DESIGN WA IS LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A BETTER BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Places that are valued by the community
Places that are functional, are easy to maintain and will last a long time

Places that are attractive and inviting
Places that are bright, airy and easy to live in

Places that are easy to get around, even as a first time visitor
Places that are a comfortable scale for people

Places that relate to the local neighbourhood
Places that include room for trees and gardens

Places that feel safe, day and night
Places that work with the environment

DESIGN WA: For a Better Built Environment
Design WA is a State Government initiative to ensure good design is at the centre of all development, from the early stages right through to delivery.

Stage One improves the consistency of design policy across the State. It includes: State Planning Policy 7.0 Design of the Built Environment, an updated Apartment Design policy and a Design Review Guide. Future stages will focus on precinct, neighbourhood, medium density and house design. These documents are available at dplh.wa.gov.au/DesignWA

Design principles, expert review and skilled designers working together to improve built-form design outcomes.

When urban environments increase in density there are more factors to consider when designing them. Good design outcomes are achieved when three fundamentals work together. Design WA promotes:

- A universal set of design principles that can be used to prepare plans and write new policy
- An integrated design review process for complex development types to streamline early stages of design, before proposals become too difficult to change
- The use of skilled design practitioners who understand how to make their project respond to established and emerging neighbourhoods.

When these fundamentals are executed well, the design, approval and development processes work smoothly to achieve a better built environment for everyone.
ELEVATING THE IMPORTANCE OF DESIGN IN PLANNING

SPP 7.0 — DESIGN OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

State Planning Policy 7.0 is the lead policy of Design WA that applies to the whole built environment.

This details the 10 principles of good design that can be used by planners, designers and developers to prepare plans and write new policy. It is a framework to modify design-related policies as our urban areas change, as well as promote better design skills and an integrated design review.

SPP 7.3 — RESIDENTIAL DESIGN CODES VOLUME 2 - APARTMENTS

This is a policy for apartments and mixed-use developments, to replace Part 6 of the Residential Design Codes (R-Codes) for multiple-dwellings.

This policy will prepare our urban areas for apartments that are well designed, for residents and neighbours. It improves guidance for siting and orienting buildings into existing and emerging neighbourhoods. It also offers support to design practitioners and decision makers who propose alternative and better design solutions. Simple guides for design practitioners, reviewers and decision-makers will help facilitate a better apartment design process.

INTEGRATING EARLY DESIGN REVIEW

This is a guide to improve the way expert design review operates across the State. It helps local governments set up and operate design review processes that are consistent, transparent and focussed.

It contains information on when a design review is recommended and supports early design discussions with local government. This reduces time and costs at the development application and building licence stages.

Simple guides help design reviewers to exercise judgment with more consistency. Information on the new State Design Review Panel, and how it can assist local governments is also detailed.

ENCOURAGING STRONGER DESIGN SKILLS

Skilled design practitioners are important to achieving good design outcomes, particularly for complex developments such as apartments.

The introduction of SPP 7.0 and the Design Principles, the Apartment Design policy and the application of professional design review will improve design knowledge and skills through the development approval process.
IMPLEMENTATION
The WAPC will publicise Design WA Stage One as soon as possible after approval. SPP7.0 and SPP7.3 Volumes 1 and 2 will be made public for a minimum of 3 months (special gazettal) before they are operational to ensure that designers and assessors are familiar with the provisions.

The Apartment Design policy will replace Part 6 of the Residential Design Codes (R-Codes) forming the following two volume approach:

- **SPP 7.3 Residential Design Codes Volume 1**
  - Existing R-Codes to be renamed SPP 7.3 Vol.1.
  - Everything except Part 6 will continue to apply.

- **SPP7.3 Residential Design Codes Volume 2 - Apartments**
  - SPP7.3 Vol.2 will replace Part 6 of the existing R-Codes and will consequently be read into local planning schemes.

BRIEFINGS AND REFINEMENT
Further stakeholder briefings and refinement of the draft Apartment Design policy settings were carried out in the advertising period. Contents of the other documents released were also considered in detail at this stage.

All public submissions were considered before the documents were finalised and changes approved.

Design WA Stage One documents were reviewed for alignment with the principles of fairness, transparency, integrity and efficiency, identified through the independent planning review.

DRAFT DOCUMENTS RELEASED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT
The draft documents have been developed through a thorough practitioner working group program including expert input and advice from local governments, practitioners and industry representatives.

The documents have also been informed by design review panel observations and interviews, apartment resident focus groups, and site visits to research local development examples.

PUBLIC ADVERTISING PERIOD CLOSES

DOCUMENTS APPROVED AND GAZETTED

PROJECT INITIATION

FUTURE DESIGN WA STAGES

ROLLOUT, TRAINING AND REVIEW
Training programs for relevant planners, design reviewers and practitioners will be rolled out, to help practitioners understand how the new policies and processes work.

Local governments are encouraged to set site-specific primary controls in areas zoned for apartments, to improve design outcomes and certainty for developers and neighbours. Part 2 of the Apartment Design policy can assist with this planning.

Operational review of Stage One documents will occur to consider improvements.
Well designed cities and towns are in everyone’s best interest, especially as our urban areas grow.

Almost every part of our cities and towns is designed; the buildings, roads, parks, playgrounds and public spaces that make up our neighbourhoods have all been designed for a purpose.

Design WA has distilled these factors into 10 principles of good design, so that we can better define and benchmark places and spaces that improve our built environment. These principles underpin all policy from Design WA.

### WHAT IS GOOD DESIGN?

**Context and character**
Responds to and enhances the distinctive characteristics of a local area, contributing to a sense of place

**Landscape quality**
Recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, within a broader ecological context

**Sustainability**
Optimises the sustainability of the built environment, delivering positive environmental, social and economic outcomes

**Functionality and build quality**
Meets the needs of users efficiently and effectively, balancing functional requirements to perform well and deliver optimum benefit over the full life-cycle

**Community**
Responds to local community needs as well as the wider social context, providing environments that support a diverse range of people and facilitate social interaction

**Amenity**
Provides successful places that offer a variety of uses and activities while optimising internal and external amenity for occupants, visitors and neighbours, providing environments that are comfortable, productive and healthy

**Legibility**
Results in buildings and places that are legible, with clear connections and easily identifiable elements to help people find their way around

**Built form and scale**
Ensures that the massing and height of development is appropriate to its setting and successfully negotiates between existing built form and the intended future character of the local area

**Safety**
Optimises safety and security, minimising the risk of personal harm and supporting safe behaviour and use

**Aesthetics**
The product of a skilled, judicious design process that results in attractive and inviting buildings and places that engage the senses
For more information or details of the policy please visit dplh.wa.gov.au/DesignWA

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of this land. We pay our respect to Elders past and present, their descendants who are with us today, and those who will follow in their footsteps.

Disclaimer
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