

2.3

GENERIC PROVISIONS SITE AND CONTEXT ANALYSIS







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Part 2 Generic Provisions

2.3 Site and Context Analysis

The Inner West Local Government Area's (LGA) suburban growth is represented by a wide range of residential, commercial and industrial buildings where numerous buildings and sites have particular historical or architectural merit and deserve special care and attention. The character of the area is largely dependent on the many common buildings and streetscapes which represent the area's development over the past 150 years. This DCP encourages restoration, sympathetic alterations and additions and infill development that retains and enhances the area where this DCP applies unique character.

The key to good design is in understanding the context of the site. Context is defined as:

*"The specific character, quality, physical, historical and social characteristics of a building's setting. Depending on the nature of the proposal, the context could be as small as a suburban street or as large as a whole town."*¹

All new development should fit into the context. This means paying careful attention to adjoining development and the wider locality.

It is important to identify any existing consistent streetscape features prevailing in the street, and to use those to guide future development. Some of those streetscape features include:

- Front setbacks and front projections;
- Side setbacks;
- Roof shapes, forms and pitches;
- Eaves height;
- Verandahs and their placement;
- Window and door openings; and
- Original roof and wall materials

NB *Part 9 (Strategic Context) of this DCP details the identifying characteristics of individual planning precincts.*

Designs for new buildings, or additions which will be visible from the street, should incorporate those features to ensure consistency with the streetscape.

It is important to understand the design principles, rather than simply copy period building designs when building a new dwelling or building, or adding to an existing dwelling or building.

2.3.1 Purpose of site and context analysis

A site and context analysis investigates the existing conditions that apply on the site and in the surrounding context before the design process commences. It may take into account known future development proposals or trends in the vicinity of the site. The

¹ *Design in Context: Guidelines for Infill Development in the Historic Environment, Sydney:* NSW Heritage Office and RAlA NSW Chapter, 2005

area covered by a site and context analysis depends on the sensitivity of the site and the catchment that may be affected by the proposed development.

Any site on which development is proposed presents opportunities and constraints to the design of that development.

A site and context analysis will assist in a number of ways.

Minimise overshadowing, loss of privacy and views

Potential objections from neighbours regarding privacy, overshadowing or loss of views can be eliminated or reduced when overshadowing, window positioning and view issues are considered early in the design stages. This can avoid delays in the assessment of the application.

The same analysis can also assist in determining any future loss of privacy or solar access for the development site when the adjoining sites are developed to their maximum potential.

NB *A photo voltaic panel or solar hot water system may become less efficient due to overshadowing as a result of legitimate development on an adjoining site, if the location of such system was not considered in view of development potential of adjoining sites during a site and context analysis.*

Assist in discussions with neighbours and Council officers

The site and context analysis can be used in discussions with architects, neighbours and Council officers. A well-prepared site and context analysis plan assists in the efficient assessment of a development application.

Improve energy efficiency

Energy bills can be reduced when the positioning of new dwellings or building additions are considered. Windows can be placed to reduce heat gain and avoid excess winter heat loss, leading to significant savings in energy costs.

Integrated design with adjoining development and the wider streetscape

The site and context analysis identifies the special qualities of the site, the street and the neighbourhood and explains how the proposed development relates to those qualities.

2.3.2 Process for site and context analysis

A site and context analysis must be prepared prior to designing the development proposal as individual developments should not be considered in isolation.

A site analysis involves two phases:

1. Site survey to record site conditions such as existing vegetation, topography, drainage corridors and neighbourhood character; and
2. Analysis based on the relevant site survey information to form decisions about the existing site conditions, including what to retain through development (such as significant vegetation, views or landmarks) and/or what site conditions may be compromised through development (for example, areas where slope and topography can be altered or vegetation that can be removed and replaced through development).

This information is then used to develop strategies and options for development of the site.

The site and context analysis may include photographs, perspectives and a photomontage to support the application. The level of detail to be included will vary according to the size and scope of the development proposed.

Designers should exercise judgement about the extent of information required to be indicated on a site and context analysis and if in doubt, check with Council.

2.3.3 Controls for site and context analysis

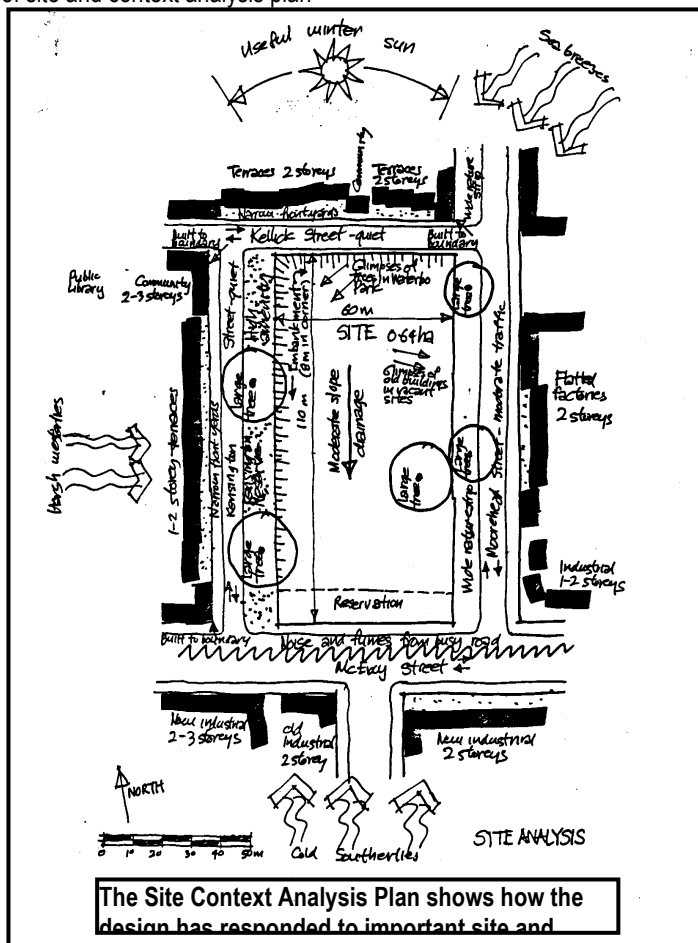
- C1** A site and context analysis must be submitted for all new development excluding internal alterations and minor external alterations and additions.
- C2** The site and context analysis must demonstrate an appreciation of the site and its context, and the opportunities and constraints on the layout and design of the site.
- C3** The site and context analysis must demonstrate that the development will integrate within the streetscape when considering scale, proportion and massing.
- C4** The site and context analysis must demonstrate that the building is well proportioned, both as an individual element and within the streetscape.
- C5** The site and context analysis must demonstrate that the building will sit comfortably with surrounding buildings in terms of its massing.
- C6** The site and context analysis must comprise an annotated plan and be accompanied by written information. It may also include other graphical explanations (photographs of the subject site and surrounds) showing the suitability of the site for the proposed use. Most information is best shown on A3 or A4 plans or sketches of the site and locality, with any additional supporting documentation provided in writing. The details on the plan must be tailored to the size and complexity of the proposed development. All documentation must be dated and numbered.
- C7** A site and context analysis plan must be based on a survey drawing produced by a registered surveyor, or alternatively, a site plan prepared by another suitably qualified consultant which includes all of the required information:
 - i. Site related information
 - a. The direction of true north;
 - b. Contours and levels to Australian Height Datum (AHD);
 - c. Land description including lot dimensions and scale;
 - d. The footprint, height and use of existing and proposed buildings on the site;
 - e. Any endangered ecological community (EEC), significant trees or other vegetation (including any unique environmental features) and any other existing trees upon the site or close to the boundaries with adjoining sites;
 - f. Site characteristics such as orientation and lot dimensions and local climatic features such as wind direction;
 - g. Existing causes of overshadowing, for example, adjacent buildings or trees;

- h. Inherent site constraints including flood affected land, overland flow paths, land subject to slope instability, acid sulfate soils, contaminated land, landfill areas, heritage and archaeological features;
 - i. Services and utilities including location of drainage infrastructure and connection for utility services;
 - j. Easements, fences, boundaries and access to the site;
 - k. The location of any sewer main upon the site where development involves the construction of a basement level;
 - l. Views to and from the site and the existence of any significant nearby view corridors from public spaces;
 - m. Movement corridors including local streets and pedestrian pathways; and
 - n. Any other notable natural landform features or other characteristics of the site.
- ii. Context related information
- The footprint, height setback distances, areas of private open space, windows overlooking the site and use of buildings on a minimum of:
- a. Two lots either side of the development site;
 - b. Those sites directly across any road adjacent to the site; and
 - c. Any allotments which abut the rear boundary of the development site.

C8 An elevational plan must show the height of the proposed development and the height of existing buildings located on either side of the development site. If the site is bounded by a road, the site and context analysis plan and elevational plans must include the adjacent site across the road. The elevational plan must also show the proposed ridgeline heights of the proposed development in relation to all adjoining buildings to AHD.

C9 The site and context analysis must reference the character statements in Part 9 (Strategic Context) of this DCP to assist in determining the desired character of an area. This includes reference to the built form, scale and character of surrounding and nearby development, including fencing and landscaping.

Figure 1: Example of site and context analysis plan



The Site Context Analysis Plan shows how the design has responded to important site and