

Installing and maintaining bud lights in street trees

Brisbane City Council offers businesses a simple, free, online application and permit process to install and maintain bud (fairy) lighting in street trees surrounding their premises.

This factsheet provides information on how to correctly install and maintain bud lighting.

Installation guide

Installation must be undertaken in accordance with the permit conditions.

Bud lights must be attached to the tree in a manner that causes no physical damage to the tree and allows it to grow.

Using a combination of limited winding of light strings and flexible attachment materials, such as Velcro or UV durable insulation tape, is acceptable.

The following installation methods are not acceptable:

- cable ties
- staples
- screws
- inflexible bands.



No cable ties, no screw-in attachments and no bud lighting on branches with a diameter less than 50 mm.

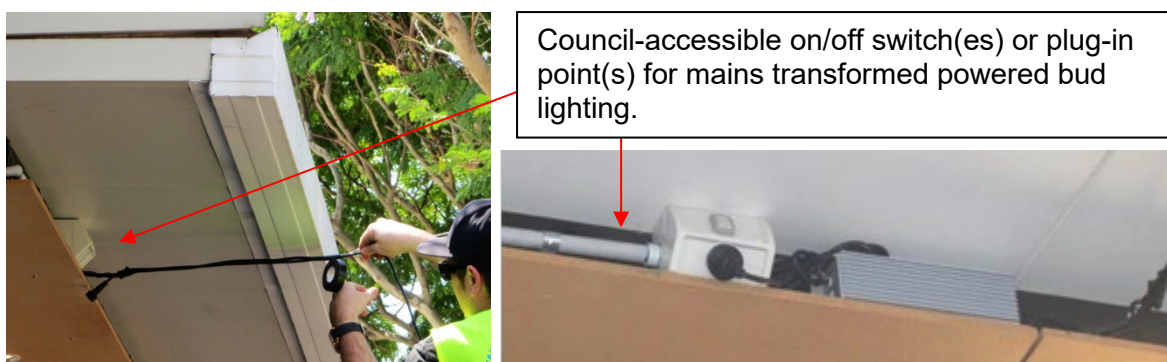


Some minor pruning of small diameter branches within 2.5 metres of the ground (using non-motorised hand tools) can be permitted in conjunction with the bud lighting permit. Pruning larger, higher branches or aerial roots is not permitted. Further information is available about Council's [street tree pruning and maintenance programs](#).

Bud lights should be attached to branches that are no smaller than 50 millimetres in diameter. This helps ensure the branch is able to hold the weight of cabling and lights. Tree limbs of this size are also likely to grow at a slower rate than smaller ones, which will result in less maintenance by the permit holder.

Lights must be installed in accordance with safe work standards and other [footpath occupancy or traffic management permit requirements](#).

A Council-accessible on/off switch or plug-in(s) for mains transformed powered bud lighting must be installed by a registered electrician. This allows the lights to be disengaged should Council need to undertake street tree maintenance.

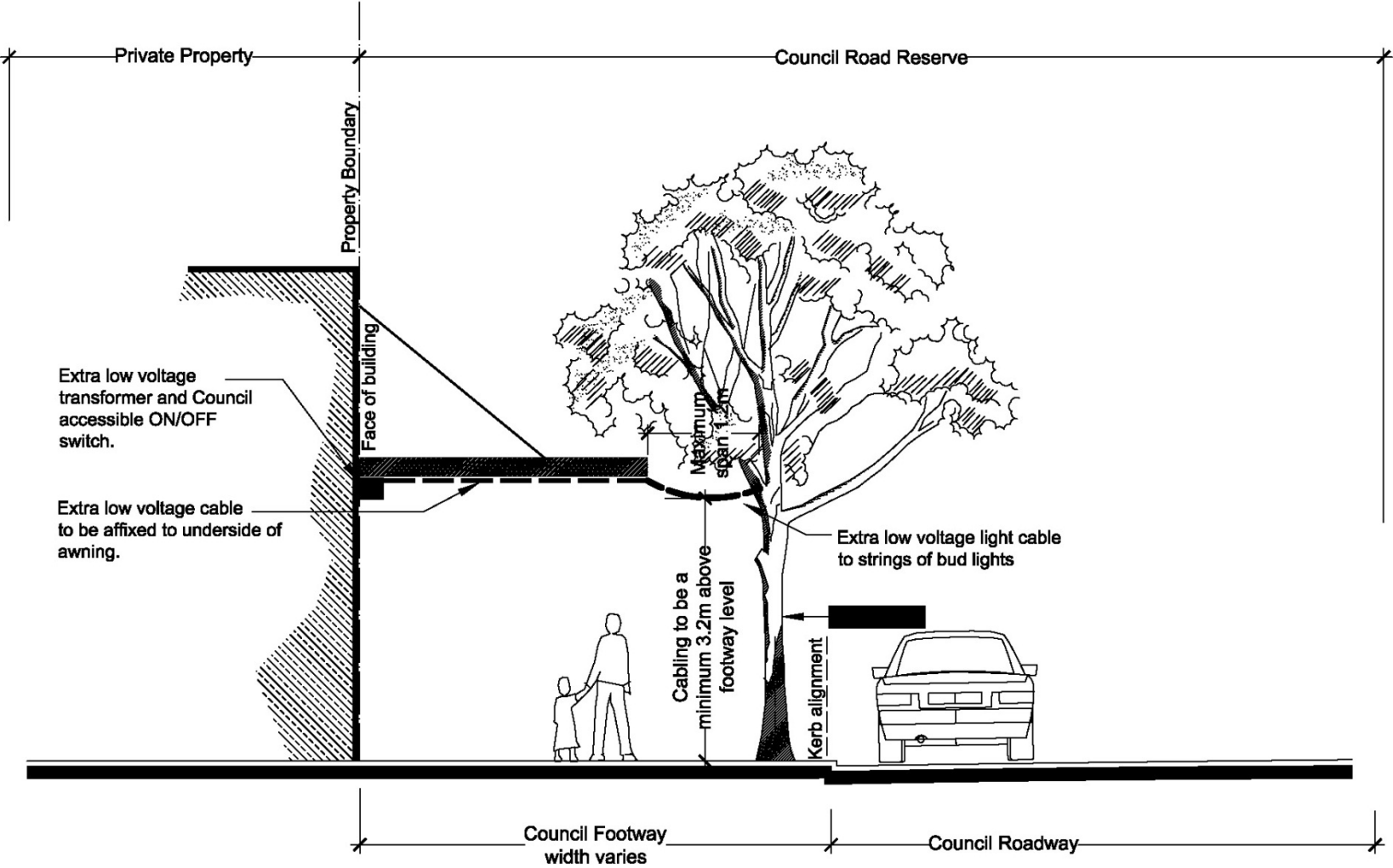


Wiring must be more than 3.2 metres above the footpath so that it does not impede pedestrian access. Wiring is not permitted across vehicle access routes (refer to example bud lighting diagram).

Within mixed use centres, where residents may be living within 100 metres of the bud lighting, permits will require the lighting be timed to turn off between 11pm and 6am. This is to ensure that lighting is not obtrusive and does not create a nuisance to nearby residents. In other district, major and principal centres, lighting curfews will not apply.

When applying for a permit, you will need to provide a plan of the proposed installation. This can be hand drawn (refer to example installation plan).

Example bud lighting diagram

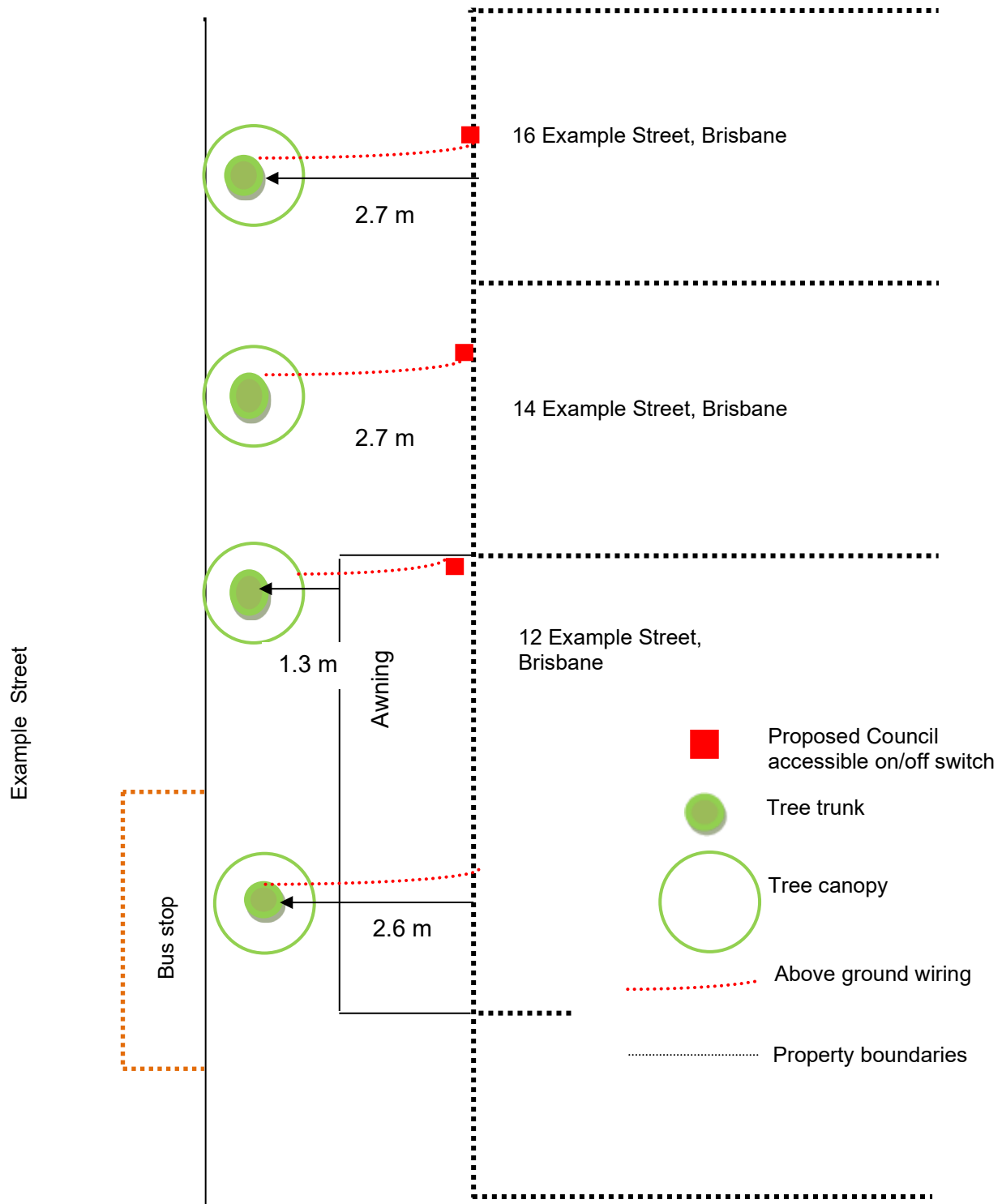


Example installation plan

On the installation plan you must show:

- distance from property boundary to the trunk of the tree(s)
- traffic lights, bus stops or parking restrictions in the vicinity
- location of above-ground wiring (for transformed mains power)
- location of proposed on/off switch(es) (for transformed mains power)
- any awnings.

Refer example plan below for the level of detail required.



Maintenance checklist

Weekly

- ☐ Check for faulty bud lights, dangling cables or broken tree branches and make necessary repairs. NOTE: Costs incurred by Council in making safe a public safety hazard associated with non-compliant bud lighting can be recovered from the permit holder.

Annually

- ☐ Keep trees healthy and attractive by removing loose bark that may have collected under lighting strings and attachments. Revisit the online application form to complete the annual Declaration of Compliance required by Council to ensure public safety, amenity and tree protection is maintained.

Every 2-3 years

- ☐ Expect a renewal of the lighting about every 2-3 years. The lifespan of good-quality bud lighting is improving, so take the opportunity at renewal time to consider any upgrades of lighting types to maintain a good lighting display and maximum durability.

Ongoing

- ☐ Contact Council about broken branches or concerns about the condition of street trees.
- ☐ Renewal and reinstatement of permitted bud lighting. When severe weather causes street tree damage, Council will disengage the lights at the on/off switch and make the situation safe for the public. However, permit holders are responsible for reinstating and fixing the lighting.
- ☐ Undertake all maintenance in accordance with work safe standards and all other [footpath occupancy or traffic management permit requirements](#).



Council will undertake regular audits to ensure compliance with bud lighting permit conditions. Penalties may apply for non-compliance.

For further assistance phone Council's Business Hotline on 133 BNE (133 263) 24 hours a day, seven days a week.