DESIGN STANDARDS
for
URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE
17 SHOPPING CENTRES AND
OTHER PUBLIC URBAN SPACES
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17.1 Introduction

17.2 Related codes of practice and guidelines
   17.2.1 Legislation
   17.2.2 Industry standards
   17.2.3 Policy and guidelines

17.3 Objectives for landscape design in shopping centres and other public urban spaces

17.4 Shopping centre landscape design policy
   17.4.1 Town centres and Civic
   17.4.2 Group and neighbourhood centres

17.5 Design principles
   17.5.1 Design Checklist

17.6 Consultation and design process
   17.6.1 Master plans and studies by other agencies

17.7 Public art and culture

17.8 Accessibility

17.9 Safety and lighting

17.10 Services and waste management
   17.10.1 Underground services
   17.10.2 Goods deliveries and emergency access
   17.10.3 Waste

17.11 Traffic and parking

17.12 Pedestrian movement

17.13 Pavements

17.14 Retaining and freestanding walls

17.15 Planting

17.16 Street furniture

17.17 Signage

17.18 Public toilets

17.19 Approvals

17.20 Further reading
17.1 Introduction
These guidelines are to be used as a guide for design projects within shopping centres and urban spaces including the suburban precincts refurbishment program.

17.2 Related codes of practice and guidelines

17.2.1 Legislation
Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
Building Act 1972 (ACT)
Collections Act 1959 (ACT)
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
Hawker Act 1936 (ACT)
Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 (ACT)
Tree Protection (Interim Scheme) Act 2001 (ACT)

17.2.2 Industry standards
AS 1428.3 Design for Access and Mobility, Part 3: Requirements for Children and Adolescents with Physical Disabilities, Standards Australia.
AS 1428.4 Design for Access and Mobility, Part 4: Tactile Ground Surface Indicators for the Orientation of People with Vision Impairment, Standards Australia.
AS/NZS 4586 Slip Resistance Classification of new Pedestrian Surface Materials, Standards Australia.

17.2.3 Policy and guidelines
Accessible Travel, ACTION, Canberra, 2001 available online at www.action.act.gov.au and follow links to Accessible Travel.
ACT Planning Guidelines for Access and Mobility, PALM (Draft 2001).
17.3 Objectives for landscape design in shopping centres and other public urban spaces

The general objectives are:

- to ensure that community issues and expectations are interpreted and incorporated within the various proposals.
- to create or enhance an identifiable character for a town centre, shopping centre or other public urban space precinct.
- to provide increased amenity for users and enhanced opportunities for increased activity.
- to ensure linkages with nearby areas and neighbourhoods are fully considered in the development of the works proposed.
- to improve the safety, function access and appearance of the area over the expected life of the work and to provide an accessible environment.
- to provide best practice in environmental sustainability and balance needs of culture, society, environment and the economy.
- to provide an accessible environment.

17.4 Shopping centre landscape design policy

17.4.1 Town centres and Civic

Civic is Canberra’s City Centre. Both Civic and the satellite towns of Belconnen, Woden, Tuggeranong and Gungahlin provide a range of shopping, administrative, cultural, community, entertainment, religious and recreational facilities and are major employment nodes.

The landscape facilities in a town centre include:

- a town centre park or other green spaces within or adjacent to the town centre buildings (acting as green lungs for the centre)
• hard paved pedestrian areas such as malls, courtyards and colonnades near the shops, offices and other businesses
• car parks, roads and road verges.

It is desirable for each of the town centres to have a distinct landscape character. The external areas and main pedestrian spines (routes) should have a style and character that identify the particular town centre. Materials and detailing such as paving, furniture, lighting styles, tree species and other landscape elements should be related throughout these spaces to unify the space.

Wind tunnelling can be a problem in town centres where there are tall buildings. Advice from a wind study specialist may be required. This may include wind tunnel modelling to ensure that the unpleasant effects of wind are minimised. New building works, tree planting at corners of buildings and mass plantings in high wind prone areas may be used to create shelter from wind but taking into account safety (not to create hiding places), desired routes of travel and accessibility.

The town centres may be interesting to tourists. Canberra as a planned city offers a different experience to the visitor and the landscape features of the commercial centres can build on this by reinforcing the garden city status using strong links to the green spaces.

Facilities should also include provisions for people who live in the town centres.

17.4.2 Group and neighbourhood centres

The group and neighbourhood centres are smaller than the town centres and generally include shopping, administration, community, cultural, religions, entertainment and recreation facilities.

It is desirable for each group or neighbourhood centre to have its own landscape style and character that identifies the particular centre. Landscape elements such as paving, tree species, furniture and lighting styles should be related throughout the centre to unify the whole space and should also relate well to the character of the surrounding area.

Local centres in existing areas are undergoing a change of life with increased numbers of variety stores, restaurants and outdoor cafes sites which are having a marked impact on parking, pedestrian access and maintenance requirements. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in public approval for the use of unleased lands. This change in style is continuing to develop as local centres strive for survival with a change in users and a continual decline of traditional strip shops. Urban infill is also generating pressure to rejuvenate these centres and provide appropriate infrastructure needs.

17.5 Design principles

Aims for design and refurbishment of shopping centres and other public urban spaces include:

• developing a landscape theme for the centre or civic space precinct
• providing opportunities for development of more vitality in the space
• improving the functioning and access of public space
• providing amenities to meet the requirement of the users
• improving or developing entry or arrival image for the centre
17.5.1 Design Checklist

Provide amenity through provision of:

- quality facilities, materials and design excellence
- vitality, colour and interest
- personable spaces, scale and comfort
- comfortable street furniture and other facilities
- landscape that relates well to the built environment and is accessible
- legibility and ease for people to find their way around
- easily identifiable facilities
- design that facilitates effective maintenance of spaces and facilities
- safe spaces and facilities
- artwork providing vitality, colour and interest and providing cultural enhancement
- valued heritage including natural, social and built heritage
- a landscape design that is flexible to cater for changes in commercial and community uses.

Ensure good access by provision of:

- effective transport facilities, (particularly at town centres) safe, functional and attractive bus interchanges, taxi rank areas and set down and drop off areas.
- improved pedestrian links with easy access from road and cycle networks and bus stops.
- access to and throughout the centre(s) without barriers, for all people regardless of their disabilities (see Disability Discrimination Act 1992).

Provide best practice environmental sustainable development by:

- full compliance with access codes and standards as a minimum
- conservation of the natural environment (see Tree Protection (Interim Scheme) Act 2001 and Design Standards 10 Parking areas and 22 Soft landscape design)
- considering solar access and providing shade (trees or shade structure) in summer and sun penetration in winter
- reinforcing the garden city status with strong links to green spaces
- balancing the requirements of culture, society, the environment and the economy
- designing systems to collect, distribute and reuse storm water from large areas of paving and roofs.
- designing to reduce use of resources and production of waste
Encourage pride and community ownership of the facilities by:

- encouraging community consultation and participation
- encouraging consultation and participation from landlords and traders
- incorporating community issues into design outcomes
- ensuring spaces work as formal and informal community gathering places.

Provide facilities that encourage community activity by:

- including facilities for festivals and cultural activities where applicable
- including sheltered spaces for busking which adds spontaneous activity to every day life
- considering use of facilities by hawkers and collectors (see *Collections Act 1959* and *Hawkers Act 1936* for the regulations for these activities).

### 17.6 Consultation and design process

City Management are committed to a full and thorough collaborative design process involving a participatory form of community consultation to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for the people involved. Consultation should be undertaken prior to any design work and the information collected should guide the development of the project and design options. Community aspirations, desires and concerns are identified through the consultation process and then design proposals are developed to respond to these.


#### 17.6.1 Master plans and studies by other agencies

Consideration should be given to other studies or proposals for works in or near the study area. The proposed redevelopment of the surrounding lands, the potential change of use and predictions of how these will affect this space may have immediate or future influence on the outcome of the refurbishment project.

Some recent master plans, development guidelines and other studies for various precincts have been listed below in section 17.20. Discussions should be held with PALM to identify relevant documents or current proposals in the specified area.

Where there are large increases in residential development in the vicinity, there is usually a greater demand for shopping and other facilities and an increase in users of the urban spaces.

### 17.7 Public art and culture

Commitment to a public art program in cities can encourage economic development and cultural tourism as well as improving the quality of life and local amenity. Public art enhances the cultural and aesthetic value of a place.

The community and stakeholder consultation process will contribute to identifying cultural and community values. The consultation process should also be informed by research, as
relevant, of history and social/community values to develop a cultural profile. The profile may aid and inform the development of design themes and specific artwork proposals.

Artwork may be incorporated into the environment in a variety of ways. It is important to ensure that artwork is durable and easily maintainable. Consideration must be given to the proposed treatment in the case of damage to the artwork and whether the work is easily repairable, replaceable or removable. If the artwork is removable then ensure that the treatment required to bring the space up to an acceptable standard without the artwork for short or long periods is easily achievable.

A broad approach should be taken to the quantity, location, size and style of public artwork to ensure there is not an over proliferation of artwork within an area and that the artwork is valued to its full potential.

Artwork may be non-functional or incorporated into the design of functional objects such as furniture, manhole covers, walls, paving and lighting.

For further information and requirements regarding street furniture refer to Design Standard 19 Park and Street Furniture and Barbecues.

17.8 Accessibility

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of disability in providing access to or use of premises that the public can enter or use. Public facilities must be designed to be accessible to people with disabilities. Designs for public spaces are expected to comply with Australian Standards AS 1428.1, AS 1428.2 and AS 1428.4. However, this does not necessarily ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

An accessibility audit of the area should be undertaken to identify and document the existing provisions and inadequacies within the study area and the linkages of the site to adjacent areas. The design team shall ensure that the proposals for the site are accessible for all people in accordance with the relevant legislation and Australian Standards. Consideration should also be given to the recommendations in Advisory Notes on Access to Premises and Accessible Travel.

A disability access consultant may be included as part of the design team to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are included early in the development of the project and to identify the priorities for work to be undertaken.

To ensure movement and facilities are accessible and to encourage people with disabilities to use the area it is necessary to take a holistic view. The objectives are to:

- Provide a continuous accessible path of travel throughout the area and to facilities.
- Ensure the design integrates access concepts in a way that is useful for all users of the area whilst maintaining an aesthetically pleasing design.
- Ensure signage and tactile warnings and other methods used to assist people are logically applied and consistent.

Pay particular attention to:

- movement linkages
- signage
- transport
- surfaces – texture, colour and glare
- shade density- minimise contrast between sun and shade on paving
- tactile pavers
- car parking
- location and design of objects in the space
- lighting
- furniture
- elimination of hazards
- kerb ramp locations
- traffic lights
- trip hazards.

17.9 Safety and lighting

The required lighting level and coverage area to be included in the lighting upgrade should be stipulated in the brief. The light is to be white light, preferably Mercury Vapour; (metal halide may be approved in some situations). The sodium luminaires are not favoured in urban shopping centres due to the orange light they emit. White light is closer to the light given off by the sun. Fittings are to be cut off (aero screen), vandal resistant and low maintenance.

For the lighting of pedestrian pavements, car parks and roads, light fittings should be selected from the list of approved fittings available from City Management. Placement should ensure safety to limit pools of light and dark areas. Poles located in areas where they are prone to damage should have rag bolt fittings for ease of replacement. For further information regarding lighting of public areas see Design Standards 12 Public Lighting.

A qualified lighting designer is required to prepare lighting design documents to ensure conformance to the relevant Australian Standards and ordinances. The designer is required to submit a lighting plan to a City Management nominated lighting consultant for certification that it complies with current standards.

The designer should also liaise with ActewAGL to ensure that the power supply has the capacity to meet the requirements.

The ACT Crime Prevention and Urban Design Resource Manual outlines issues and recommendations relating to safety that the designer needs to be aware of when designing public spaces.

17.10 Services and waste management

17.10.1 Underground services

Location of existing underground services should be identified. Established landscapes may have problems with blocked drains from a build up of deleterious materials or tree roots. These and any other problems should be identified and Canberra Living Places will work with the relevant department or authority to rectify the problem. Where the problems can only be rectified by works beyond the project scope, defects should be reported to the
relevant asset owner for an opportunity to consider upgrading their works as an extension to the project.

Designs must ensure that any new trees or structures are suitably located to maintain acceptable clearances from services. Suitable tree species will need to be specified for any new planting near drainage pipe work and where appropriate root barriers should be installed (refer to Design Standard 23 - Plant Species for Urban Landscape Projects).

Sumps should be located away from the main pedestrian routes of travel. Any meter pits must be located in an approved location and made safe to prevent trip and falls by the general public. The pit and lid must be strong enough to carry expected traffic and must be maintained for the life of the connection.

Where possible, provide a clear and unobstructed passage for maintenance vehicles to service underground and building infrastructure.

17.10.2 Goods deliveries and emergency access

Provision for back-of-house goods deliveries to the various premises needs to be addressed. Loading zones need to be identified and appropriate areas marked and sign posted. These sites should be free of obstruction and have adequate entry points for movement of delivery and service vehicles.

Provide a clear and unobstructed access for emergency service vehicles as determined by the building structure.

17.10.3 Waste

The ACT Government is committed to a policy of minimising waste as described in *A Waste Strategy for Canberra, No Waste by 2010*. The methods of waste minimisation and storage used on private premises have significant effect on public areas and consideration must be given to how this is currently addressed and what changes are expected in the next decade.

The *Development Control Code for Best Practice Waste Management in the ACT* outlines solutions and requirements for the treatment of waste. In shopping centres it is current policy to provide 120 litre Sulo bins concealed within an attractive outer covering (see Design Standard 19 Park and Street Furniture and Barbecues). Where there is space and it is appropriate, the provision of multi Sulo bins to sort waste is encouraged.

Design solutions should also address the location of charity bins as an integral component of the centre’s urban landscape.

The use of recycled materials in the construction stage and the recycling of materials removed from the site should be considered during design. The designer should identify the type of recycled material, its extent and location of use. The construction team may wish to investigate using the online *Australian Reusable Resources Network* to list or purchase demolition or construction materials.

17.11 Traffic and parking

In the refurbishment of a public area consideration often needs to be given to traffic flow, car parking, roads and bus stop parking, and their relationship to pathways, lighting, disability access, planting and shelter requirements to ensure adequate vehicle and pedestrian circulation.
Use of public transport, walking and cycling should be promoted and routes and services should provide easy access to and from shopping centres and other public spaces.


17.12 Pedestrian movement

Pedestrian movement needs to be studied and a hierarchy of entry points or ‘doorways’ established to provide defined ease of access plus an identifiable character for the centre. Attention should be given to logical and well laid out integration and connection with the adjacent spaces and a continuous path of travel. For safety reasons avoid hidden doorways or alley type access points to collect people from the surrounding car parks.

Consideration should be given to the location of existing, proposed or possible future provision of outdoor cafes. These are required to be sited in accordance with Outdoor Cafes in Public Places Policy.

Soft landscaping can be used to direct pedestrians and should not obstruct desirable pedestrian movement. Careful design of soft landscape areas is needed to avoid pedestrians taking shortcuts across the soft landscape areas. See also Design Standard 22 Soft Landscape Design.


17.13 Pavements

Pavement may be used to direct people along pathways, to define or highlight areas, to unify spaces and to provide interest and amenity. Artwork may be incorporated into the paving.

It is desirable to provide pavement materials and facilities that are easy to clean and maintain, designed to resist vandalism and that resist damage from skateboarding (see Design Standard 13 Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities). Selection of the paving material should consider the porosity of the surface. Porous surfaces are difficult to clean if dirt such as spilt drinks and chewing gum imbeds in the surface.

The designer should also consider glare when selecting pavement materials and avoid light and highly reflective tones. Surfaces of paving/artwork are to be slip resistant as described in Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4586, durable and easily maintained. The use of permeable pavements and structural soils is supported to reduce storm water runoff and to provide an increase in natural watering of trees in pavement.

In most shopping centres and civic spaces, vehicular access is required to varying degrees and design loads. All areas require adequate emergency vehicular access. In the design of pavement structure attention must be given to the vehicular use and loads. Some areas require delivery or maintenance vehicular access across pedestrian pavement areas and it may be desirable to clearly define the vehicular route using trees, bollards, walls, seats or by marking the pavement. Where the route is permanent the pavement marking should also be permanent such as by using a different colour or tone for the pavement material. Tactile pavers are to be
provided as required by Australian Standard AS 1428.4 and if suitable may be used to mark the route.

Gradients across pavements in areas where outdoor cafes are to be located should ideally be between 1:100 and 1:40 and not exceed 1:40. The pavement should fall away from access points to ensure sewerage spills and surcharges have minimum impact on the public.

Good surface drainage is important to all pavement areas. For further information on pavement gradients and drainage refer to Design Standard 13 Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities. Grated sumps within paved areas should be located so as to avoid the pedestrian movement areas.

Refurbishment and repairs to areas where there are specific pavement treatments prescribed should be in keeping with the treatments prescribed to unify the particular precinct.

### 17.14 Retaining and freestanding walls

Retaining or freestanding walls in shopping centres and other civic spaces should be designed to be easy to clean and maintain, resist vandalism and discourage damage from skateboarding.

For information on the structural requirements for walls see Design Standard 7 Bridges and Other Structures.

Skateboard riders are attracted to using sections of smooth surfaced walls, and the action of the skateboard along the wall can cause discolouration and damage. To discourage the activity, the walls should be a broken surface such as pointed brickwork, or metal lugs may be inset into the top edge of walls.

Graffiti protection can be in the form of either and the walls being located in places with natural surveillance, the application of a sacrificial coat to the surface, painting the wall so that repainting will cover any graffiti or the texture of surface. At handover stage, the designer should inform the maintenance authority of any relevant information regarding the finishes and treatment required.

### 17.15 Planting


### 17.16 Street furniture

Street furniture should be chosen to suit its function, comfort requirements and users. Materials and designs that are easy to clean and maintain, resist vandalism and discourage damage by skateboards are other considerations. Street furniture should not encroach upon the continuous accessible path of travel.

When locating seats the designer needs to consider shade, sun and where people are likely to need to sit (such as near entry or exit points, supermarkets and chemist shops). Seats should not be located within outdoor cafe lease areas where they will be in conflict with the cafe seating (see *ACT Government Outdoor Cafes in Public Places Policy*). It is recommended that armrests be provided on seats.

The location of bins should target supermarkets, milk bars and fast food outlets.

See Design Standard 19 Park and Street Furniture and Barbecues for more information.
17.17 Signage

The aim of signage design for shopping centres and other public urban spaces is to improve name recognition and direction. It is necessary to provide materials that are easy to clean and maintain and resist vandalism. Tactile signs are preferred for people who have disabilities.

The document Signage Policy for Urban Places and AS1428.1 should be referred too.

See The Code of Practice for the Placement of Movable Signs in Public Places for information about temporary advertising in shopping centres.

See Design Standard 19 Park and Street Furniture and Barbecues for more information about signs.

17.18 Public toilets

Public toilet facilities in shopping centres need to be analysed in terms of their adequacy in lighting, disabled person access, suitability of location, safety and security factors. The decision to replace or refurbish existing toilets at a shopping centre is generally dependent on the available budget, the condition of the existing toilets, community consultation outcomes and the availability of a suitable site. See Design Standard 18 Public Toilets.

The reduction of public toilets and the inclusion of toilet facilities within a private development should be considered with Planning and Land Management playing an important role in the decision making process. Issues such as the viability of shopping centres and business diversity will provide the necessary background information in determining public toilet needs.

17.19 Approvals

Agencies that may require approvals for work in shopping centres and other civic spaces include, but are not limited to, Planning and Land Management, ActewAGL, ACT Roads and Stormwater, the Heritage Commission and Heritage Council (ACT).

17.20 Further reading

ACT Public Art Program, Canberra Cultural Centre, Museums and Galleries, Bureau of Arts and Heritage, Canberra, 1997.


Our City – A Vital, Accessible and Sustainable Civic, Planning and Land Management, Canberra, 1998.


Jamison Group Centre Master Plan (Draft), Planning and Land Management, Canberra, 2000.


Skateboard Deterrent Study, Canberra City, Totalcare Projects for The Department of Urban Services, Canberra, 1999.


Territory Plan, Planning and Land Management, available online: http://www.palm.act.gov.au

Tuggeranong Lakeshore Master Plan, Planning and Land Management, Canberra, 1999.


A list of other documents that may be relevant is available on online at: www.act.gov.au