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The North Wright Compact Housing Project

Innovating Australian Housing



ACT
Government

Suburban Land
Agency

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Working Together

The first story of Canberra is embedded in the first footprints, they belong to the Ngunnawal people. As part of the ongoing engagement on the project with Traditional Owners, we will be taking a deep dive to capture Ngunnawal feedback and will seek to embed this in the future development of the site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as Canberra’s first inhabitants and Traditional Custodians. We recognise the special relationship and connection that Ngunnawal people have with this Country.

Prior to the displacement of Ngunnawal people from their land, they were a thriving people whose life and culture was connected unequivocally to this land in a way that only they understand and know and is core to their physical and spiritual being.

The segregation of the Ngunnawal people from Culture and Country has had long-lasting, profound, and ongoing health and well-being effects on their life, cultural practices, families, and continuation of their law/lore. We acknowledge the historic interruption of the Ngunnawal people of Canberra and their surrounding regions.

We recognise the significant contribution the Ngunnawal people have played in caring for Country. For time immemorial they have maintained a tangible and intangible cultural, social, environmental, spiritual, and economic connection to these lands and waters.

NGUNNAWAL LANGUAGE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Yuma

Dhawura nguna ngurumbangu gunanggu Ngunnawal.
Nginggada dindi dhawura Ngunnawalbun yindjumaralidjinyin.
Mura bidji mulanggaridjindjula.
Naraganawaliyiri yarabindjula.

This country is Ngunnawal (ancestral/spiritual) homeland. We all always respect elders, male and female, as well as Ngunnawal country itself. They always keep the pathways of their ancestors alive. They walk together as one.

Djan yimaba



Yuma, hello and welcome

INTRODUCING THE NORTH WRIGHT COMPACT HOUSING PROJECT

The Suburban Land Agency (SLA) is committed to creating great places where communities thrive. As part of the ACT Government, we innovate and build people-focussed residential and urban renewal projects for the people of Canberra. And we're excited to share our vision for the future of local living: The North Wright Compact Housing Project.

The North Wright Compact Housing Project (the Project) is an innovative placemaking, design and construction project located in the southern suburb of Wright in the ACT. It will deliver and test a series of compact townhouse designs that improve housing choice, sustainability outcomes and long-term cost efficiencies.

Comprising 43 separately titled house and land packages within a single, integrated precinct, the Project aims to create a sense of community with a design that supports the wellbeing of residents of different ages, income levels and cultural backgrounds.

Importantly, the Project seeks to provide distinctive residences and spaces that foster safety, belonging, discovery and joy among those who will call it home.

Underpinned by our mandate to deliver housing that is lower cost, both to purchase and to live in, our vision is to deliver high amenity and liveability with reduced energy, materials and land use. Landscape-oriented and accessible design solutions with a healthy indoor air quality are prioritised, leading to 7- and 8-Star passive solar design or Passivhaus homes.

In doing so, the Project will complement existing lower cost housing options with a higher-quality, sustainable built form outcome and is intended to demonstrate a new delivery model that provides insights and lessons that can be replicated in future developments.

Over the following pages, we'll share our vision, the thinking behind it and the benefits we believe the Project can deliver.



AN OVERVIEW OF THE SITE AND LOCATION

Located in the heart of the Molonglo Valley in the emerging southern suburb of Wright, the Project site comprises five parcels of land on the south side of Thwaites Crescent. While the land surrounding these parcels are either recently constructed residential dwellings or vacant development land, the suburb is set to evolve into an active residential community anchored by shops, recreation facilities, and open spaces.



SITE FACTS

Location: Bound by Thwaites Crescent and Opperman Avenue in Wright, ACT

Size: 10,260sqm across 5 land parcels (Sections 53, 54, 55, 56)

Zoning: RZ1; Suburban

Planning framework: Territory Plan

KEY DEVELOPMENT FACTS

Total of 43 separately titled dwellings incorporating variety townhouse concepts

6 blocks will also include an additional, rear independent surveillance or 'eyes on the street' dwelling

Approx. 9,000sqm of public open space



“The SLA exists first and foremost to meet the community’s expectations about what kind of city they want to live in — an inclusive safe and lower cost city with a wide variety of innovative housing options.”

Rethinking the way we live

BETTER QUALITY HOUSING - LOWER COST

Home ownership is a major issue facing Canberrans. The city was recently named Australia’s second most expensive city to buy a home with a 37% price increase recorded in 2021¹. In addition, CoreLogic research indicates that from the March 2022 quarter Canberra was Australia’s most expensive capital city to rent, with median rent \$674 per week, and rent increasing at 2.8% per year over the past five years.

Our role at SLA is to ambitiously explore options to build sites that enable new housing models to meet the needs and expectations of the community while ensuring that these new developments deliver economic feasibility. We are driven to create more options for innovative lower cost housing to ensure more Canberrans are able to achieve a home of their own.

\$1.15M²

Median house price in Canberra, Australia’s second most expensive capital city to buy

\$674 per week²

Median Canberra rent

2.8% p.a.²

Annual Canberra rental increase over last 5 years

Sources:

1 (Strahorn, Belinda) www.citynews.com.au/2022/canberra-named-second-most-expensive-city-to-buy-a-home/

2 www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7808045/canberra-rents-rise-again-as-vacancy-rate-recovers-slightly



“If we get densification right, we have the opportunity to address both housing affordability and what’s referred to as the ‘missing middle’, a diverse array of housing options to meet the needs of a diverse community”.

A Place For Everyone,
PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) (2017)

ADDRESSING THE ‘MISSING MIDDLE’

Australia’s housing choices are relatively polarised between the detached suburban house on a suburban block and high-density apartment living in the city centre. The gap between high-density and low-density, detached housing is known as the ‘missing middle’. To respond to growing housing affordability and housing concerns, low-rise medium density options with opportunities for outdoor spaces are being explored as an alternative to the traditional suburban block.

This housing solution is increasingly being implemented to respond to emerging challenges facing cities around the world. Evidence suggests that when combined with built form innovations, such as compact housing design landscape and environmental design attributes, medium density, such as townhouse style developments, can offer lower cost housing choice, higher sustainability outcomes, as well as high amenity living.

‘Missing Middle’ Housing

Medium density housing is a proven, lower cost-by-design housing solution that meets the growing demand for walkable neighbourhood living. Providing the ‘missing middle’ option between low and high density living, separately titled townhouses, terraces and courtyard townhouses provide an attractive alternative to apartment living.

The Project Vision

Enriching life through economical and environmental housing innovation

The North Wright Compact Housing Project is an innovative housing solution driven by purpose and defined by community. Created by the Suburban Land Agency in response to financial, social and environmental challenges, the Project will serve as a new blueprint for conscious and lower cost neighbourhood living in the 21st century.

CREATING A LOWER COST OPTION

In a rethink of residential affordability in Australia, the Project will demonstrate quality, architect-designed, low-cost housing for the future—a future where more individuals and families have access to home ownership without compromising on style, comfort, or amenity. Cost savings will be fuelled by efficient land-use, compact spaces, innovative construction, and the economic benefits of smart and sustainable design.



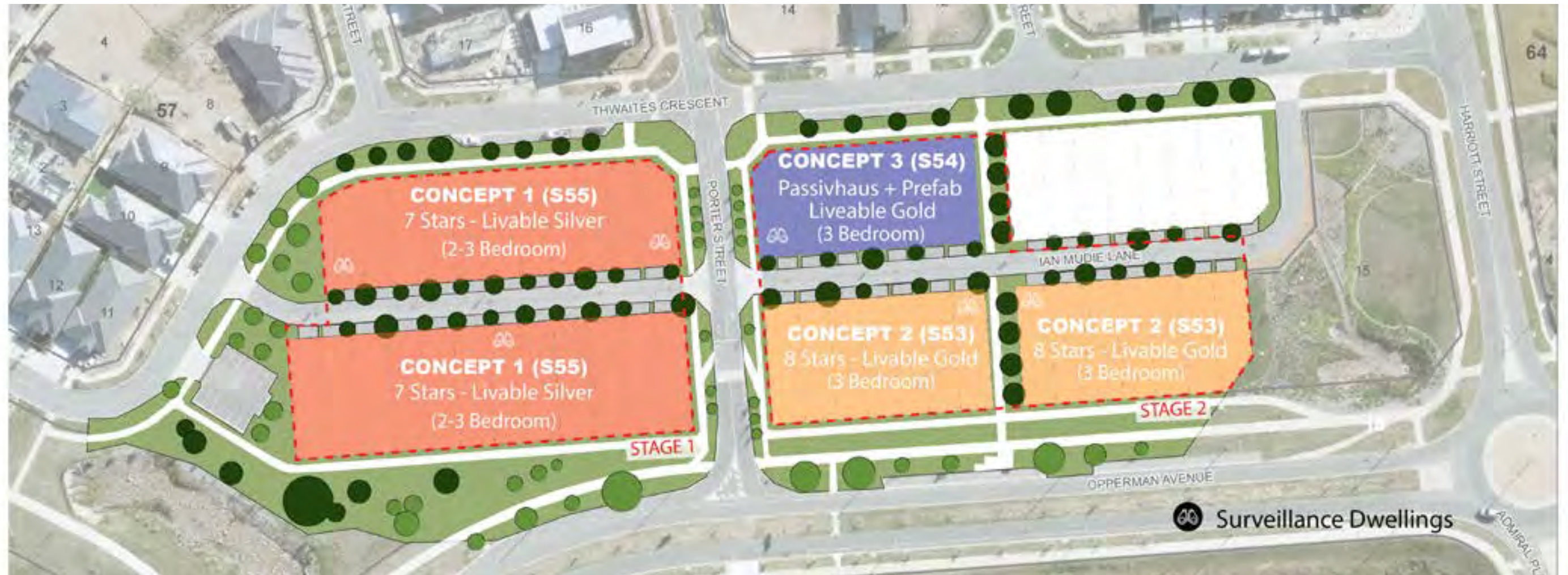
CREATING A GREENER FUTURE

Bringing together complementary yet distinctive landscape-oriented housing types, the Project will ambitiously elevate the standards of low carbon and green living in Australia. Leading sustainable design techniques and measures will optimise and reduce the use of materials, energy, and emissions for cheaper and cleaner living.

CREATING A RICHER COMMUNITY

The Project will foster and celebrate community with innovative shared spaces designed to engage all ages. Embedded with opportunities for outdoor play, discovery, gathering and connection to Country, the Project will be a place where neighbours can connect, grow and thrive together.





Testing the right mix

A HYBRID APPROACH TO HOUSING TYPES

The carefully chosen hybrid solution comprises 43 dwellings across three townhouse concepts. The townhouses are all-electric and include rooftop solar and battery storage, as well as demand management systems and electric vehicle charging points. Concept 1 (Section 55 & 56 in the diagram above) will be delivered in the first stage of the Project and Concepts 2 and 3 (Section 53 & 54 respectively) will be delivered in the second stage.

SURVEILLANCE BLOCKS OR 'EYES ON THE STREET' DWELLINGS

Six blocks of the Project include a separate small dwelling (defined as Surveillance Blocks (R19) in the ACT Single Dwelling Housing Code) for extended family living or rental opportunity. They offer a fully contained and independent 1-bedroom dwelling above the garage to the rear of the main residence.



CONCEPT 1: LOWER COST 'MISSING MIDDLE'

The low-cost 'missing middle' concept comprises 20 townhouse dwellings designed as compact housing that offers a lower purchase price and maximum private open space with minimum running costs. The concept will provide a mix of sizes with single and double-storey options which include 3-bedroom dwellings designed to + 'Silver Level' Liveable Housing Guidelines for accessibility and 'aging-in-place'.

'Room-to-grow' extendable dwellings: There are also 2-bedroom townhouses which are designed to allow for a future extension of an additional bedroom and a garage. This is a unique housing typology that allows the owner(s) to grow the property to potentially meet their changing needs, as they can afford it, and realise its development opportunity over time.





CONCEPT 2: ENERGY EFFICIENT AND GREEN

This concept includes 3-bedroom townhouses designed to provide an 8-star energy efficiency rating that has a high design specification showcasing innovation, sustainability and design excellence. These townhouses will be delivered in accordance with the Livable Housing Design Guidelines ‘Gold Level’ which includes wider door openings and spaces compared to ‘Silver Level’. Up to seven of these townhouses will be delivered through prefabrication techniques.

What is Livable Home Design?

Livable Housing Design is housing designed to adapt to the changing needs of occupants throughout their lifetime. This means reduced steps, more space in the bathroom, wider doorways, and the ability for future adaptations such as grab-rails.

What is Passivhaus?

Passivhaus is a design standard that delivers healthy, comfortable and efficient buildings by ensuring the thermal envelope of the building is optimised. Passivhaus design can result in an 80%-90% reduction in energy consumption. The design concept comprises Classic, Plus and Premium standards, each defining a level of renewable energy generation.



CONCEPT 3 PASSIVHAUS CONCEPT

This concept comprises six 3-bedroom townhouses built and certified to Passivhaus Classic and Livable Housing Design Guidelines ‘Gold Level’. These certifications have a high design specification showcasing the highest standard of energy efficiency and a healthy indoor air climate as well as wider door openings and spaces compared to ‘Silver Level’.

Creating community

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER BY DESIGN

One of SLA's objectives for the Project is to create a place where community connection and sense of belonging can be nurtured. The site's approximately 9,000sqm of open spaces, including verges and laneways, will become the regenerative landscape that builds and connects the future community of this precinct.

Collaboration is an important element in the design process, and it is for this reason that an innovative, precinct-scale codesign process will be undertaken with the purpose of developing a series of placemaking solutions that maximise social connection, activation, and the distinct sense of place. Four key themes and potential placemaking opportunities are shown opposite.



“The trust of a city street is formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts... Most of it is ostensibly trivial but the sum is not trivial at all.”

Jane Jacobs,
Author and Urbanist, 1961

THEME 1: PLAY & DISCOVERY

Continual learning and intrigue that ignites the imagination

Attractive spaces and trails, which promotes art and expression.

Playful spaces that encourage learning.

Spaces that support imaginative, self-directed and loose materials play.

Progressive challenges in play and exploration to facilitate development.

Calm places of retreat to reflect and reset.

Street libraries and knowledge sharing hubs.

A communal multipurpose space for learning and education.



THEME 3: WELLBEING & SAFETY

Promote healthy living where everyone feels safe

Infrastructure that supports active recreation e.g. facilities for cycle storage and repairs,

Natural outdoor play for all ages.

Flexible streets and open spaces for informal sports, games and exercises.

Street design to promote low vehicular speeds and enhanced pedestrian safety.

Permeable garden frontages to create 'eyes on the street' and neighbourhood safety

Appropriate lighting levels to support night-time activity



THEME 2: COUNTRY

Creating better connections to sky, land, water and native flora and fauna

Ngunnawal signage and interpretation to impart traditional ecological knowledge.

Water a feature across the precinct, promoting physical interaction and play.

Strengthen ecological links with layered native planting and habitat creation.

Explore native planting in small spaces - micro forests and biodiverse sensory gardens.

Enhance natural features such as hilly topography and unique geology of the area.

Use natural and local materials and minimise processing.



THEME 4: COMMUNITY

Build community capacity and shared stewardship of the place

Spaces that are flexible for use by everyone

Communal spaces with shared amenities that builds community trust.

Places for teenagers of all genders to do stuff and be seen positively.

Elements that support common interests across diverse community.

Verges and lanes used for gardening and produce.

Opportunities for multi-generational interaction.

Community notice board and info hub.

Awareness building of Ngunnawal culture and opportunities for Ngunnawal activities.

Shaping place expression

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS AND CHARACTER

As an innovative new housing model it is essential that the identity of the Project captures its distinctive character and purpose. Combined with our overarching vision statement, the values and benefits outlined here form the foundation for the unique expression of the Project in materiality, experiences and communications.



Characteristics

SOCIAL:

Open and welcoming, the Project is a place that celebrates people and diversity as an active neighbourhood and true community.



INTELLIGENT:

Smart and efficient, the Project applies intelligent design and low carbon sustainability practices to realise meaningful and measurable outcomes.



GROUNDING:

Natural and warm, the Project nurtures and inspires with a connection to the environment through texture, colour and experiences.



Benefits

HOUSING DIVERSITY:

The Project delivers diverse 'missing middle' housing concepts across a range of price points.

PLACE AND COMMUNITY:

The Project creates an integrated precinct approach that utilises placemaking opportunities to create a strong sense of community.

WHOLE-OF-LIFE LIVING:

The Project provides adaptable design for a range of generations, demonstrating the benefits of low carbon living with low running costs.

CONSTRUCTION LEADERSHIP:

The Project prototypes design and construction techniques not currently used in Australia but widely used in the Northern European market.

SUSTAINABILITY:

The Project innovates Australia's built form design towards net zero carbon emissions in operation and materials with enhanced greenery.

TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE:

The Project demonstrates financial viability with sustainability and design excellence and delivered in accordance with the Livable Housing Australia guidelines.

“An opportunity to rethink housing development in Australia, this is a legacy project for the SLA that will be recognised in years to come for its bold innovation in creating sustainable communities.”

Petra Oswald,
Program Manager, SLA, 2022

The future starts here

A NEW BENCHMARK FOR LOW CARBON LIVING

As we embark on a decarbonising decade in response to Climate Change, the Project presents an opportunity to redefine Australian housing and foster more resilient communities.

This innovative hybrid housing model will demonstrate greater housing choice, compact design, flexible spaces and increased affordability while showcasing a pathway to net zero emissions and community living.

By balancing community and sustainability outcomes with financial returns, the SLA seeks to

drive housing innovation within the Australian residential development industry. It will allow the SLA to quantify the true cost and performance against triple bottom-line framework including social, environmental, and financial criteria. This evidence will be used to identify improvements in the design and delivery of its typologies, and initiate continuous improvements on future projects.

Ultimately, the Project has the potential to create a meaningful solution for our community with a purposeful and powerful environmental ambition that can become a new benchmark precinct in the ACT and beyond.



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