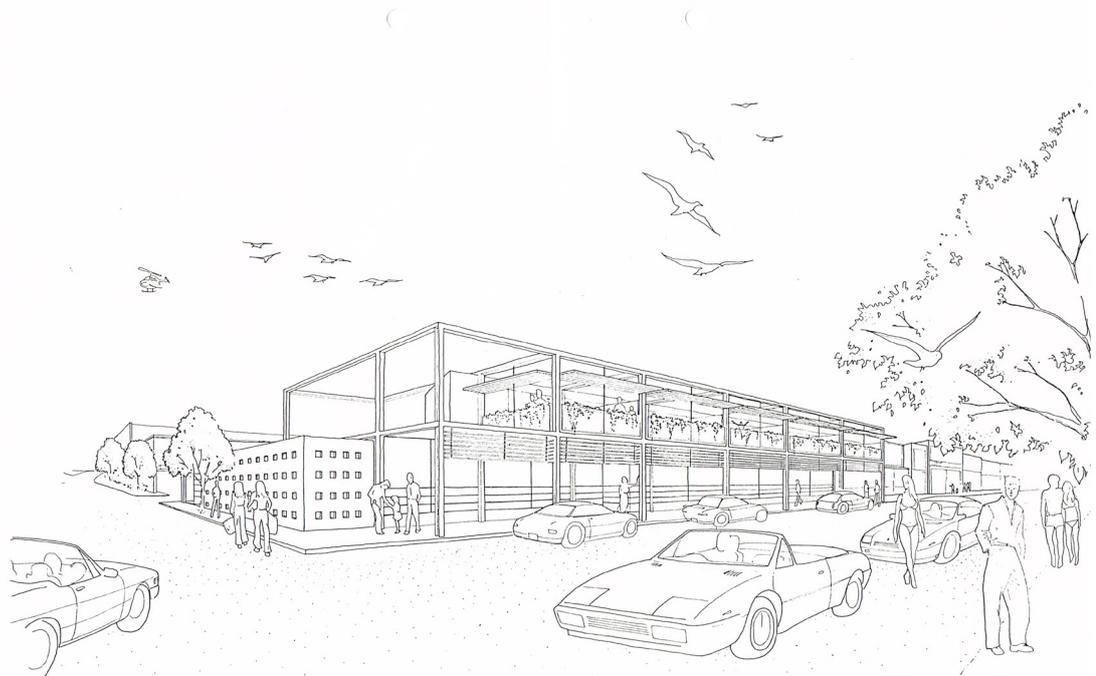
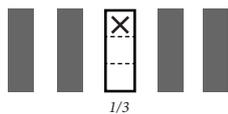


TOWN PLANNING

WHAT IS TOWN PLANNING AND HOW DO I KNOW IF I NEED IT?

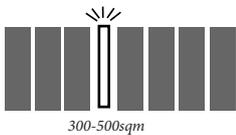


Town planning is about gaining the approval from the relevant council in the form of a planning permit. It is usually required when:



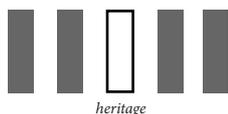
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1 Building more than one dwelling on a block. Even building a new home in your back yard may require town planning depending on the size of the block.



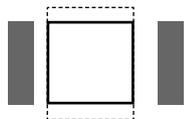
300-500sqm

2 Working with a small block – often under 500sqm or in some cases 300sqm depending on the area.



heritage

3 Working with a Heritage protected property.



dispensation

4 Requiring dispensation- for example you may want a 2m high fence in an area where the regulations only allow 1.2m.

NOTE THAT

A planning permit is **not the same as a building permit** and the drawings necessary are different. A planning permit **approves the development** and is issued by the relevant council.

In order to build you would normally still require a building permit. This is issued by a building surveyor and relates more to how the building is constructed with a focus on safety. A planning permit can only be obtained through the relevant council while a building permit can be obtained through an independent building surveyor outside of council.

TOWN PLANNING

WHAT IS TOWN PLANNING AND HOW DO I KNOW IF I NEED IT?

HOW LONG DOES IT ALL TAKE?

This will depend on the nature of the project. Trying to squeeze 4 dwellings onto a block as opposed to just two is obviously more challenging and will take longer. For projects with 2-3 dwellings, Wolf Architects suggest an allowance of 6-12 months on top of the design stages.

While this may seem like a long time it's important to recognize that it's better than not gaining approval at all. While other practices may sell themselves as being fast and able to gain approved permits they may in fact be misleading. Spending little to achieve nothing is pointless in our view.



DO WE NEED AN ARCHITECT FOR TOWN PLANNING?

Essentially “no” for smaller developments, however it is very important to understand the dangers of not using an architect and the benefits of engaging one. If you are looking to build a cheeseburger house that simply ticks off all the boxes in order to gain permits then an architect could seem expensive. However, if you wanted to do more than just the very basics, your chances of getting approval may be very limited unless you have a good architect on board.

Wolf Architects is not interested in mediocre projects and would not be inclined to take on a project that results in a “cheap and nasty” build. However, you are most likely reading this article because you want to see your project benefit from the Wolf brand. With that in mind we suggest you read on to understand the benefits of using an architect, more importantly Wolf Architects.

WHY IS TOWN PLANNING NECESSARY?

Town planning may be frustrating at times but in the overall sense it is designed to maintain standards. Australia is a beautiful country, with livable cities to live and much of this has to do with good planning.

Town planning is designed to prevent our neighbourhoods from running astray with unscrupulous developers carving up properties and building a lot of rubbish. While we may argue that our suburbs are already filling up with what we call “cheeseburger houses”, cheap, nasty and rushed designs, things would be a lot worse without town planning. Thus Town planning exists for the greater good of our urban environments and as such we should be respectful of its objectives and ideals.



WHAT DOES TOWN PLANNING COST?

This varies according to the nature of the project, and significant information is always necessary to provide an accurate estimate. Ticking all the boxes required by council is not difficult and there are many builders and drafting firms offering to do just that, for very little. Cheap fees however should always be considered with great caution in an industry where you get what you pay for.

Architects should charge significantly more than a draftsman or less qualified designer as they offer more. Especially when trying to get a contemporary development approved in areas that are dominated by traditional building styles. The process of negotiating through council's requirements and finding the best compromise takes time, knowledge, experience and great skill. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that permits will be achieved, but we believe that using a good architect greatly increases your chances. This is because they have the ability to think outside of the box and come up with alternative solutions to satisfy all parties.

With multiple dwelling developments the fees will vary in relation to the number of dwellings on a site. More dwellings will always be more challenging than less. The variations between each dwelling also affect costs. Four identical houses will be easier and less time consuming to document than four that are all completely different. The same applies to multi level apartment buildings. The more unit variations mean more design work.

It can be hard to know the possibilities until the design process has commenced though there should be some agreement between the client and the architect on what can be achieved. Thus it is important to understand that if for example, council rejects an application for three houses and the architect must re-work the proposal for two houses, there would be considerable extra work. This additional work must be allowed and paid for as appropriate, especially in situations where the architect has advised previously that 3 houses were unlikely.

TOWN PLANNING

WHY USE WOLF ARCHITECTS FOR PROJECTS REQUIRING TOWN PLANNING?



The definition of good design will always be subjective especially when the professionals in council (making the decisions) rarely have design backgrounds or are artistic in nature. Having a recognised name such as Wolf Architects can hold some weight as we are expected to produce finer work compared to someone less qualified.

Don't be fooled by people claiming, "We have done it all many times before and know the relevant council well." Many reputable architects, including Wolf Architects, have been passed over for lesser ones from this claim. While having experience is very important we believe that someone claiming to have done a particular type of project over and over again does not inspire creativity.

“ Good designs are harder to ignore and harder to deny. ”

Council regulations are not rocket science so complying with their codes is fairly straight forward. That is why most developers and draftsmen attempt by providing related services. Design however is a much more subjective topic and contemporary designs can look terrible if not done right. We believe that unless contemporary designs are done well, by good architects, council will generally be inclined to refuse applications in preference of more conservative traditional designs. Key to successful town planning is thus design excellence and this is what Wolf Architects are well known for.

We at Wolf Architects are renowned for our modern contemporary designs and our clients expect such creativity in their unit developments. It is important however to realize that the path to successful planning approvals is not always as straight forward as it should be. Contemporary designs do not often fall into council's requirement with respects to neighbourhood context. Award winning designs rarely tick all the boxes necessary to gain approval. Our high standards do tend to set our work apart from the norm and this goes against council's preference to blend in. It's an argument we've had since day one, since blending encourages mediocrity rather than excellence.

Nevertheless our track record of having many contemporary developments approved is testimony to our experience and proficiency with town planning. Without using practices like Wolf Architects, you are likely to turn out with "cheeseburger".

