



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN SERVICES

REPORT NO. 74 JULY 2001
MAWSON/ATHLLON DRIVE LAND USE

RECOMMENDATION

The committee recommends that the planned land release of the Athllon Drive Corridor Estate not proceed for the following reasons. It is relatively poorly served by public transport, it lacks good pedestrian and cycle connections to the Woden centre, it creates further dense multi-unit development in an area already replete with this type of development, and it does not maintain the level of separation between different landuses which residents expect.



BACKGROUND

1. Following representations by local residents, the members of the committee became concerned about aspects of the proposed residential development along Athllon Drive in Mawson. The committee resolved to obtain a public briefing on the matter; the Assembly then directed the committee to conduct a formal inquiry. This report is the outcome of that inquiry.
2. Key dates in the inquiry are listed in the Box on this page.
3. The committee invited public comment and received 11 submissions. As well, the committee obtained a copy of the 93 submissions received by PALM.

KEY DATES IN THE INQUIRY

17/11/00—committee agreed to schedule a public hearing on the proposal for medium density housing near Athllon Drive, Mawson, following concern expressed by local residents. Also, committee asked the Minister for Urban Services to delay further action by his department on this matter until after that public hearing (the Minister advised the committee on 5/12/00 that he assented to this request)

6/12/00—the Legislative Assembly resolved as follows: *That this Assembly requires the Minister for Urban Services to not proceed with the proposed sale and release of the Mawson/Athllon Drive Corridor until the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Services has reviewed the appropriateness of the Residential Land Use designation of the land and the government has presented its response to the committee's report*

16/2/01—committee asked Minister for Urban Services for a copy of the submissions received by PALM on this matter (provided on 23/2/01)

23/2/01—public hearing attended by local residents and representatives of the Mawson Phillip Residents' Action Group, along with officers of DUS [PALM and Land&Property].

10/4/01—inspection of the site by the committee, in the company of Mr Cornwell MLA, local residents and officers of DUS

THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN SERVICES

The Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Services was established on 28/4/98 to inquire into and report on planning and lease management, road and transport services, infrastructure and asset management and public utilities purchasing, electricity industry and regulation, construction industry policy, parks and forests, private sector employment inspectorate, building services, environment, heritage and municipal services and any other related matter (*resolution of appointment, as amended on 25/11/99, 7/2/00 and 15/2/01*).

Committee members: Mr Harold Hird MLA (Chair), Mr Dave Rugendyke MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr Simon Corbell MLA

Secretary—Mr Rod Power; Office secretary—Ms Judy Moutia; for further information please contact the secretary on ph: 02 6205-0435 or fax: 02 6205-0432 or email: committees@act.gov.au

THE PROPOSAL

4. The proposed residential development—known as the Phillip and Mawson (Athllon Drive Corridor) Estate—is to the east of the Yarralumla Creek stormwater channel, north and south of Power Street, Mawson. It would comprise a mix of multi-unit and single residential sites.
5. The multi-unit sites would be in 16 separate blocks to the north of Power Street in Phillip. The blocks would provide for 115 units and ‘will be in accord with the style and type of existing units in that suburb... [though with] a lower block density than currently exists in Swinger Hill’.¹ Their actual density would be approximately 25 dwellings per hectare, which compares to the existing multi-unit developments west of Ainsworth Street and north of Power Street of approximately 37 dwellings per hectare.²
6. The single residential sites would be to the south of Power Street in Mawson and comprise 59 blocks ‘in line with the adjacent areas’ though separated by the existing bike path. The proposed block sizes range from 451m² to 650m².³
7. Access to the single residential sites, and to half of the multi-unit sites, would be from Power Street; access to the remaining multi-unit sites would be from Alsop Close and Horbury Street, both off Ainsworth Street.
8. A map of the proposed development is attached to this report.

THE GOVERNMENT’S RATIONALE

9. Officials told the committee that the land has been zoned residential since 1993; it is included in the land release program for 2001-02; it is close to the Woden Town Centre, public transport and employment nodes; and is an area highly sought after by buyers. Further, the site has been designed to take account of a future Intertown Public Transport [IPT] route. The existing bicycle path would be retained, as would all existing trees. All of the proposed housing would be above the one in 100 years flood line (which is applied throughout Canberra). Noise levels from Athllon Drive are within the Australian national standard⁴; and it is estimated that Hurley Street is capable of handling the increased traffic flows which the housing development would generate.⁵

THE CONCERNS OF RESIDENTS

10. Residents are concerned about the impact of the proposed development on their residential amenity, as well as on the traffic flow and safety of Hurley Street; and they are concerned about future danger to residents of the proposed housing estate in the event of

¹ *Phillip and Mawson (Athllon Drive Corridor) Estate—Draft Development Control Plan: Public Consultation Report* prepared for PALM by LandPlan Partnership and Hughes Trueman, December 2000, p.19, pp.16-17. Provided by the Minister for Urban Services in correspondence dated 15/2/01.

² Mr Smyth MLA [Minister for Urban Service], supplementary correspondence dated 13/3/01

³ Ditto

⁴ Mr Smyth MLA [Minister for Urban Service], supplementary correspondence dated 13/3/01

⁵ Ms McKinnon [DUS: Land&Property] and Mr Adams [PALM] *Transcript* 23/2/01

serious flooding. Also, residents are concerned about the nature of the consultation process used by PALM.⁶

11. The committee received submissions making these points from the following residents (listed in alphabetical order): Mr Edge; Mr and Ms Evans; Mr Halladay; Mr James; Mawson/Phillip Residents' Action Group [Ms Fergie and Mr Primrose]; Mr Roe; Mr and Ms Rowe; Mr Shivasabesan; Mr De Sousa; and Ms Ward.

12. Out of the 93 submissions received by PALM, 57 expressed concern about the design capacity and traffic volume of Hurley and Power Streets, 19 suggested alternative traffic access/egress arrangements to those proposed by the government, 34 expressed concern about flooding, 14 were concerned about noise from Athllon Drive, 36 wished to retain the existing open space in the corridor, 14 were concerned about the proposed land use policy, and 25 expressed concern about the consultation process.⁷

CONCLUSION

13. The committee is concerned about the size, scale and impact of the proposed development in relation to the existing amenity of local residents. There is already a considerable density of multi-unit development west of Ainsworth Street; the proposed expansion of this multi-unit area would almost double the number of dwellings in this area. While there would be some degree of separation from the IPT corridor and the Phillip trades area, this is not the case for the proposed single residential sites which are located right up against the IPT route and would be affected by noise from the busy Athllon Drive/Melrose Avenue intersection as well as from the Phillip 'commercial' landuse area.

14. The committee is concerned about the 'connectivity' of the site to the Woden Town Centre. Though located not far from that centre, it is separated from it by wide and busy roads including Athllon Drive and Hindmarsh Avenue. These roads are not easy for pedestrians and cyclists to cross, and so it is possible—even likely—that many residents of the proposed housing estate would use cars to access the Town Centre. This seems to defeat one of the stated justifications for the whole development.

15. Further, the access of residents to public transport would be awkward. Until the IPT corridor is operating (expected to be some years away), residents would have to rely on the existing bus services in Mawson. There are no bus stops along the part of Athllon Drive adjacent to the proposed development and anyway, that road would be difficult to cross for pedestrians. In these circumstances, the use of public transport by residents of the proposed housing estate is problematic.

16. On balance, the committee considers that the proposed residential estate should not go ahead because it is relatively poorly served by public transport, it lacks good pedestrian and cycle connections to the Woden centre, it creates further dense multi-unit development in an

⁶ Mrs Evans, Mr Primrose, Ms Fergie, Mr and Mrs James, Mr Mitchell, Mr O'Neill, Ms Howitt, Ms Rowe, Ms Stone, Mrs Ward, Mr De Sousa *Transcript* 23/2/01

⁷ *Phillip and Mawson (Athllon Drive Corridor) Estate—Draft Development Control Plan: Public Consultation Report* prepared for PALM by LandPlan Partnership and Hughes Trueman, December 2000, p.11. Provided by the Minister for Urban Services in correspondence dated 15/2/01.

area already replete with this type of development, and it does not maintain the level of separation between different landuses which residents expect.

Mr Hird MLA
Chair

18 July 2001

