



ACT
Government

**Territory
Planning**
Authority

CONSULTATION REPORT

Draft Plan Amendment to the Territory Plan B

Blocks 5, 6, 9, 11 and 12 Section 19 Forrest

July 2025

This consultation report was prepared
under division 5.2.5 of the *Planning Act 2023*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This document, prepared under section 67 (3) of the *Planning Act 2023* (the Act), details the outcomes of government entity and public consultation the Territory Planning Authority (the Authority) has undertaken for Draft Plan Amendment B – Blocks 5, 6, 9, 11 and 12 Section 19 Forrest (DPA-B).

This document should be read in conjunction with recommended DPA-B given to the Minister and is available on the [Planning website](#).

1.2 Outline of process

The Authority has considered comments received from agencies and the public on DPA-B during the public consultation period. This consultation report has been prepared to outline comments received and how they have been considered or responded to.

DPA-B has been given to the Minister to refer to the relevant Legislative Assembly Standing Committee. More information about the next steps for DPA-B are provided in the Draft Plan Amendment (DPA) referred to the Minister and is available on the [Planning website](#). General information about the major plan amendment process is also available on the Planning website [here](#).

1.3 Project background

The scope of DPA-B was subject to change throughout the community consultation process and as such, was subject to two round of community consultation.

Initially DPA-B proposed amendments only to Block 9 Section 19 Forrest. Following the first round of community consultation, DPA-B was revised and the scope was expanded to include Blocks 5 6, 9, 11 and 12 in Section 19.

The consultation process and comments made on both versions of DPA-B are discussed in this report.

2.0 CONSULTATION WITH GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

In accordance with section 62 of the Act the Authority has consulted with each of the following entities in relation to this DPA:

- National Capital Authority
- Conservator of Flora and Fauna
- Environment Protection Authority
- Heritage Council

As there is no unleased or leased public land affected by the DPA, it has not been necessary to consult with any custodian of the land likely to be affected.

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A copy of the comments received from the above-mentioned entities are provided in Appendix 1 of this document.

Below is a summary of each of the entity’s comments and the Authority’s response to any matters raised. There are no ‘referral entities’ prescribed by regulation for DPA-B.

Entity matter raised	Authority’s response
National Capital Authority	
<p>The NCA has no objections with the proposed development. The site is within the Urban Areas of the National Capital Plan.</p> <p>The proposed land use, assessment outcomes and requirements are not inconsistent with the Plan and the NCA has no objections with the proposed amendment.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
Conservator of Flora and Fauna	
<p>The Conservator of Flora and Fauna has no concerns with the works as proposed. Some Regulated trees around the perimeter of the site will need to be looked at during development stage.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Regulated trees will be addressed as part of any development application (DA) for development on the site/s.</p>
Environment Protection Authority	
<p>The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) advised that an intrusive detailed site investigation, in accordance with EPA endorsed guidelines, must be undertaken by a suitably qualified environmental consultant to determine whether past activities have impacted the site from a contamination perspective and to determine whether the site is suitable for the proposed uses, prior to the site being used for other purposes.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>An assessment requirement has been included in the Inner South District Policy for an intrusive detailed site investigation, in accordance with the Environment Protection Authority endorsed guidelines, to be undertaken.</p>
Heritage Council	
<p>The blocks proposed to be rezoned are in the immediate vicinity of the Free</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

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<p>Serbian Orthodox Church (Block 2 Section 19 Forrest) which is a registered place on the ACT Heritage Register.</p> <p>The ACT Heritage Council advised that while the Major Plan Amendment is unlikely to directly diminish the registered heritage significance of the Free Serbian Orthodox Church, as it proposes no direct change to any of the registered heritage place, retaining the church and its murals, it has the potential to diminish the local heritage, specifically in relation to its relationship to registered heritage places in terms of height, massing and setbacks.</p> <p>The ACT Heritage Council requested that future development applications for the subject blocks describe how development proposals respect local heritage character and context, in accordance with the principles of good planning set out in the Act.</p>	<p>Future DAs will be referred to the ACT Heritage Council for comment and feedback on the proposed detailed design of buildings addressing the Heritage registered place.</p>
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3.0 CONSULTATION WITH THE PUBLIC

3.1 Original version of DPA-B (Block 9 Section 19 Forrest)

3.1.1 Consultation

As outlined in section 1.3 above, DPA-B was placed on public consultation twice, over two consultation periods.

In accordance with 63 of the Act, DPA-B was made available on the [ACT planning website](#). In addition to the statutory requirements, mailed letters were sent to residents in the sections surrounding Block 9 and a notice was also placed on the DA Finder+ App.

Written comments were invited from the public about the original version of DPA-B (Block 9 Section 19 Forrest) from 6 September 2024 to 21 October 2024.

3.1.2 Public comments

Fifteen comments were received during public consultation on the original version of DPA-B was initially placed on consultation. The main points raised during consultation were:

- concerns about proposed building design and building heights
- traffic, access and parking issues
- the desire for a more holistic approach to rezoning
- that the proposal should be consistent with the planning detailed in the Inner South District Strategy
- lack of site planning controls to mitigate the urban heat island effect
- lack of requirements for planting area and canopy cover

Notably, some community comments indicated that a comprehensive approach for Section 19 Forrest would be more beneficial to enable a cohesive approach and consistency of parameters for future redevelopment. Such an approach would also allow a greater level of community understanding of the approach for the whole section and is preferable to proceeding with a spot rezoning in isolation. The Authority agreed with these comments and as such, a revised version of DPA (Blocks 5 6, 9, 11 and 12 Section 19 Forrest) was prepared and consulted on.

Copies of the fifteen public comments were made publicly available on the Planning website in accordance with section 65 of the Act after the completion of public consultation and are at Appendix 2 of this document

Responses to other public comments are provided below in Section 3.3.

3.2 Revised version of DPA-B (Blocks 5 6, 9, 11 and 12 Section 19 Forrest)

3.2.1 Consultation

In accordance with 63 of the Act, the revised version of DPA-B was made available on the [ACT planning website](#). In addition to this statutory requirement, mailed letters were sent to residents in the sections surrounding Section 19. Those who made a submission on the original version of DPA-B were also notified of the revised version.

Written comments were invited from the public about DPA-B from 7 March 2025 to 22 April 2025. Late submissions were accepted until 6 May 2025.

3.2.2 Public Comments

A total of sixteen public comments were received on the revised version of DPA-B. Five written public comments were received during public consultation and eleven additional late public comments were also received:

- Thirteen were individual comments
- Three comments were from community groups including the Inner South Canberra Community Council (ISCCC), Forrest Residents Group and Greater Canberra

Copies of the sixteen public comments were made publicly available on the Planning website in accordance with section 65 of the Act after the completion of public consultation and are at Appendix 2 of this document. One confidential submission was also received.

3.3 Summary of issues raised

Below is a summary of the issues raised in the public submissions received during public consultation on both versions of DPA-B.

3.3.1 Support for rezoning

Some comments supported the proposed rezoning of the site to CZ5 Mixed Use.

The reasons included:

- the proposal is consistent with the *Planning Strategy, Inner South District Strategy*, and the *Statement of Planning Priorities*
- it will provide more housing in an inner city location
- it will create more housing close to transport, schools, parks, services and employment
- it will encourage outdoor activities and strengthen community interaction
- compact living is better for the environment by reducing carbon footprint and promoting sustainable practices

Response

Noted.

3.3.2 Traffic, overshadowing, living infrastructure and other impacts of future development proposals

Objections to the proposal raised the following points:

- The health of the existing trees and success of future plantings will be severely impacted by seven storey development.
- The proposal will exacerbate the already severe traffic and parking congestion.
- No consideration of noise and traffic impacts on family residences being subjected to greatly increased traffic and noise, potentially extending far into the night if a hotel were to be included in the development in the future.
- There will be negative impacts on winter sun, amenity and lifestyle of the residents opposite the site.
- Lack of controls regarding site coverage and minimum requirements for planting areas and tree canopy coverage, which could negatively impact the local environment and streetscape.
- Allowing commercial uses along the Dominion Circuit frontage could adversely affect the amenity, privacy, and character of the residential properties directly opposite.

Response

As outlined in the draft major plan amendment released for public consultation (Appendix 3), any development in commercial zones needs to address a range of site planning considerations that are contained in the assessment outcomes and assessment requirements in the [Commercial Zones Policy in the Territory Plan](#) (including for the CZ5 zone). This is in addition to those added to the Inner South District Policy by DPA-B.

All relevant assessment outcomes and requirements are considered during the DA assessment process and must be met for development approval to be given.

Many of the existing assessment outcomes and requirements already seek to minimise impacts of future development on the site and on other surrounding land uses. These include:

- Assessment outcome 6 of the Commercial Zones Policy aims to limit any adverse impacts of development on surrounding land uses both within a site and on adjoining sites, including between non-residential and residential uses. Assessment of this outcomes would consider noise and overlooking impacts on the residential area opposite the subject site.
- A new site-specific assessment outcome to the Inner South District Policy, proposed by DPA-B, requires the mitigation of impacts of noise and overlooking from new buildings on the surrounding community and recreation uses.
- Assessment outcomes 7-9 and 26 of the Commercial Zones Policy also expresses that future developments must consider traffic flow, active travel, and parking rates to ensure the development is accessible. A detailed traffic

impact assessment will likely be required as part of the DA package to support the assessment of this outcome.

- Building design considerations, including height, bulk and scale are contained in assessment outcomes 14-17 of the Commercial Zones Policy. These assessment outcomes encourage a range of building heights across larger sites which consider solar access, varied setbacks and relationship to open spaces, high quality urban design, and consideration of residential amenity and neighbouring properties.
- Assessment outcome 18 of the Commercial Zones Policy guides living infrastructure outcomes and includes consideration of planting area, canopy trees, deep soil planning zones and water sensitive urban design measures.
- Assessment outcome 19 of the Commercial Zones Policy addresses urban heat island effects which are to be mitigated and reduced by limiting impervious surfaces, building material selection and provision of canopy trees and plants.

The design guides are also considered alongside these assessment outcomes for larger development proposals. For example, the [Housing Design Guide](#), which applies to development 5 storeys or over, provides guidance about building siting, street interface, solar orientation, setbacks and separation, privacy and outlook, building heights, communal and private open space and deep soil planting and tree canopy coverage.

As noted in comments by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna in section 2.0 above, protection of regulated trees will be addressed as part of any DA for development on the site/s.

Comments and responses to other specific design matters (such as building heights) are discussed in the following sections of this report.

3.3.3 Building heights

Various comments were received about the proposed building heights. These included:

- The proposed seven storey height allowance is excessive and inappropriate. Taller buildings are more appropriate in town centres and major transport corridors like Northbourne Avenue.
- The height of the tree canopy should not be used as a basis for the maximum height of the buildings:
 - if the building is the same height as the tree canopy, there is no cooling from the canopy
 - trees around the site are of varying heights, different varieties and ages. Some have died and been replaced with less mature trees, and many may need replacement in the future.
- Building heights should be “stepped down” along the frontage of Dominion Circuit to 1-2 storeys to achieve the appropriate outcomes for this area in the Inner South and be included in the DPA to give clear guidance to developers prior to submitting a DA.

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- Building heights should be:
 - maximum of four storeys or equal to 15 metres [equivalent to RZ4 medium density zone]
 - setback of 20 metres to allow for landscaping trees and understorey,
 - stepped back development, 8 metres height at the front, with 15 metres height further back, to enable more lighting for all residents.

Response

The site is identified in the Inner South District Strategy as suitable for urban infill and intensification with a CZ5 mixed use commercial zoning. Noting the site's proximity to quality public spaces, infrastructure and public transport routes, particularly the proposed Light Rail Stage 2 route, it is well located for this type of development.

Shadow diagrams provided with DPA-B show that 7-8 storey buildings are able to be accommodated on the site with minimal overshadowing impacts to neighbouring lessees on the southern site of Dominion Circuit. As outlined in 3.3.2 above, these development impacts and many others will be considered through detailed design and assessed during the DA process.

Notwithstanding this, a new site-specific assessment outcome is proposed to be added to the Inner South District Policy to protect the residential amenity of properties to the south of Dominion Circuit by considering adequate setbacks to new buildings above seven storeys and/or where ground floor commercial uses are proposed. Future DAs for new buildings on the site will need to demonstrate compliance with this assessment outcome.

Building heights were considered with the height of the established mature tree canopy height not to justify the proposed heights but to note that they provide visual mitigation and shadow to neighbour leases.

The National Capital Authority has no objections to the proposed zone change and proposed maximum building heights for the site.

3.3.4 Consultation

Concerns were raised about the consultation process on the proposal. Key issues raised included:

- The DPA is an inadequate response to the earlier community feedback; it does not address previous concerns.
- Failure to adhere to good consultation principles; no presentation on the proposed changes to the community.

Response

As outlined in sections 3.1.1 and 3.2.1 above, public consultation on both the original and revised DPA-B was conducted in accordance with the statutory requirements and timeframes stated in the Act. In addition to the statutory consultation requirements, letters were sent to residents surrounding the site, notice was

placed on the DA Finder+ App and submitters on the original version of DPA-B were also notified of the revisions.

The revised DPA-B specifically responds to concerns raised in previous consultation regarding a holistic approach planning control changes across section 19. This was also identified in the [Inner South District Strategy](#) which outlined blocks 5, 6, 9, 11 and 12 as having potential to be rezoned to commercial CZ5 mixed use zone.

3.3.5 Heritage impacts

Concerns were raised about the potential heritage impacts of the proposed rezoning. Key issues raised included:

- The proposed multi-storey development is seen as a threat to the established heritage values of the area, potentially undermining the historical and aesthetic significance of nearby heritage-listed properties. Specific concerns include:
 - Erosion of the distinctive low-scale garden suburb character that defines Forrest.
 - Overshadowing of adjacent heritage properties, reducing their visual prominence and amenity.
 - Degradation of historically significant view corridors and culturally important streetscapes that contribute to Forrest's unique identity.
- Although the rezoning area is not within a designated heritage precinct, it is directly adjacent to several heritage-listed areas. Submitters argue that the proposed seven-storey development is incompatible with the existing neighbourhood character, which is predominantly low-rise and historically sensitive.

Response

The ACT Heritage Council is a mandatory referral entity on draft major plan amendments. The Council has provided comment, as detailed in section 2.0 above. The Territory Planning Authority will refer future DAs to the ACT Heritage Council for comment and feedback on the potential impacts to the heritage registered place and any other heritage related matters.

An additional site-specific assessment outcome has also been proposed which requires new development to mitigate the impacts of noise and overlooking from new buildings to the community and recreation uses located to the west, north and north-east of the subject site.

3.3.6 Inconsistency with the local character

Concerns were raised about the potential of future development being inconsistent with the character of the area. Key issues raised included:

- Forrest is a residential area, not a commercial hub or employment area. Residential zoning would be more appropriate, with lower height limits to ensure a more coherent transition to the surrounding low-rise residential areas and to retain neighbourhood character. Missing middle housing would be more appropriate.
- The proposal permits significantly greater building heights and densities, which is incompatible with the existing character and scale of the neighbourhood.
- The proposed changes are contrary to the Inner South District Strategy, to Walter Burley Griffin's vision for Canberra and destructive of vistas and low-rise urban development.

Response

The existing character of Forrest as predominately a low-scale residential area is acknowledged. The area is characterised by larger blocks with excellent access to blue-green spaces and heritage spaces.

However, as is outlined in the Inner South District Strategy, the ACT's and the Inner South's population will continue to grow. Accommodating this growth without further residential and commercial density is not possible without placing major pressure on the low-scale character of the area. Therefore, the best planning outcomes are achieved by consolidating density in areas with great access to quality public spaces, infrastructure and transport connectivity. This is why Section 19 Forrest is identified as a key site and change area within the Inner South District Strategy.

3.3.7 Precedent setting

A concern was expressed that the proposed rezoning could set an undesirable precedent for future developments.

The key issue raised was that the rezoning may establish a precedent for similar high-density developments in other low-rise residential areas, potentially leading to the gradual erosion of the unique character and established planning expectations of neighbourhoods like Forrest.

Response

The subject site, which currently contains a range of zones and land uses, was identified during the formulation of the district strategies as having potential to be rezoned to CZ5 which could support uses including residential. The district strategies were developed to help guide the strategic planning of Canberra in a manner that led to the orderly change and growth within the urban areas towards 2038 and beyond. On this basis, it is not considered that this proposal will set a precedent.

3.3.8 Commercial viability of the proposal and impact on property values

Comments raised concerns about the potential impact of the proposed rezoning on property values and questioned the demand for apartment-style dwellings.

The comments claimed that the introduction of high-density, mixed-use development is likely to reduce property values and diminish the overall desirability of the area, particularly for residents who chose the suburb for its low-density, quiet character and have invested accordingly.

Response

This DPA was primarily initiated by proponents. The interest of the private sector in undertaking development on the site indicates that it would likely be commercially viable.

Impacts to surrounding property value is not a relevant planning consideration. Notwithstanding this, there is no evidence that appropriate and sensitive urban infill development in key identified locations reduces property values.

3.3.9 Consideration of broader community and housing needs

Some of the submissions raised concerns about the proposed rezoning's failure to address broader community and housing needs. Key points included:

- The inclusion of commercial uses in the proposed CZ5 zoning is seen as misaligned with Canberra's housing priorities, as it does not contribute meaningfully to addressing housing affordability or supply challenges, particularly given the site's location away from major commercial or transport hubs.
- Section 19 is considered well-suited for "missing middle" housing—such as 2–3 storey townhouses or low-rise apartments.
- Comments highlighted the importance of preserving space for cultural, social, sporting, and religious uses, which are integral to the community fabric and could be displaced or overshadowed by high-density, mixed-use development.
- Concerns were raised about no increase in the amount of publicly accessible green space provided for new residents and the decrease in solar access to existing footpaths making them less attractive and more dangerous to use for active travel.

Response

The ACT Government's missing middle housing reform project that is currently underway envisages missing middle housing typologies (townhouses, low rise apartments, etc) being provided within the RZ1 and RZ2 zones with two storey and three storey height limits respectively.

The site is identified in the Inner South District Strategy as suitable for urban infill and intensification in the form of CZ5 mixed use residential and commercial development. This notes the site's proximity to future light rail, and to a range of

existing services, facilities and employment. With this, it is well suited for higher density development.

Any future residential development on the site will contribute to increasing housing supply in an inner south location, close to employment, retail services and a range of recreational and community facilities.

The indicative design concepts indicate that redevelopment of the blocks will likely be predominantly multi-storey residential, with limited commercial uses. Additionally, to protect the retail hierarchy of local, group and town centres, an assessment requirement limits shop selling food to 250m². Provisions are also proposed to protect existing residential amenity.

3.3.10 Broader planning considerations

Some submissions raised significant concerns about the broader planning implications of the proposed rezoning. The key issues identified include:

- The proposal is viewed as a poor urban planning outcome, lacking alignment with established planning principles and contravening several statutory guidelines intended to ensure orderly and sustainable development.
- The proposed seven-storey development is seen as inconsistent with the National Capital Plan (NCP) requirement for height limits along Canberra Avenue and the need for careful transitions between institutional, open space, and residential zones.
- The rezoning appears incompatible with the objectives of the Inner South District Strategy, especially those relating to heritage conservation, appropriate density management, and the creation of sustainable, contextually responsive urban environments.
- It risks violating key provisions of the Territory Plan's residential zones requirements, particularly those designed to protect neighbourhood amenity, ensure privacy, and maintain solar access for existing residential properties.

Response

The proposal aligns with the five (5) themes of the ACT Planning Strategy, i.e. a compact and efficient city, a diverse Canberra, a sustainable and resilient Territory, and a liveable Canberra and accessible Canberra.

Rezoning the subject blocks to CZ5 would support future housing provision in a position in close proximity to public transport, including future light rail, employment and shopping centres which would support an increase in the residential population in this location.

The CZ5 mixed use zoning will allow for a mix of residential and limited commercial uses on the subject site, and in the case of Block 12, will allow the cultural centre to continue operating on the site, while also providing the opportunity for future redevelopment.

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The proposal is also consistent with the 2024-2025 Statement of Planning Priorities. Specifically, one of the priorities is to facilitate the release of land in the existing urban footprint, focussing on strategic planning and investigations to enable staged development in 'key sites' and 'change areas' identified in each urban district through the nine District Strategies, including precincts next to rapid transport services.

The subject site is identified as Key Site 1 – Category 2 change area in the district strategy which recommends that detailed planning can proceed, along with appropriate consultation. The proposal is therefore consistent with the Inner South District Strategy.

The National Capital Authority (NCA) is a mandatory referral entity on draft major plan amendments. The NCA has provided advice that it has no objections to the proposal.

The draft major plan amendment is the mechanism for considering the suitability of the proposed zoning for the subject site. Future DAs for buildings on the blocks are the mechanism for considering the detailed design and siting matters for the site, and the proponent will need to demonstrate compliance with the provisions (assessment outcomes and assessment requirements) in the Inner South District Policy and the Commercial Zones Policy in the Territory Plan. This includes considerations around amenity, privacy and solar access for existing residential properties. Site-specific assessment outcomes are also proposed to protect the amenity of surrounding residential, community and recreation uses as described in the response to 3.3.2 above.

Furthermore, the Act also requires certain prescribed developments to be presented to the National Capital Design Review Panel (NCDRP) for review. Under section 11 of the Planning (General) Regulation 2023, a building of 5-or more storeys is a prescribed development. The NCDRP advises on the consistency of the proposal with design principles and can make recommendations that aim to improve the urban design quality of a proposed development regarding sustainability, dwelling amenity and functionality, relationships between buildings and overall performance of the site. The NCDRP also comments on built form aspects of a proposal such as height, bulk, scale, building envelope, setbacks, solar access and microclimate considerations.

4.0 CHANGES MADE TO DPA-B FOLLOWING CONSULTATION

Changes have been made to DPA-B following public consultation.

The proposed changes are:

- Building heights changed from 7 storeys to height of building in metres (26 metres). Recognising that residential and commercial floor-to-floor heights vary significantly, setting the building height to 26 metres ensures a final height, irrespective of the building's use. It is expected that this will limit buildings to 6-8 storeys, depending on their design and use.
- A new site-specific assessment outcome was added to the Inner South District Policy for the provision of adequate setbacks to new development along Dominion Circuit to protect the residential amenity of dwellings opposite the site.
- A new site-specific assessment outcome was added to the Inner South District Policy to specifically address noise and overlooking of surrounding community and recreation uses.

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Cantonese (Traditional Chinese) / 繁體中文	如果你需要傳譯員，請致電：13 14 50
Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt	Nếu bạn cần thông dịch viên, xin gọi: 13 14 50
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APPENDIX 1 Comments from Government entities

APPENDIX 2 Comments from the public

APPENDIX 3 Public consultation version of revised DPA-B