

DUAL OCCS. & OTHER RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT IN 'RZ1-SUBURBAN' AREAS

WHAT DOES THE NEW TERRITORY PLAN REQUIRE?

In the 'new' Territory Plan (Nov. 2023) – '*Residential Zones Policy*' - the ONLY '*Assessment Requirements*' (mandatory development controls) for dual occupancies in RZ1 zones are:

- minimum block area: **800m²**
- maximum number of dwellings per standard block: **2** (other than *supportive housing* and *community housing* which can have 2 dwellings on min. 600m² + 1 per 250m²)
- maximum site coverage: **45%** (increased from 40% previously)
- maximum building height: **2 storeys**

The size limit on the second house is under '*Subdivision Policy*': "subdivision under the *Unit Titles Act 2001*" (only) is permitted "on a block a minimum of 800m² and where one dwelling has a maximum dwelling size of 120m²".

So you could have **two x 360m²** 2-storey dwellings on one 800m² block – you just couldn't subdivide the block. Alternatively, you could presumably have one x **480m²** house and one x 120m² house on a 800m² block, and unit-title subdivide into two. Of course, the bigger the block, the bigger the houses without limit! On a 2,000m² block (about half an acre - many of those and larger in Forrest and Red Hill) you can get one **1,560m²** house plus one **120m²** house, unit-titled!

There is a built-in incentive to go for *supportive* or *community housing* (see above). On a 2,000m² RZ1 block, you could get **8 x supportive or community housing** dwellings! Such unplanned, disruptive and impactful redevelopment is likely to be strongly opposed by established residents, of course.

RESIDENTIAL ZONES TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS (SEPT.2023):

Planting area, canopy cover etc. come under the non-mandatory '*Technical Specifications*', which are outside the Territory Plan and can be ignored or varied at will by the planning authority/ government, and which are also expressed as (smaller) percentages of block area, eg.

- planting area minimum **35%** of block area
- canopy cover & deep soil zones minimum of **15%** of block.

LIBERAL PARTY POLICY:

On a 800m² block you could get two x **360m²** 2-storey houses, and subdivide. On a 2,000 m² block you could get two giant **900m²** 2-storey houses!

ACT GREENS POLICY

The Greens advocate "**universal upzoning of RZ1 to RZ2**". The '*Assessment Requirements*' under the 'new' Territory Plan for RZ2 are the same as RZ1:

- maximum site coverage: **45%** (increased from 40% previously)
- maximum building height: **2 storeys**

However, under the 'new' Plan, **RZ2** permits:

- minimum block area for more than one dwelling: **700m²**
- maximum number of dwellings per block: **2 + 1 per 250m²** (or part) **over 700m²**

So, under the Greens policy, on a 2,000m² block you could get **8 x dwellings of unrestricted type. Each dwelling could be 2 storeys and 225m² in size.**

In the Greens policy there are no specific improvements proposed to **planting area, canopy cover & deep soil zones.**

PREVIOUS TERRITORY PLAN:

The previous Territory Plan contained **plot ratio** controls which limited the maximum amount of floor area for dual occupancies on a sliding scale reducing as the block size increases, eg. on a 1,000m² block the maximum floor area = **290m²**; on a 2,000m² block it would be **440m²**, plus **150m²** for each additional 1,000m² of block area. These *plot ratio* controls have completely disappeared from the new Territory Plan and '*Residential Zones Technical Specifications*'.

DOES THE NEW TERRITORY PLAN COMPLY WITH ITS OWN STATED 'OUTCOMES'?

The '*Policy Outcomes*' for the RZ1 'Suburban' Zone include:

"2. Provide for a range of housing choices that meet changing household and community needs."

Redevelopment with very large new houses would not provide a range of housing choices.

"4. Ensure development respects valued features of the neighbourhood and landscape character of the area and does not have unreasonable negative impacts on neighbouring properties."

Such redevelopment is unlikely to respect the highly valued landscape character of Inner South residential areas and would likely impact on neighbours adversely. It would result in unplanned, grossly over-size, resource-depleting houses, which would inevitably be very expensive (not affordable) housing and do very little to address the need for a substantial increase in appropriate housing.

EARLIER RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT POLICIES:

In May 2002 then Minister Corbell launched the 'Garden City (Territory Plan) Variation':

"Acknowledging the widespread concerns about inappropriate "ad hoc"

redemption in Canberra's suburbs". This introduced 'Suburban areas' and 'Core areas' (immediately adjacent to local shops) and said: **"no separate unit titling**

will be permitted" in the proposed Suburban areas. Are we now doomed to repeat the mistakes of the late 1990's which led up to this? Or are there better ways to provide for some redevelopment of established Inner South Canberra areas?

ACT GOVERNMENT DISTRICT STRATEGIES 2023:

According to these, the potential future housing demand in the Inner South District is about **7,000** new dwellings by 2050. Note that **91%** of this demand is for 'High density' dwellings, **19%** for 'Medium density' and **-10%** for 'Separate house' (Figure 5, Volume 2, 'District Strategies 2023'). So the Government is projecting **negative** demand for separate houses, which would include additional new houses on subdivided existing house blocks. **So what is the point of policies aimed at providing more single houses?**

'INNER SOUTH CANBERRA DISTRICT PLANNING STRATEGY 2021':

According to the ISCCC's own district planning strategy, "The Inner South Canberra District can be developed **without having to resort to more losses of the low-density residential character and green space in the existing suburban RZ1 areas.**" The projected future housing demand can be achieved by:

1. "a targeted urban renewal program to include sites such as the Canberra Brickworks [380 dwellings plus former CSIRO Forestry site – 300 dwellings], Kingston Arts Precinct, the remainder of Kingston Foreshore, East Lake (4000-5000 dwellings) and Dairy Road (1300 dwellings [now 400])"
2. Further redevelopment (excluding single houses) in 'RZ2 – Suburban Core Zones', adjacent to local shopping centres.

WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESSFUL RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT?

- a) All new or redeveloping housing areas must be subjected to careful, community-sensitive, **precinct planning**.
- b) Inappropriate housing types (single houses, dual-occupancies) should not be permitted in such areas. Single block redevelopment should not be permitted.
- c) A high diversity of housing types should be provided.
- d) Development sites need to be large enough to enable high amenity, climate-sensitive and sustainable design.
- e) Building heights should be limited to 3-4 storeys, with appropriate *plot ratio* controls, reversing recent trends to excessively high-density residential redevelopment. Earlier Kingston redevelopments are around 110-130 dwellings per hectare. The recent 'Kingsborough' development is about **double** that.
- f) Generous communal open space should be provided for shade tree planting (to limit urban warming), recreation facilities, community gardens etc.

The forthcoming ISCCC Community Forum on 28 May will be an opportunity to explore these approaches in more detail.

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