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## North Wright Compact Housing Project

### Glossary of useful definitions

**Active living and travel** is a 'way of life' that integrates physical activity into daily routines and is supported through precinct design features such as convenient path networks and good proximity to parks, recreation and other amenities. Active travel is a means of transport through physical activity, such as walking, cycling, and 'wheeling' – including scooters, skating, skateboarding, pushing a pram and the use of mobility aids. Active travel is not only a healthy mode of transport but also a low-carbon one, especially for shorter distances. This 'micromobility' over short distances is usually enabled by well-designed path networks and an estate design with housing and employment in reasonable proximities to shops, schools, community facilities, public transport and other destinations.

**Carport** means a car shelter wholly or partly enclosed on not more than two sides. For this project we are exploring multi-purpose spaces with the design of carports allowing for more daylight and their use for outdoor seating or recreation. We are similarly exploring multi-purpose garages that are flexible for a range of uses beyond car parking.

**Communal open space** means shared outdoor open space for recreation and relaxation of residents of a housing development. Strictly speaking this project comprises public and private space only, however the goal of our landscape co-design process is to vegetate and activate the public spaces of the precinct which surround the private blocks for greater community connection.

**Compact blocks**, for this project it means a separately titled block of land, 200-250sqm in size.

**Designing with Country** ranges from the large-scale meaning and symbolism of a place to the detailed land management of specific important sites. Research suggests designing with Country links design to people to place and to nature and can often help us to achieve more sustainable outcomes. Connecting to Country is not possible without engaging with recognised knowledge holders. The project team is working with Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (TOAC), an independent cultural advisor, throughout the project to consider the cultural significance of the site and opportunities for restoring connection to Country through our landscape concept.

**Discrete utilities** means that compact houses and blocks tend to benefit from the discrete location and integrated screening of washing lines, rainwater tanks, hot water units, outdoor air-conditioner condensers, wheelie bins and the like. Likewise, private spaces include backyards, courtyards, balconies, utility areas and rear house entry zones. In a similar vein, laundry, bathroom, and toilet windows shall not be prominent from public areas and are to be screened.

**Habitable room** is a room or space within a townhouse for living, sleeping, cooking or eating, such as a bedroom, study, living, family, kitchen or dining space. Non-habitable spaces include a

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bathroom, laundry, utility room, hallway, garage, or other spaces of a specialised nature which tend to be used intermittently.

**Livable Housing Design Guidelines (Silver and Gold Level)** ) are a common feature of the project and mean that a core of room functions and zones are step-free and manoeuvrable and designed to their respective accessibility level. Further detail can be found at the Livable Housing Australia website: <https://livablehousingaustralia.org.au/design-guidelines/>.

**Missing middle** refers to medium-density, compact housing types which are often attached or semi-detached. This includes duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, terraces, and courtyard homes. The name responds to high consumer demand and a market undersupply. This dwelling type is improving housing choice for young families, single-parents, elderly Canberrans, in particular owner-occupiers, seeking well-designed, high-performing single-residential housing options at various economical price thresholds.

**More affordable housing** is intended to offer a compact but sustainable built form typology to address a gap in the market at a price that is generally more affordable than other homes for sale. This product type is likely to be targeted towards eligible home buyers on lower to moderate incomes. We will explore this aspect with the Advisory Group as the design is refined, noting we seek a balance between being cost-efficient to build while being energy-efficient and cost-effective to run, maintain and adapt.

**Overlapping function and flexibility:** Houses are designed to be compact and to use less space, less materials, and to leave space for areas such as gardens and courtyards or a future extension. A key space-saving strategy therefore involves designing for flexibility and overlapping function. For example, to the occupants, a guest bedroom might double as a home office, a hobby room and so forth. Circulation spaces such as hallways are minimised and overlap with living areas. Laundries can combine with bathrooms; open plan kitchens combine with living spaces; carports doubling as pergolas; multi-purpose garage spaces and the like.

**Perceived spaciousness** arguably benefits from direct garden access and views to landscape near and far, along with sunlight, daylight access and good cross-ventilation. In this way, 'indoor-outdoor connection', open-planning, and the judicious use of raised ceilings can combine to add to a sense of space in compact housing.

**Place-led landscape and placemaking** seeks to maximise the precinct benefits for residents by creating spaces for community connections, growing food, informal play, and recreation in nature. It focusses on placemaking, activation, communal space use and landscape solutions for verges, green buffers, pedestrian cross links, and laneways; all of which can extend the usable space for residents beyond the block itself to help make a home feel 'bigger than its house'.

**Planting area** means an area of land within a block that is available for landscape planting and that is not covered by buildings, structures, vehicle parking and manoeuvring areas or any other form of

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impermeable element that impacts water permeability of the ground surface (i.e. paving, terraces, pergolas, patios or decks).

**Prefabrication, repetition and modularity:** To help streamline construction and the efficient use of materials, the project prioritises modular, repeat types using standard room sizes that can be reconfigured for different sites. In Stage 2, the repetition and modularity theme extends to include 'flat-pack' prefabrication of floor, wall and ceiling systems to reduce construction time, reduce material use, reduce gaps and draughts, and to allow for the future reuse of dismantled panels.

**Principal private open space (PPOS)** describes private garden space of a minimum size (4x4metres or above) that is directly accessible from a living space. The PPOS shall be in a location to receive direct solar access. Windows and doors to townhouses shall be located to reduce overlooking from adjacent properties. In addition to courtyard walls, we will consider supplementary landscaping and screening devices to maximise the usability of north-facing courtyards and living spaces and to minimise overlooking from the street.

**Public open space** describes the variety of spaces within the urban environment that are readily and freely accessible to the wider community for recreation and enjoyment.

**Room to grow/extendable** townhouses allow for future development of a third bedroom, flexible studio space, or the like, to support household growth and change. Compact blocks are typically developed to their maximum potential, thus ruling out future expansion and this project seeks to challenge that norm.

**Setback** in the Territory Plan, that outlines the code requirements, means the horizontal distance between a block boundary and the outside face of the house, carport, garage and the like.

**Surveillance blocks:** The Territory Plan, the statutory planning instrument of the ACT, requires a minimum number of surveillance blocks through the precinct. Many houses in the project offer 'eyes on the street' windows overlooking streets and laneways, a technique which is considered to help improve safety and perceived safety.

**Wayfinding, legible front doors and street character:** Houses should contribute to the quality and character of the neighbourhood, have a 'sense of street address' and an identifiable principal entrance. We are exploring cohesive, articulated streetscape solutions and materials palettes, exercising care to prioritise house personalisation, while avoiding repetitive streetscapes.

**Laneways:** We seek articulated, vegetated, and activated rear laneways which avoid repetitive double garage forms and consider fence and courtyard wall positioning to allow for tree, green screen and shrub planting which contributes landscape and shade to rear laneways.

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