



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Ms Chiaka Barry MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

In relation to: St Francis Church Site

Hearing: 24 July 2026

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 110

Transcript provided: 28 July 2026

Answer Due: 2 August 2026

Dr Swete Kelly took on notice the following question(s):

THE CHAIR: On notice. Okay, thank you. And also, can you take on notice whether a development application has been lodged or approved for the site?

Dr Swete Kelly: Okay.

THE CHAIR: And also whether there are demolitions planned as part of the DA application?

Dr Swete Kelly: Okay. I am not aware of anything at this stage. But we will take on notice and gather that investigation.

Mr Burkevics: And maybe, Chair, just for process issue, the question about a DA maybe referred further.

Mr Engele: Yes, we will take it on notice.

THE CHAIR: Yes, okay. Thank you so much. Thank you. Do we want to come back to you?

Chris Steel MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The St Francis Church (Block 8 Section 2 Nicholls) was subject to a recent development application (DA202342382) that was refused by the Territory Planning Authority on 15 August 2024, and a reconsideration application that was subsequently approved on 13 February 2025.

The original application that was refused proposed:

- Demolition of existing buildings and structures
- a two-storey 550-seat place of assembly
- three-storey hotel comprising of 57 rooms
- basement, undercroft and surface carparking
- Retention of the heritage church hall with proposed attached pavilion
- Internal driveway, landscaping and associated works
- Lease Variation to vary the crown lease to allow the proposed uses.

The Territory Planning Authority (the Authority) have advised ne that among the refusal reasons for the original DA, of note was inconsistency with advice received from the ACT Heritage Council (the Council). The Council advised the development was likely to diminish the heritage significance of the heritage registered place, and requested design amendments to avoid and minimise these heritage impacts.

The reconsideration application that was approved included the following key changes:

- Reduction in place of assembly seat number from 550 to 400.
- Clarification that the hotel component will be ancillary to place of assembly
- Retention of the heritage church hall retained with no change to the façade
- Removal of the pavilion addition to the church and removal of proposed additions to the Church
- Relocation of the on-site substation
- Removal of lower ground function space
- Significant design and siting changes to address refusal reason detailed in the previous Notice of Decision dated 15 August 2024.

Buildings and structures have been approved for demolition as part of the reconsideration application, but this does not include the heritage church hall, which is proposed to be retained on site. The Heritage Council also provided advice on the reconsideration application where they noted that subject to conditions, the revised development is unlikely to diminish the heritage significance of the place.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2026-2027

Signature:



Date:

4/8/26

By the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development, Chris Steel MLA