



Inquiry into DPA-04: Missing Middle Housing reform

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: JO CLAY

Addressed to: Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

Reference: CED - Planning

Hearing: 12 February 2026

In relation to: URBAN CHARACTER

Question received: 18 February 2026

Answer Due: 25 February 2026

JO CLAY MLA: To ask the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development –

The impact of missing middle reforms on the urban character of the neighbourhood has been raised in submissions. The Missing Middle Housing Design Guide establishes four design principles including the need to ‘respond to neighbourhood context and character to create a sense of identity and reflect local styles’. How does the Territory Planning Authority assess neighbourhood context and character and will the information provided by a proponent on these matters in the development outcomes report for a missing middle housing development include information on neighbourhood context and character?

CHRIS STEEL MLA: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:

The Territory Plan includes a range of Assessment Outcomes across its Zone Policies that must be met for development approval to be given. These include several Assessment Outcomes that consider the surrounding area, including:

- The proposed use and scale of development are appropriate to the site and zone.
- Adverse impacts of development on surrounding uses (both within a site and on adjoining sites) is minimised and residential amenity protected. This includes between residential uses and between non-residential and residential uses.
- The height, bulk and scale of the development is appropriate, noting the desired zone policy outcomes and the streetscape. This includes consideration of building envelope and setbacks.

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The draft Missing Middle Housing Design Guide (MMHDG) provides guidance on how these Assessment Outcomes can be met. The MMHDG helps ensure new missing middle housing is designed to respect and enhance Canberra's established urban character.

The design guidance in the MMHDG has a focus on the human scale of development, how street character and verge trees can be protected, and how denser development considers and reduces impact on neighbours.

The MMHDG encourages materials and colours that respond to local context and reinforces Canberra's characteristic openness through soft, permeable frontages and high-quality landscaping. Streetscape design will continue to support tree canopy, biodiversity and a strong connection to Country, ensuring new housing integrates sensitively into each character setting.

When submitting a missing middle housing development proposal for assessment, a proponent will be required to include a suitable response to neighbourhood context and character in their development outcomes report.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning

Signature:



Date: 25/2/26

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