

R2 | Residential Design Element Fencing and Walls

Overview

When high solid fencing dominates a street, it creates a street environment that is not pedestrian friendly and can result in people feeling unsafe, reducing their likelihood of walking. Compare the feeling when walking along a street of low (or no) front fences (like a traditional villa suburb) to one where high walls and blank garages dominate. This type of streetscape also limits interaction between neighbours, reducing safety and a feeling of community. Security and privacy can be achieved without sacrificing the amenity of the street.

The front fencing standards in the Unitary Plan are intended to provide privacy and security while maintaining opportunities for:

- » passive surveillance, by ensuring good visibility to the street
- » minimising visual dominance effects on the street
- » maintaining pedestrian safety
- » creating or maintaining an appropriate streetscape character.

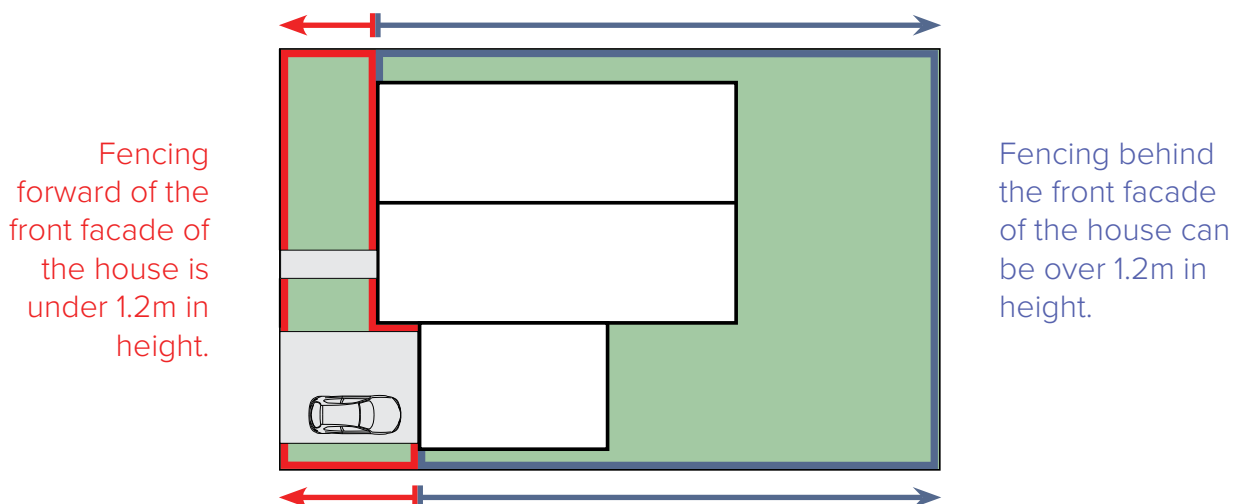
Purpose

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)(a) H3.3(3)(b)	H4.3(2) H4.3(3)(a) H4.3(3)(b)	H5.3(2) H5.3(3)(a) H5.3(3)(b)	H6.3(2) H6.3(3)(a) H6.3(3)(b)

Design Principles

- R 2.1** Limit the total height of fences and walls fronting a street or other public place (such as a park/reserve or a shared driveway) to below eye level. As well as detracting from the streetscape character, tall fencing can block lines of sight between footpaths and driveways. This means pedestrians cannot easily see oncoming cars, and drivers cannot see pedestrians, especially if reversing. The Unitary Plan requires solid fences to be below 1.4m, but best practice is 1.2m, as this allows children to be more easily seen.
- R 2.2** Fencing fronting a street or public place that is over 1.4m in height should be a minimum of 50% visually permeable, such as pool style fencing. This is to maintain visual connections between the street and the site, limit opportunities for graffiti and to create a feeling of openness for the street.
- R 2.3** Retaining walls along the street frontage or other public places should be minimised in height, and designed to complement the streetscape and dwelling. Retaining walls over 1m in height should be stepped in terraced sections up slopes and combined with screening planting.
- R 2.4** Combined fencing and retaining wall heights on side or rear boundaries should be no more than 2m in height to avoid dominating and shading adjacent spaces.
- R 2.5** Fencing over 1.2m in height along a side boundary should be located behind the front façade of the house. This ensures that when drivers are entering and exiting a property (including reversing onto the street) they are able to see pedestrians and pedestrians are able to see them.



Getting it right



The low fencing of the traditional villa suburb creates a sense of private space behind the fence while creating an open and welcoming street edge.



The same positive characteristics of a villa suburb can be recreated in a modern way, creating street appeal and encouraging a sense of community.

Getting it right



Fencing is avoided in the front yard, with low planting used to define the public/private boundary and fencing set back behind the front façade of the dwelling.



Fences over 1.4m high obstruct views into and out of the site and create a blank edge to the street. This removes an opportunity for passive surveillance and creates an unpleasant street environment.

Getting it right



Well-designed low walls add to the streetscape, define boundaries between public and private land and let houses comfortably sit closer to the front boundary.



High fencing along the street edge endangers pedestrians as it obstructs views of the footpath for vehicles exiting the site.

Getting it right



Retaining walls along the street can be enhanced with complementary fencing and planting. The impacts of this retaining wall are further reduced by stepping the walls up the slope.



High front yard fencing blocks views to the street and creates a poor pedestrian environment.

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