

NSW Housing Pattern Book

Guidance for low-rise pattern book users

Purpose of this document

This guide helps homeowners, architects, designers, certifiers and other users understand how to get started with the NSW Housing Pattern Book, the planning pathways available, and when to seek professional advice.

1. Planning considerations for the low-rise patterns

1.1 Assessing site applicability

A guideline to assess initial site applicability can be found below to determine what is permissible. We recommend further project-specific advice is sought from a registered architect or building designer.

Professional associations and registration boards can help you find a local architect or building designer. For more information visit:

- [Australian Institute of Architects](#)
- [Regional Architecture Association](#)
- [NSW Architects Registration Board](#)
- [Building Designers Association of Australia](#)

Step 1

Identify

- what land zone the development site is located within. This can be done by searching the street address or lot & deposited plan number in the [NSW Planning Portal Spatial Viewer](#)
- which housing types are permissible within the land zone. Refer to the relevant local council's local environmental plan (LEP) under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, which specifies what types of development are allowed on each parcel of land
- if the site is located within or outside a 'low and mid-rise housing area' using the [LMR Viewer](#), which will indicate whether the [LMR Housing Policy](#) within the Housing SEPP applies.

Step 2

Compare the site to the development standards that apply as specified in the patterns.

Step 3

Select a suitable pattern book design ensuring the site can uphold the development standards detailed in the pattern, such as minimum site width, and any relevant environmental planning instruments (EPI) that apply.

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1.2 Types of residential development included in the pattern book

The low-rise patterns include the following types of residential development (as defined in the Standard Instrument LEP):

- **dual occupancies** in accordance with the following patterns:
 - Semis 01 by Anthony Gill Architects
 - Semis 02 by Sibling Architecture
- **manor houses** in accordance with the following pattern:
 - Manor Homes 01 by Studio Johnston
- **multi-dwelling housing** in accordance with the following pattern:
 - Row Homes 01 by SAHA
- **multi-dwelling housing (terraces)** in accordance with the following patterns:
 - Terraces 01 by Carter Williamson
 - Terraces 02 by Sam Crawford Architects
 - Terraces 03 by Officer Woods Architects
 - Terraces 04 by Other Architects x NMBW.

Certain patterns also allow associated attached development (such as access ramps and driveways), detached development (such as fences and detached studios) and secondary dwellings where this development is consistent with the relevant pattern.

1.3 Complying development pathway

Complying development is a combined planning and construction approval for straightforward development that can be determined through a fast-tracked assessment by a council or an accredited certifier, where a proposal is fully compliant with all development standards. The Pattern Book Development Code (part [3BA](#) of the Codes SEPP) makes this pathway available for low-rise patterns.

The pattern book complying development pathway applies in zones R1, R2 and R3. The proposed land use (e.g. dual occupancy) for the chosen pattern needs to be permissible in the land use zone. Refer to 1.1 and 1.2 of this guide to investigate your land zone and permissible housing types.

1.4 Local planning requirements

Complying development - unless specifically referenced in the Codes SEPP (e.g. land-based exclusions, permissibility, minimum lot size requirements), requirements in an LEP and development control plan (DCP) generally do not apply.

Development application - If seeking a DA for a low-rise pattern development, it will be subject to a full merit assessment by local councils and the local planning rules, and the relevant local environmental plan and development control plan will apply. However, any use of the pattern designs must still comply with the [terms and conditions](#) for the use of patterns.

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1.5 Requirements and exclusions of the complying development pathway

The patterns can be used across New South Wales where low-rise and mid-rise housing types are already permitted with consent. For pattern book complying development, the relevant development standards are found in the patterns themselves, as well as in State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008 (the [Codes SEPP](#)). Not all sites will be eligible for a complying development pathway using the patterns.

The pattern book complying development pathway relies on the general requirements and exclusions for complying development set out in the Codes SEPP (clauses [1.17A](#), [1.18](#) and [1.19](#)). The pattern book complying development pathway does not apply to:

- land that is critical habitat or a wilderness area
- state, local or draft heritage items
- heritage conservation areas (HCAs) and draft HCAs
- environmentally sensitive areas
- land mapped as being Class 1 or Class 2 on an Acid Sulfate Soils Map
- significantly contaminated land
- land identified as a buffer area, a river front area, an ecologically sensitive area, environmentally sensitive land or a protected area
- land identified as being or affected by a coastline or coastal hazard or a coastal erosion hazard
- land in a foreshore area
- land that is in the 25 ANEF contour or a higher ANEF contour
- land declared to be a special area under the [Water NSW Act 2014](#)
- land identified on a map in [Schedule 5](#) of the Codes SEPP.

Additional exclusions for the pattern book complying development pathway apply in the Pattern Book Development Code (clause [3BA.6](#) of the Codes SEPP). The pattern book complying development pathway does not apply to:

- bush-fire prone land
- flood control lots
- battle-axe lots
- a lot where there is an existing secondary dwelling or group home
- building over a registered easement
- unsewered land
- land identified as susceptible to landslide risk.

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1.6 Assessment times for the complying development pathway

A CDC application for a pattern development must be determined within 10 days once all the required information is provided. Neighbours must be notified for at least 7 days before approval.

1.7 Design verification statement

A [design verification statement \(DVS\)](#) is a document that confirms the proposal meets all the requirements of the chosen pattern. It must be included in your pattern book complying development application. This must be completed by an accredited designer or architect, and they must confirm the proposal follows the relevant pattern in terms of:

- development standards
- location requirements
- technical drawings
- technical information.

For pattern book complying development, this DVS takes the place of the design statement normally required under the Low-Rise Housing Diversity Code.

1.8 Low and mid-rise (LMR) housing area

The [Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy \(LMR policy\)](#) supports building more low-rise to mid-rise homes within 800 metres of key town centres and transport hubs. The pattern book provides specific development standards for LMR areas.

1.9 Land outside a low and mid-rise housing area

The low-rise patterns provide specific development standards for non-LMR areas.

The lot must also meet two minimum provisions:

- 1 the minimum lot size set by the local council's LEP for the relevant housing type
- and*
- 2 the minimum lot size required by the specific pattern book design.

1.10 Easements

The current exclusions that apply to [Part 3B Low Rise Housing Diversity Code](#) of the Codes SEPP (including the exclusion of building over a registered easement) will also apply to the pattern book complying development pathway.

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1.11 Concurrent subdivision

Pattern book complying development and the subdivision of the development can be applied for at the same time under a single complying development certificate (CDC).

Alternatively, homeowners and developers can apply for the pattern book CDC first for construction, and then apply separately for a subdivision (either Torrens title or strata), as another complying development application. See Clauses [3BA.4](#) and [3BA.5](#) of the Codes SEPP for more information.

1.12 Building a kerb, crossover or driveway

General requirements for complying development apply, including the need to obtain approvals under Acts other than the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. This includes approval under [Section 138](#) of the Roads Act by the local council for unclassified roads and many classified roads, or Transport for NSW (TfNSW) giving concurrence or consent on classified roads.

1.13 Effluent disposal systems and on-site stormwater drainage systems

The general requirements for complying development apply. This includes the need for any on-site effluent disposal system (for development on unsewered land) and any on-site stormwater drainage system to be approved by the local council under [Section 68](#) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, before a complying development certificate can be issued.

1.14 Lodging a pattern book development

All planning applications in New South Wales must be lodged through the NSW Planning Portal at: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au

During the application process, the unique pattern identification number will be required, which is issued via email at the time of purchasing a pattern.

1.15 Support for planners assessing pattern book applications

Enquiries can be directed to the pattern book email: pattern.book.housing@planning.nsw.gov.au

Visit the pattern book webpage to stay up to date:

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/government-architect-nsw/housing-design/nsw-housing-pattern-book>

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2. Using and adapting the low-rise patterns

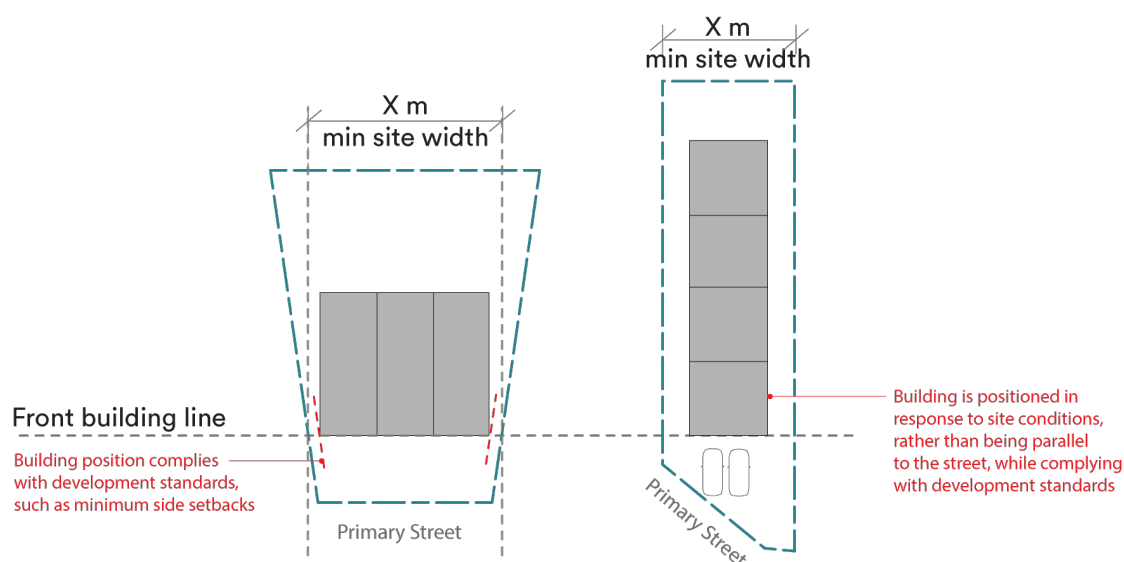
2.1 Adaptations to pattern designs

Each low-rise pattern design incorporates flexible features that can be modified within defined parameters. These adaptable features vary by pattern, and include options for dwelling size adjustments, siting arrangements, additional rooms, alternate ground and first floor layouts, inclusion of a third storey room or roof terrace, attic storage, car parking solutions, or rear lane garages or studios. Wet areas and joinery layouts are provided as indicative guides based on tested designs that meet livability standards and support the functionality of internal spaces. These layouts may be adjusted to suit individual project requirements; however, circulation paths must remain clear, access to windows and doors must be maintained, and changes should not alter the external character or position of openings and external features.

Any additional changes to the design beyond the specified adaptable pattern features outlined in the technical drawing set are not deemed to comply with the legislated requirement under the Codes SEPP or the [terms and conditions](#) for the use of patterns.

2.2 Minimum site width

The minimum site width is to be measured at the proposed front building line.



2.3 Applying the patterns to sloping sites

The patterns are designed to be adaptable to a range of site conditions, including varying slopes. Each pattern has a unique approach to sloping sites, which is detailed in the technical drawing set. However, they may not be suitable for very steep or highly complex sites.

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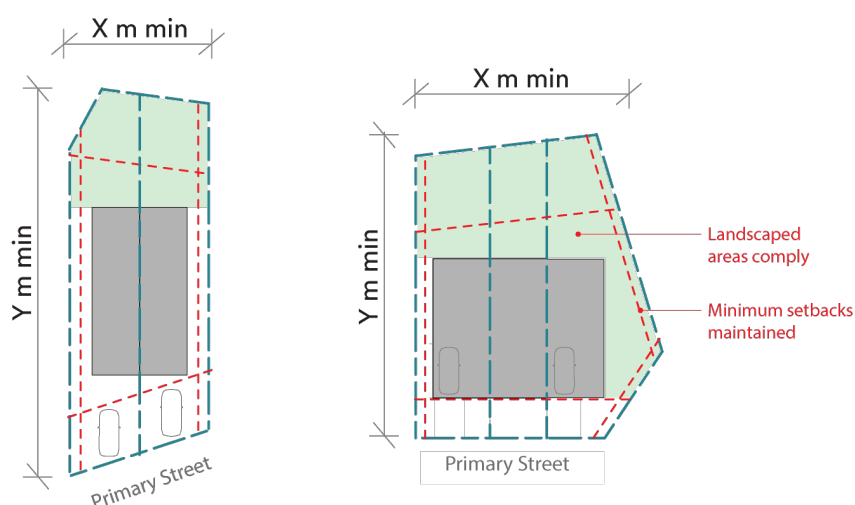
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2.4 Applying the patterns to wider or longer lots

Pattern designs can be used on wider or longer lots, provided the minimum development standards are met. Some patterns include specific provisions for larger sites.

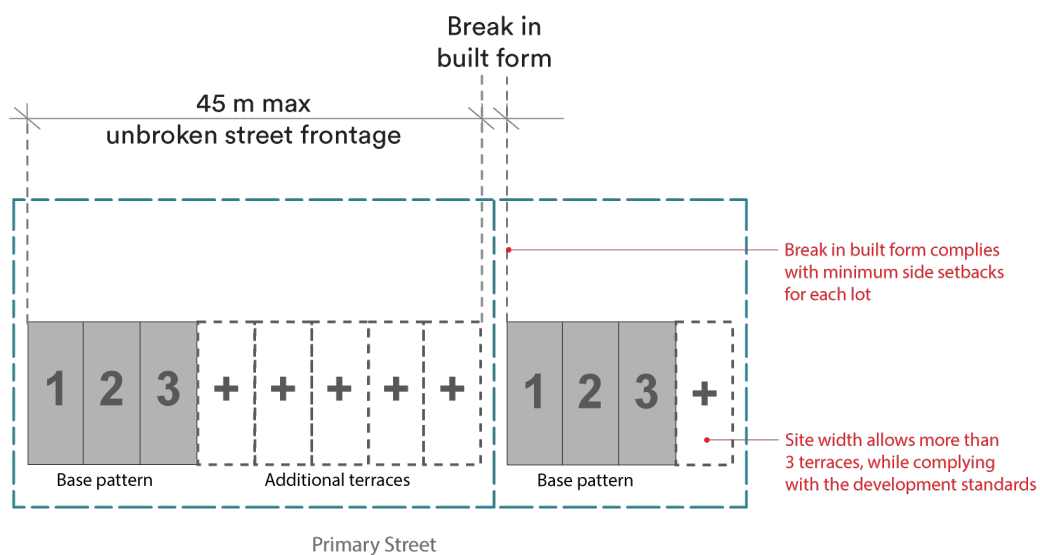
2.5 Applying the patterns to irregular-shaped lots

Pattern designs can be used on irregular-shaped lots if they remain compliant with development standards such as minimum setbacks and landscaped area requirements.



2.6 Additional terraces

For terrace patterns, up to 45 metres of unbroken street frontage is permitted in the development standards before a break in the built form is required, allowing additional terraces (that is, more than 3 terrace dwellings in a row) if the site width and side setbacks maintain compliance with development standards.



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2.7 Overshadowing considerations

Each pattern has been tested for overshadowing using siting and orientation scenarios, benchmarked against the [Low-Rise Housing Diversity Design Guide \(LRHDDG\)](#) for complying development. The planning overview page included in the pattern packs includes a requirement to demonstrate that 'reasonable solar access is provided to the living rooms and private open spaces of adjoining dwellings' as defined by the LRHDDG, with site context and neighbouring development considered.

2.8 Stormwater management considerations

Key elements such as gutters, downpipes, and rainwater collection have been addressed in the pattern designs. Site-specific stormwater solutions, dependent on factors such as slope and soil conditions, should be developed by an engineer qualified to design stormwater systems for each pattern book development.

2.9 Rainwater tanks

Rainwater tank locations are proposed for each of the designs, along with recommended minimum tank capacities in the BASIX guidance.

2.10 Considerations for existing trees

Standard complying development requirements for tree removal and pruning apply. A permit, approval or development consent for any necessary tree removal or pruning must be granted before a pattern book complying development certificate can be issued.

Setback requirements from protected trees on pattern book project sites are contained in Part [3BA.11](#) of the Pattern Book Development Code in the Codes SEPP.

2.11 Building code compliance

The patterns have been reviewed to confirm the designs are capable of compliance with the National Construction Code / Building Code of Australia (NCC/BCA), subject to the specific construction and site. Applicants will need to prepare developed design information such as a engineering details and specifications to demonstrate compliance to the certifier.

2.12 Engineering details

Engineering details, such as structural engineering, need to be designed and documented by a qualified engineer to reflect the conditions of the particular pattern book project site and intended construction method.

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2.13 Considerations for aging in place

All patterns are designed to meet the [Australian Building Codes Board \(ABCB\) Livable Housing Design Standard](#), which has been adapted from the 'silver' level requirements of the Livable Housing Association (LHA) Livable Housing Design Guidelines. Several patterns include options for one or all the dwellings to achieve the ABCB 'voluntary standard' ('beyond minimum') set out in the [ABCB Voluntary Standard for Livable Housing Design: Beyond Minimum](#). The ABCB voluntary standard has been adapted from the LHA 'gold' level requirements.

2.14 Cost considerations

Pattern designs can benefit from time and cost savings, achieved by using the pre-prepared designs and access to a fast-tracked assessment pathway. Designs are optimised for efficient size, circulation and layouts, with adaptations to suit varying budgets such as external materials and finishes. Designs can also accommodate various internal finishes and fixtures to suit budgets. Standard materials, vertically-stacked services, and efficient structural spans support cost-effective construction.

2.15 Cost information

The patterns were developed with input from a quantity surveyor to ensure the designs are cost effective. However, building costs across New South Wales will vary due to unique site characteristics, construction methods, chosen pattern adaptations and material finishes, and local requirements, and therefore, cost estimates or guidance is not provided.

The cost of construction for a pattern book project depends on the costs for development, construction and landscaping, and fees for other professional advice such as legal, financial or engineering.

For an accurate estimate of construction costs, we recommend engaging a quantity surveyor.

3. Pattern book terms and conditions

3.1 There is no expiry date for the use of pattern designs

The [terms and conditions](#) do not include an expiry date for use of the pattern.

3.2 Use of NSW Housing Pattern Book designs outside New South Wales

The NSW Housing Pattern Book [terms and conditions](#) do not permit the use of the designs outside New South Wales.

Glossary

A

Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB)	A standards-writing body responsible for the NCC and other schemes through regulatory and non-regulatory measures, in collaboration with governments and industry.
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B

Building Code of Australia (BCA)	Part of the National Construction Code (NCC) that sets minimum technical standards for the design and construction of buildings and other structures.
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C

Complying development	A fast-tracked, combined development consent and construction approval for development that meets specified predetermined development standards.
Complying development certificate (CDC)	A certificate issued by a council or private certifier stating that a proposed development is complying development and will comply with all development standards applicable to the development.
Consent authority	In relation to a DA or CDC: The council having the function to determine the application (or another authority as defined by regulations or an environmental planning instrument).

D

Development application (DA)	An application for consent under Part 4 of the EP&A Act to carry out development. It is usually made to the local council. It consists of standard forms, detailed plan drawings and a number of detailed documents (called 'submission requirements').
Development consent	Consent under Part 4 of the EP&A Act to carry out development and includes, unless expressly excluded, a complying development certificate.

Development control plan (DCP)	A detailed guideline that illustrates the controls that apply to a particular type of development or in a particular area and is made under the EP&A Act
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Dual occupancy	Two dwellings on one lot of land. They can either be attached or detached.
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E

Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)	Provides the regulatory framework for planning decisions, including the assessment of development applications, making of planning instruments, and strategic environmental planning.
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L

Local environmental plan (LEP)	A form of environmental planning instrument made under the EP&A Act. It is the principal legal document for controlling development at the council level. LEPs contain zoning provisions that establish permissibility of uses and specify standards that regulate development. They are prepared by councils and approved by the Minister or their delegates.
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Low-rise dwellings	Residential buildings that are generally one or 2 storeys, and typically include dual occupancies, multi-dwelling housing (including terraces) and low-rise residential flat buildings. It does not include freestanding houses.
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LMR housing area	As defined in the Low and Mid-rise Housing Policy.
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M

Manor house	A type of 2-storey residential flat building that has 3 or more attached dwellings, with at least one of those dwellings partially or wholly located above another dwelling.
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Multi-dwelling housing	Residential developments that have 3 or more dwellings built on a single lot, with each dwelling having access at ground level.
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Multi-dwelling housing (terraces)	A type of multi-dwelling housing where all dwellings are attached and are generally aligned along, and generally face, one or more public roads.
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N

National Construction Code (NCC)	A nationwide set of technical design and construction provisions that set the minimum required level for the safety, health, amenity, accessibility and sustainability of certain buildings.
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NSW Housing Pattern Book (pattern book)	A collection of designs for low-rise and mid-rise housing typologies including architectural drawings and supporting guidance.
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P

Pattern	A design for housing that includes architectural drawings and supporting guidance.
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Pattern book development	Development using a pattern from the NSW Housing Pattern Book that complies with all requirements and only modifies the pattern within pre-defined parameters.
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S

State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)	A form of environmental planning instrument made under the EP&A Act by the State Government to make provision with respect to any matter that, in the opinion of the Minister, is of State or regional environmental planning significance, or is of environmental planning significance to a district in the Greater Sydney Region.
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Subdivision	The division of land into 2 or more parts that, after the division, would be obviously adapted for separate occupation, use or disposition.
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