



## Neighbourhood Character Overlays - Measurement of Building Area.

The Surf Coast Planning Scheme includes a range of controls which aims to preserve and enhance the character and quality of landscapes of Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Moggs Creek, Lorne and Anglesea. This aim is expressed through various objectives which generally seek to encourage built forms to nestle into the vegetated landscape, promote a low scale, compact form of building and encourage sites to retain sufficient land to allow for vegetation.

The development performance standards of the Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO) that cover these townships guide the achievement of objectives and these include building site coverage, hard surface coverage, plot ratio and side setbacks. To assist the understanding of these performance standards the Surf Coast Shire has prepared this information to provide guidance on these standards. However, it is important to read each NCO schedule carefully, as they all have different requirements and calculations.

Importantly, the performance standards are not absolutes. The main consideration is achievement of the relevant objectives of the overlay or policy. These measures provide some guidance on how to achieve these objectives, however good design that achieves objectives of a particular control may occur with minor variations to the performance standards.

### Building Site Coverage

Building Site Coverage (BSC), or Site Coverage, is defined in the State Section of the Planning Scheme (Clause 73) as the proportion of a site covered by buildings. A building is defined by the *Planning & Environment Act 1987* as including a structure and part of a building or a structure; and fences, walls, out-buildings, service installations and other appurtenances of a building. Therefore, for the purposes of calculating BSC the building includes verandahs, decks, landings, stairs, outbuildings, water tanks, etc; and are included irrespective of whether they touch the ground. It does not include an underground basement that is constructed wholly underground, outdoor paving, driveways. It does not include building eaves, however it may be necessary to make a judgement as to whether something is an eave or a roof. What might be a wide eave in one situation could be a verandah in another.



### Hard Surface Coverage and landscaping areas.

Hard Surface Coverage (HSC) is not defined in the Planning Scheme at Clause 72 but is a tool used to calculate land that is not available for landscaping.

The HSC is different from the permeability standard of clause 54 and 55 which includes pervious surfaces (such as gravel driveways) that cannot be landscaped with plants. Instead HSC includes all surfaces that prevent the growing of vegetation such as buildings (see building site coverage above), gravel or sealed driveways, paths, tennis courts, swimming pools, etc.

An unroofed pergola should not be included in the HSC unless it covers a decked or hard stand area. However, pergolas should be considered in the context of meeting the objectives of the NCO particularly the requirement to provide space around buildings for screening landscaping.

Each NCO is different, some require a certain percentage of land available for planting of vegetation whilst others require a dimensioned area for landscaping (or both). It is important to think about what areas will likely need to be hard surfaces early in the design, for example areas between retaining walls and buildings may not practically be used for landscaping and will need to be included in the HSC calculation.

### Plot Ratio

Plot Ratio (PR) is defined in the State Section of the Planning Scheme (Clause 72) as the gross floor area of all buildings on a site, divided by the area of the site. Gross Floor Area (GFA) is in turn defined as the total area of a building, measured from the outside of external walls or the centre of party walls, and includes all roofed areas (emphasis added). Large unwall covered decks and undercroft spaces are included in the PR.

PR is used to assess a development in terms of its bulk and mass on a site and within a streetscape. PR focuses on both the enclosed and roofed areas of a building including basements, attics, garages, penthouses, enclosed porches, attached enclosed covered ways, equipment rooms, lift shafts, staircases and any other fully enclosed useable area of the building.

### Side Setbacks.

NCO Schedule 1 (covering Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, and Moggs Creek) and NCO Schedule 3 (for Anglesea Residential Areas) includes a three-metre side setback standard which aims to preserve space around buildings for vegetation. Structures typically allowed to encroach under clauses 54 or 55 of the scheme—such as eaves, verandahs, porches, and pergolas—are not allowable encroachments within this setback area under this standard.

### Multi-dwelling calculations

The NCO Schedule 3 (Anglesea Residential Areas) states that site area is calculated for an individual dwelling and is not an average across multiple dwellings. This means that when calculating BSC, HSC and PR, it is calculated on each lot separately. This is not the case under the other schedules where it is calculated across the entire site.

NCO Schedule 1 (Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven and Moggs Creek) and NCO Schedule 3 (Anglesea Residential Areas) standards are based on 'site area' rather than lot area. Site area excludes land common or shared land between two or more dwellings and land for access to a rear dwelling (i.e, the handle of a battle axe lot).

Multi dwelling developments must also consider the requirements of the relevant Design and Development Overlay when subdividing the land.