



R1 | Residential Design Element Front Yard Landscaping

Overview

Front yard landscaping plays an important role in creating the attractive, green streetscapes that typify many of Auckland’s suburbs. As our neighbourhoods increase in density and typical site sizes get smaller, it is important to still allow space for greenery in the front yard. This becomes more challenging as demands for space compete.

Purpose

This Residential Design Element is a non-statutory design guide created to assist developers, designers and planners achieve policy outcomes under the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP). This guide provides assistance in achieving the following AUP policies:

Single House Zone Policies	Mixed Housing Suburban Zone Policies	Mixed Housing Urban Zone Policies	Terrace Housing & Apartment Buildings Zone Policies
H3.3(2)(b) H3.3(3)(b)	H4.3(2)(c) H4.3(3)(b)	H5.3(2) H5.3(3)(b)	H6.3(2) H6.3(3)(b)

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Design Principles

1.0 Design

- A. At least 50% of the front yard should be soft landscaping, including tree and shrub planting.
- B. Integrate letterboxes and utility services (e.g. water metres) into the design of the front yard. This improves the appearance of the site and saves the difficulty and expense of retrofitting them later.
- C. A safe and easily visible pedestrian path should be provided from the street to the front door. For the safety of pedestrians, this path should be separate from the driveway.

2.0 Planting

- A. Where the setback between the street and the building is 2.5m or more, consider providing at least one specimen tree that is appropriately matched to the space it has available to grow in (minimum PB40/95).
- B. Select trees and shrubs that will compliment or improve the amenity and character of the streetscape. Consider shade, colour and seasonal variation.
- C. Providing views between living spaces within the dwelling and the street enhances safety for both the street and the house by enabling passive surveillance. To achieve this:
 - i. Use shrub planting that grows to a maximum height of 1.2m.
 - ii. Locate specimen trees so they do not screen windows or, if this is not possible, select a tree species that has a tall clear stem that will enable views beneath its canopy.

3.0 Private Outdoor Space

- A. Private open space should be located at the rear or side of the site. Where this is not desirable (i.e. to achieve sun access) it may need to be located in the front yard. This requires careful design to ensure the space allows some privacy, while also maintaining opportunities for passive surveillance of the street. Ways to achieve this are:
 - i. Elevating the front yard approximately 0.5m above street level to raise occupants above the eye level of passers-by.
 - ii. Fronting the street with visually permeable fences or low fences. Best practice is that visually impermeable fences should be no higher than 1.2m above the footpath.
 - iii. Providing taller side fences or screens (up to 1.8m) to provide privacy between neighbouring outdoor living areas.

Getting it Right



A pedestrian path separated from the driveway visually reinforces the front door and provides safety from vehicles.



Poor landscape design, including a lack of planting, creates a barren and unattractive front yard. This detracts from the value and appeal of the development and its surrounding neighbourhood.



Even small front yards can still provide good opportunities for tree planting.



Raising the level of outdoor living areas on the street improves privacy for the occupants while still providing good opportunities for passive surveillance.

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