



Policy 18: Using the Urban Design Bonus Provisions

Chapter 1 Purpose

To provide information on potential urban design bonuses that may be allowed under the provisions of a domain or Local Area Plan place code. To ensure that development proposals requiring code or impact assessment seeking to achieve development bonuses through the incorporation of desirable urban design enhancements and public benefit components are assessed in a consistent manner.

Chapter 2 Application of Bonus Provisions

A number of Local Area Plans and domains allow for floor space or plot ratio bonuses to be earned for the inclusion of public benefit components in the development, and/or the achievement of a very high standard of architectural merit and/or urban design. Typically, these opportunities are provided in the major town centres and in the mixed use commercial areas of the City. These bonuses are most commonly to be sought for developments with the potential to exceed four storeys in height. However, it is also possible for these bonuses to apply to low-rise buildings.

All eligible bonus provisions must be earned, and the development application must clearly document the level of public benefit or architectural and urban design merit that can be attributed to the development in a manner consistent with this policy.

In any domain or Local Area Plan, where the place code specifies a Basic Plot Ratio for any particular site, the development can only exceed the Basic Plot Ratio through the application of bonuses earned consistent with the provisions of this Policy.

In any domain or Local Area Plan, where the place code specifies a Maximum Plot Ratio for any particular site, the development cannot exceed the Maximum Plot Ratio notwithstanding the application of bonuses identified and documented consistent with the provisions of this Policy.

In any domain or Local Area Plan, where plot ratio is not specified for a particular site, the relevant Place Code may allow for a proposed development of the site to earn additional floorspace bonuses, provided these are identified and documented consistent with the provisions of this Policy.

Important Note:

All development in the City is expected to achieve a good standard of architectural merit and to contribute to good urban design. Where appropriate, developments are expected to incorporate public benefit components. Council does not reward good or simply competent development since it expects every development proposal to reach such a standard. The bonus provisions described in this policy are intended to reward developments that exceed these normal standards. The bonuses must be earned through outstanding architectural merit and urban design, and through public benefit inclusions over and above what would normally be expected.

Chapter 3 Measured Public Benefit Floorspace Allowances

3.1 Bonus Floor Space Elements

Where allowed by a domain or Local Area Plan Place Code the following measurable incentives for new development are available for the inclusion of particular design features and/or facilities intended to provide a public benefit.

The benefit of the facilities provided must outweigh any detrimental effects of the increase in floor area. The area included within any bonus element will be additional to those areas to be provided as a requirement by the domain or LAP Place Code.

All the standards and designs required to achieve the bonus will be to the satisfaction of Council, or its delegate.

It is possible for a single development to qualify for a floorspace bonus under two or more categories. In this event, the floor space bonuses are cumulative.

Note: ***The total floor space of the development including all bonuses earned, must not exceed the Maximum Plot Ratio that applies to the subject site.***



3.2 Specific Public Benefit Facilities

The bonus floor space is to be considered for the inclusion of a specific public amenity component in a particular development. Public amenities include toilets, rest rooms, parents' rooms, community organisation rooms, seating, water fountains and other public furniture, as well as footpath widening above the required amount. Public amenities may also include any other facility to be provided on site which Council or its delegate considers to be a specific amenity element.

Bonus floor space awarded under this bonus will be in accordance with a ratio determined by Council, or its delegate, having regard to the particular local circumstances. The ratio will not exceed 3m² of additional floor space for every 1m² of area of the specific public amenity.

3.3 Pedestrian Facilities

Floor space bonuses may be granted for the inclusion of pedestrian facilities. To be eligible for the floor space bonus, the pedestrian facility must be:

- able to be integrated with the existing or proposed pedestrian areas external to the proposed building;
- attractive to pedestrians and easily accessible to most pedestrians;
- open to the public during such hours as determined by Council, or its delegate, and be signposted, lit and ventilated;
- furnished and, where applicable, suitably landscaped, including advanced trees, as required by Council, or its delegate;
- located and designed to the satisfaction of Council, or its delegate;
- additional to the normal requirements of the domain or LAP precinct; and
- consistent with the standards set out in **Table 1 – Pedestrian Facility Bonus Calculation**.

Table 1 – Pedestrian Facility Bonus Calculation

Pedestrian Facility	Minimum Dimensions	Floor Space Bonus
<p>Internal pedestrian arcade – where the facility is located on the ground floor of a building and has a minimum unobstructed width of 3.5 metres.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Internal pedestrian arcade – where the facility is located above ground level, but links directly to a ground floor pedestrian facility and has a minimum unobstructed width of 3.5 metres.</p>	<p>Minimum unobstructed width of 3.5 metres.</p>	<p>a) the bonus of 2m² of additional floor space per 1m² of internal pedestrian arcade may apply. A bonus may be applied for single storey arcades, where they are roofed and the majority of the roof is not transparent or translucent;</p> <p>b) where the roof of the arcade is two or more storeys above ground level, and where the majority of the roof is not transparent or translucent, a bonus may apply. The bonus is 3m² of additional floor space per 1m² of internal pedestrian arcade;</p> <p>c) for arcades where the majority of the total arcade area is unroofed or where the majority of the roof is transparent or translucent to the satisfaction of Council, or its delegate, a bonus may apply. The bonus is 4m² of additional floor space per 1m² of internal pedestrian arcade.</p>
<p>External plaza or open court – where such area is at ground level, open to the sunlight and adjoins the street.</p>	<p>Minimum area 350m². The area will not include the area of setback or landscaping required as a standard within a precinct.</p>	<p>4m² of additional floor space per 1m² of external plaza or open court. Council, or its delegate, at its discretion, may grant a lesser bonus. This bonus will not exceed 3m² of floor space per 1m² of external plaza. An external plaza that does not adjoin the street may be approved where:</p> <p>a) it is easily accessible from the street;</p> <p>b) the plaza adjoins the street but is less than 350m² in area;</p> <p>c) the plaza has suitable dimensions;</p> <p>d) it is located to the satisfaction of Council, or its delegate.</p>



3.4 Corner Site Streetscape Improvements

The treatment of corners within major Town Centres and local commercial areas is an important design element. Council seeks to encourage site-sympathetic designs and streetscape improvements that utilise the unique position of the corner sites by rewarding design innovation and improvements with floor space bonuses.

A floor space bonus may be granted where the proposed development is located on a corner site with frontage widths in excess of 20 metres to any two streets. To achieve the bonus, substantial streetscape improvements to the corner site must be proposed. These improvements could include combinations of the following elements: innovative pavement treatments, dense and/or mature landscaping, public art, murals, street furniture, shade structures, public seating facilities, water features or similar.

A floor space bonus of up to 2m² of additional floor space for every 1m² of streetscape improvements may be granted at the discretion of Council, or its delegate.

3.5 Landscaping

Floor space bonuses may be granted for the inclusion of landscaped areas over and above the landscaping required by any relevant codes for the development.

The bonus will be at a rate of 2m² of floor space for each 1m² of landscaped space. When considering whether the bonus will be granted, Council, or its delegate, will take into consideration:

- the location of the landscaped area;
- whether the landscaped area is capable of deep planting;
- whether a significant proportion of mature trees will be provided;
- public accessibility to the landscaped area;
- whether the additional landscaping effectively delivers further public benefits, eg. increased or mature shading for car park areas, screening of hard stand areas or other unsightly features, shading of public gathering area or public seating, etc.

3.6 Tree Protection

A floor space bonus may be granted for the retention of a significant tree or trees on any site. Bonus floor space awarded under this bonus will be in accordance with a ratio determined by Council, or its delegate, having regard to the particular circumstances of the tree or group of trees. The ratio will not exceed 3m² of additional floor space for every 1m² of area required to be left undisturbed in order to retain the tree or trees or other valuable vegetation.

3.7 Site Amalgamation

Amalgamation of small allotments with a frontage of 10m² or less is encouraged. Where two or more allotments with a frontage of ten metres or less are amalgamated into one undivided allotment, a floor space bonus may be granted. The bonus is a plot ratio factor of 0.3. The bonus may be granted only when the proposed access to the site is satisfactory.

Amalgamation of small lots less than 600m²: Where two or more allotments that are each less than 600m² in area, are amalgamated into one undivided allotment, Council or its delegate may grant a floor space bonus. The bonus is a plot ratio factor of 0.3.

3.8 Underground Car Parking in the Coomera Town Centre Structure Plan

Within **Precincts 1, 3, 7 and 8**, of the **Coomera Town Centre Structure Plan**, Council or its delegate may grant floor space bonuses for the provision of underground car parking. To be eligible for floor space bonuses, such car parking shall:

- be designed in accordance with the parking, aisle and turning dimensions within **Constraint Code 4 – Car Parking, Access and Transport Integration**;
- be open to the public, without hindrance, during the operation of commercial or other site related activities;
- provide facilities for the parking and securing of bicycles in a secure and convenient location; and
- ensure that the openings to the underground car park are screened to hide the parking operation as much as possible.

A bonus of up to 5m² of additional floor space for each underground car park may be granted.



3.9 Pedestrian Facilities in the Coolangatta LAP

Additional bonus floorspace is possible in the **Coolangatta LAP** as described here:

Precinct 1

Pedestrian connection between Griffith and Chalk Streets or **Precinct 4** is encouraged.

Provision for a pedestrian facility in developments on the southern side of Griffith Street, between McLean and Warner Streets, may attract a plot ratio bonus. The pedestrian facility must connect Griffith and Chalk Streets or Griffith Street to **Precinct 4**. 'Council or its delegate', may at its discretion grant a floor space bonus of double the bonus, as specified in the **Table 1 – Pedestrian Facility Bonus Calculation**.

Precinct 4

Safe pedestrian links between the transit centre and Griffith Street are encouraged. Council or its delegate, may at its discretion grant a floor space bonus of double the bonus as specified in **Table 1 – Pedestrian Facility Bonus Calculation**.

3.10 Pedestrian Facilities in The Spit LAP

Within **Precincts 4, 5 and 6** of **The Spit LAP**, Council or its delegate may grant floor space bonuses for the provision of a foreshore walkway adjacent to the Broadwater. Additional floorspace is to be calculated in the following way:

Table 2 – The Spit LAP Pedestrian Facility Bonus

Pedestrian Facility	Minimum Dimensions	Floor Space Bonus
Foreshore walkway adjacent to the Broadwater in excess of 3.5 metres wide	In excess of 3.5 metres wide	2m ² of floor space per 1m ² of additional pedestrian walkway

Chapter 4 Bonus for Mixed Use Development

4.1 Bonus Elements

Where allowed by a domain or Local Area Plan Place Code the following incentive for new development is available for the inclusion of an innovative and/or desirable mix of uses in a single development.

This incentive is intended to encourage active street fronts and vibrant mixed uses in the main centres and employment locations of the city. This does not include floorspace used for car parking.

Note: *The plot ratio bonus intended here can only be used for the actual mixed use floor space. This cannot be counted twice, and any unused entitlement cannot be converted into more residential floor space.*

For these 'mixed use development' incentives, there is no standard amount of plot ratio bonus that may be earned; each case will be determined on its merits.

4.2 Bonus for Residential Development In the Nerang LAP

Council, or its delegate, may grant floor space bonuses for provisions of residential use in mixed use developments in **Precincts 1 and 2** in the **Nerang LAP**. A floor space bonus of 30% is possible, where that floor space is to be used for residential purposes



Chapter 5 Bonus for Public Art

5.1 Bonus Elements

Where allowed by a domain or Local Area Plan Place Code the following incentive for new development is available for the inclusion of public art as an integral part of the development. To earn plot ratio bonuses for public art, the application must demonstrate that it promises to deliver more than would be normally required in terms of one or more of the following:

- evidence of the involvement of an artist as part of the original design team;
- incorporation of innovative artworks as part of the development;
- contribution to significant public art to be maintained on the development site;
- contribution to significant public art in the locality of the development.

For these 'public art' components, there is no standard amount of plot ratio bonus that may be earned; each case will be determined on its merits.

Chapter 6 Bonus for Heritage Protection

6.1 Bonus Elements

Where allowed by a domain or Local Area Plan Place Code the following incentive for new development is available for the conservation of heritage buildings and sites and or retention of heritage and character elements in new developments. To earn plot ratio bonuses for heritage protection, the application must demonstrate that it promises to deliver more than would be normally required in terms of one or more of the following:

- retention of heritage or character buildings;
- conservation of heritage sites;
- maintaining clear sight lines to the heritage building from adjacent streets such that its prominence is maintained;
- incorporation of heritage or character components in new development;
- inclusion of interpretative elements recording heritage or character values in new development.

For these 'heritage protection' components, there is no standard amount of plot ratio bonus that may be earned; each case will be determined on its merits.

Chapter 7 Bonus for Public Safety

7.1 Bonus Elements

Where allowed by a domain or Local Area Plan Place Code the following incentive for new development is available for the incorporation of significant public safety measures in the development. To earn plot ratio bonuses for public safety, the application must demonstrate that it promises to deliver more than would be normally required in terms of one or more of the following:

- undertaking and responding to a detailed crime risk analysis;
- implementing specific safety measures for protecting vulnerable persons including the young, women and/or the elderly;
- integrating public safety measures within an overall urban design approach that contributes to an attractive and inviting public realm;
- creating a clear and effective interface between the public and private within and surrounding the development.

For these 'public safety' measures, there is no standard amount of plot ratio bonus that may be earned; each case will be determined on its merits.



Chapter 8 Bonus for Urban Improvements

8.1 Bonus Elements

Where allowed by a domain or Local Area Plan Place Code the following incentives for new development are available for the funding or undertaking of infrastructure works, streetscape improvements and/or parkland embellishments within the locality of the subject development. To earn plot ratio bonuses for urban improvements, the application must demonstrate that it promises to deliver more than would be normally required in terms of one or more of the following:

- contribution to streetscape improvements;
- contribution to parkland embellishment;
- contribution to individual infrastructure items, eg. a bridge, boardwalk, library, school, hall, etc.

For these 'urban improvement' components, there is no standard amount of plot ratio bonus that may be earned; each case will be determined on its merits.

Chapter 9 Bonus for Urban Design

9.1 Bonus Elements

Where allowed by a domain or Local Area Plan Place Code the following incentive for new development is available for the inclusion of outstanding urban design components or attributes. To earn plot ratio bonuses for outstanding urban design, the application must demonstrate that it promises to deliver something more than what the market currently demands.

Council employs a merit based assessment of design quality to acknowledge exemplary proposals which raise the quality of design in the City. An eligible proposal must show that it possesses 'cutting edge' or innovative qualities in one or more of the areas described here:

- land use mix (eg. a range of mixed uses, previously untried uses or combinations of uses; genuine home office arrangements in business areas, etc);
- Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) addressing energy, water, materials and community standards;
- use of a range of building materials including landscape materials (includes issues of quality, novelty and longevity, and in the case of vegetation, maturity);
- Urban Design quality in relation to the treatment of the interface with public and private spaces surrounding the proposal, and the success of resolution of the '15 Qualities of Good Urban Places' set out in the document **Guiding Principles for Good Urban Design** adopted by Council on 15 September 1997;
- further Public Benefit such as the iconic value of the design, improvement of public space, enrichment of community experience, contribution to the 'bigger picture' cultural heritage and city image issues.

For these 'outstanding urban design' components, there is no standard amount of plot ratio bonus that may be earned; each case will be determined on its merits.



Chapter 10 Bonus for Architectural Merit

10.1 Bonus Elements

Where allowed by a domain or Local Area Plan Place Code the following incentive for new development is available for the inclusion of components or attributes of outstanding architectural merit. To earn plot ratio bonuses for outstanding architectural merit, the application must demonstrate that it promises to deliver something more than what the market currently demands.

Council employs a merit based assessment of design quality to acknowledge exemplary proposals which raise the quality of design in the City. An eligible proposal must show that it possesses 'cutting edge' or innovative qualities in one or more of the areas described here:

- structural systems and structural design which advance the body of knowledge of the design industry;
- construction processes which advance the body of knowledge and construction expertise of the building industry;
- Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) addressing energy, water, materials and community standards;
- innovative and/or particularly expressive use of a range of building materials including landscape materials (includes issues of quality, novelty and longevity, and in the case of vegetation, maturity);
- architectural quality (eg. the achievement of a masterful composition of materials, patterns, textures and colours and including integration with landscape, quality of illumination, and quality and integration of signage).

For these 'outstanding architectural merit' components, there is no standard amount of plot ratio bonus that may be earned; each case will be determined on its merits.

Chapter 11 Documentation of Request for Bonuses

11.1 Development Application Documentation

Where an applicant intends to seek floorspace or plot ratio bonuses for their proposed development, the request must be included and justified as part of the development application. The application must clearly identify the items for which bonus floorspace is being claimed, and it must document how the amount of floorspace or plot ratio bonus has been justified consistent with the provisions of this Policy.

A plot ratio bonus item cannot be 'double dipped': bonus floor space cannot be earned for the same feature in the development twice.

Chapter 12 More Information

12.1 Guiding Principles for Good Urban Design

For more information on Council's approach to good urban design, please refer to the document entitled **Guiding Principles for Good Urban Design** adopted by Council on 15 September 1997.