



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN RENEWAL

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Submission Cover Sheet

Draft Variation 345 - Mawson Group Centre: Zone changes
and amendments to the Mawson Precinct map and code

Submission Number: 027 - Woden Valley Community Council Inc.

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The Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Committee

Woden Valley Community Council Submission to the Inquiry into the Draft Variation to the Territory Plan for the Mawson Group Centre No 345.

The Woden Valley Community Council (WVCC) appreciates the opportunity to provide this submission to the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal's Inquiry into DV345. Our submission primarily comments on building heights and solar access.

The Territory Plan Precinct Codes are important documents because they set the future direction of development and therefore underpin the community's ability to identify spaces for 'placemaking' for the enjoyment of the local residents.

The WVCC is advocating for the retention of sun in the little square at Southlands in order for it to become a more active meeting place for the community. The primary comments about DV345 are summarised as follows:

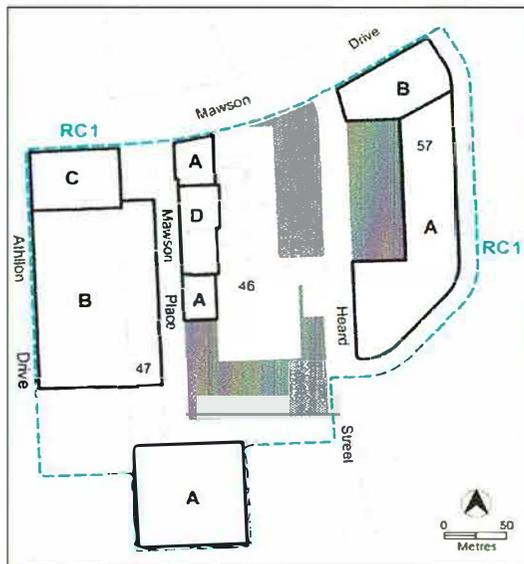
- retain the existing low-scale (1 and 2 storey) building heights around the central courtyard to preserve the human scale and solar access to the square;
- measure surrounding buildings in metres with a maximum of 18 metres (5 storeys);
- retain the southern and eastern (next to the newsagent) surface carparks because parking availability is central to the centre's convenience and function;
- retain the park n ride site because it is critical for many of the public transport users to access public transport and jobs and services;
- identify walking and cycling connections; and
- identify open spaces within the centre.

Building heights and solar access

The little square is an important central area that is comfortable in winter when it is sunny. Due to the small size of the square it is very important that the current building heights are retained to provide human scale and solar access.

The Woden community has maintained a constant position that all the squares in Woden should be retained for the community, including the Woden Town Square and the Curtin Square.

DV345 provides for 4 storeys on the western side of the square which is currently 1 storey. The impact of four storeys on the human scale and solar access on the small square will be significant.



Area A - 4 storeys

Area B - 6 storeys

Area C - 8 storeys.

Area D – 2 storeys – The maximum height of building may be increased to up to four storeys where development retains reasonable solar access to the adjoining public square to the east between the hours of 12pm to 2pm during 21 June (winter solstice).

Two hours of sun in winter is not adequate!

Areas A and D on the western side of the square are currently 1 storey and, similar to Curtin, sunlight should be maintained by a notional 5 metre wall around the square, except for the northern building in the centre which is currently two storeys.

While the WVCC welcomes development and densification, we want it to be done well with the needs of the community at the forefront of planning, including open green spaces and great public amenity for people to meet. As a general principle, community activity should be co-located in a sunny central area. The Precinct Code should underpin and support the community's efforts to provide an active Group Centre that has comfortable places that people want to be.

The reduction of winter sun in the central meeting place does not facilitate the outcomes sought by the community for the Group Centre.

In addition, the content of the DV345 is inconsistent with Woden's other Group Centre at Curtin. The WVCC seeks to have the principles agreed for the Curtin Group Centre applied to Southlands.

Curtin Precinct Code

As you would be aware, the Curtin residents have been very vocal about the retention of human scale and solar access in their square as the community is passionate about the character of their public space. The ACT Government established a community panel to discuss the planning for the centre.

As a result of the consultation, the location of the central courtyard has been identified in the draft Precinct Code with solar access/building setback requirements. The design principles in the existing draft master plan were modified to provide clear guidance for building design and height in the retail core area to allow for innovation and flexibility in the way buildings can be designed for individual sites.

Curtin's Design Principles (Criteria) - Buildings may be considered above two storeys and to a maximum of 18 metres (up to 5 storeys), where they achieve the following:

- Achieve a 'human scale' to the central courtyard by maintaining a single ground floor storey at the edges of the existing central courtyard and a minimum building setback of 3 metres above the ground floor level.
- Maintain sunlight to the central courtyard by ensuring that buildings do not overshadow the central courtyard beyond the shadow cast by a notional 5 metre high wall (also known as a solar fence) measured from the ground level at the boundary adjoining the central courtyard.
- Buildings do not overshadow living spaces of adjacent dwellings.
- Buildings are designed to reflect the local character of the group centre.
- The development contributes to the mix of uses and/or housing diversity of Curtin

These spirit of these principles should also apply to the Mawson Group Centre.

Retain the southern and eastern (next to the newsagent) surface car parks

Parking availability is central to the centre's convenience and function, primarily due to the significance of the supermarket for grocery shopping in the south of Woden. It is preferable to retain the surface car parks at this time and reconsider parking requirements once people move into the proposed residential buildings in the area.

Identify walking and cycling connections

Active travel involves physical activity such as walking and riding a bike to get from one destination to another - including travel to and from the places we live, work, learn, visit and play. These are some of the most efficient and effective ways to incorporate regular exercise into our daily lives, reducing many long-term health risks and contributing to our mental and physical health and well being.

The ACT Government remains committed to delivering on a healthy, active and vibrant Canberra under the Healthy Weight Initiative.

Notwithstanding the ACT Government's policy around active transport, the densification of the Mawson Group Centre precinct leaves the walking and cycling alignments at risk of being 'built out' by development should they not be identified in the Precinct Code.

Identify open spaces within the centre.

Having access to a variety of quality open spaces is vital for any community. Research confirms that convenient access to quality open space connects people and has a positive influence on our sense of wellbeing, as well as our physical health.

The WVCC recommends that the southern part of section 46, block 17 (the surface carpark between the shops and Heard Street) be converted to an open green area that could host a play area for children within the line of sight of adults socialising at cafes.



The picture of the Mawson Group Centre shows the central courtyard that should be retained as a public space with human scale and solar access.

In addition, it shows the southern end of the carpark between the shops and Heard St that could be converted to an open green area for children playing in the line of sight of adults.

Retain the park n ride site because it is critical for many residents to access public transport and jobs and services

The park n ride is very popular and is often full because it provides an efficient means of getting people to the main north-south public transport alignment on Athllon Drive. It is critical that these facilities are convenient for the community to use in order to attract people to public transport.

Where walking to the bus stop is not possible, the alternative is a slow suburban bus to the interchange which is not conducive to getting people to work in a timely manner.

Corridor preservation for light rail

It is important that the Athllon Drive corridor is reserved for light rail and is future proofed to ensure that it is wide enough for all design options and unexpected changes to be accommodated.

The alignment is potentially complex due to the fact that it runs along the Yarralumla Creek stormwater system, which transfers water from the Woden urban area, and can cause dangerous, fast-flowing run-off. The creek discharges high sediment and nutrient loads into the Molonglo River.

The Yarralumla Creek catchment is part of the ACT Basin Priority Project which will improve water quality in Canberra's waterways, in turn improving water in the Murrumbidgee River system and the Murray-Darling Basin.

Until the planning for light rail is settled, the corridor should remain available to Transport Canberra to enable them to consider all options for innovative solutions for a light rail alignment.

The WVCC is available to discuss our submission and attend hearings should they be held.

Yours sincerely



Fiona Carrick
President
Woden Valley Community Council

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