



# Heritage Advisory Service

## HSPN 01. FENCING IN HERITAGE OVERLAY AREAS

The basis of this Policy is contained in the relevant clauses of the City of Port Phillip Heritage Policy (Page 4 of 6), at Clause 22.04-4 of the Planning Scheme.

The intent of the Heritage Policy is that fences should be appropriate to the particular building that they front. Fences, as a very important part of the streetscape, should enhance its heritage and aesthetic values. Associated with this is the need to support appropriate social interaction within a street and to avoid deleterious impacts, particularly loss of surveillance of the area, both to and from private property. The subject site will provide the basis of fence design, not the streetscape.

### 1.0 ISSUES

The importance of front fences:

- They provide a physical interface between the public and private land, but allow the extension of the visual domain of the street beyond the front boundary into a site.
- They provide reinforcement of the stylistic patterns of a site and its streetscape.
- They form part of the visual presentation of a dwelling and its garden to the street.
- They provide a balance between security and exposure of private property.

The major issues in relation to front fences are:

- High front fences that limit social interaction of sites and the street.
- Fences that obscure street and front gardens from surveillance and which consequently support anti-social activities, including property invasion.
- Limitation of what is visually part of the public domain by obscuring the view of front gardens and dwelling facades.
- The use of inappropriate style for fences, including the over-elaboration of historic types.

### 2.0 GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR FENCES

#### 2.1 Location of fences

- Front fences should be located on the street boundaries.
- Fences within the front setback will generally not be appropriate.

#### 2.2 Front fence heights

Front fences should be of a height/type appropriate to the style of building on the site.

Generally this will mean (measured from the footpath level);

- For Victorian and Federation dwellings of single storey, 1200mm to 1350mm.
  - For Victorian dwellings where the verandah is on the street boundary, balustrade of 850 – 1000 mm from the verandah deck.
  - For Victorian and Federation dwellings of two storeys, 1200mm to 1650mm maximum for posts.
  - For mansions with extended frontages, higher fences (to 1800mm) may be appropriate.
  - For Interwar dwellings, including apartment buildings, 600mm to 1000mm.
  - For Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century dwellings, zero to 900.
- NOTE; High front fences, even of masonry have little impact on noise attenuation to a dwelling. Noise reduction will not be an acceptable reason for a high front fence.

### **2.3 Construction materials.**

Front fences should not be constructed in a more substantial or elaborate form or materials than that of the dwelling they front, depending on the style of the dwelling involved, eg:

- Fences to timber dwellings should be of timber framing with timber or sheet metal infill, eg. timber pickets or vertical corrugated iron.
- Fences to masonry dwellings could be of any type, including masonry and/or metal styles.
- In all cases the format of the fence should be vertical. Horizontal battens are not appropriate.

If the original fence no longer exists on the property, it will probably have been constructed of timber. The more permanent types tend to persist. Therefore, unless there is evidence to the contrary, a new timber fence will be most appropriate.

### **2.4 Front fences at corners.**

- Front fences on street corners should generally continue around the corner along the side street to a point projected from the front of the dwelling.
- On a lane, the side fence construction should be continued up to the street frontage.
- Corners should not be splayed.

### **2.5 Security of private property**

- Traditionally front fences and gardens are accessible to the public, the closure of sites being at the front façade of the building where the side setback can be closed by a high fence/gate (2100mm max) at the line of the front of the building, or somewhere within the side setback.
- The use of security gates on the street frontage will be discouraged.

### **2.6 Side and rear fences on public rights of way and streets**

- Side fences should be opaque and of 1800mm to 2100mm high. Side fences should be of utilitarian construction using vertical palings, vertical galvanised custom orb corrugated iron or face brickwork. Rendered surfaces are not appropriate.
- Generally side fences on streets or lanes should not have exposed intermediate posts.

### **2.7 Side and rear fences between properties**

- Side fences behind the front of the house and rear fences should not exceed 2100mm high.
- In the front setback they may be either at the same height as the front fence, or tapered up from the front fence height to the side fence height at the house frontage.
- Side and rear fences should be of materials and in a style agreed by the adjacent owners.
- 600 mm height of 50% transparent trellis may be added above side and rear fences except within the front setback.

### **2.8 Gates in front fences.**

- Gates should be provided at all entry points for pedestrians and vehicles. Gateless driveways will be discouraged. Vehicular gates must close when the vehicle is on site.
- Gates in front fences should be clearly distinguishable.

## 2.9 Terraces and pairs.

- Ideally fences to matching groups, terraces and attached pairs of common design should be identical. Where one or more of a group or pair has an original fence or, if not, an appropriate new fence, this fence will be taken as the pattern for all new fences in the group or pair.
- On terraces and pairs, the fence and side boundary posts should be shared and located centrally on the joint boundary (unless the historic pattern is otherwise).

## 2.10 Recessed entries and Lych Gates.

- Recessing of gates from the street was only common in the Victorian and Federation periods and only where the property and fence were substantial and with a considerable setback of the dwelling. Generally, this practice should be avoided.
- Lych gates (gates with a roof over) were rarely used and are not encouraged.
- Framed entries (similar to pergolas) were common in the Interwar period and may be appropriate for the Interwar styles.

## 2.11 Hedges and perimeter planting.

The high cypress hedge is a 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon and consequently is often found on Federation and Interwar houses. Less substantial forms of hedging have always been used, particularly roses and later the ubiquitous Privet and similar types of the Interwar period. Planting of hedges will not be subject of Planning Permits and may provide added privacy if sought.

## 2.12 Style of Front Fences

- Front fences should be of a style appropriate to the style of building on the site. What happens elsewhere in the street is not a key determinate.
- Fences may vary from the norm where documentary or physical evidence indicates otherwise (subject to Permit review).

## 3.0 OBTAINING A PERMIT FOR A FENCE.

All fencing in the Heritage Overlay Areas of Port Phillip requires a Planning Permit.

To provide useful information and to facilitate the permit process, Guidelines for Fence Types appropriate to various types of dwellings commonly found in the City of Port Phillip have been prepared. These provide a comprehensive range of details and materials for each style/type as follows.

- 1A. Timber front fences for Victorian dwellings
- 1B. Metal and masonry fences for Victorian dwellings
- 1C. Front fences for Edwardian/Federation dwellings

Each guideline offers a range of choices for all aspects of front fence design, eg, panel types, picket types and post types, from which a set of details may be selected. There will be no constraints on selections from these menus, except that tendencies to over-elaborate will be discouraged.

1. Having identified the type and period of your dwelling, choose the appropriate guideline and select the type of fence, type of picket, type of posts and gates from the menu on the guideline.
2. Complete the Counter Application Form by identifying in the items chosen in the Table, attaching a simple site plan, elevational sketch and photograph of the property as illustrated on the form.
3. Provide a copy of the Title of the property,
4. Submit the Application to the Department of Planning at South Melbourne Town Hall. If the application is complete and correct and is submitted by hand, workload permitting, a Permit should take less than a week.