

SUBMISSION TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, PUBLIC WORKS AND TERRITORY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Inquiry into RZ3 and RZ4 Residential Development Policies – Inner North Canberra

Attention: Committee Secretary, Ms Nicola Derigo, committees@parliament.act.gov.au

Submission by [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I am the owner of [REDACTED] which is one of the 24 blocks in Section 47 Turner that is currently subject to a redevelopment moratorium. This area is subject to the inquiry currently being undertaken by the Standing Committee.

Whilst by no means an advocate of 'rip and tear' development, I and many of my neighbours are against a blanket prohibition on development in the area. The debate on development in this area has to date been characterised, at one extreme, by much misinformation and mischief on the part of some local action groups who remain rabidly anti-development and, at the other extreme, by some developers who want an unconstrained opportunity to develop. Is there not a place for sensible, high quality, ecologically sensitive urban development of this area? I also find it objectionable that some of the most vociferous voices are not actually residents of Section 47!

It is my considered view that measured redevelopment of this area should be allowed and that it is necessary for the area, but only with some stringent conditions.

My reasons for accepting some limited development are:

1. **POOR QUALITY HOUSING:** The existing housing stock in the area is generally of poor quality. Condemning the current owners and residents to effectively live in a museum that has high energy consumption, poor orientation, and high maintenance needs is both unfair and unsustainable.
2. **PLENTIFUL OPEN SPACE:** Open space is rather plentiful around the section 47 homes, with most facing a park or reserve. This open space remains grossly underused by residents and is consequently not well maintained.
3. **EXISTING ZONING:** There has been a longstanding rezoning of the area in place, notwithstanding the moratorium that has been placed on the area. Hence, there is a clear expectation that redevelopment via a rezoning will happen in this area at some point in the near future.
4. **OWNER/OCCUPANT CHOICES:** Canberra needs greater density to better reflect the way people live. It is all well and good for some Luddites to bemoan redevelopment but this development is never pushed onto buyers and residents, it is merely a reflection of the desires and preferences of the buyers and residents.
5. **EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE:** Greater density will make greater use of the existing infrastructure and revitalise a tired area. It will also allow Canberra future public transport

services to be made economically sustainable through higher catchments and consequently better patronage.

6. **COMPATIBILITY WITH CHANGING LIFESTYLES:** Housing stock needs to change in the area to facilitate changing lifestyles. We need to prepare the housing stock for the next generation. I agree with many objectors that there is too much small unit development in the area at the exclusion of other housing types and that is why I think this area should be redeveloped for townhouse/terrace style homes. There are plenty of detached homes available in the western part of Turner, plenty of units in the eastern and southern parts of Turner but very few high quality townhouses exist in the suburb (see point 10 below).
7. **SUSTAINABILITY:** Too much lawn and garden area that needs to be maintain via regular watering is difficult to maintain in the face of escalating climate change, so as a result many plants, lawns and trees end up left to die.
8. **NATURAL BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT:** There is a natural barrier created by the Sullivans Creek reserve areas that should be the delineator between the parts of Turner that can be developed into higher densities (i.e. east of Sullivans Creek) and those that should remain as detached single homes (i.e. west of Sullivans Creek).
9. **PRESERVE WHAT IS IMPORTANT:** No matter what form of development is decided upon, we must preserve as much of the streetscape as possible.
10. **MISSING HOUSING CHOICES:** The type of dwellings to be created should probably not be small investment units. There is a distinct lack of suitable townhouse-style accommodation in the inner-city of Canberra (including Turner) and this location does provide an opportunity to serve a market that is underfed and at the same time have minimal negative impact on the amenity of the residence in the area. This also allows residents to maintain living in these areas since the size of the townhouses would generally be comparable to existing homes, but with less maintenance required and an enhancement of built quality and amenity.
11. **POOR POLICY:** The prohibition on development by way of allowing or precluding development in an entire section is much too blunt an instrument. One of the nonsensical outcomes of the current arrangement is that Section 48, which is on the northern, higher side of Holder Street is allowed development while the southern side of the street which falls in Section 47 is not. A similar situation will occur along Macleay Street with the east side being developed and the west side (at least those 4-5 blocks that happen to be part of Section 47). This will end up creating an illegible and imbalanced streetscape and all because of the crudeness of the planning instruments being used at present. There is no reason why development of Macleay and Holder St frontages would in any way compromise or be detrimental to the Bent/Greenway frontages should that occur.
12. **QUALITY OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION:** Why not mandate tasteful, well-designed, spacious townhomes as one would find in areas like Fitzroy North in Melbourne and Paddington in Sydney but with more of a garden landscape overlay – the best of both worlds? Higher density in those areas has not eroded the vitality, safety, amenity or privacy of these areas. In fact they have enriched the urban landscape and social fabric of the areas. Housing types like this will allow Canberra to attract talented, educated and enlightened workers who unfortunately still view Canberra as an unfashionable and drab destination.
13. **SECURITY:** The streets around Section 47 are generally poorly lit and void of people during large parts of the day. Crime has noticeably increased in the last few years as a result. An

appropriate increase in density will create opportunities for more passive surveillance and hence increase the safety and security of residents, visitors and pedestrians alike.

14. REGENERATION: Holders Street possess 2 potentially wonderful pocket parks which have been left to wither, but which should be regenerated and replanted to create a better future open space. The cost of this could be met with some contributions from developers.
15. PROGRESS: Although there will always be objections to any changes in the area, I will point out that much of the objections in the past have been from people not even living in Section 47. In the last round of public submissions that were sought during the 2007 'restructured Territory Plan' process there was a pretty even split between those for and against development.

Proposed Development Conditions.

1. Allow the development of part of Holders St and Macleay Streets which front onto other sections which already allow development.
2. Allow development of Greenway and Bent Sts once 50% or more of the blocks fronting Holders Street and Macleay Street have been redeveloped (due to the existence of constraining easements these areas will all be developed separately anyway i.e. would not be able to be consolidated)
3. Maintain special building covenants for section 47 on top of the existing RZ3 requirements, that requires that:
 - a. only townhouses can be constructed in the area,
 - b. those townhouses can only be 110m² in size (FECA) or greater, and contain at least 3 bedrooms (or at least 2 bedrooms and a study),
 - c. remove above ground car parking from the GFA calculations for DA's,
 - d. remove FSR caps on the area,
 - e. developers must maintain and improve the landscaping of each developable block.,
 - f. all developers will need a special landscaping plan to be prepared; and,
 - g. all developers of Holder St must contribute to a fund (at say 2% of the unimproved value of the land) that will regenerate and refresh the pocket parks (sections 49 and 50) in Holder St.