

PUBLIC HOUSING RENEWAL: MARSDEN ST, DICKSON

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD



DICKSON REDEVELOPMENT

From 15 October to 21 December 2018 and then from 17 April 2019 to 10 May 2019, Housing ACT sought input from the community for a new public housing development in Marsden Street, Dickson.

The existing 3 and 4-bedroom dwellings at 44 & 46 Marsden Street, Dickson (Block 20 & 21, Section 24), have reached the end of their useful life, but the blocks are located close to local schools, health services and other community facilities as well as shops and public transport at the Dickson Group Centre. As such, Housing ACT is proposing to replace the existing dwellings with five 2-bedroom houses over the two consolidated sites.



The dwellings will be allocated to older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and will be constructed to Class C Adaptable standards. Adaptable housing ensures that people of all ages and abilities can live within the home and it can be easily adapted to meet changing household needs without requiring costly or substantial modifications. This is part of the ongoing commitment to revitalise the public housing portfolio. It is also in line with the ACT Government's commitment to support culturally appropriate public housing accommodation options for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community¹.

Housing ACT has given careful consideration to the site and local amenity to produce a high-quality design that aims to integrate with the surrounding area whilst addressing the tenants' needs now and into the future. The site was chosen in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, with Dickson chosen due to its proximity to shops, health services, public transport and other essential services.

There are a number of large trees within the verge and on the site which will be retained to maintain the leafy character of the suburb.

CHANGES TO THE DESIGN

The original design proposal included six 2-bedroom houses. After the first round of community engagement, Housing ACT decided to reduce the yield to five 2-bedroom houses.

Due to the proposed change in dwelling numbers, a second round of community engagement was undertaken from 17 April to 10 May 2019.

THE CONVERSATION

Housing ACT engaged with the community to seek feedback on the shape and scale of the proposal and asked people to consider the orientation, look, design and landscaping of the new development.

We initially engaged with stakeholders face-to-face and online about the proposed development from 15 October to 21 December 2018. A second round of community engagement took place from 17 April to 10 May 2019, with the YourSay page updated and the surrounding neighbours advised of the updated designs via a letter box drop.

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In early October 2018, a letter was sent to 41 residents in the surrounding neighbourhood to inform them of the proposed development. Information about the proposal, as well as copies of the plans, were published on the YourSay website and a drop-in information session was held at the Dickson Group Centre on 10 November 2018, where community members were invited to stop by to see the plans, ask questions and engage with representatives from Housing ACT about the project. In April 2019, a second letter was sent to 39 surrounding residents to inform them of the new proposal and the YourSay web page was updated to show the revised design intention.

WHO ENGAGED

Some local residents made comments on YourSay or sent emails and others attended the on-site information session to discuss the proposal.

During the first phase of community engagement, the YourSay page for the proposed development at Marsden Street reached 445 Canberrans, with nine individuals leaving 13 comments. Thirty local residents attended the on-site drop-in session on Saturday 10 November 2018.

During the second phase of community engagement, the YourSay page reached 183 people. Six people sent 13 emails about the project over both phases of community engagement.

Key insights from the community

Public Housing in Dickson

1. There was support for well-designed public housing in Dickson and the construction of supportive housing on this site
2. Some felt the existing dwellings should be retained and/or renovated rather than demolished
3. Support for the design to include less than six units to ensure adequate space on the block for amenity/landscaping

Affordable and Accessible Housing

4. There was general interest in the design of the properties, and support for adaptable homes
5. There was support for the single storey design of the dwellings

Parking

6. There were concerns about the on street visitor parking
7. There were concerns about the increase in the number of cars entering and exiting the site and how that will affect the safety of other road users and pedestrians

Neighbourhood amenity

8. Comments that the proposed development is inconsistent with the character of the street/zoning
9. There was some concern around ambient noise
10. There was a desire to keep the established trees on the block, to maintain the leafy character of the suburb
11. Some commenters felt the new homes are too close to the fence/boundary

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WHAT'S NEXT?

Housing ACT values the community's feedback to the proposed development. For the most part, feedback was supportive of the redevelopment of public housing on the site.

Matters raised through the community engagement process have been taken into consideration and, where possible, addressed through the design. A table outlining what we heard and how we have responded is attached to this report.

Housing ACT proposes to proceed with the development and the next step is to finalise the design in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body before lodging the Development Application (DA). There will be further opportunity to provide comment as part of the DA process. The DA will be notified at http://www.planning.act.gov.au/development_applications/pubnote

To find out more about the Marsden Street development and other Housing ACT projects in Canberra visit www.yoursay.act.gov.au or email the Housing ACT team directly at housingactrenewal@act.gov.au.

Key Timings

Step 1: 15 October – 21 December 2018, first round community engagement

Step 2: 17 April 2019 - 10 May 2019, second round of community engagement

Step 3: June– compile and respond to community feedback
We are here

Step 4: Late 2019– finalise design with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and submit Development Application

Step 5: 2019/20 – commence construction (subject to development approval)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

628

The YourSay page was viewed 445 times during the first round of community engagement and 183 times during the second round

32

We spoke to 30 individuals face-to-face at the drop in session in November 2018 and met with 2 neighbours at their home

1

We held one on-site pop-up information kiosk

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13

We received 13 comments from 9 individuals on YourSay about the initial design proposal

6

6 people got in touch via email

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We received no further comments on YourSay about the revised designs

ⁱ ACT Housing Strategy (October 2018); https://www.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1265638/ACT-Housing-Strategy-2018.pdf