OVERVIEW

The information contained in this fact sheet is only applicable where a building approval is required for building works associated with a single residential dwelling. This information is a guide only and not intended as a substitute for consulting the relevant legislation or for obtaining appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances. Balconies, decks and verandahs are defined as class 10a structures under the Building Code of Australia.

BUILDING APPROVAL

In accordance with the *Queensland Building Act 1975*, a building approval is required for the construction of a balcony, deck or verandah where any of the following apply:

- A plan area of more than 10m²; or
- an overall height of more than 2.4m; or
- a mean height of more than 2.1m; or
- any side longer than 5m; or
- the floor height is higher than 1m above the natural ground surface; or
- not freestanding (attached to another building or structure).

*Natural ground surface* means the finished surface level when the lot was created on the plan of survey.

*Mean height* is the total elevational area of the building divided by the horizontal length of the building.

For assistance with lodging a building application with Council, refer to the Building Application Lodgement Checklist.

OTHER APPROVALS

Additional approvals may be required for the proposed work. Please refer to the General Building Guidelines for Residential Properties diagram on the last page of this fact sheet.

ADJOINING PROPERTIES

If the proposed building or structure has the potential to impact on a neighbour, it is recommended that you consult with that neighbour before starting any work. Consultation with your neighbour may help to avoid disputes later. Further information about avoiding disputes can be found on the Queensland Government website.

If the adjoining property owner is Council, contact Council’s Property Team on (07) 3810 6617 to initially discuss your proposal.

FIRE PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

The Building Code of Australia outlines the fire protection requirements which are applied to Class 10 buildings. The objective set out in this Code is to protect the house/class 10 building from fire on neighbouring properties. There are a number of methods which satisfy the fire protection requirements. The most commonly applied methods include:

- Provide a 900mm clearance between the boundary and the Class 10 building.
- Provide a 900mm clearance between the house and the Class 10 building.
- Provide a 60 / 60 / 60 fire rated wall between the house and the boundary. This wall should have no openings and would generally be of masonry construction, although there are other alternatives.
**ROOFWATER DISPOSAL**

Associated roofwater/stormwater from any building must be disposed of so it does not create a nuisance to land, buildings and structures in the neighbourhood. This would generally require the installation of guttering, downpipes and stormwater pipes. The roofwater must be piped to an appropriate stormwater discharge point (e.g. inter-allotment stormwater drainage system or into the kerb and channel). If this is not possible, the roofwater shall be piped to a soakage pit. Soakage pits should be located as far as practicable from buildings, structures and property boundaries. Please refer to Councils example soakage pit drawing.

**BALUSTRADING REQUIREMENTS**

Balustrades of at least one metre in height are required where people could fall one metre or more from a floor or accessible roof of a building.

Openings between the rails of the balustrade must not be greater than 125mm (refer to Figure 1).

Balustrades must be constructed so that they can resist the forces reasonably expected to be placed upon them.

Balustrades or handrails on stairs are equally as important as those for balconies, decks and verandahs. When people ascend or descend stairs, they generally gain support using the railing, which can also act as a barrier. Therefore, stairs require balustrades that are sturdy and can withstand expected forces.

For stairs, a barrier of at least 865 millimetres high above the ‘nosing’ of the stair treads is required. The ‘nosing’ of the stair treads can be measured by placing a string line, or straight object, where each stair tread begins, forming a slope. The measurement of 865 millimetres can be taken vertically anywhere along this line to the bottom of the balustrade. As with balustrades for balconies, decks and verandahs, gaps in balustrades on stairs are not permitted to have openings greater than 125 millimetres (refer to Figure 1).

**STAIRS**

Treads must have a slip-resistance finish, non-skid strip or treatment near the edge of the nosing.

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**STAIR RISER AND GOING DIMENSIONS (mm) for Private stairways**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stair Type</th>
<th>Riser (R)</th>
<th>Going (G)</th>
<th>Slope relationship (2R + G)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Min</td>
<td>Max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Stairs</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

125 mm sphere must not pass through treads

---

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

All balconies, decks and verandahs should be designed and constructed by suitably qualified persons.

Additional links:

- Ipswich City Council applicable [fees and charges](#).
- [Deck and balcony safety](#) on the Queensland Government website.
- [Inspecting decks and balconies](#) on the Queensland Government website.
- [Maintaining decks and balconies](#) on the Queensland Government website.
- [Building or renovating](#) information from the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC).
- [Forms, fact sheets and publications](#) page on the QBCC website.
**Figure 1 - Balustrade or Other Barrier Construction**

- Openings between rails must not be more than 125 mm.
- 125 mm sphere must not pass through opening above the nosing line.
- Height: 1 m
- Nosing line
- 865 mm
- Landing

**Figure 2 - Example Diagram Showing Common Deck Components**

- Post supporting roof loads to be directly over deck support posts
- Handrail
- Decking boards
- Ledger
- Fascia
- Joist
- Footing
- Bearer
- Stairs
- Post on stirrup
The information contained in this document is general in nature, and before relying on the material in any important matters, users should carefully evaluate its accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for their purpose. This document is not intended as a substitute for consulting the relevant legislation or for obtaining appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances. The Ipswich City Council does not accept responsibility or liability for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred as a result of the use of, or reliance on, information contained in this document. These guidelines are not intended to be, and should not be relied upon as, the ultimate and complete source of information on balconies, decks or verandahs.

For further information, please contact Council’s Planning and Regulatory Services Department on (07) 3810 6888.
BUILDING APPROVALS

The following types of building work undertaken on a residential property will require a building permit:

(a) Dwelling/Dual Occupancy (Class 1 habitable)
- any habitable single dwelling or dual occupancy buildings
(b) Decks, Balconies, Verandahs, Awnings and the like
- more than 10m² in area after the building work is completed (e.g. 3.1m x 3.2m); or
- more than 2.4m high; or
- with a mass height of more than 2.1m; or
- longer than 5m along any side; or
- for a deck that is notched or higher than 1m above the deck’s natural ground surface.
(c) Garages, Sheds, Carports, Shipping Containers and the like
- more than 10m² in area after the building work is completed; or
- more than 2.4m high; or
- with a mass height of more than 2.1m; or
- longer than 5m along any side.
(d) Fences and Screens
- excluding 2m in height above natural ground surface; or
- where part of a swimming pool safety barrier
(e) Retaining Walls
- has a surcharge loading over the zone of influence for the wall;
- the total height of the wall and of the 8m or cut retained by the wall is more than 1m above the natural ground surface;
- the wall is closer than 1.5m to a building or another retaining wall.
(f) Swimming Pools and Spas
- A swimming pool or spa as defined under the Queensland Building Act 1976.

For any other building work, you should consult a building professional for advice regarding the necessity for a building permit.

TOWN PLANNING APPROVALS

Where a planning application is required, this must be obtained before a building permit can be issued and may include alternate siting provisions.

Examples of where a planning application may be triggered include:
(a) If the site is located within a Character Area or a Heritage listed property
(b) If the site is affected by a Development Control Overlay
(c) If the building or structure does not comply with the design criteria detailed in the Residential Code or the conditions of a Development Permit.

Further planning related information regarding planning scheme zones and development constraint overlays can be obtained from Council’s Ipswich Planning website.

BUILDING LOCATION ENVELOPE (BLE)

If the property is subject to a Building Location Envelope (BLE), contact Council’s Planning and Regulatory Services Department on (07) 3810 6888 to determine the extent of work that is permissible within and outside of the BLE.

AMENITY AND AESTHETICS REFERRAL PROVISIONS

In addition to design and siting provisions, the Amenity and Aesthetics Referral Provisions 2019 apply to particular Class 1 and 10 buildings and structures. Where identified within the provisions, a referral agency response from Council will be required before a building permit can be issued.

Referral items include:
- Demolition or removal of a building or structure;
- Relocation of a building or structure;
- Class 10 buildings or structures exceeding certain dimensions;
- Garages within the prescribed road boundary setback;
- Certain Class 1 and 10 buildings on vacant land;
- Transportable building and structures;
- Fences and retaining walls.

For further information refer to the Amenity and Aesthetics Referral Provision 2019 and the following Implementation Guidelines:
1. Transportable Buildings (Shipping Containers, Train Carriages, Demountable Buildings and the like)
2. Oversized Class 10 Buildings and Structures
3. Demolition, Removal or Relocation of a Building

RETAILING WALLS, FENCES AND SCREENS

The following boundary setback provisions apply except for boundary truncations.

The height refers to the total height of any retaining wall, screen, fence or combination thereof from natural ground surface (i.e. the finished surface level when the lot was created on the plan of survey).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height (m)</th>
<th>Siting Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2m or less</td>
<td>Up to boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 2m</td>
<td>Boundary setbacks apply in accordance with dwelling setback criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Any retaining wall, screen, fence or combination thereof which exceeds 2m, regardless of where it is located, will require an Amenity and Aesthetics approval except where a siting variation is already required.

BOUNDARY TRUNCATIONS

(1) Fences, screens, retaining walls and other structures built within the 6m x 6m corner truncation area are not more than 1m high.
(2) No building or structure over 2m high is built within a 9m x 9m corner truncation.

BUILD OVER OR NEAR RELEVANT INFRASTRUCTURE

Despite any boundary setback allowances noted in this guideline, building work proposed to be constructed within 3m of any relevant infrastructure will be required to comply with the QDC MP 1.4 - Building over or near relevant infrastructure. For further information refer to the fact sheet available from Council's Building webpage.

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Note: The site cover is the maximum area covered by all roofed buildings and structures roofed with impervious materials, does not exceed 50% of the total lot area.