

Guidelines

STREET VERGE LANDSCAPE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

(Updated 24 November 2015)

1. Why street verges are important?

- A street verge is part of a road reserve between the kerbline and the property boundary and comes under the care, control and management of the Town of Cambridge.
- The street verge provides a safe space for pedestrians, and also accommodates common public utilities and essential services such as bus stops, footpaths, power, water, gas and telecommunications services.
- Well maintained street verges will contribute towards the attractiveness of your home and your street.
- Healthy low-growing plants, appropriate mulch or lawn on the street verge create a sense of 'greenness' and help street trees survive harsh summers. In winter they allow the rain to soak into the soil rather than add to runoff on the roads.
- Conversely, large amounts of paving or hardstand create heat sinks, affect the health of a street tree by limiting how much water falls on the tree's root zone and could potentially lead to flooding problems for other properties in the street and neighbourhood.

2. Whose responsibility is it to look after the street verge?

- The Town of Cambridge has a duty of care to the community for the safety of street verges and is required to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, policies and guidelines in the case of hazardous or unsuitable installations.
- It is not financially feasible for the Town of Cambridge to maintain all the street verges in the Town of Cambridge. Therefore, the owner/occupier plays a major role in accepting their responsibility to maintain the street verge adjacent to their property, keeping it neat and/or attractive and making sure it is a safe environment for pedestrians and road users.

Guidelines

3. What do I need approval for?

Some landscaping works consistent with these guidelines do not require council approval.

- Any paving work including landscaping, vehicle crossovers or property access requires formal approval from the Town of Cambridge. A formal application to the Town of Cambridge by the owner or occupier and subsequent approval is required prior to the undertaking of any of these paving works.
- All street verge treatments in commercially zoned areas require formal approval. A formal application to the Town and formal approval is required prior to the undertaking of any work.
- Artificial grass (permeable or impermeable) will not be approved under any circumstances for any street verge.
- Landscaping works that are not consistent with the requirements of these guidelines also require approval. A formal application to the Town of Cambridge and subsequent approval is required prior to the undertaking of any street verge works.

4. Landscaping Guidelines

4.1 Layout

- Where a footpath exists on the street verge a distance of one meter (1.0m) immediately adjacent to the kerblines, must be kept clear to allow for passengers to safely alight from any vehicle parked on the road and to prevent damage to vehicle doors opening out over the kerblines and street verge.
- Where a footpath does not exist on that side of the street, a 1.5 metre wide strip suitable for pedestrian access must be maintained along the length of the street verge at the kerb side. Suitable trafficable material includes the following:-
 - conventional grass; and
 - permeable, fine evenly graded and compacted aggregate less than 5mm in size.

Guidelines

4.2 Materials and Treatments Not permitted

- The placement of objects and/or barriers on the street verge such as fencing, concrete slabs, bricks, rocks, logs, bollards, reticulation control boxes, garden ornaments, garden stakes etc. is not permitted.
- Plants on the street verge that may cause injuries or harm to pedestrians and road users are not permitted (e.g. plants with sharp leaves/branches or prickles). Plants greater than 750mm in height are not permitted.
- Impermeable or permeable artificial grass.
- Loose and uncompacted inorganic poorly graded materials greater than 5mm in size such as gravels, crushed bricks or loose stones. Such material is easily displaced and then collects on the road, footpath or adjoining properties, thus posing a safety issue and/or hazard to pedestrians and other road users.

4.3 Appropriate plantings

- The Town of Cambridge encourages residents to install and maintain soft water wise landscaping on their street verges and to create a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment for all to enjoy.
- Soft landscaping includes drought tolerant grass varieties such as Couch, Kikuyu, Buffalo, or Zoysia which is regarded as the most drought tolerant lawn for Perth, ground cover and shrubs less than 750mm tall.
- Water wise plants are those which are drought tolerant and have a reduced need for fertiliser.
- In addition, local native plants can provide a usable habitat for birds, small reptiles and insects, and increase biodiversity within the Town of Cambridge.
- The Water Corporation, Great Gardens and Beyond Gardens websites provide information on water wise plants for Perth at the following websites :-

<https://www.watercorporation.com.au/save-water/waterwise-plants-search?pid=res-sw-np-wp>

<http://www.greatgardeninfo.com/>

www.beyondgardens.com.au

Guidelines

4.4 Prevent Hazards

- Any landscape design must not create any undue safety issues or hazards to road users or pedestrians in accordance with the Town of Cambridge Local Government and Public Property Local Law Parts 9 and 10 - Works in Thoroughfares and Activities In Local Government and Public Places.
- Plants should not interfere with driver or pedestrian sightlines, must be maintained to less than 750mm in height, should not encroach onto footpaths or roads and are not permitted within 10 metres of the truncation point of an intersection to a road pavement.

4.5 Vegetable Gardens

- Vegetable gardens are permitted provided that the vegetation does not exceed 750mm in height, the ground is not raised and remains reasonably level, and stakes, fences or rockeries are not used. Root vegetables and herbs are particularly suitable for street verge vegetable gardens.

4.6 Artificial grass

- No artificial grass (permeable or impermeable) is permitted on the street verge under any circumstances. Where existing verges (permitted on approval prior to November 2015) have had artificial grass previously installed the verges may have many underground services which require repair from time to time and contractors will need to cut the artificial grass to access them. If previously approved, the owner/occupier will be responsible for all repairs and/or reinstatements to the artificial grass.

4.7 Your Verge Boundary

- The owner/occupier should notify their neighbour about any proposed street verge treatment works and agree on the location of the boundary between their adjacent street verges prior to any works commencing.

Guidelines

4.8 Safety on your Verge

- Temporary barricades for the purpose of establishing street verge landscaping are acceptable provided that the materials used do not create a hazard and are identified with an abundance of reflective markers to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Barriers must not be erected across pedestrian access ways.
- The level and grade of the street verge, and between adjoining street verges, shall remain consistent and free of barriers, trip hazards, excessive undulations, mounds, holes, depressions, ridges and terraces.
- Edgings and dividers on street verges or between street verges are permitted only to the extent required to provide sufficient division, and provided that they are flush with the street verge surface.

4.9 Pedestrian access from Kerb to Property Line

- Where pedestrian access from the kerblines to the property boundary is desirable (and not associated with the property vehicle crossover or street verge paving works for parking) it must be no more than 1.5 metres wide and constructed of a suitable trafficable material such as the following:-
 - paving (requires the Town of Cambridge approval prior to construction/installation)
 - conventional grass
 - permeable, fine and evenly graded compacted aggregate less than 5mm in size.
- Paving must be flush with any existing footpath, kerb or street verge level, and segmented paving to have level grass or other suitable trafficable material between segments.

4.10 Access to your Street Verge

- Adequate access to the property letterbox for delivery by Australia Post motorcyclists must be provided.
- A suitable location is to be provided on the street verge in front of the property and immediately behind the kerblines for weekly collection of rubbish bins which are to be located on the kerblines.

Guidelines

4.11 Built Structures

- The installation of built structures within the street verge such as planter boxes or retaining walls may be permitted under certain conditions and requires approval by the Town prior to commencement of construction.

4.12 Irrigation

- Whilst the Town of Cambridge encourages landscape treatments that minimize or reduce water consumption and/or improve soil improvement and water retention, the installation of a reticulation system on the street verge by adjacent owners/occupiers is permitted and does not require approval by the Town of Cambridge.
- Owners/occupiers are advised to obtain underground services information prior to any works being carried out on the street verge. The 'Dial Before You Dig' service can be accessed by telephoning 1100 during business hours and is currently a free service for the public to gain information on underground services.
- Fittings connected to the pipes shall not protrude above the surface of the lawn or garden, except when the irrigation system is in use (ie pop-up sprinklers only).
- The pipes and connections should be at least 250mm away from the footpath and the kerb alignment. The owner or occupier should contact the Town of Cambridge to confirm whether a footpath upgrade or new installation is programmed for the street verge. If so, the Town of Cambridge will advise of the preferred location of any pipe work.
- Where irrigation extends to the kerbing or a footpath, reduced radius sprinklers should be used and should direct the flow of water away from the road or footpath surface.

5. Paving for Street Verge Parking

- All street verge paving requires the Town of Cambridge approval prior to construction or installation.
- The Town of Cambridge discourages parking of vehicles on street verges, however it is acknowledged that, in some precincts, adequate kerbside and off-street parking may not be available to owners/occupiers.
- Street verge paving for parking will only be permitted where a property cannot accommodate two cars onsite.
- Where there is a valid requirement for street verge parking and where there is no reasonable alternative, property owners may apply to pave a portion of the street verge directly adjacent to their property if parking on street verges is permitted in that area.

Guidelines

- The maximum permissible area of street verge paving on any street verge adjacent to a property zoned "residential" is 18 square meters or 10% of verge area, whichever is greater (sufficient for one standard motor car). Vehicles parked on street verges must not overhang the road, footpath or intrude into a pedestrian clear zone.
- The street verge paving must be of contrasting colour to that of any adjacent footpath, preferably of 'earthen' colours, and must be to the satisfaction of the Town of Cambridge.
- Small format pavers (for example cobblestones, brick sized pavers and pavers up to 300 x 300mm) are preferred, as they allow a higher level of permeability than large format paving, allowing for better drainage and water permeation. Porous or open segmented pavers are strongly recommended. Large paving slabs are not allowed.
- Where a tree is located on a street verge, paving is not permitted within 1.5 metres from the face (outside) of the tree.
- Where the installation of paving to the street verge is likely to compromise the health of a street tree, the application will not be supported.
- Applications for hard paving of 100% of a street verge will only be considered by the Town of Cambridge where the width of the verge is less than 1.5 metres (not including the footpath) or the verge is adjacent to buildings in a commercial zone. Approval will only be granted where it would be unreasonable or impractical to require vegetation on that part of the street verge.
- Where approval is sought from the Town of Cambridge for paving, stormwater catchment/ run-off needs to be carefully considered, as stormwater runoff from excessive paving is known to cause localized flooding.

6. Street Trees

- All trees on street verges are the responsibility of the Town of Cambridge. This includes those that may have been planted by residents without the Town of Cambridge approval.
- The planting, pruning or removal of street verge trees is to be undertaken by the Town of Cambridge only. Requests for the Town of Cambridge to carry out these works must be made in writing and will be considered in accordance with the Council's Street Tree Policy No 5.1.3 and the adopted Treescape Plan (2010-2020).
- In accordance with the adopted Treescape Plan (2010-2020) the Town of Cambridge may plant a tree on the street verge without a request from the adjacent property owner/resident. Prior to this occurring, the property owner/resident will be notified.
- Where new crossovers are constructed, they must not be installed closer than 3 metres from the face of the tree. This is in accordance with Council's Street Tree Policy 5.1.3
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Guidelines

- Where a tree is located on a street verge, the only material permitted within 1.5 metres from the face (outside) of the tree is organic mulch, grass or other plantings.
- Whilst the Town of Cambridge waters and fertilizes young street verge trees that it has planted, property owners/residents are encouraged to also water and fertilise young street verge trees.
- The construction or installation of tree houses in street verge trees is not permitted due to safety issues, in accordance with Local Laws.

7. Non-Compliant Existing Street Verge Treatments

- Where existing street verge treatments are not consistent with these guidelines and are identified as potential safety hazards, the Town of Cambridge will request the property owner/occupier to carry out necessary remedial works within 14 days of notification by the Town of Cambridge.
- Where an existing street verge treatment is identified to present an immediate safety hazard, the Town of Cambridge will make a street verge safe, and request the property owner/occupier to carry out other remedial works within 24 hours of notification by the Town of Cambridge.
- All other street verge treatments which are not consistent with these Guidelines and/or have not been approved by the Town of Cambridge are to be rectified within 60 days of notification by the Town of Cambridge.
- Enforcement action will be in accordance with Town of Cambridge Policy No 4.4.6 - Enforcement.

8. Parking on Street Verges

- Vehicles cannot be parked on the street verge without the approval of the adjacent property owner, in accordance with the Clause 4.8 of the Town of Cambridge Parking Local Law, or unless street verge parking is expressly permitted by signage.

9. Access to Services

- Town of Cambridge employees, contractors and public utilities such as Telstra, Water Corporation, Alinta Gas and Western Power all require access to the street verge to repair and maintain services. Following works, street verges will be re-instated in accordance with Main Roads WA "Restoration and Reinstatement Specification for Local Governments in Western Australia" or Town of Cambridge Local Laws (as appropriate).

Guidelines

REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION

POLICY: 5.2.19 Street Verges - Landscape and Maintenance

LOCAL LAW: Local Government and Public Property

LOCAL LAW: Parking Local Law

DOCUMENT VERSION

1. Version 1 May 2012. Report DV 12.57
2. Version 2 November 2015. Report CR 15.138