

Sugarwood

Design Guidelines

April 2026



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01

Sugarwood Vision

The vision for Sugarwood is to create a family-oriented, conservation-led community that harmoniously blends modern living with preserved natural bushland.

Positioned in a premium infill location with limited land supply, the project emphasizes sustainability, affordability, and inclusivity while delivering a connected lifestyle with fast access to Newcastle CBD, Lake Macquarie, and key transport corridors.

Through a placemaking strategy that celebrates nature, the development aims to foster a safe, vibrant neighbourhood where families thrive, children explore, and residents enjoy the unique character of “life in the bushland suburb.”

02

Purpose of these Guidelines

We have developed these Guidelines to set a high standard of design and sustainability for Sugarwood above and beyond basic building regulations.

The Guidelines will help you to:

- choose a home that best fits your land and lifestyle
- protect your investment by encouraging all homes to be of the same high quality
- add value to your home and suburb

Before you seek building approval from Council or a private Certifier you will need to submit plans to Landcom for approval of your house and landscaping design. Landcom will review your proposal against these Guidelines and endorse plans so you can lodge a development application.



How to use these Guidelines

Read through the basic principles on pages 7 to 13.

On pages 14 to 15 you'll find a detailed design checklist that you can give to your builder or designer for easy reference.

The Sugarwood Design Review Team can assist with further explanation of the terms used in the Guidelines.

You'll also find an explanation of terms on Landcom's Sugarwood website.

When Landcom reviews your plans it will check to ensure alignment with the principles in the Guidelines. Any departure from or alternatives to the specific guidelines may be assessed by the Sugarwood Design Review Team on merit.

The Guidelines complement Lake Macquarie City Council's Development Control Plan (DCP) and the NSW Housing Code for Complying Development (CDC). Before building you must seek development consent from Council or a private Certifier by complying with either the DCP or CDC. If you would like to ask about the Guidelines or discuss your concept plans before submitting for approval, please contact the Sugarwood team at gardensuburb@landcom.nsw.gov.au.



Approval Process

Step 01 Inform your Builder about the Sugarwood Design Guidelines

Provide your builder with a copy of the Design Guidelines. Ensure your builder understands that compliance with the Sugarwood Guidelines is a condition of your Contract of sale and the Restrictions on Title in the 88B instrument.

Step 02 Sugarwood Design Review Team Approval

Submit your house plans, garden layout, schedule of main external materials and colours, and BASIX assessment to the Sugarwood Design Review Team for approval. Ensure your plans meet these Guidelines.

Step 03 Authority Approval

Once you've obtained approval from the Sugarwood Design Review Team, lodge your plans with Lake Macquarie City Council's (or Private Principal Certifying Authority) for approval.

Planning your House

Make sure that your house fits well on the site and suits your land.

- You should use the current version of either Lake Macquarie DCP or the NSW Housing Code (CDC) to determine dimensions and siting of a house design on your land.
- Check Lake Macquarie City Council's requirements for land identified as bushfire prone land and make sure you comply with any Asset Protection Zone (APZ) and Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) rating required to be met for any new homes.
- The size of your house should be in proportion to your land area, leaving enough room for a generous rear yard, a landscaped front garden and enough space between neighbours.
- You should allow for a generous private yard (or private open space - POS) and have a main part (Principal POS) that is sunny and opens directly off a living area. Any area less than 1.5m wide is not considered part of private yard area.
- Make sure your garage is a good size with room for storage and well positioned so the driveway does not interfere with street trees, drains and services. The garage must be set back at least 1m behind the main front wall of your house.

- Built to boundary walls (zero lot line) can only be used if there is an easement on the adjoining lot. Built to boundary is not permitted on larger lots.
- Dual occupancy and secondary dwellings, such as studios, may be permitted in some circumstances, provided the requirements for site coverage, landscaped area and guidelines for private yard area are still met. The design must present as a single building – see Street Presentation and Landscaping.

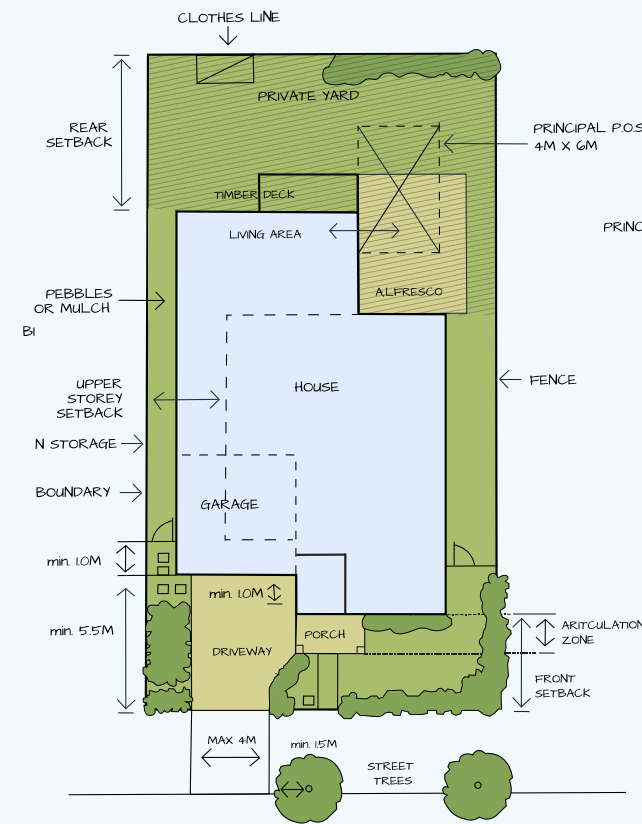


Fig 1. Light and warm in tone with quality features

Legend

- BUILDING AREA
- LANDSCAPED AREA
- PAVED AREA
- PRIVATE YARD

Typical standard lot



Typical corner lot



Fig 2. Typical standard and corner lot

Sustainable Design

Make your house comfortable to live in and friendly to the environment.

- Your main living areas should have a sunny aspect to the north and open on to the main part (Principal POS) of your private yard. At least half your Principal POS should be sunny in winter.
- Be aware of your neighbours' yards and living areas and try not to overshadow them too much.
- Windows facing north must have shading to protect from summer sun while letting in winter sun. West facing windows may also benefit from summer shading or high performance glass, bearing in mind the lower sun angle.
- Doors (including sliding doors) to your yard should be protected from weather by an overhang or structure like a roofed pergola.
- Building materials and surfaces should be chosen to avoid adding to urban heat, be light in colour, achieve a 'low' BASIX material rating and come from renewable, recycled, local and/or sustainable sources where possible. Roofs in particular should have a good Solar Reflective Index (SRI) and must fall within the 'light to medium' range for Solar Absorptance (SA). To be classified as "light to medium", the roof material must have a solar absorptance value of <0.7. Roofing manufacturers have been advised to provide a solar absorptance value for the colour you choose so it can be compared against the <0.7.
- Driveways should be a lighter colour, light earthy tones preferred (not dark greys or charcoal)
- Use energy efficient appliances and lighting, and design for zoned areas in your house that can be either closed off or allow good cross-flow ventilation when necessary.
- Note that Sugarwood is an all-electric neighbourhood. There is no reticulated gas service, and we don't encourage the use of bottled gas.
- You must achieve a BASIX minimum 'Energy' score of 90 and a minimum 'Water' score of 50, beyond the minimum BASIX requirements. Exceeding the minimum Energy and Water scores is encouraged.



Fig 3. Streetscape

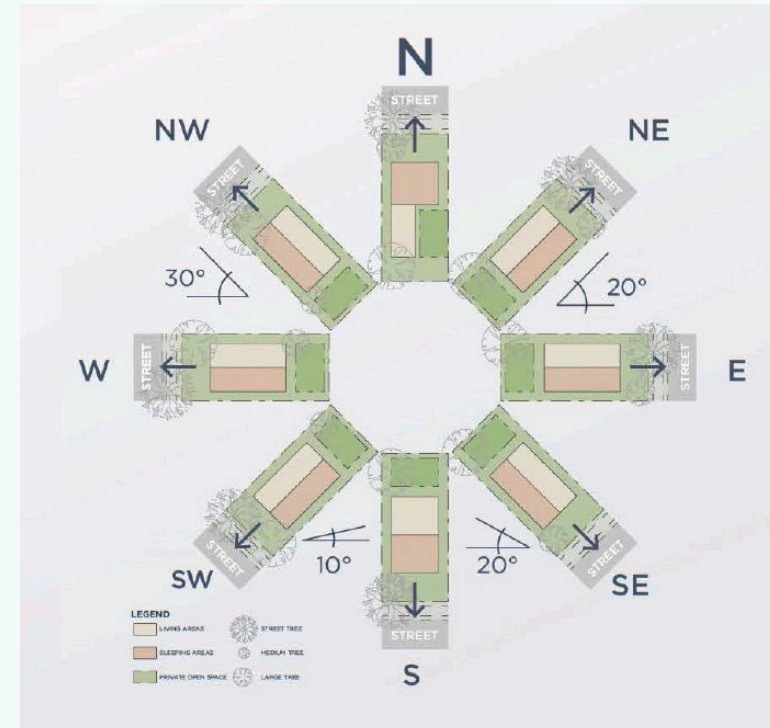


Fig 4. Ideal positioning for key zones of the house

- You need to provide at least two of these energy efficient items: min 6.6kW solar PV system; home storage battery; heat pump hot water system; induction cooktop.
- Consider your plant selections carefully to conserve water. Indigenous species are preferred (Council has a suggested list in its Backyard Habitat Planting Guide). Deciduous trees may provide good shade in summer while allowing sunny yards in winter.
- Be aware of active areas in your house and yard that might affect your neighbours' privacy. Avoid living area windows that look directly into your neighbours' yard, using high window sills, screening or obscure glass if necessary on the upper level.
- Be aware of noise from motors like air conditioning units or pumps, as well as your outdoor living area, and locate or screen so they have less impact on your neighbours'.



Fig 5. Roof covered in solar panels



Fig 6. Expansive rear yard with ample landscaping

Street Presentation

Make sure your house looks good in the streetscape and is an asset to the neighbourhood.

- A great street is created by homes with good street address: architecturally interesting houses which look out on the street and relate to it; a consistent character of house designs and materials which have variety but fit in with the neighbourhood; well defined front yards, landscaping and trees.

- Make your house look interesting with building articulation, such as stepped wall lines, using different materials and adding features like balconies, porches and pergolas – you don't want to live in a plain 'box'!

- You must have a generous, well-defined and sheltered front porch at your front door. A good sized front verandah is a great asset for outdoor living and neighbourhood connection.

- Don't forget to add interest to the rear and sides of your house; a break in long walls (over 14m) is especially important for two storey houses – see requirements for upper storey wall stepping in the Design Checklist.

- Have a contemporary style of house without grand architectural expression, fancy ornamentation or fake historical details. Oversized elements such as double height porticos are not encouraged. Use materials and colours which fit in with the neighbourhood character, generally light earthy tones with use of highlight colours and materials. Non combustible lightweight cladding is encouraged for upper storeys, with more solid

masonry elements at lower storey. Ensure materials meet the BAL requirements for your house.

- Dual occupancy development should be presented as a single unified building. Each dwelling must maintain its own identity in the street, clearly defined entry and character which is sympathetic to its partner. Exact replication or mirror reversing of the same facade will not be accepted. Secondary dwellings must be incorporated into the design of the main house, not a detached outbuilding.

- Driveway crossing (from front boundary to kerb) must be plain uncoloured concrete, max 4m wide. For single dwelling lots, your driveway should taper to meet crossing width at the front boundary and at least 1m from the side boundary to allow planting beside it.

- For Dual occupancy development, the total of both driveways should be a maximum of 6m wide, with a substantial space between each driveway to allow for planting.

- Your roof must have eaves (minimum 450mm), including any garage under the main roof.

- Hipped and gabled roofs must have a minimum pitch of 22°, skillion roofs may have a minimum pitch of 12°. Flat roofs and parapet walls as the main building expression are not permitted.

- You must have good sized windows from habitable rooms facing the street, and the main entry must be well expressed to the street.

- Your garage must be set back at least 1m from the main front wall of your house, and the garage doors be a simple plain design and colour, not more than half the width of your front facade.

- Corner lots are particularly important. The house design must emphasise and 'wrap around' the corner as well as looking out on both streets – each street facade should look like a 'front' of the house and be well articulated. Consider the quality of habitable rooms and windows at the corner, garages are not to be provided there.



Fig 7. Composition of native plants and trees



Fig 8. Example of corner lot

Landscaping and Fencing

- Every home must have a landscape plan which includes all the external site features such as fences, lawn, paving, plant beds and trees to the minimum standard noted in the Design Checklist.

- A well landscaped front yard is a critical part of good street presentation. Front yards must include a minimum of 50% 'soft' landscaped area (does not include hard paved areas, patios, decks or pebble beds) with good shrub planting, trees and turf.

- Make sure you meet the requirements of any APZ in planning your landscaping.

- Check requirements for fences in the Design Checklist, including front fences and side fencing, which must be set well behind the front of the house.

- Landscaping and fencing for corner lots is particularly important to properly express their prominent location in the neighbourhood. The secondary frontage should be well landscaped as a continuation of the primary frontage. Any high fencing on the secondary frontage of a corner lot should not exceed 50% of the length of the lot.

Design Checklist

Planning your House

- Setbacks, heights and site coverage comply with DCP/CDC
- Setbacks, materials and landscaping comply with any APZ
- Landscaping and materials to comply with BAL construction requirements
- Garage minimum 1m behind main front wall of house
- No Built to Boundary walls (zero lot line) unless easement in place
- Dual occupancies or secondary dwellings integrated as one building

Planning your House

- Main living areas and private yard with north aspect
- Principal Private Open Space to be a minimum of 24m²
- 50% Principal POS to receive min 3hrs direct sunlight in midwinter
- All north facing habitable room windows to be shaded from summer sun
- All external doors from habitable rooms to have overhead shelter
- Main external wall materials generally light and warm in colour
- Roof to be in 'light' to 'medium' range (solar absorptance <0.7)
- Driveway to be light colour (driveway crossing plain uncoloured concrete)
- BASIX min 'Energy' score of 90, min 'Water' score 50
- At least two of: min 6.6kW solar PV system; home storage battery; heat pump hot water system; induction cooktop to be provided

Street Presentation

- Well-articulated facades including architectural features, varied wall materials, single storey elements, and coherent design compatible with neighbourhood
- No grandiose design, historic ornate styles or overheight elements
- No flat roofs or parapet wall designs as the main expression
- Good sized habitable windows that look out to street
- Sheltered entry minimum 1.5m deep, generous width
- No two storey wall to exceed 14m length without stepping (minimum 600mm)
- Hipped or gabled roof minimum 22° pitch, skillion minimum 12° pitch
- Minimum 450mm eaves to all external walls
- Meters and services screened from street view where possible
- At least one variation of wall material to all street facades
- Garage door to be simple design, not heavily profiled or panelled
- Driveway crossings plain uncoloured concrete max 4m wide, to clear street trees by at least 1.6m and services, pits, poles etc by at least 1.0m
- Driveway within lot to meet crossing width at front boundary, light colour, simple finish, minimum 1m from side boundary
- Dual occupancy: driveways maximum total 6m wide, separated to provide planting beside/between
- Dual occupancy/secondary dwellings: integrated into one building, no replicated or mirror reversed facades
- Corner lot: express corner by use of architectural elements which wrap the corner, continuation of elevation features like windows and wall finishes, and landscaping
- Corner lot: at least one good sized habitable room window looking out to secondary street
- Corner lot: secondary facade well articulated with good street address

Landscaping and Fencing

- Front yard minimum 50% soft landscaping
- Front boundary to be defined by densely spaced shrub planting, including behind any front fence, and including the secondary frontage of corner lots up to any yard fence
- Additional shrub planting within front yard, including beside driveway/paths, near house and any extended fence returns
- All shrubs to be in mulched garden beds with structural edging
- Minimum 2 advanced trees in front yard (separate from front boundary planting)
- Minimum 1 advanced tree (larger species) in rear yard
- Corner lot: additional tree within secondary frontage
- Letterbox to be a substantial construction (e.g. in pier) which complements house design, integrated with any front fence, 0.9m to 1.1m high
- Any front fence max 1.0m high, generally open construction,
- Side boundary fencing generally 1.8m high
- 'Cutoff' fencing and gate between house and side boundary set at least 1.0m behind the main front wall of house, aligned with neighbour's where possible; no side boundary fencing to extend beyond that point
- Corner lot: high fencing on secondary frontage to be max 50% lot length and high quality (piers/expressed posts and infill), including any return in neighbour's yard visible to street.
- Any street tree damaged or relocated to be properly replanted or replaced to Council satisfaction

- Turf is provided as required to nature strip area between boundary and kerb

- Any retaining walls visible from the street to be masonry, compatible with your house design, and max 0.6m high, terraced where that height is exceeded
- Corner lot: any secondary frontage fence above a retaining wall to be set back to allow planting between the retaining wall and the fence.
- Safe landings are provided outside all external doors.
- Plant selections appropriate to location; no turf in narrow passages that get little sunlight.
- Most planting is native species (see the preferred list in Council's Backyard Habitat Planting Guide); other appropriate species may be used if they suit the Sugarwood neighbourhood

Documents for submission to the Sugarwood Design Review Team

- Architectural plans to DA standard (fully dimensioned: site, floor plans, elevations indicating finishes, section).
- Concept landscape plan (all external works, paved, garden bed, turf, gravel areas, types of planting, fencing, retaining walls, letterbox, bin storage, clothes line etc).
- Schedule of main external materials and colours with sample images.
- BASIX Certificate which achieves min 'Energy' score of 90 and min 'Water' score 50, and includes at least two of the listed sustainability inclusions.

Contact details

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 [Landcom.com.au](https://www.landcom.com.au)