

Downer Old School-Site and Local Centre Redevelopment - Information for Downer Residents

After numerous investigations into Downer Local Centre's potential for redevelopment, the Economic Development Directorate (EDD) began engaging with the local community in 2011 to develop a design for a housing complex on the former school site.

After community feedback, the proposed height of the 5 storey housing complex, set above a commercial level, was reduced to 3 storey accommodation, comprising 1, 2 & 3 bedroom apartments, affordable housing units and a handful of townhouses, again set above a commercial level that requires a higher ceiling limit. Since then there have been several consultation sessions and a revised concept design was presented in response to community feedback, although there have been few concrete details and facts available to date.

Although there were many general themes supported by the community – the ACT government's commitment to redevelop the site breathing new life into the centre and the inclusion of mixed use development which would include businesses and a childcare centre – there were also expressions of community concern. Below are dot points outlining some of the concerns expressed:

- The number of dwellings proposed has ranged from 150 to 300 units, the number of floors from 3 to 5. There have been assurances the building will not go above the tree-line.
- There will be 1 car park per unit. Concerns have been expressed about car parking on the perimeter of the oval and nature strips surrounding the area.
- A traffic survey has been carried out, based on 153 one bed apartments, 126 two bed apartments and seven 3 bed apartments being built. The survey did not anticipate any marked increase in traffic flow in the streets around the complex.
- Predominately 1 bedroom apartments have been proposed. How will this affect the demographic mix of Downer?
- There is a large oversupply of apartments across the ACT, and few downsizing opportunities in Downer. Some residents would prefer more townhouses.
- Concerns have been expressed about the bias towards financial considerations and the EDD driving the process with little professional planning input from the government's own planning authority. Some feel the value of the land should be based on a realistic appraisal of appropriate development options and potential, not the maximum that may be physically available.

There are presently approx. 1500 dwellings in Downer, so 300 new units would represent a 20% increase. The effect this will have on parking and traffic and the dominance of this development over the area are unknown. The EDD website can be accessed at www.economicdevelopment.act.gov.au.

Downer Community Association welcomes comments from residents and/or the details of any concerns that you may have on the proposed development, which could be useful to both the Downer community and the EDD. Your opinions will help us as we continue to seek firm information about the school-site proposals and present the concerns of residents to the ACT authorities.

Please contact us in one of the following ways to lodge your thoughts:

Mail: Downer Community Association
Frencham Place
Downer ACT 2602

Email: downerassociation@gmail.com
Phone: 6249 6443 (Leave a message,
and someone will call you)

Note: There is a slot in the door of the DCA office
at the Community Centre to save postage.