

Design and siting requirements for buildings and structures assessed by the City of Gold Coast as a Referral Agency

Purpose

This document sets out the minimum provisions acceptable to the City of Gold Coast (the City), in line with City Plan and other legislative documents for building setbacks and site cover relating to a single detached Class 1a(i) building, Class 1(a)(ii) building made up of no more than 2 attached dwellings or a detached Class 10 building or structure such as a garage, carport or shed.

However, the City may consider variations to these requirements considering the particular location and individual site constraints.

Site cover and building setbacks

Site cover

The City Plan defines 'site cover' as the portion of a site covered by buildings and structures attached to the buildings (e.g. carports) calculated which is to the outer most projections of the buildings and expressed as a percentage (%). The term does not include any structure or part of a structure included in a landscaped open space area such as a gazebo or shade structure, a basement car park located wholly below ground level, or eaves and sun shading devices. The maximum site cover in a residential context is 50%, however, this may vary for development in different locations such as rural or semi-rural land.

Building setbacks

Building setbacks may vary subject to the zoning requirements of the City Plan but are measured from the outermost projection (fascia) of any proposed building or structure. The following table details setback requirements for the main residential zones.

Setbacks may vary for land at different locations including rural and semi-rural zones to those provided within the table below. *(Please note that 'metres' are expressed as 'm'.)*

Zone/Setbacks	Low Density Zone		Medium Density Zone		Medium Density Zone (Small Lots)		High Density Zone**	
Front	6m		4m (under 23m) 6m (over 23m)		4m/2m (rear lane/building elevated 900mm above street level)		4m (under 23m) 6m (over 23m)	
Side & Rear	Height	Setback	Height	Setback	Height	Setback	Height	Setback
	Up to 4.5m	1.5m	Up to 4.5m	1.5m	Up to 3m	0 metres*	Up to 4.5m	1.5m
	4.5m to 7.5m	2m	4.5m to 7.5m	2m	Up to 4.5m	1m	4.5m to 7.5m	2m
	Over 7.5m	+0.5m per 3m	Over 7.5m	+0.5m per 3m	4.5m to 7.5m	1.5m	Over 7.5 m	+0.5m per 3m
					Over 7.5m	2m		
Rear lots	3m from all boundaries				3 metres from all boundaries			
Rear (for rear lots only)					6m 0m if abutting a rear lane			
Between habitable buildings (not attached)	Double the applicable side setback		Double the applicable side setback				Double the applicable side setback	

*0 metre setback for Class 10 buildings located on southern / western boundary maximum 9m

** For High Density Zone (Small Lots) refer to the City Plan.

Residential allotments resulting from the subdivision of land may also contain a 'Plan of Development' (POD) that will designate non-standard setbacks and requirements to those contained in the City Plan.

Information on how to obtain a copy of a POD may be obtained from the City's Planning Enquiries Centre (PEC), on telephone (07) 5582 8708.

Open carports and enclosed garages

While an enclosed garage should be located behind the road front setback clearance area and accessed only from a licensed vehicular cross over (VXO), an open carport may also be applied for within the road front setback clearance area. For either an open carport or enclosed garage to be sited within a setback clearance area (including shade sails as covered car parking), a Referral Agency Assessment Application is required to be lodged with the City.

When constructing either an open carport or an enclosed garage, the design and use of materials should be compatible with and similar to those of the main dwelling so that the completed building work presents as an overall integrated development.

Should a new or amended VXO be required for the proposal, the applicant must obtain approval prior to the issue of a Development Permit for Building Work. Where a VXO does not meet standard design requirements, an Operational Works (Vehicular Crossing) application is required. It is strongly recommended that a VXO licence be obtained prior to lodgment of the Referral Agency Assessment Application so as to avoid any issues and delays with regard to vehicle access.

While the design of a pier or support for an open carport should be in scale with the intended building and compliment the amenity of the streetscape, a minimum 350mm square masonry design or equivalent is preferred.

A further design requirement for an open carport is that the two sides are not enclosed in any way (e.g. fixed slates, screening, a fence or nib/return wall), within 500mm of the outermost projection of the open carport. Notwithstanding this, the City accepts that the carport may be enclosed on the side that structurally joins a dwelling as well as a panel lift or roller door for vehicle access.

The gradient of the floor for an open carport must comply with Australian Standards and it is the responsibility of the Assessment Manager (Private Building Certifier), to ensure compliance prior to the issue of the Development Permit for Building Work.

When assessing a Referral Agency Assessment Application for development within a setback clearance area, several matters are taken into account such as but not limited to the impact upon the amenity of the neighbours and to the streetscape.

In order to achieve an acceptable level of impact upon amenity, the following minimum design provisions apply:

Open carport height

The maximum height for an open carport at the road front property boundary is required to be:

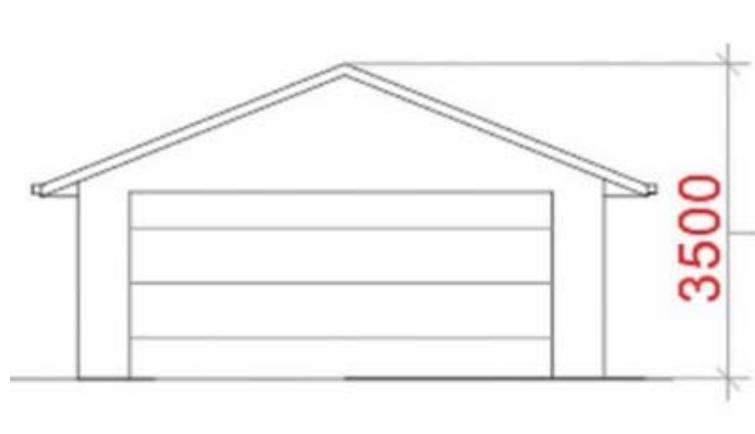
- 3 metres measured from natural ground level to the top of the fascia for a hip, dutch gable or parapet roof design
- 3 metres 'mean' (average) height measured from natural ground level to the top of the fascia for a skillion roof design
- 3.5 metres measured from natural ground level to the top of the ridge line for a gable roof design.

The maximum height is measured from natural ground level and not the finished ground level or slab height.



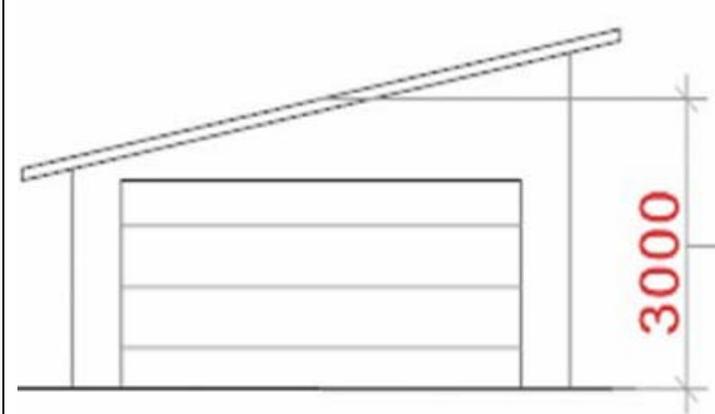
Hip roof

Dutch gable roof



Parapet roof

Gable roof

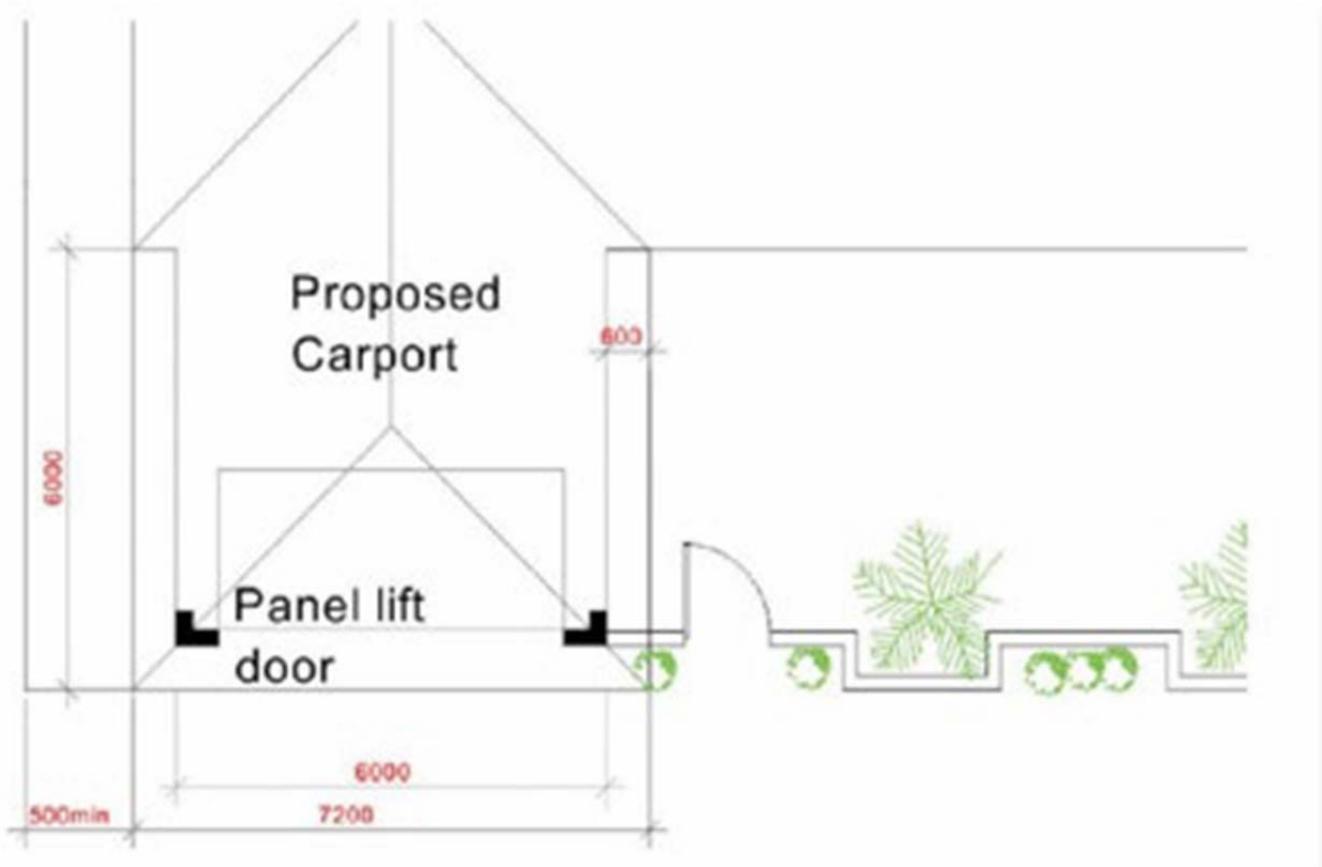


Skillion roof

Open carport widths

The maximum width for an open carport at the road front property boundary is to be:

- 6 metres measured from outside of the pier or support on one side of the open carport to the outside pier or support on the other side of the open carport if there are no eaves; or
- 7.2 metres if inclusive of two 600mm eaves.



Open carport setbacks

Where the proposed roof design for an open carport incorporates a gutter adjacent to the footpath, a minimum setback clearance of 150mm is required to ensure that the gutter is contained within the site.

The minimum side setback clearance area for an open carport (within the road front setback clearance area), is to be 500mm measured from the outermost projection of the open carport to any other building or structure including a fence or nib/return wall.

It should be noted that the outermost projection is taken as the fascia board to which the gutter is attached and not the outside of the gutter.



Typical Front Elevation

Enclosed garages

As previously indicated, an enclosed garage should be located behind the road front setback clearance area and only accessed from a licensed vehicular cross over (VXO).

Requirements for an enclosed garage outside of the road front setback clearance area include:

- a maximum mean (average) height of 3.5 metres with a total height not exceeding 4.5 metres above natural ground level
- a total length not exceeding 9 metres along or parallel to a side or rear property boundary.

In the case of a garage behind the front setback clearance but within a side boundary clearance area, a neighbour's written comment should be obtained.

Gatehouses

Gatehouses like open carports, have the potential to impact upon the amenity of a neighbour or the streetscape. While gatehouses generally have a floor area of about 4m², the minimum requirements that apply include:

- a minimum separation of 500mm between the outermost projection of the gatehouse and any open carport such that both buildings are sited individually and are not structurally attached or connected
- a minimum separation of 500mm between the outermost projection of the gatehouse and a side property boundary
- a maximum height commensurate with any adjoining but separate open carport
- a minimum road front setback clearance of 150mm at the front property boundary to ensure that any gutter is contained wholly within the site
- the use of colours and materials compatible with and similar to those used for the main dwelling to appear as an integrated development.

Discretion may be given should the scale of the detached dwelling support the consideration of a larger gatehouse.

Domestic storage sheds and pergolas

Domestic storage sheds

The provision of a domestic storage shed that is ancillary to a dwelling on the same site, requires a *Referral Agency Assessment Application* if located within a side setback clearance area. It should be noted that the City does not permit a domestic storage shed either within a road front setback clearance area or a waterfront setback clearance area.

The minimum setback clearance for a domestic storage shed to a side property boundary or fence should be 150mm to enable sufficient access for maintenance purposes such as weed control.

A domestic storage shed is included within the calculation for 'Site cover' as defined by the City Plan.

The permitted floor area and height for a detached Class 10 building including a domestic storage shed is contained in the City's *Amenity & Aesthetics Policy*. Development proposed in excess of the figures below requires a *Referral Agency Assessment Application*.

Combined floor area for all (existing and proposed) detached Class 10 buildings exceeding:

- 36m² on a site area under 800m²;
- 54m² on a site area between 801m² and 2000m²;
- 72m² on a site area between 2001m² and 4000m²;
- 108m² on a site area between 4001m² and 8000m²;
- 150m² on a site area between 8001m² and 40,000m² (4ha);

Height exceeding:

- 4.5 metres or a 'mean' average height of 3.5 metres above natural ground level.

Further information regarding Council's *Amenity & Aesthetics Policy* may be obtained on Council's website.

Pergolas

A 'Pergola' by definition is an open and unroofed structure used for ornamental or horticultural purposes. Accordingly, pergolas are not to be covered with any impervious material (pervious shade cloth is accepted), or otherwise enclosed by walls or fixed screening.

Should the height of a pergola exceed 2.4 metres above natural ground level within a side setback clearance area or 1 metre within a road front setback clearance area, a *Referral Agency Assessment Application* is required. If the height of the pergola is to exceed 2.4 metres or a length of 5 metres (within a setback clearance area), a *Development Permit for Building Work* is also required.

If located within a waterfront setback clearance area, a pergola may intrude within this area to a maximum of 2.5 metres before a *Referral Agency Assessment Application* is required.

Open roofed patios

An open roofed patio for recreational purposes is not generally supported within a road setback clearance area. Whilst Council may support an open carport for car parking purposes within this setback area, an open roofed patio or bali hut may be visually detrimental to the amenity of the streetscape. Notwithstanding this, an open roofed portico is supported where the majority of the front setback clearance area is maintained such as a setback of 4.5 metres in a standard front setback of 6 metres.

Open roofed patios within any side or rear setback clearance areas will require a *Referral Agency Assessment Application*.

Shade Sails

The construction of a shade sail within the road front setback clearance area for car parking purposes will require a *Referral Agency Assessment Application* but will incur a reduced application fee. Shade sails within other setback clearance areas within the site would incur a standard application fee.

Shipping containers etc.

Where a shipping container or similar building such as a railway carriage, truck or van body used for domestic storage in association with a dwelling is proposed, Council's *Amenity & Aesthetics Policy* contains relevant provisions and requirements.

Such buildings require a *Referral Agency Assessment Application* subject to the following:

- a minimum site area of 1500m²; and
- sufficient supporting information is provided to adequately demonstrate that either site topography or landscaping will effectively screen the development from adjoining properties and roadways.

Further information regarding Council's *Amenity & Aesthetics Policy* may be obtained on Council's website.

House Relocations

The relocation of a dwelling to a site within the City will require a *Referral Agency Assessment Application* (for an amenity and aesthetics assessment).

Any approval given by Council will require a cash bond or bank guarantee to be entered into to ensure that required works including infrastructure, external painting and landscaping, are satisfactorily completed.

Fencing

Fencing of a residential lot is permitted to a maximum height of 2 metres above natural ground level. Any proposal to extend this height would require a *Referral Agency Assessment Application*. Further restrictions also apply to corner allotments.

Should the combined height of a fence and retaining wall exceed 2 metres above natural ground level, a *Referral Agency Assessment Application* is also required.

The fencing of a road frontage in association with an open carport or gatehouse must also visually enhance the amenity of the development when viewed from the streetscape and accordingly the following design provisions are acceptable:

- a 50% open type construction;
- provision of a minimum offset of 600mm from the road front boundary to allow for the inclusion of landscaping over a minimum 50% of the length of the frontage; and
- provision of plantings immediately behind any existing frontage fence over a minimum 50% of the length (of that fence), capable of achieving a maximum growth height of 2.5 metres to 4 metres at maturity.

Fencing within a waterfront setback clearance area is required to be of an open design. (Refer to the City's Land Development Guidelines).

Further information regarding fencing may be obtained on Council's website.

Retaining walls

The construction of a retaining wall exceeding 2 metres in height above natural ground level and which is located within a setback clearance area of non-waterfront land requires a *Referral Agency Assessment Application* together with a *Development Permit for Building Work* from a Private Building Certifier. For the construction of a retaining wall within a waterfront setback clearance area, this height is reduced to a maximum of 1 metre above natural ground level before an application is required.

Specific conditions given by the City for subdivision (reconfiguration) approval may further limit the height of retaining walls and it is recommended that the original subdivision approval be obtained to determine any specific condition relating to a height for the retaining wall.

Whilst no legislation controls exist for the siting of retaining walls within a setback clearance area, the following provisions are recommended:

- a minimum setback clearance of 600mm between the retaining wall and a property boundary to avoid any maintenance or ownership issues with an adjoining land owner; and
- any fence and retaining wall to be offset where possible as the combined height exceeding 2 metres above natural ground level would then require a Referral Agency Assessment Application.

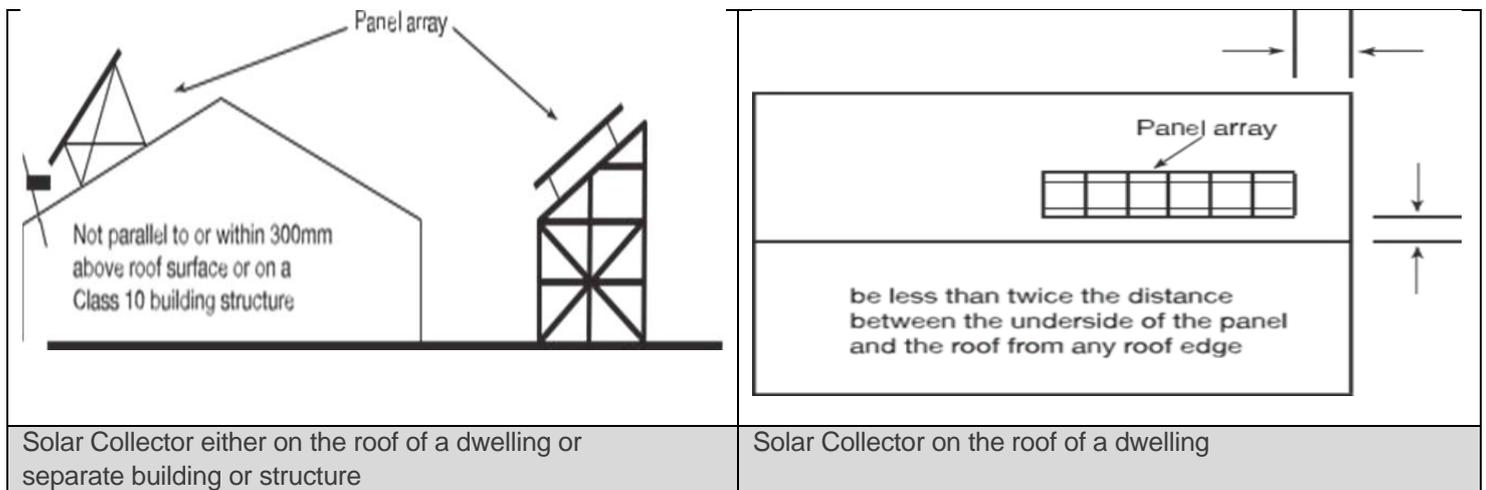
Solar collector installation

A 'Solar Collector' includes any photovoltaic solar panel or solar hot water system that is attached to either a Class 1 residential dwelling or a Class 10 building or structure. The installation of a solar collector that does not comply with the City's *Amenity & Aesthetics Policy*, requires a *Referral Agency Assessment Application* (for an amenity and aesthetic assessment.) specifically if:

- not parallel to or within 300mm of the roof surface; or
- located more than twice the distance between the underside of the panel and the roof from any roof edge.

State legislation may also require a building approval from a Private Building Certifier.

Diagrams indicating when a Referral Agency Assessment Application is required are indicated below:



Building within a waterfront setback

For residential lots adjacent to a canal or waterway, the City designates a specific waterway setback clearance area in which the scale and design of proposed buildings and structures are assessed both for aesthetic and hydrological reasons (e.g. flooding).

In general terms, any building work undertaken within a waterfront setback clearance area such as a swimming pool or a deck which, inclusive of balustrading exceeds 1 metre in height above natural ground level, will require a *Referral Agency Assessment Application*.

Further information on an applicable waterway setback can be obtained from the City's Planning Enquiries Centre (PEC) on telephone (07) 5582 8708.

Easements and infrastructure

Buildings and structures requiring a *Referral Agency Assessment Application* will not be permitted within a registered easement. Easements are created for the protection of public infrastructure e.g. water, sewerage or stormwater and any proposed development within 2 metres of infrastructure will require the written permission of the easement stakeholder. This requirement is the responsibility of the Assessment Manager (Private Building Certifier) prior to the issue of a *Development Permit for Building Work*.

To determine whether a registered easement is located within a site, an easement search may be conducted through the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

Written permission of the easement stakeholder may be obtained either by contacting the infrastructure stakeholder directly or by indicating 'Division 3, Table 7 Item 1 of the QDC under Section 3 of the *Referral Agency Assessment Application* form upon which the easement stakeholder will be contacted and any relevant requirements obtained.

Information regarding the location of public infrastructure within a site may be obtained by undertaking a *Search Request* with the City or by contacting the stakeholders directly as under:

- Gold Coast Water, telephone 1300 000 928 in respect of water and sewerage main matters, and
- City of Gold Coast City Infrastructure Directorate, Engineering Assets & Planning Branch, telephone (07) 5582 8211 for storm water matters.

Amenity and aesthetics assessment of the Referral Agency process

Council has an *Amenity & Aesthetics Policy* that considers matters such as how larger sized sheds, shipping containers or solar panel installations, may impact upon the amenity of adjoining development or the streetscape.

The construction and use of a shed should always remain ancillary to the dwelling on the site however under special circumstances it may be possible to obtain Referral Agency approval for a shed on vacant land where a dwelling is proposed within 12 months. In such a case, a Statutory Declaration is required from the applicant and a note will be added to the City's property records to ensure compliance.

As part of its amenity and aesthetics assessment, matters taken into consideration may include but are not be limited to the following:

- the bulk, height and width of the intended building or structure;
- the materials and colours to be used;
- proposed security lighting;
- the potential clearing of vegetation and alternative locations within the site;
- disruption to the amenity or character of the locality, and
- the need for additional landscaping for screening purposes.

Council's Amenity and Aesthetics Policy may be located on Council's website.

'As constructed' development

'As constructed' development includes buildings and structures that already exist before a *Referral Agency Assessment Application* is made to Council. Whilst many of these forms of development can be approved on a case by case basis, Council is not obliged to approve non complying development and any Referral Response given may be either annotated for approval with amendment or otherwise refused.

Additional Information

Additional information regarding the Referral Agency Assessment process may be obtained from *Information notes for Referral Agency Assessment Applications* that may be accessed on Council's website.

Disclaimer

The City is not liable to any person under any circumstances whatsoever arising by virtue of a claim for breach of warranty (express or implied), tort (including negligence), strict liability or otherwise for actual, incidental, contingent, special or consequential damages, lost profits or revenues arising directly or indirectly or out of (but not restricted to) any claim arising out of the inaccuracy of any information contained in these notes.

Any person investigating any issues addressed in this document should seek their own independent legal, technical and professional advice and consult the City on specific matters relating to their property and any constraints thereon.

This information is intended as the minimum design and siting requirements acceptable to the City and should not be relied upon as the sole document upon which to propose development. The applicant is strongly encouraged to seek their own independent legal, technical and professional advice regarding their proposal and specific circumstances.

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