

# 2.11

## GENERIC PROVISIONS FENCING







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## Part 2 Generic Provisions

### 2.11 Fencing

As part of the interface between public and private areas, fences can establish the street appeal of a property or area and, as such, are important elements in urban streetscapes. This section of the DCP provides objectives and controls for residential, industrial and commercial fences.

Carefully designed fences and walls can integrate development into the existing streetscape. However when poorly designed, fences can unduly dominate the streetscape, reduce opportunities for neighbourhood surveillance and social interaction and obscure views of heritage items.

**NB** *Specific detail for fencing in heritage conservation areas (HCAs) is provided in Part 8 (Heritage) of this DCP.*

#### 2.11.1 Objectives

- O1** To ensure all original fences are retained and continue to be able to contribute to the interest and integrity of the area's streetscapes.
- O2** To encourage the reinstatement of lost original fences.
- O3** To ensure new fences are sympathetic to heritage items, period buildings and HCAs and complement and conserve the visual character of the streetscape.
- O4** To ensure any new fence is sympathetically scaled and proportioned with a contemporary dwelling.
- O5** To ensure any new fence is unobtrusive and does not distract from the building or streetscape.
- O6** To encourage the removal of visually intrusive infill fences in otherwise consistent streetscapes.
- O7** To ensure side and rear fencing provides privacy and amenity without impacting on pedestrian safety.
- O8** To provide appropriate fencing for industrial properties that is integrated with the building form, unobtrusive and sympathetic to the streetscape.
- O9** To provide fencing for commercial properties that contributes positively to the public domain.
- O10** To discourage the installation of poorly detailed or proportioned replica fencing, including the use of off-the shelf pickets and infill panels of aluminium.

#### 2.11.2 General controls

- C1** Fencing must be consistent with the provisions of 'Crime Prevention through Environmental Design' (CPTED) discussed under Section 2.9 (Community Safety) of this DCP.
- C2** Removal of existing trees to facilitate a fence is generally not permitted. See Section 2.20 (Tree Management) of this DCP for further details.

- C3** For sites that adjoin a public reserve, additional restrictions on type, height and style of fencing may apply and should be discussed with Council.

## 2.11.3 Fencing for heritage and period buildings

### Controls

- C4** Modifications to the fence of a heritage item, period building or within a heritage conservation area must be designed in a manner which contributes to the historic style of the building and streetscape context. For further details on fencing styles refer to Section 2.11.7 and Part 8 (Heritage) of this DCP.
- C5** Existing fences must be retained where they are consistent with the period style of the building.
- C6** Any new fences must be consistent with the traditional designs used in the area, but using simpler detailing. For example, the same spacing for fence posts and pickets should be used, but replica aluminium pickets should not be used.
- C7** A variety of fence types may exist in the vicinity of the site. The predominant character must be adopted and interpreted to maintain visual continuity and cohesion.
- C8** The visual impact of fences must be minimised by selecting materials compatible to the age of the house.
- C9** Sympathetic reconstructions of fences are encouraged if original fences cannot be repaired.
- C10** Painting or rendering original masonry and sandstone fencing degrades the materials and alters the character of the fencing and is not permitted.
- C11** New openings must not be created in original iron palisade fences.
- C12** Fences over 1.2 metres high are generally inappropriate as they reduce visibility of the garden setting and the heritage item or period building. On sloping sites, fences may rise to a maximum 1.5 metres before stepping down to 1.2 metres or less.



Figure 1: Fencing on sloping sites

## 2.11.4 Residential fencing

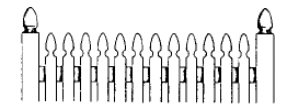
### 2.11.4.1 Design and style

### Controls

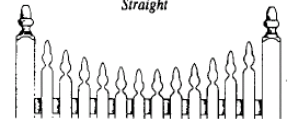
- C13** High solid walls and fences must be avoided as they detract from the streetscape and impede passive surveillance.
- C14** New fences must be finished in dark or recessive materials and surfaces, and aluminium panel fencing must be avoided.

### TIMBER PICKET FENCE DESIGNS

Victorian Period to



Gothic Style Picket  
Straight



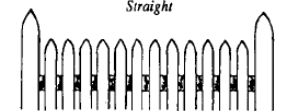
Acorn Style Picket  
Scalloped



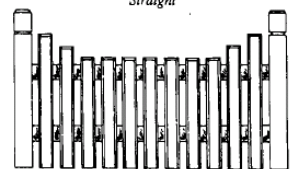
Windsor Style Picket  
2-Picket Step



Round Top Picket  
Straight



Cathedral Style Picket  
Straight



Federation Style Picket  
2-Picket Step

Federation Period

A decorative timber picket fence was a feature of just about every cottage built before 1920. There are many differences between fences of the late nineteenth century (1840-1890) and those of the early twentieth century (1890-1915). Preferences during the latter period were for plain timber pickets with chamfered edges rather than the Gothic or Acorn shapes of the Victorian Period.



- C15** If a new fence is proposed within a streetscape which contains groups or runs of fences, the new work must match the height proportions, rhythms, colours and transparency of nearby fences.
- C16** For modern or significantly altered houses with little original detailing, the fence must be of a contemporary nature - simple in design and in materials and colours that fit into the surrounding area.
- C17** Materials will be considered on their merit with a general prohibition on the following materials:
  - i. Cement block;
  - ii. Galvanised sheeting, profiled, treated or pre-coated;
  - iii. Aluminium sheeting, profiled, treated or pre-coated;
  - iv. Fibro, flat or profiled;
  - v. Brushwood;
  - vi. Barbed wire; and
  - vii. Aluminium swimming-pool style fences forward of the building line or on side or rear fences where adjoining public property including parklands.

**NB** All controls regarding design, style and material or fences are subject to the provision of adequate sight lines for emerging vehicles to enable surveillance of pedestrians.



Figure 2: Example of infill fencing

### 2.11.4.2 Height

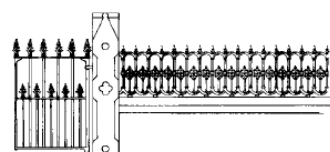
**NB** For the purposes of this DCP, front fencing is that part of the fence that faces the principal street frontage and includes the parts of the side fences between the front building line and the front street boundary.

#### Controls

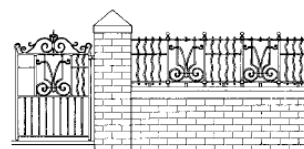
- C18** Front and side fences forward of the building line, must be no more than 1.2 metres in height above footpath level, unless a lower height is characteristic of the street. Front fences of up to 1.5 metres in height may be permitted to allow for sloping land.
- C19** Council may allow front fences and side fences forward of the building line greater than 1.2 metres in height above footpath level only where:
  - i. There is dual street frontage and a higher fence is proposed for the secondary street frontage to achieve acoustic or visual privacy. Maximum height of the fence must not be more than 1.8 metres

Palisade Style Fencing

Victorian Period to



Mid Victorian (Gothic)



Edwardian



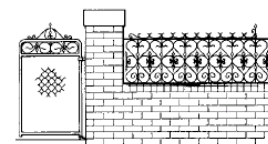
Mid Victorian (Italianate)



Early Victorian



Late Victorian (Queen Anne)



About 1920

Inter War Period

Where the original fencing has been removed, altered etc, re-instatement of the original fencing style is encouraged.

The choice of fencing style should be guided by the style of the existing dwelling.

and it must have an open design above 1.2 metres to allow some street surveillance. The higher parts of the fence must taper down to match the lower height front fence as illustrated in Figure 3; or

- ii. In the case of a heritage item or property in a heritage conservation area, where consistent with the scale or heritage value of a property and where historical evidence can be provided to support this; or
- iii. The property adjoins streets with high traffic. In such cases, Council may allow a fence up to 1.8 metres in height, constructed of solid material provided it can be shown that the fence acts as an effective noise barrier. Such fences must be either set back from the boundary to allow landscaping to soften the bulk or the structure must be articulated as an alternative to a solid blank wall. This is subject to the provision of adequate sight lines for safe traffic and pedestrian movements.

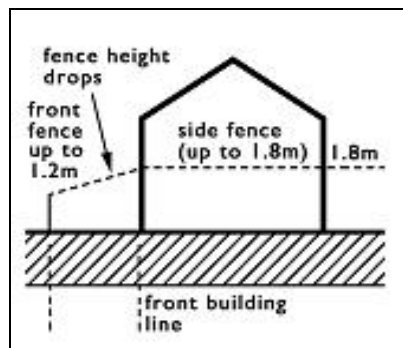


Figure 3: Side fencing must taper down to match the height of the front fence

- C20** In the case of semi-detached dwellings, a higher fence is only permitted if both dwellings in the pair seek consent concurrently.
- C21** Side fences (behind the front building setback) and rear fences must not be higher than 1.8 metres.
- C22** Side fences must taper down to match the height of the front fence as illustrated in Figure 3.
- C23** Where public views are available from the street, these must be preserved by open style fencing.
- C24** For safety, design and streetscape reasons high blank walls are not permitted nor are side boundary fences which obscure views of pedestrians and create a potential hazard for footpath users with reversing vehicles.

### 2.11.5 Industrial fencing

Fencing is often an integral part of industrial development in delineating areas and boundaries and for security purposes. Fencing location, style and height should be integrated with the building form, be unobtrusive and relate to the character of the streetscape.

#### Controls

- C25** The maximum height of all industrial fences is 1.8 metres.
- C26** Fencing location, style and height must be integrated with the building form and relate to the character of the street.





- C27** Fences must be located behind the landscaped frontage (between building and planter bed) or else incorporated within the landscaped frontage.
- C28** Fences adjacent to the front boundary must be constructed of permeable metal palisade or pickets in a dark recessive colour. Solid metal panel fences are not permitted adjacent to the street frontage.
- C29** Masonry retaining walls along the street frontage must be a maximum of 600mm high.
- C30** Chain wire fencing is only permitted on side and rear boundaries and is required to be black PVC coated. If the boundary adjoins a residential property a timber paling or colorbond fence is permitted.
- C31** Gates must be constructed of similar materials to the fence and must be hung so that the direction of the swing is inward.
- C32** Fences for corner properties must be splayed for road widening purposes and to improve sight lines at intersections for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists and increase the footpath area for pedestrian access at corners, especially in centres. Splays will generally be as follows:
- i. 3 metres x 3 metres at street and street corner;
  - ii. 2 metres x 2 metres at street and lane corner; and
  - iii. 2 metres x 2 metres at lane and land corner.
- C33** Council will consider fencing for industrial properties abutting non-industrial lots on their merit, with regard given to amenity, streetscape, sight distances and general security of the non-industrial lots. If an industrial property is a heritage item or within or abutting a heritage conservation area, any fencing must be designed in accordance with Part 8 (Heritage) of this DCP.

## 2.11.6 Commercial fencing

### Controls

- C34** Generally no fencing will be permitted forward of the front building line.
- C35** Any other fencing must effectively screen from the public view storage areas (such as refuse bin storage areas or products storage) and be sympathetic to the streetscape of the area.

#### **Temporary fencing**

*Under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008 (the Codes SEPP), temporary construction site fences used in connection with exempt development or complying development do not require consent subject to some requirements set out in the Codes SEPP.*

*State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007 permits various forms of fencing as exempt development when carried out by or on behalf of a public authority.*

### **Dividing Fences Act 1991**

*The Dividing Fences Act 1991 addresses how the cost of a dividing fence is shared between adjoining landowners, where an owner wants to erect a dividing fence or wants work done on an existing dividing fence. It sets out the minimum requirements only; owners may agree to arrangements exceeding these requirements.*

*The Act also sets out the procedure for resolving disputes involving the cost, type and position of a fence.*

*More explanatory information can be found on the NSW Land and Property Management Authority website at: <http://www.lands.nsw.gov.au/>*



## 2.11.7 Fence styles

### 2.11.7.1 Federation

**NB** *This section applies to all Federation-era properties with an original fence. For iron palisade fence details refer to Section 2.11.7.2 of this DCP.*

Examples of Federation style fences include low brick, brick with iron ribbon panels, pickets and timber joinery. Original fences enhance the setting of their house and the historic integrity of the streetscape and should be retained.



Materials such as timber do not have the longevity of brick or iron, and surviving examples of original joinery or picket fences are rare. Replacement when deteriorated can be considered, including in a heritage conservation area.



## PART 2: GENERIC PROVISIONS

The retention and conservation of all early fences in the Inner West LGA is encouraged. If details of the original fence are known, options include reconstruction using traditional materials and technology or replacement with a simple contemporary fence that will be unobtrusive in the streetscape.

A new fence could be a similarly configured simple vertical bar fence with the same spacing and gauge, similar to surviving fences but without facsimile decorative heads to the picket.

The current fashion for elaborate front fences with heavy pillars, large bases and decorated or filled panels is not suited to the LGA's narrow frontage lots. They introduce an unfortunate opacity to the streetscape and make it more difficult to appreciate the unity of the underlying architecture.

The area's original front fences are low, particularly when constructed of brick or other opaque material. Although the transparent palisade rose to 1200mm in many places, the scale of most fences related to the scale of the land and setback of the house. Many cottages had a fence of 500mm or lower. Brick fences were not walls, and did not extend above chest-height.

Brick and steel ribbon fencing was a more substantial style of Federation fence, used most often in larger detached cottages and houses. The panels were of wrought iron ribbon and were often set into a curved brick base. The gates were made to match with driveway openings and double gates becoming more common.



### ***2.11.7.2 The iron palisade fence***

One of the most important elements of the area's streetscapes is the cast iron picket fence set into a sandstone base. Those fences are known as iron palisade fences.



Palisade fences are also found in front of houses of a scale or architectural period that in other areas would have had a timber fence - either picket or joinery, up until the 1920s. Iron foundries were some of the LGA's most important industries and it is likely that many, if not all, of those fences were manufactured in the area, contributing to their local popularity.

They are characteristically constructed of round iron pickets set individually into a sandstone base with an intermediate and upper rail to hold the pickets vertical. This base has a rounded top and is laid in long blocks along the boundary alignment. Alternate iron bars rise to approximately 1200mm (depending on the fall of the land) and the remainder to approximately 600mm. Both are topped by identical cast iron heads - usually a fleur-de-lis or spearhead, but sometimes ovuloid or other shape. Hardware such as latches was also made of iron.



The palisade fences in many of the heritage conservation areas were terminated by slim rendered, stone, brick, or in rare cases, iron pillars at the corners of the site. These are integral to the structure of the fence and serve to punctuate the rhythm of the streetscape when viewed obliquely. The scale and proportions of these pillars helps define the character of the streetscape and surviving pillars should be retained.

Front gates matched and blended into the view along the line of fences from the footpath. Houses from the servant-less Federation era often also had 'milko gates' next to the boundary to allow access to the side of the house for the delivery of milk, bread and coal to the house, often through a small hatch in the side wall (known as the servery).

Few had gates to allow access by a vehicle and the narrowness of most lots, together with the availability to access from the rear lane for cars in more recent years, has meant that many 'runs' of fences remain intact.

Although many original palisade fences have been removed, many survive and continue to unify and enhance their property and bring a cohesiveness to the LGA's streetscapes.

Most surviving fences continue to serve their purpose, only requiring basic maintenance including lightly sanding and painting to prevent oxidisation, or rusting, of the iron. If this is neglected the rust makes the iron swell and can crack the socket in the sandstone base. The retention and conservation of all iron palisade fences in the Inner West LGA is encouraged.

The use of materials such as aluminium or lightweight steel fencing in an attempt to replicate the style of the palisade fence should not be used in any part of the LGA as their scale, proportions and powder-coated finishes have a significant adverse impact on the aesthetic quality and value of the street.

### **2.11.7.3**     *Inter-War fencing*

The Inter-War period marked the end of the area's major development phase, with many examples from the period being infill development within earlier subdivisions and small pockets of development in the more outlying areas of the LGA.

Inter-War fences were almost all simple, solid and low brick structures, constructed of rusticated sandstone blocks, often also incorporating brickwork. Only fences to properties built in the Spanish Mission style were rendered and painted white, and these are rare.

The most prominent element of Inter-War fences is their horizontal emphasis, reflecting the influence of the Californian Bungalow architectural style and contrasting with the finely textured vertical fences popular in earlier periods.



Subtle textures and interest was created by the use of decorative brickwork such as castellation, dentiling and herringbone. Bull-nosed bricks were also used to soften the edge line to the fence. The choice of decoration generally matched that on the front verandah of the house; this can be a good starting point if the fence has been damaged or lost.

Another popular detail was to insert a water pipe as a horizontal rail into the space between two squat piers. The piers were located at the corners of the property and either side of the gate. An additional pier was provided if the site was particularly wide or the site sloped sufficiently to require an extra step in the fence line.

Side gates for deliveries were not incorporated in most Inter-War bungalow fences. They did start to provide for access for vehicles, as seen in the wider lots and asymmetrical siting of the house allowing space for a side driveway. The openings in fences for these driveways led to a very different and much more open character to these parts of the area.

The height of Inter-War fences is usually between 500mm-700mm above footpath level for the main part of the wall and the piers up to 1000mm-1200mm depending on the detailed design. Their bases are negligible - generally only a single course of bricks set at right angles to the boundary unless a more substantial footing was required due to the fall of the land.

Gates were metal, often with a wire panel to the lower portion and a wrought ribbon or simpler decorative detail in the upper. Driveway gates were made to match and did not rise higher than the fence piers.

Some houses of the Inter-War period had a fence of woven wire on a timber frame but these are not common in the area. Fences were not painted or rendered (other than Spanish Mission).

Appropriate fencing for an Inter-War house should match any original fence that has survived, the period and style of the house and the character of the local streetscape.

Properties within a heritage conservation area should have fences that fit into the streetscape in an unobtrusive manner that respects the heritage conservation area's specific heritage values. This does not mean that a 'fake' period fence is required.

A fully detailed Inter-War fence should generally not be erected in front of a house of a more recent architectural style. If the house was built recently or has been significantly layered over the years to the point where it has lost much of its original form, the new fence should be simple and use materials and colours to help it fit into the surrounding area. In the case of an Inter-War area, a low face-brick wall (<800mm) is likely to be the most appropriate solution.