1.8** Ground-floor homes should have their own entrances and gardens that face the street.



Approach B2: Minimise the impact of vehicular access

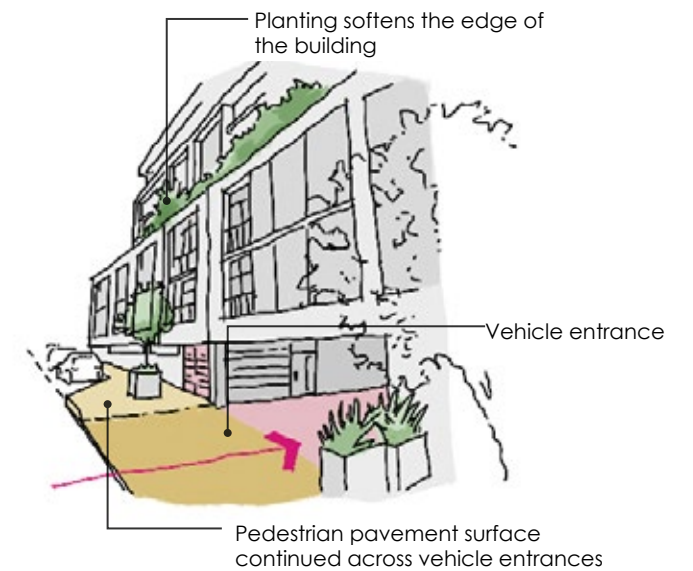
Vehicular access points should be discreet by reducing the visual impact on the public environment.
This can be achieved in the following ways:

Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS6.2; PS6.6; PS6.8

Vehicle access

- B2.1** Design vehicular access ways with habitable space above.
- B2.2** Incorporate tree planting and integrated hard and soft landscaping to enhance the pedestrian environment.
- B2.3** Ensure that the pedestrian surface is continued across the carriage way crossing, thus prioritising pedestrians and aiding driver awareness.
- B2.4** Use architectural detailing and materials to reduce the visual impact of driveways and vehicle access. The design should focus on creating a comfortable, human-scale environment.
- B2.5** Recessing vehicular access, relative to the building facade, will assist in mitigating the negative impact it will have.
- B2.6** Locate vehicular access points in secondary roads or in less vibrant or desirable parts of the site.



An example of a multi-storey residential development occupying a corner site; Brackenfell

Approach B3: Parking layout should not pre-determine site configuration

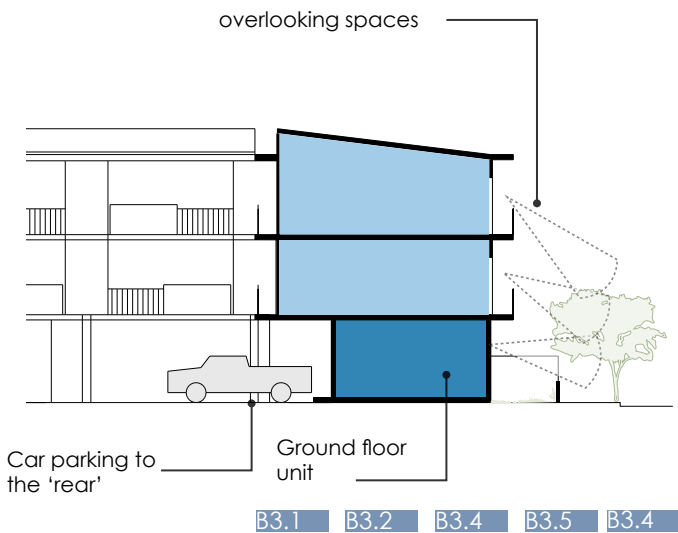
Parking design should not be prioritised over the creation of a responsive urban environment. This can be achieved in the following ways:

Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

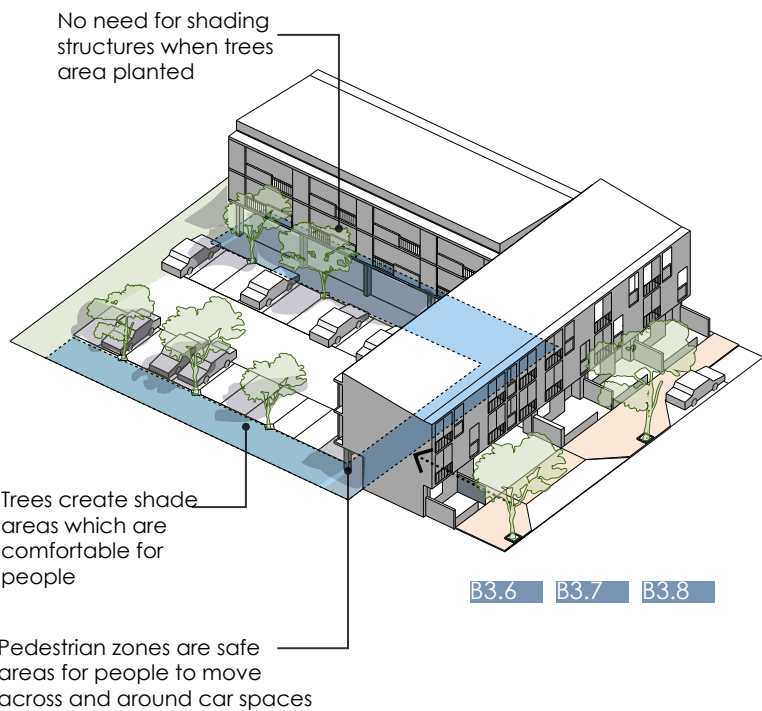
PS6.1; PS6.2; PS6.5

Parking

- B3.1 Parking should be positioned to minimise its impact on street frontages and open spaces by positioning it behind built form.
- B3.2 Avoid stilted buildings with parking facing onto the street, as they reduce the opportunity for active street-level engagement. Instead 'wrap' the parking with residential units (and active function) facing onto the street.
- B3.3 Design parking areas to accommodate both vehicles and people by incorporating trees, landscaping, and pedestrian walkways.
- B3.4 Whenever possible, provide ground floor units that face onto the street to conceal parking beyond.
- B3.5 Ensure that parking efficiency can assist in allowing space for open space uses, such as recreation space.



- B3.6 'Public transit zones' allow for a reduced number of parking bays while promoting the use of public transport. This enhances the pedestrian experience and the public realm.
- B3.7 On-grade parking facilities require tree planting to provide shade and visual and environmental mitigation.
- B3.8 Minimise the use of shade parking structures through the use of trees and parking orientation.



Approach B4: Mitigate the effects of parking visible from the street

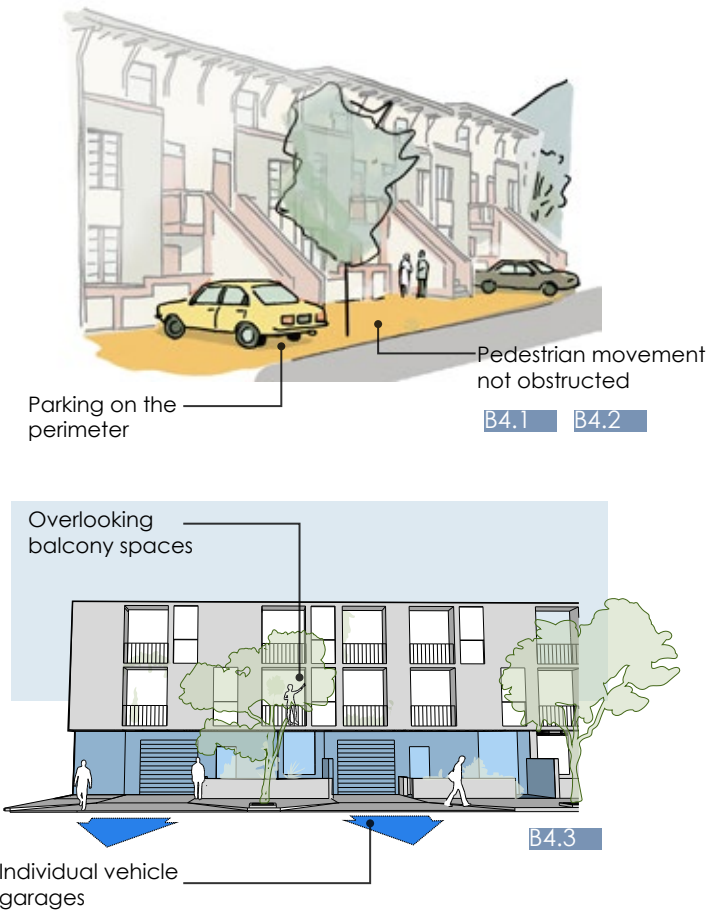
Where parking seen from the street is unavoidable, mitigate its impact on the public realm. This can be achieved in the following ways:

Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS3.1; PS3.2; PS6.6; PS6.5

Mitigating effects of parking

- B4.1 Parking on the perimeter of a development directly accessible from the street should be minimised. However where it is unavoidable it should be designed to be part of the threshold condition between the public street and building edge. It should also accommodate pedestrian walkways between bays that are be provided with appropriate landscaping and lighting.
- B4.2 Parking bays that are directly accessible off the street should not impede the public walkway and be clearly delineated with the use of hard and/or soft landscaping.
- B4.3 Where appropriate, ground floor units should include individual parking bays with direct access from the street. These should be paired with street-facing gardens and separate pedestrian entrances.



An example of a multi-storey residential development; Blaauwberg

Site design

A multi-storey residential development needs to look at its existing context and site and consider what is the best for its current and future residents, based on what the identified site has to offer. Responding to what a site and its surrounding character is, allows for a development to unlock the greatest potential from that site and enhance the experiences of its users for the better.

Approach C1: Response to the surrounding conditions

Multi-storey residential developments need to respond to the on-site conditions, and complement the neighbouring context and street.

This can be achieved in the following way:

Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS1.2; PS5.5; PS5.6;
PS8.1 - 8.3; PS9.1; PS9.3

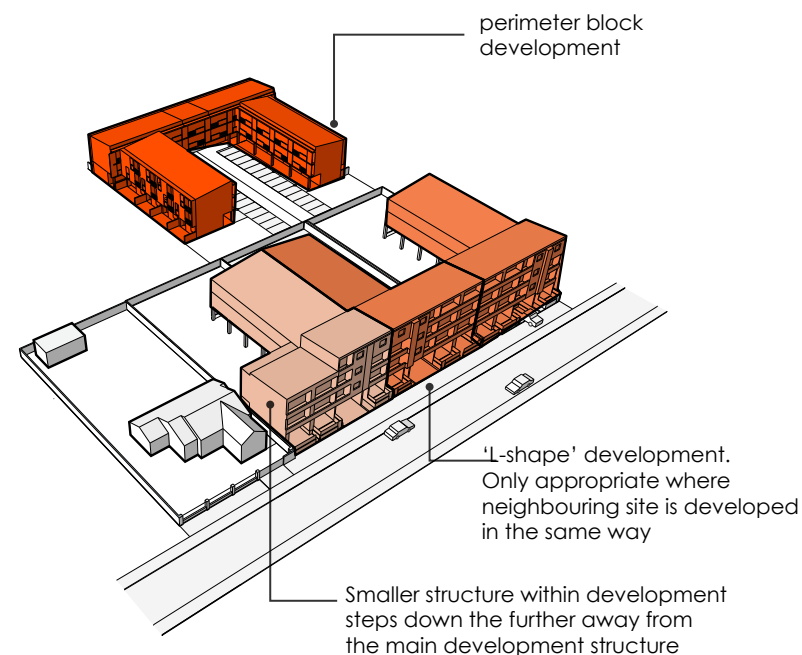
Configuration

C1.1 Consider positioning buildings close to or onto street-facing boundaries where buildings can create a continuous edge to the public realm. Overlooking features, such as balconies and windows improve safety and visual interest.

C1.2 Where the site size and dimensions allow, configure buildings in a perimeter block. Where this is not possible, consider the proposal as a part of a perimeter block within a developing context (L-shape).

C1.3 Place the tallest part of the building towards the street to define the public realm, respect nearby heritage buildings, and respond to sun orientation by maximising light and minimising overshadowing.

C1.4 Orientate the development towards the street.



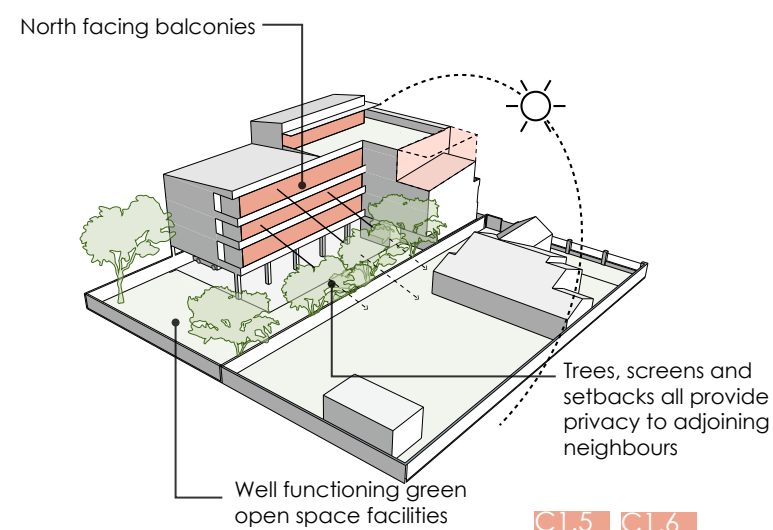
C1.1 C1.2 C1.3 C1.4

Neighbourhood context

C1.5 Consider the privacy of neighbouring properties and position buildings away from common boundaries. Where this is not possible, consider mitigation measures such as screens, tree planting and the careful positioning of windows and balconies.

C1.6 Orientate openings to best respond to climatic conditions whilst maintaining privacy to neighbouring properties. This can be achieved by using screening and shading devices.

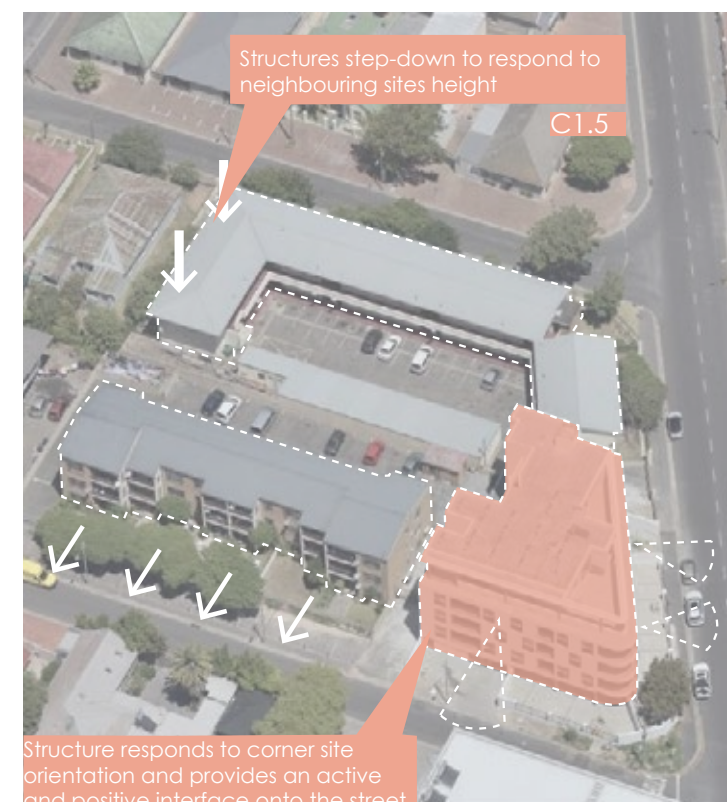
C1.7 In areas of heritage sensitivity, respond to the existing built form patterns, streetscape, roofscape, scale, setbacks or built-to lines.



C1.5 C1.6

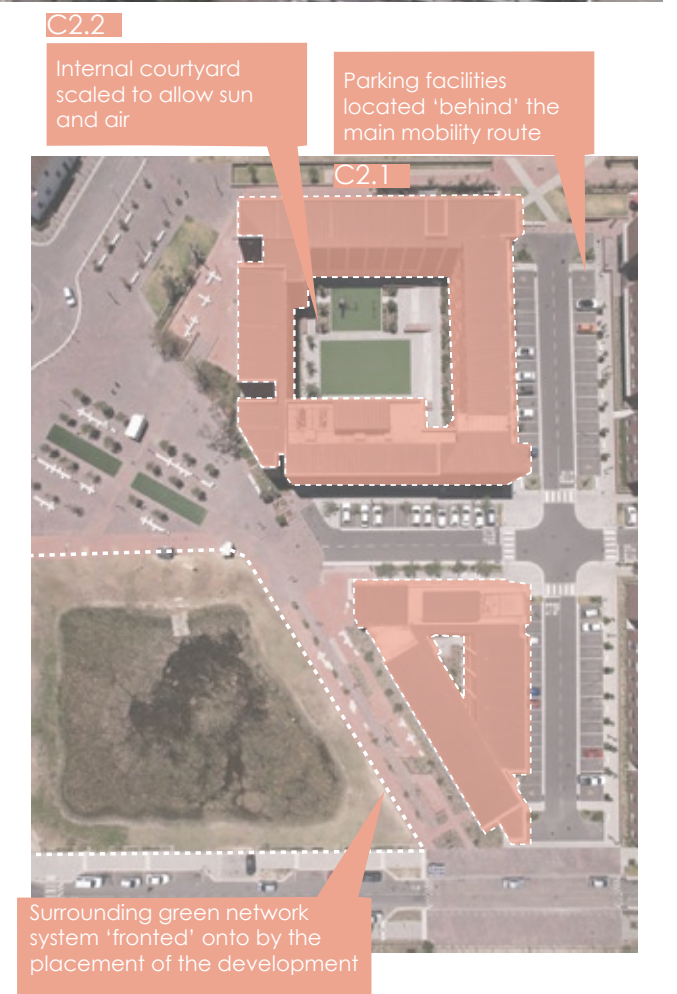


An example of green network integration. (Rondebosch)



C1.1

An example of desired built form - perimeter block. (Claremont)



An example of a positive interface along green infrastructure and climate response. (Pinelands)

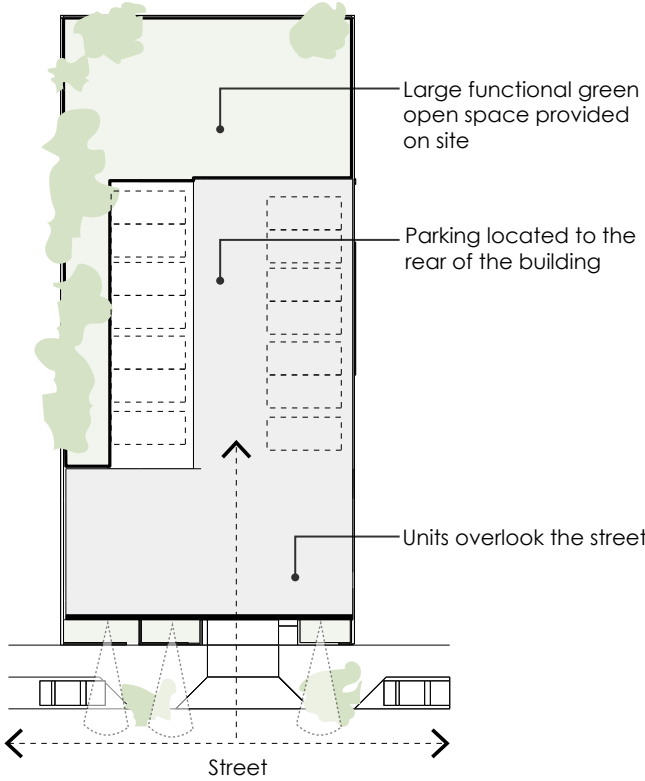
Approach C2: Ensure a positive street and public realm relationship

Multi-storey residential developments need to ensure a positive relationship with the public realm and the neighbouring context. This can be achieved in the following way:

Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)
PS1.2; PS2.1; PS2.5; PS3.7; PS3.8; PS4.8; PS4.9; PS5.7

Layout informants

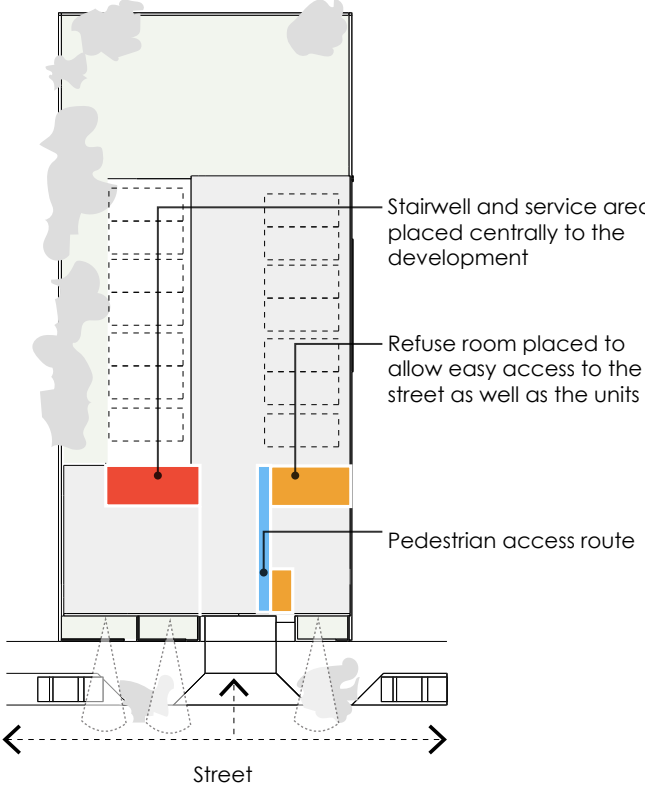
- C2.1 Safeguard street verges by accommodating parking to the rear of the proposal. This should keep street verges unobstructed to pedestrians. Enhance the character and identity of the context by reflecting the surrounding conditions and include tree planting and landscaping.
- C2.2 Configure the buildings to create a single large open space rather than creating smaller scattered open spaces.
- C2.3 Retain and use existing trees on-site as a design informant.
- C2.4 Where present continue open space networks through the site.



C2.1 C2.2

Service/refuse area

- C2.3 Position refuse areas so that they are easily accessible but do not negatively affect the street.
- C2.4 Avoid placing service areas, refuse yards and sub-stations/generators closer to the street than the remainder of the building. Service areas should be located on the ground floor or underneath the building with built form on top.
- C2.5 Position the refuse area away from the primary pedestrian entrance into the development.
- C2.6 Position the drying yard so that it is easily accessible and has sufficient sun exposure.



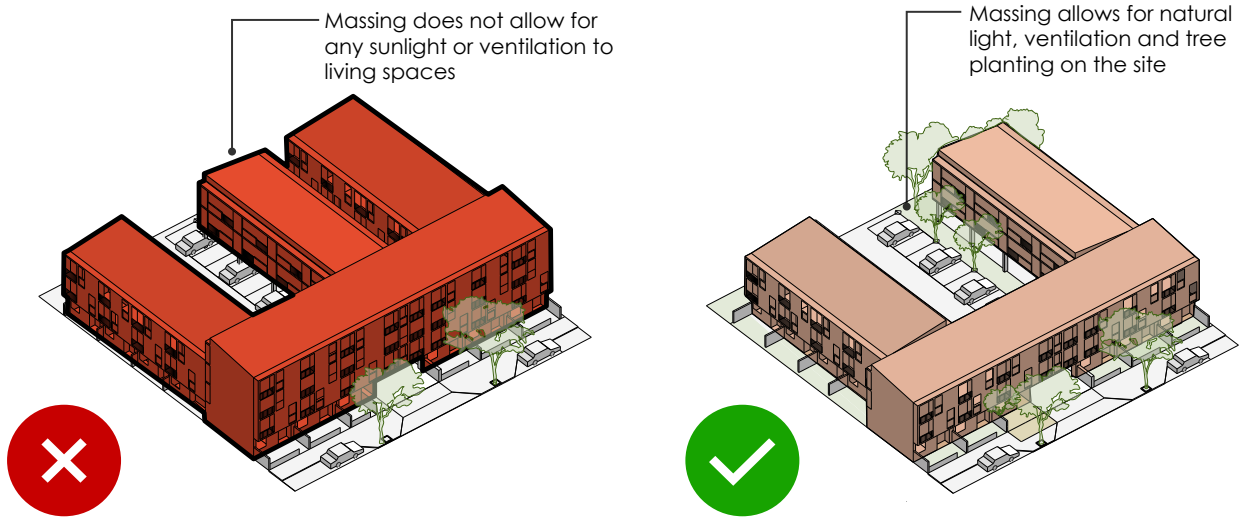
C2.3 C2.4 C2.5 C2.6



An example of desired built form - perimeter block. (Ottery)

Massing

- C2.7 Developments should be appropriately scaled to avoid over-bulking and excessive site coverage that compromises liveability, access to light and integration with surrounding context.



C2.7

Open Space

Internal and external open spaces are a vital component when creating a liveable environment in multi-storey residential developments. These spaces should be designed holistically, respond to residents' needs, and integrate with the broader open space network.

Approach D1: Provision of functional open space

Ensure sufficient functional open space for all users of the development

This can be achieved in the following ways:

Provision of open space

D1.1 Confirm if there is sufficient public open space within a 5 minute walking distance, around 300m, of the development. Analyse the surrounding area to determine whether these spaces are accessible and in usable condition.

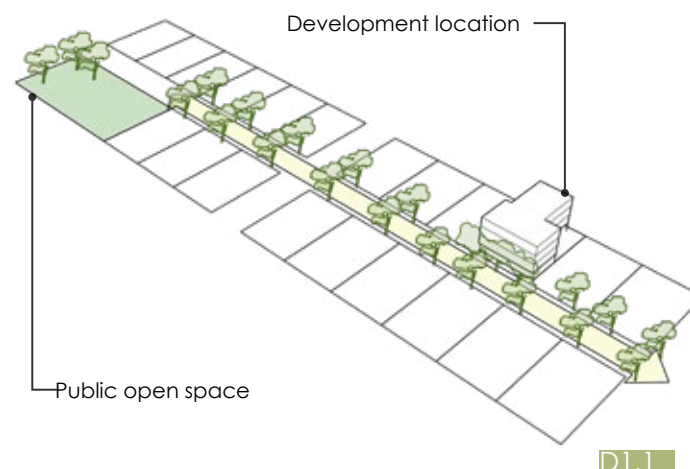
D1.2 Provide on-site open space for residents. These spaces should be intentionally designed to accommodate both everyday and recreational uses. This may include play areas, areas to hang laundry as well as open areas to socialise.

D1.3 The rule of '3-30-300' provides the basic framework to follow, to create a healthy urban environment.

3 trees: Individuals should be able to see at least three mature trees from their home's windows.

30% canopy cover: Every neighbourhood should have a minimum of 30% tree cover, which provides significant cooling effects and health benefits.

300 meters: Everyone should live within a 300-meter walk or bike ride of a public green space.



Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS1.1; PS1.2; PS3.6; PS3.7; PS8.4

Approach D2: Position of open space on site

Open space should be part of a larger network and easily accessible

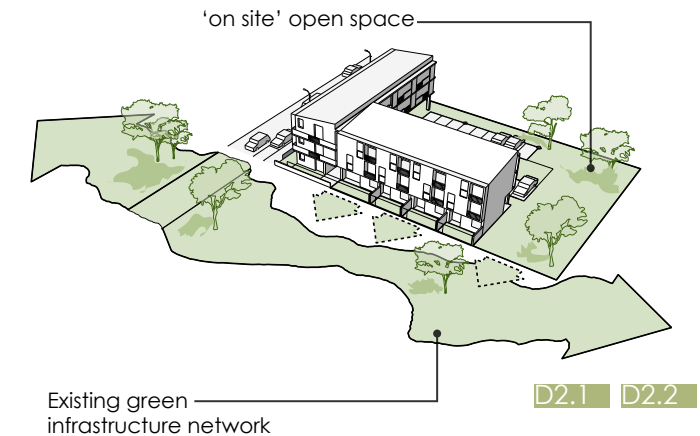
This can be achieved in the following ways:

Active open space

D2.1 Identify the existing open space network as well as the tree canopy network and locate the proposed functional open space within these respective networks.

D2.2 Where applicable, ensure that functional open spaces are connected to the larger open space network.

D2.3 Ensure that functional open spaces are accessible by clear, designated and unobstructed pedestrian pathways.



Approach D3: Consider the street's role as a public open space

In many contexts streets fulfil a significant public open space function. Ensure that developments add value to the street as a public open space

This can be achieved in the following way:s

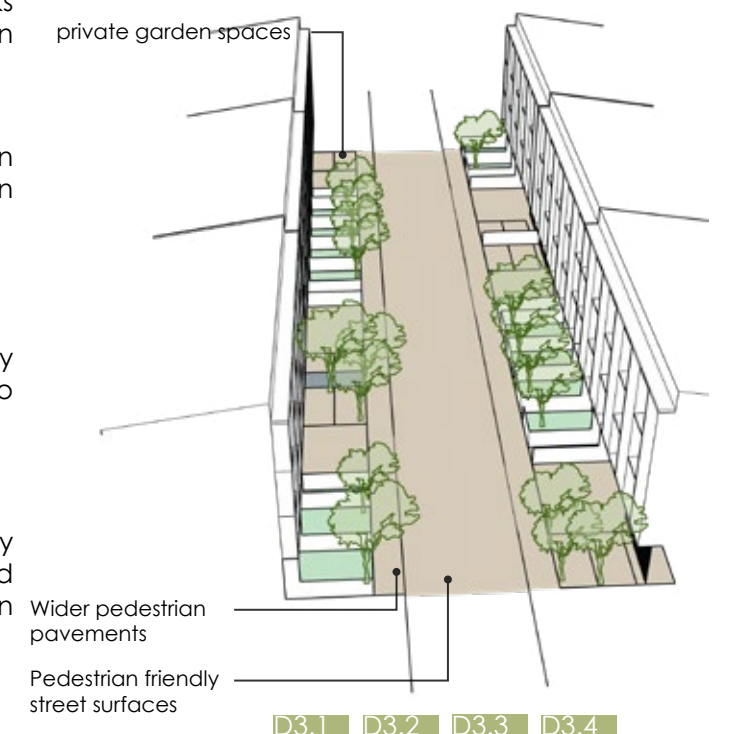
D3.1 Landscape and plant trees along sidewalks to continue or introduce tree-lined and green corridors.

D3.2 Introduce landscaping and tree planting on the street boundary to create a softer transition between the public and private realms.

D3.3 Front gardens should have visual permeability to overlook the street and contribute to greening the public realm.

D3.4 If visitors' parking bays are accessible directly from the street they should be landscaped and be able to serve as a forecourt or open space for the development in the long term.

D3.5 Where possible widen sidewalks and narrow streets. Introduce landscaping and tree planting on sidewalks. Ensure that sidewalks and entrances are universally accessible.



Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS1.7; PS1.10; PS2.8; PS3.6; PS3.8; PS8.1; PS8.2; PS8.3; PS8.4

Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS 1.7; PS3.8; PS4.1; PS4.2; PS4.3, PS4.8, PS4.10; PS4.12; PS8.2; PS8.4

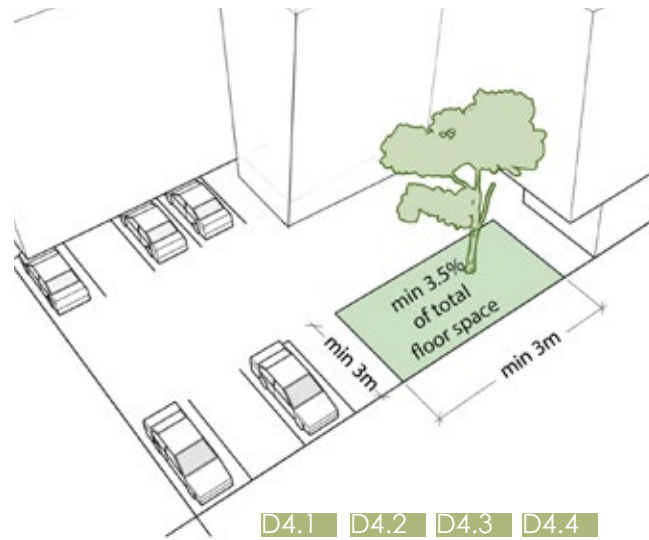
Approach D4: Provision of open space on site

Create intentionally planned and designed, quality functional open space.

This can be achieved in the following ways:

Functional open space

- D4.1 Functional open space should be intentionally planned. Functional space should not be leftover space. From the onset of the design process identify optimal positions on site for open spaces with consideration of sun and wind.
- D4.2 Designated space requirements – minimum 3.5% of the total floor space to be functional open space.
- D4.3 Avoid small slivers of unusable open space. Arrange buildings to create fewer larger functional open spaces as opposed to more smaller open spaces.
- D4.4 Functional open space should be a minimum of 3m in either direction.



Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS2.1; PS2.4; PS2.7

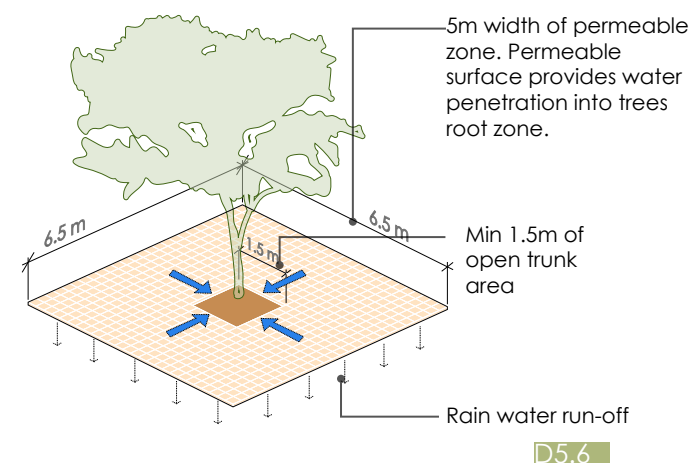
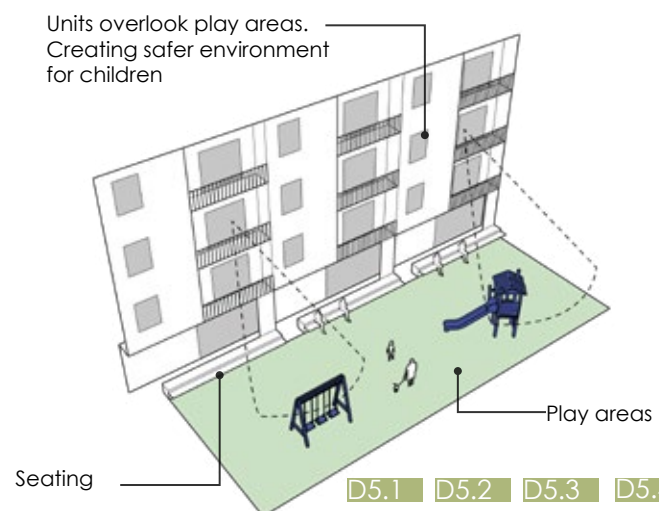
Approach D5: Design of open space

Open spaces should accommodate the needs of residents and be comfortable for all users.

This can be achieved in the following ways:

Designed open space

- D5.1 Design open spaces to accommodate the needs of the residents. This may include play areas, areas to hang laundry as well as open areas to socialise. These spaces should be appropriately sized and located for residents.
- D5.2 Position seating areas under or close to trees to ensure comfortable seating.
- D5.3 Ensure that children's play areas are secure and safely located. These spaces should be overlooked by surrounding apartments and supporting uses should be positioned close-by.
- D5.4 Ensure that open spaces have positive edges with overlooking features in the form of balconies, fenestration and walkways overlooking them.
- D5.4 Ensure that functional open spaces are landscaped with selected plant species that are appropriate for the local conditions.
- D5.5 Avoid excessive hard open space – landscape and soften open space wherever possible.
- D5.6 Retain existing trees and plant new trees. Planting of larger trees are strongly encouraged.



Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS2.1; PS2.2; PS2.4; PS2.5; PS2.7; PS2.8



An example of on-site open space. Mixture of hard and soft landscaping space.



Examples of on-site open space. Mature trees and recreational infrastructure (Rondebosch)

Interface

The relationships between a multi-storey residential development, the surrounding neighbouring properties, green open spaces, natural ecological systems and the public streets are important interfaces to be designed and considered. These interfaces help shape how a multi-storey development and its users experience the development and the surrounding neighbourhood.

Approach E1: Interfaces onto the street and public realm

Ensure a positive interface with passive surveillance onto the street and public realm.

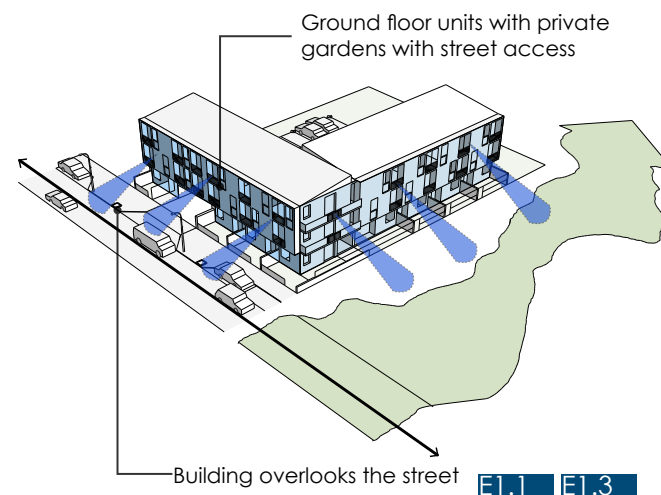
This can be achieved in the following ways:

Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS6.1; PS6.2; PS6.4;
PS6.6; PS6.9

Position

- E1.1** Positioning the building close to the street and adjacent public open space.
- E1.2** Provide a clearly designated and demarcated pedestrian entrance with direct access from the street into the building.
- E1.3** Units should be located on the ground-floor with individual pedestrian access to the ground floor and with individualised gardens facing onto the street.



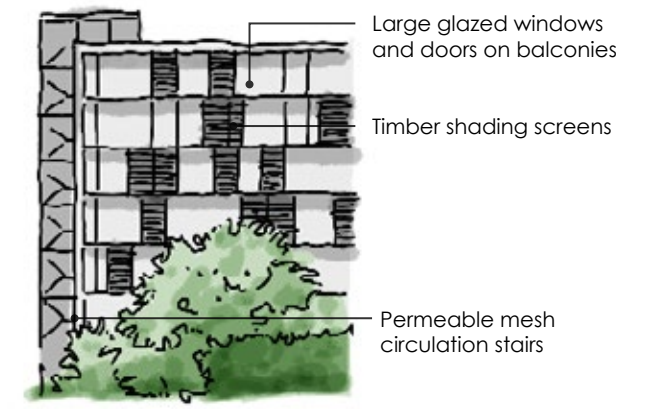
Habitable spaces

- E1.6** Include balconies, large windows and fenestration that overlook the street
- E1.4** Should have habitable function in the form of bedrooms and living areas facing onto the street on all levels. Avoid service areas and bathrooms on the street facing elevation.
- E1.5** Where non-habitable spaces on the street-facing elevation are unavoidable, design the elevation and windows in such a way that these bathrooms and service areas cannot be easily identified. This elevation design should form part of the architectural whole.



Articulation

- E1.7** Façades should be well designed and articulated. They should indicate a clear consideration towards the following: proportion, depth, openings, vertical and horizontal rhythm. Where appropriate take cues from the surrounding context to inform articulation.
- E1.8** Ensure that all sides of the building facing the street are addressed in the design. These façades must incorporate the guidelines outlined above



An example of good habitable functions on all levels. (Newlands)

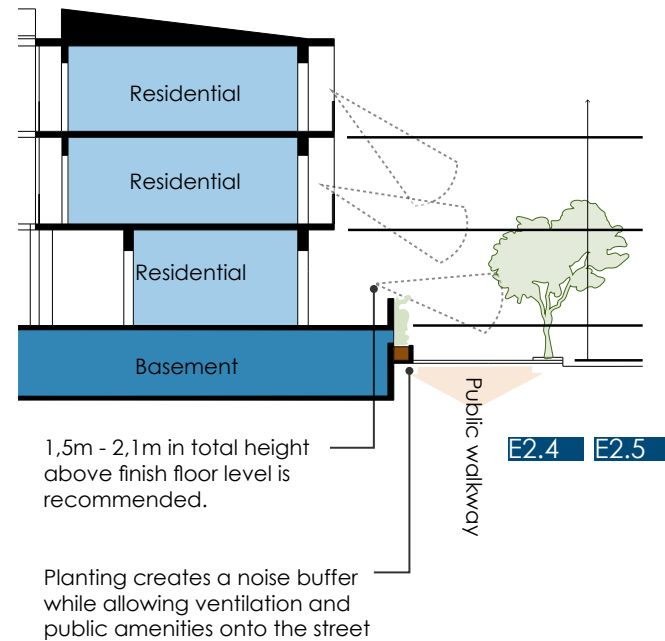
Approach E2: Minimise parking impact on the street interface

Parking should be concealed, discreet and not have a negative visual impact on the street.

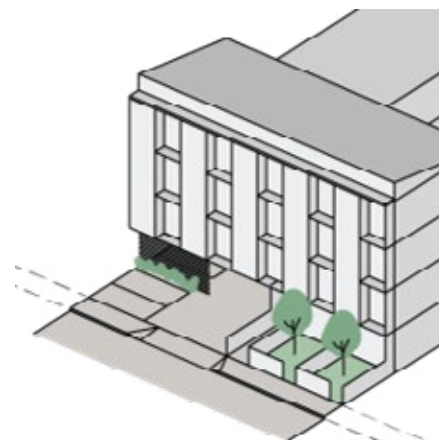
This can be achieved in the following ways:

Street interface

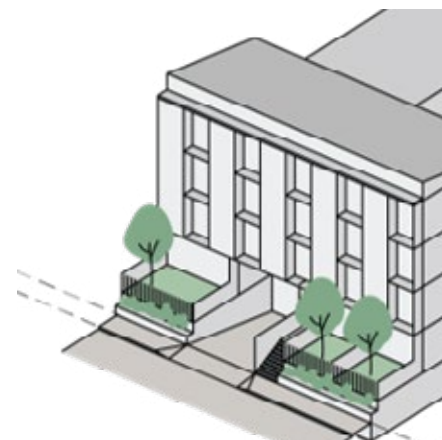
- E2.1** On grade parking should be positioned to the rear of the site. On grade parking with building on columns above (stilted parking) should not be visible from the street.
- E2.2** In cases where stilted parking onto the street front is unavoidable, the parking should be appropriately screened and landscaped.
- E2.3** The undercarriage of a building should not be visible from the street or public open space.
- E2.4** Landscape basement parking to mitigate the effects of the height difference.
- E2.5** Individualised gardens on top of the semi-basement are encouraged to reduce the negative visual impact of a semi-basement.



Ground floor units with gardens
E2.1



Ground floor units with gardens and screened parking
E2.2



Semi-basement with gardens on top and landscaping
E2.4

Refer to the Urban Design Policy (2024)

PS6.5; PS6.6

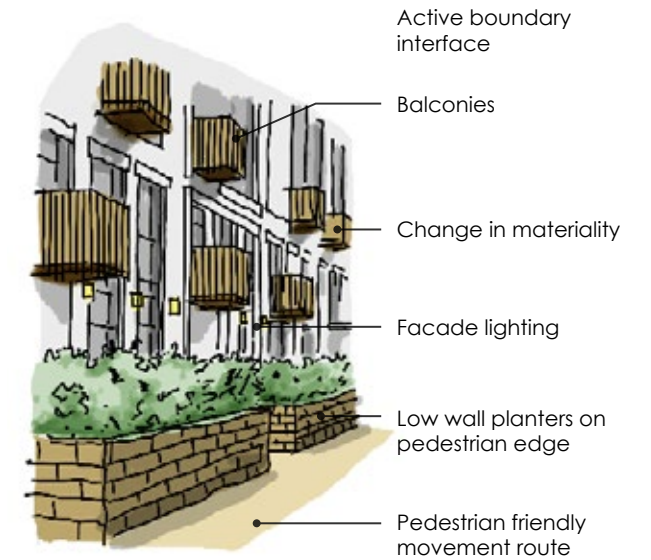
Approach E1: Ensure a positive boundary wall condition

Ensure a visually permeable and positive street boundary condition

This can be achieved in the following ways:

Boundary wall treatments

- E3.1** Boundary walls facing onto the street to be visually permeable. It is recommended that street boundary walls be a maximum of 1.5m high or that 70% of the street boundary wall be visual permeable.
- E3.2** Boundary condition to reinforce the positive boundary conditions of the area. Negative or solid boundary wall conditions should not be used as a precedent to justify for future development.
- E3.3** Avoid continuous blank walls facing onto the street or public realm. Where large expanses of blank wall are unavoidable, use landscaping, tree planting and articulation to mitigate the negative effects thereof.
- E3.4** Solid walls taller than 1.8m high should not have a continuous length of more than 10m.
- E3.5** Incorporate landscaping and tree planting on the street boundary.



E3.2 **E3.5**



An example of contextually appropriate response and articulation. (Vredehoek)

Acknowledgements:

This document was produced by the City of Cape Town's Urban Design Branch in collaboration with a multi disciplinary group of individuals representing internal and external groups.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all internal departments and external professionals whose collaboration and expertise were instrumental in the development and drafting of this Urban Design Guideline document. Their collective input has helped shape a comprehensive and forward-thinking framework that reflects a shared vision for sustainable and inclusive urban environments.

These guideline documents look to provide a tool for users to use when designing and developing within the City. As such, the intention will be to periodically update and revise these documents based on the changing realities within the urban realm.

If you would like to provide any feedback or comments on the urban design guidelines and Policy, please make contact with our team via the email below:

urban.design@capetown.gov.za