A guide for residential fences
Fencing purpose
This guide provides advice to Gold Coast residents on the design of boundary fencing for detached and dual occupancy dwellings in the city.

A well designed and constructed fence can provide visual appeal and add value to your property. Common considerations are, function, location and materials.

Function – Why do you want a fence?
Location – Where will the fence be installed?
Materials – Metal, timber or masonry.

Why do you want a fence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Privacy</th>
<th>Air circulation</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Define space</th>
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<td>Defines your property boundary, making it clear where your property entry is located.</td>
<td>Provides privacy to outdoor recreation areas and reduces noise.</td>
<td>Let breezes in or provide protection against strong winds.</td>
<td>Help prevent your pets or small children from wandering off.</td>
<td>Defines your outdoor spaces as entertainment and utility areas, parking spaces or play areas.</td>
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Tree planting
Feature trees in your front yard will help frame the view of your house and provide street appeal, shade and amenity. Try to avoid planting trees near pipes or foundations to avoid root damage.

Front fencing
Consider planting hedges and screen plants to soften the appearance of your fence and improve the appeal of your property.

Fence permeability
A more open fence with gaps between palings allows views into and out of your yard. It also allows for better air circulation than a fence with smaller spaces.

Gates
Gates help provide additional privacy and security as well as signify an entry point to your property. Consider fencing the front yard area to provide separation between vehicular and pedestrian entries to your house.

Fencing height and style
Note the predominant height and style of fences along your street and consider a design style for your fence that matches the existing predominant design style in your area.

Do you have a corner lot?
Fencing on a corner lot must be designed to allow the traffic on both roads to have a clear line of vision around the corner.

1. If your lot is a truncated corner lot (the property boundary follows the corner around in small lengths) your fencing can be greater than 1 metre in height because it does not interfere with the views around the corner for motorists.

2. If your lot has a non-truncated boundary, (where the boundary comes out to finish in a regular corner) your fence in this location will need to no more than 1 metre in height.
Where will the fence be installed?

The location of a fence can influence its function. On the boundary, a fence shows where your property ends. At the top of a wall a fence is performing a safety function. Against a driveway the fence is providing separation of vehicles from the yard. The following illustrations show how different fence locations can perform varied functions.

Fencing behind planting

Locating the fence line 600 mm inside the property boundary creates space between the property boundary and the fence for a low maintenance planting bed to provide additional screening. This is recommended to soften the appearance of higher fences along busy roads.

Fencing with planting recesses set back into the property

Planting recesses set into the fence, breaks up the fence line making it appear shorter. This is useful where long lengths of fence are required along a boundary.

Retaining wall with fencing to the top of the wall

If your lot is above street level you may require a retaining wall at your front boundary and the fence will be located at the top of the wall. When your fence is above street level, privacy is less of a concern. A metal fence with timber posts is illustrated with planting along the inside of the fence to provide additional screening. Consider the overall height and appearance of the fence from the base of the wall. There are some restrictions on overall combined wall and fence heights in these situations.

Reduce the risk of accidents involving pedestrians and vehicles on your property by locating a secondary fence separating vehicle and pedestrian uses. A gate close to the building allowing movement between the two areas can control the entry to your house from a parked vehicle on the driveway.
Passive surveillance and privacy

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) supports the use of permeable fencing so that unlawful house entry does not occur out of sight behind solid fences. Visual filtering, combining a permeable fence of moderate height with vegetation behind or in front of the fence balances the need for privacy without total visual blocking.
Fencing materials

After determining the location and function of your fence, consider the fencing materials to be used. Combining these attributes allows you to design a functional fence that complements the design of your house. The materials you choose will also determine the level of maintenance needed to keep your fence in good condition. An indication of cost and maintenance requirements for different fencing materials are listed below:

Timber

Untreated timber will grey with age and weathering. Painting or oiling timber fences will improve the appearance and longevity of your fence, but will require periodic re-coating to maintain their appearance.

Over time timber posts will rot in the ground; alternatively use steel posts.

Timber is readily available, low cost and easy to repair or change elements of your fence. Add palings to make your fence more solid or remove some to make it more open.

Masonry pillars or walls

Masonry fencing elements should only be considered with the input of a structural engineer to determine soil conditions and foundation requirements. Poorly constructed footings or wall sections may subside or move, resulting in structural failures or fault lines appearing in the wall.

A masonry wall or pier as an element of a fence gives a high quality looking finish. This can be further added to by using face brick or facing stone panels, tiles, or paint and render. It is a high cost fencing option.

Metal (pool type) fence panels

This type of fencing is both readily available, cost effective and low maintenance. Pool type fencing is very open and provides virtually no screening, but screen planting can be done either in front or behind the fence to provide privacy while still allowing air circulation.

Common screen planting species are listed on page 5.

City Plan development application requirements

Where City Plan requires a development application to be made, then site specific fencing requirements exceeding the general advice outlined in this guideline may be required. For example, a requirement for boundary setbacks greater than 600mm where an acoustic fence of substantial height is proposed.

Fencing within the waterway setback area

Fencing within the waterfront setback area shall be of an open design. Refer to SC6.9.8 City Plan Policy – Land Development Guidelines SD 04-004 Waterway Development Cross Section Note 2.

When is a development permit for building work required?

A permit will be required if the fence/wall is:

a) constructed of any material and it exceeds 2 metres in height above the fence’s/wall’s natural ground level; or
b) greater than 1.2 metres high in the waterfront setback area; or
c) inconsistent with an earlier approval; or
d) a retaining wall fence combination, exceeding 2 metres in height above natural ground level, and the retaining wall section is greater than 1 metre in height.

Useful links

Additional documentation and building guidelines can be found via the following link:

cityofgoldcoast.com.au/propertyfencing
Fibre cement or metal sheeting

Fibre cement or metal sheeting provides a cost effective method of screening large sections of fencing. Blue-board fencing can be rendered, painted, clad to give the look of a solid wall. Fibre cement sheeting can be prone to water damage, cracking and warping in narrow width sheets.

Solid metal panel fencing should not be used for front boundary fencing unless limited to a height of 1200 mm and screened with planting in front.

Screening with plants

Screening and hedging species will grow at different rates and heights and should be considered based on their mature height, pruning requirements and root characteristics.

Many of the species suggested can easily grow to a 1.8 metre height within 2 years to provide a more attractive screen solution than a typical 1.8 metre fence.

Acoustic

An acoustic fence (also called a noise barrier or sound wall) is used to reduce noise by absorbing sound vibrations caused by neighbours, traffic or industrial activity.

Different materials and styles can be used so your fence suits your house design and fits in with the surrounding environment. We recommend planting in front of the fence and using some sections of accent colour to soften its appearance.

The design and type of material used such as timber, concrete or poly panels, steel and brick will affect the cost and level of maintenance required so consult an acoustic fence specialist.

Checklist

- Boundary survey to ensure correct fence location
- Note prevailing wind direction, direction of road noise, views, solar access, neighbours, requirements for screening
- Your preferred building materials
- Main access point to your property
- Letterbox location and type
- Slope, retaining and drainage requirements
- What are the other fences in your area like?

Common screen planting species

- Acmena smithii ‘minor’ (dwarf lilly pilly)
- Callistemon citrinus* (lemon-scented bottlebrush)
- Gardenia florida* (gardenia)
- Grevillea (grevillea ‘Robyn Gordon’)
- Melaleuca (hillock bush hypericifolia*)
- Murraya paniculata* (orange jasmine)
- Syzygium cascade* (weeping lilly pilly)
- Westringia fruticosa (coastal rosemary)

Enquire at your local nursery for suggestions suited to your area.
Incorporating interest using voids can also help to break up an otherwise blank fence.

Fencing materials should reflect the character of your house.

The combined use of materials with a rendered masonry wall with an upper panel of glass fencing adds interest and appeal.

Screen planting along your fence either inside the property boundary or where permitted in the road reserve can create a fence on its own.

An open horizontal timber infill between masonry piers keeps this frontage open and provides greater air circulation compared to a solid fence.

Vertical timber infill between masonry piers reflects the character and materials of this property. The tall planting behind the fence provides screening to the property.

Using different layers of planting provides more visual interest in your boundary fencing. Once established, this level of barrier provides shade and screening from the road.

Planting to the front of a rendered masonry fence helps make the fence appear less prominent.

Another example of planting to the front of a blank fence to help make the fence appear less prominent.