

Draft Variation 369

EXPLAINER

“Compact” or small blocks (around 250m²)

<u>What changed?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The outdoor area (“private open space”) requirements for all small blocks will be 30%. For front loading blocks (where the house is close to the road), this is a reduction of 20%. For rear-loading blocks (where the house is close to the back), the percentage for outdoor space is unchanged. The planting area is still half of the outdoor area (15% of total).• Where developments are allowed to meet ‘criteria’ instead of these percentages, the criteria now include much stronger language. This means the outdoor area must be substantial, useable and have space for trees and other ‘living infrastructure’ – like plants and gardens.
<u>Why?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We were told the original difference between ‘front’ and ‘rear’ loading blocks meant that developers would end up preferring rear-loading developments with paved laneways – meaning less space in new developments for trees.• Here, we have trade-offs between small, more affordable blocks and the size of house allowed. Where blocks are smaller, public land must do more of the heavy lifting.• The stronger criteria better meets our outcomes focus on reducing the urban heat island effect, retaining water, and providing amenity for the neighbourhood.
<u>Next steps?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These blocks do not make up a big percentage of blocks in Canberra - right now it is less than 5%• However, new suburbs tend to have more of these blocks – this is why making sure the rules about creating new suburbs (the “Estate Development Code”) needs to be changed to include tree canopy targets – more about that below.

Mid-sized blocks (around 450m²)

<p><u>What changed?</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outdoor area (“private open space”) requirements for these have gone down from 50% to 40%. The planting area is still half of the outdoor area (20% of total). • Where developments are allowed to meet ‘criteria’ instead of these percentages, the criteria now include much stronger language. This means the outdoor area must be substantial, useable and have space for trees and other ‘living infrastructure’ – like plants and gardens.
<p><u>Why?</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We were told the private open space requirements would result in perverse incentives to build two-storey buildings on this size of block. This can impact neighbours – for example it can cause shadowing, meaning their houses can be colder, and solar panels not be as effective. Two storey houses are also not always accessible. • Here, we have trade-offs between small, more affordable blocks and the size of house allowed. Where blocks are smaller, public land must do more of the heavy lifting. • The stronger criteria better meets our outcomes focus on reducing the urban heat island effect, retaining water, and providing amenity for the neighbourhood.
<p><u>Next steps?</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These blocks do not make up a big percentage of blocks in Canberra - right now it is around 15% • However, new suburbs tend to have more mid-sized and small blocks – this is why making sure the rules about creating new suburbs (the “Estate Development Code”) needs to be changed to include tree canopy targets – more about that below.

Large blocks (around 800-1200m²)

<p><u>What changed?</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been no changes to the percentages of private open space, minimum dimension or planting area. • The description of percentage of planting area has changed – from a percentage of the minimum area to a clearer description. • Criteria has been strengthened to clarify the intent and outcomes of the qualitative response to be demonstrated by responding to the criteria.
<p><u>Why?</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changes have been made to make the rule clearer, and to strengthen the criteria.
<p><u>Next steps?</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n/a

Blocks with more than one residence (‘multi-unit developments’)

<u>What changed?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several criteria (C38, C38A, C39 and C39A) have been strengthened to clarify the intent and outcomes of the qualitative response to be demonstrated by responding to the criteria. - There is now an increase to the requirement for canopy cover on the block at maturity from 15% to 20% for multi-unit development in RZ3 to RZ5 zones - In the original version of DV369, if the minimum required planting area could not be planted on site in an RZ5 zone, an equivalent area should be achieved through planting on structures. This has now been expanded to RZ3 and RZ4 zones
<u>Why?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several comments in the consultation submissions noted the need to strengthen the criteria. These criteria were amended to provide a link to the outcomes intended by DV369 – to cool, to retain water, and to provide habitat. - Several comments in the consultation submissions asked for an increase in canopy cover in the multi-unit housing development code. As a result of this feedback, the percentage was increased from 15% to 20%. - Planting on structures has been allowed in the criteria for consideration where a multi-unit development may be in an already dense area with limited other options to reasonably meet the minimum planting areas. For these proposed developments, planting on structures will still need to show they will achieve the objectives of the Living Infrastructure Program, i.e., contribute to cooling heat islands, retaining water, and providing amenity. The ACT government has been trialling green roofs, vertical plantings, and other similar innovations to see what thrives in Canberra and works with developers who put forward credible similar ideas. This is an evolving area; hence the criteria here rely more on an individual assessment of any proposals against the objectives, rather than giving a categorical list of what is acceptable.
<u>Next steps?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further work will be done to determine the guidelines for green infrastructure.