Private open space and communal open space

Variation 306

Open space is an important component of residential development. Open space includes private gardens, balconies, communal areas and places to dry washing. These spaces provide private places for residents, common areas for neighbours in multi-unit developments, and they are used for entertaining, play and relaxation. Landscaping in open spaces improves residential amenity and providing shade trees and other vegetation make the space comfortable, attractive and useable.

Variation 306 contains provisions in the single dwelling housing development code and the multi-unit housing development code relating to open space requirements for single dwellings and multi-use developments.

What areas are considered private open space?

A usable outdoor area is considered to be private open space. It can include balconies, terraces, decks, front gardens and areas between a dwelling and the boundary. Up to a quarter of the private open space can be roofed, and in multi-unit developments, balconies can be completely roofed.

Areas that cannot be counted as private open space include enclosed spaces, vehicle parking areas (covered or uncovered) and verges. Driveways that are shared with other dwellings are not considered to be private open space (for instance in multi-unit developments).

Private open space requirements for single dwellings

Single dwellings require two different types of open space - private open space and principal private open space.

Private open space

Blocks must have an area of private open space (POS) for outdoor activities and separation from neighbouring houses. Half of the total open space needs to be a planting area, and must have, or be able to have, landscaping plants including deep rooted trees. The planting area doesn’t include driveways, solid surfaces or roofed areas.

Principal private open space

Blocks must have an area of principal private open space (PPOS). The PPOS must be at ground level, next to a living area, be screened from the street and receive adequate winter sun to allow it to be used all year round. PPOS ensures that the dwelling has an outdoor living area that is an extension of the indoor living area. It must be large enough to be usable (eg to fit an outdoor table setting).

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**Single dwelling private open space for a 600m² block area**

Private Open Space has a minimum dimension of 6m for an area not less than 10% of the block.

At least 50% of the minimum area of Private Open Space is planting area.

Private Open Space is a minimum of 60% of the block area, less 50m².

(Indicative block area = 600 m²)
Multi unit private open space rules

Multi unit developments require site open space for the whole development as well as principal private open space for individual dwellings.

Site open space

Site open space (SOS) is a portion of the total site area with the minimum size being dependant on the zone it is in. This SOS can consist of communal open space (shared by residents of the complex) and/or private open space (used solely by the dwelling residents). The SOS has a minimum width of 2.5m to ensure that it is wide enough to be usable. Half of the total SOS must be a planting area, and have, or be able to have, landscaping plants including deep rooted trees. The planting area doesn’t include driveways, solid surfaces or roofed areas.

Principal private open space

Each multi unit dwelling must have its own area of principal private open space (PPOS). The minimum size and width of the PPOS depends on the zone that it is in and the number of bedrooms it has. A dwelling with more bedrooms generally has more occupants and therefore requires a larger area of open space to cater for their needs. The PPOS needs to be accessible from the living area, screened from the street and either have good access to winter sun or, if at the upper floor level, overlook a public street or park.

These provisions improve the amenity of the open space provided to ensure it is used as often as desired. A 2m² area of the PPOS is also required be screened from the public to allow for functions such as clothes drying and air conditioners.