

Your local voice

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The Standing Committee on Planning , Environment
and Territory and Municipal Services
G.P.O. Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

24 August 2015

Submission in Relation to the Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No 343 – Residential Blocks Surrendered under the loose fill asbestos insulation eradication scheme

I am writing on behalf of the Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) in relation to the proposed variation to the Territory Plan to allow changes to the RZ1 planning rules.

Weston Creek Community Council would like to offer the following comments in relation to the proposal:

Draft Variation 343 to the Territory Plan proposes to:

- Reduce the block size for dual occupancy development on the surrendered blocks from 800m² to 700m²,
- Permit subdivision for unit titling of dual occupancy development on the affected blocks,
- Alter the plot ratio to accommodate the reduction in block size, consistent with plot ratio provisions currently applying to dual occupancy development in the RZ2 suburban core zone,
- Limit the building height to single storey for any dual occupancy dwelling to which a 35% plot ratio will apply, and
- Introduce a design criterion for dual occupancy development on the affected blocks to maintain and support the amenity of existing residential RZ1 suburban zoned areas.

It is claimed that *“the proposed changes through this draft variation are modest. The existing amenity of surrounding suburbs and streets will be maintained and supported through code requirements also contained in this draft variation.”*

The Weston Creek Community Council does not agree that the proposed changes are modest. The changes have the potential by considerably altering pockets within suburbs to affect the whole character of a suburb. It is known that there are concentrations in specific streets, cul-de-sacs and in back-to-back situations with blocks I adjoining streets.

The proposed variation will result in concentrated areas of increased density that in some cases will not be modest. The streetscape will be changed and it will be those who own houses nearby who will be the most affected.

By allowing higher plot ratios and unit titling the proposed changes will encourage large and most likely two storey dwellings as owners and builders endeavour to maximize their return on an expensive block. Inevitable these dwellings will push the upper boundaries of of the permitted plot ratios. These increased ratios are highly likely to result in overlooking and overshadowing devaluing the amenity of the existing residential area .

WCCC considers that if blocks are subdivided single storey houses only would be more appropriate on blocks in the range 700 – 800 sq m. Further that consideration be given to include a specific design criteria requiring that area where plot ratios of 50% apply basement car parking should be allowed.

1. Change in the Size of the Block

Council does not agree with the reduction in the block size for dual occupancy from 800 square metres to 700 square metres. This has all the hallmarks of a precedent to allow dual occupancy of all blocks down to 700 square metres in RZ1 Zoned areas of Canberra. It has particular significance on blocks where it would be extremely difficult to meet the criteria concerning solar access if a block is subdivided.

2. Altering the Plot Ratio

Council does not agree with altering the plot ratio to be the same as for RZ2 located blocks. The affected blocks are in the RZ1 Zone and the plot ratio should remain as that for RZ1 blocks. Altering the sliding scale is a significant change as an example on a block 1,120 sq m.the plot ratio is 5% higher and there would be an additional 112sq m of floor area.

Limiting the Building Height

The Delegate states in the introduction that the proposal would

Limit the building height to a single storey for any dual occupancy dwelling to which a 35% plot ratio will apply.

In the Draft Variation, page 5, it states that:

Building heights for dual occupancy development on the affected blocks has been limited to single storey for any dual occupancy dwelling to which a 35% plot ratio will apply.

Yet at Page 6 the Draft Variation states:

The existing amenity of streets and suburbs will be maintained through a building height limit and an associated design criterion.

On page 14 of the Draft variation is a statement under Rule 3.12 relating to the Number of Storeys in a] ii *two storey for all other single dwelling blocks.*

Council considers that the integrity of the RZ1 Zone is threatened by this proposal and undermines the rules that apply to other land in the zone and recommends that

- Only single storey dwellings be allowed on unit titled blocks, plus attics and basement car parking where plot ratios of 50% apply, and
- Keep the current sliding scale plot ratios

It is considered that this can be utilized to encourage innovative high quality design which will maintain the amenity of the streets in which the dwellings can inject an example of what can be achieved.

3. Design Criteria to Maintain the Amenity of Existing RZ1 areas

WCCC supports this statement and stresses that it is crucial these criteria be maintained and enforced. In order that the streetscape be maintained a plot ratio that allows adequate and appropriate planting is necessary. Additionally building setbacks and a suitable front fence policy to closely resemble that of the existing streetscape is required.

It is important that these design criteria are both appropriate and enforced then a visually harmonious streetscape can be achieved. Further there will be variety and interest which does not detract from the existing streetscape but enhances it.

By making careful considered changes the unit title provisions could maintain the integrity of the RZ 1 and protect the properties surrounding the blocks which are being redeveloped

If required the WCCC would be available to discuss this Submission.

Tom Anderson
Chairman
Weston Creek Community Council