

Watson- Section 76 Online Presentation Q&As

Development

Is there currently a two-storey limit for the whole block or only the first 160m setback from the Federal Highway?

The current building height limit across the site is 2 storeys. Part of the site includes provisions from the National Capital Authority's National Capital Plan, which restricts building height to 2 storeys within 160 metres of the Federal Highway.

DV372 proposes to increase the building heights from 2 to 4 storeys for the south of the site only, closest to Aspinall Street. The proposed building height changes will provide Demonstration Housing proponents more flexibility with the design of their built form. A 4-storey building height limit to the south of the site is sympathetic to the landscape. The future buildings will be lower than the existing trees along the southern site boundary with Aspinall Street. We are seeking to retain the existing trees, which will provide a visual buffer between buildings and neighbouring blocks



Do the 150-200 residences include the Demonstration Housing block?

Yes, the 150-200 dwelling yield includes the Demonstration Housing blocks. The division of residences between blocks has not been identified yet.

What is the reasoning behind the four-storey development proposal? Why not three?

Planning for the site has considered the character of the area and the design of nearby buildings. There are examples of other three to four storey buildings in North Watson, including the Solstice on Antill Street. Four storeys are proposed as they provide for development flexibility while still being sympathetic to the treed landscape. Four storeys will allow the trees to provide a visual buffer, whilst accommodating the targeted 150-200 dwellings.

Will the development be of a high standard - not like some of the other recent housing in North Watson?

We are aware that the community has concerns regarding recent developments in North Watson, particularly building quality. In our draft Place Plan and Development Concept available on our YourSay webpage, we have identified some precedents which we hope to guide the themes and buildings on the site. Our draft Place Plan and Development Concept was open for public comment until COB 19 March 2021.

The final Place Plan and Development Concept will be provided to the Suburban Land Agency which will manage the sale of the sites. It will also be provided to developers as a guide on community values in the area. Additionally, developers will be required to consult with the community on the built form of their development during the development application stage.

What is the “setback” concept?

A ‘setback’ refers to the space between the site boundary and the built form. The northern edge of Section 76 is subject to setback provisions under the National Capital Plan, which mandates a minimum setback of 15 metres from the Federal Highway. Setbacks for the eastern, western and southern edges of Section 76 will be determined using the relevant development codes.

Development codes are informed by land zoning, and so the relevant development codes for Section 76 will depend on the outcome of DV372, which proposes to change the zoning of the site to part PRZ1 urban open space and part RZ4 medium density residential. Under these development codes, the minimum setback distances are determined based on the type of development and building height.

Will there be good solar orientation for the development?

Solar access has been considered in our place planning, but further consideration will be given during the Estate Development Plan and development application stages. Solar access will need to be considered in line with the relevant development codes depending on the development type. The relevant code will be dependent on the outcome of DV372 which proposes rezoning the site to part PRZ1 urban open space and part RZ4 medium density residential.

If DV372 is approved, buildings within RZ4 zoning will be subject to the Multi-Unit Housing Development code. Under this code, solar access requirements differ depending on whether the development is a townhouse, apartment, etc. Solar access will be provided in line with the relevant development code.

Any thoughts of running the whole development with a “solar battery” storage model?

At this stage, there are no plans to run the development with a solar battery storage model. This may be investigated by developers and/or Demonstration Housing proponents during the Request for Tender stage and/or development application stage.

Trees/Wildlife

Does the target for tree canopy (30% across the site) have a timeframe attached to it? For example, will it be measured after saplings have grown?

[Canberra’s Living Infrastructure Plan](#) aims to have Canberra’s urban environment covered by 30% of tree canopy and 30% permeable surfaces by 2045. The draft Place Plan and Development Concept

for Section 76 responds to this policy by setting a target of 30% tree canopy and 30% permeable surfaces to be developed and maintained across the site.

At this stage, there is no timeframe attached to these targets for the site. The canopy cover for the site is currently approximately three hectares out of a total nine hectares, almost equivalent to our 30% target. Our intent is to retain as many trees on site as possible to help achieve this target. However, some trees may need to be removed to provide for the access road or improve safety outcomes. Community consultation will be required prior to any tree removal. The method in which we achieve this target will be assessed further during the detailed design stage through consultation with our Climate Change colleagues, the Tree Protection Unit in TCCS and ACT Parks and Conservation.

The 42-page tree report seems to suggest all the pine trees will be removed. Can you confirm this?

The tree assessment presented in our Preliminary Planning Report in 2018 is being used only as an indicator of tree health and tree species. To meet our 30% canopy target we are looking to retain trees on site. While some trees such as *Pinus radiata* are a weed species, they can provide value as a visual and wind buffer, as well as support canopy cover and bird movement. During the development of an Estate Development Plan for Section 76, we plan to undertake a more detailed tree and landscape management assessment.

How many of the trees along the Aspinall St side might have to be removed?

An Estate Development Plan (EDP) is required to be prepared for the site. As part of the EDP, a Tree and Landscape Management Plan developed by a specialist arborist will provide recommendations for new tree plantings and steps that can be taken to improve the health and maintenance of the existing trees. We have a 30% canopy target for the site and hope to retain as many trees as possible.

The EDP and Tree and Landscape Management Plan may also recommend that specific trees be removed -- for example, if the tree poses a risk to public safety, or to provide access to the site from Antill Street. The community will be consulted on the EDP and have input into future applications for development approval.

What plans / protocols are in place to ensure that new plantings are from local provenance and gene pool? Preferably no more new plantings of more exotics of any kind... You mentioned Chinese Elms just now. These are NOT endemic. Elms in general tend to be invasive and weedy, especially English Elm. Check their weedy propensities please.

The previous tree assessment that was undertaken recommended some species for planting, including the Chinese Elm and various wattle species which are valuable for the Superb Parrot. There is also the opportunity to plant grasses and other plants which provide different ecological values.

The ACT Government is planning to undertake a Tree and Landscape Management plan during the detailed design phase which will guide any plans for planting. Some exotic species do provide value as habitat for existing fauna and as wind and climate buffers, however the need for this will be assessed further during the detailed design phase. We will also consult with the Tree Protection Unit in TCCS, the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, and Parks and Conservation prior to planting.

Can you expand a bit more on the impact on fauna?

We have undertaken an ecological values and constraints assessment for Section 76 which showed that any residential development on site would be unlikely to have any significant impacts on ecological values.

A large part of the site will be rezoned to urban open space, including an area the Superb Parrot uses for foraging. This part of the site will be off limits to development and will be managed by the Territory.

The design of the proposed new public park will also consider including plants and trees that support wildlife. At present, the land is zoned CZ6 Leisure and Accommodation, which offers no such protection.

ACT Parks and Conservation Service, which undertakes research into the Superb Parrots breeding, foraging and movement habits, has advised that the draft Place Plan and Development Concept and draft variation number 372 to the Territory Plan are a biodiversity sensitive planning proposal.

We have been advised the Superb Parrot may temporarily stop using the site during construction, but is expected to return. There are other more important foraging habitat sites for the Superb Parrot in Watson so the impact is not considered significant.

The draft Place Plan and Development Concept also commits to 30 per cent canopy cover across the site, which will support wildlife on site.

Affordable Housing

Are there plans to provide affordable housing?

Affordable housing is determined for a site during the planning of the site and prior to the sale of the site. A number of factors are considered when applying housing targets to a site, including access to amenities, proximity to schools, transport, employment centres, and public open space as well as existing concentrations of affordable and social housing in each suburb.

Watson Section 76 is currently in the planning stage and it has therefore not been decided if public, community or affordable housing will be included on the site. Should the Draft Variation to the Territory Plan number 372 be approved by the Minister for Planning and Land Management to allow for part residential use, the site will be considered for public, community and affordable housing prior to its release to the market.

What is the 15% figure I've heard mentioned? not in relation to this site, just ACT planning generally

Under the ACT Housing Strategy, the government dedicates at least 15 per cent of residential dwelling sites for public, community and affordable housing (Housing Targets) each year.

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Demonstration Housing

Can you please explain (briefly) the demonstration housing process?

In early 2018, the Demonstration Housing Project called for Stage 1 Expressions of Interest, and proponents were invited to apply for one of two categories:

- With a site – proponents who had a housing concept and already owned land (a site) appropriate for the proposed development.
- Without a site – proponents who had a housing concept but who did not own land (a site).

Responses were received from individuals, developers, industry groups, community housing providers and organisations (proponents) who had a housing concept they wanted to test and deliver in Canberra. Of the 27 expressions of interest received, 17 proposals were selected to progress and invited to the next evaluation stage - Stage 2 Request for Proposal/Tender. To date, only the proposals 'with a site' have completed Stage 2.

The ACT Government has identified suitable ACT Government owned land that will be appropriate for each 'without a site' proponent and will be releasing the Stage 2 Request for Tender documentation to these proponents throughout 2021.

This is the process which is being undertaken on the Demonstration Housing Section 76 sites.

The plan has two sites for "demonstration housing - cohousing". What is that?

Demonstration Housing is a government initiative that seeks to test innovative housing and promote excellence in design, building quality and sustainability that may meet a number of desired outcomes and objectives of government but might not be possible under the current planning rules.

Demonstration Housing is closely aligned to the ACT Government's Housing Choices policy project that is focused on how government can better meet the housing needs of the city's residents, now and into the future.

An aim of the initiative is to identify how more flexibility in elements of the planning system could enable more housing choice and encourage the type and quality of residential buildings that our community needs and is looking for, such as co-housing. Co-housing is a type of living arrangement which emphasises building a sense of community. It consists of separate dwellings with some common or shared facilities, such as kitchens, living areas, gardens, laundries and even car-share schemes for residents to use.

Is there any call for 4 storeys from Demonstration Housing? I looked at your website and didn't see any more than 2 storeys.

The design for the Demonstration Housing projects on the Watson Section 76 sites has not been prepared at this stage. The proponent/s will develop their design during the Stage 2 Request for Tender submission as part of the Demonstration Housing Project process.

A draft variation to the Territory Plan (DV372) proposes to increase the building limit to 4 storeys on the sites nominated for Demonstration Housing use, to provide Demonstration Housing proponents increased flexibility with their design.

If the proponents are successful in the Stage 2 Request for Tender, they will be required to undertake pre-development assessment (DA) community consultation on their proposal, seeking feedback from the community. The proponent's design will be available on the Demonstration Housing website during that time. There will also be the statutory public notification period through the DA process where the community will have the opportunity to provide comment.

Traffic

Is it possible to have cars exiting onto Federal Highway?

Part of Section 76 is subject to provisions under the National Capital Plan (NCP). The NCP includes provisions relating to landscaping, building and access requirements to ensure that the gateway into our city is prominent.

From Antill Street to the intersection with the realigned Majura Road, access will not be permitted on the southern side of the highway except to Apex Park. This area includes Section 76 Watson.

Will there be on street parking along the Aspinall St side of the development?

Parking requirements will be assessed during the development of the Estate Development Plan. A parking assessment will consider the need for parking along Aspinall Street as well as the impacts on pedestrian and cyclist safety and the nearby bus stops on Aspinall Street. The neighbourhood park is for local residents within walking and cycling distance, however there may be some provisions for on street parking as well.

Will there be underground parking proposed for the development or only above ground?

Provisions for parking will be undertaken during the development application for each development site. Under the National Capital Plan there is a provision that prohibits any carparks which are visible from the Federal Highway. This may mean underground carparking will be more suitable. Ultimately, the type of parking will depend on the development type (i.e. apartment complex, townhouses, etc.). These options will be discussed with developers and assessed during the development application stage.

Consultation

What is the next step in the consultation?

The ACT Government will review and report back on community feedback received on the draft Place Plan and Development Concept and DV372. Community feedback will be used to refine our planning and develop a final Place Plan and Development Concept.

The final Place Plan and Development Concept will be made publicly available in mid-2021. If approved, Territory Plan variation number 372 will be finalised in 2022. Once finalised, the Place Plan and Development Concept and DV372 will direct future planning for the site, including the preparation of an Estate Development Plan.

An Estate Development Plan will be developed, consulted on and approved before the land can be sold for housing. Future development proposals will go through the development approval application process, which provides further opportunities for community comment. Demonstration Housing will also undertake community consultation on their designs if they are successful through the Stage 2 Request for Tender evaluation process. Information on community consultation will be posted on the Demonstration Housing website as well as the proponent's website when available.

Any urban open space will be retained and managed by the Territory. Funding considerations will inform what can be delivered and when, in regard to the proposed neighbourhood park and other site servicing, such as walking and cycling paths and an access road into the site.