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Sent: Friday, 21 September 2018 4:11 PM
To: admin@saplanningcommission.sa.gov.au; DPTI:Planning Reform; DPTI:Planning Engagement
Subject: Community Submission to planning reform State Planning Policies for South Australia

To whom it may concern,

Submission to Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure Re: State Planning Policies for SA Community Consultation Process

A joint submission prepared by Elle Vallance of Adelaide Co-Housing on behalf of The Verge Cohousing Community.

Introduction

Cohousing is a unique housing typology that is not currently included within the South Australian DPTI Planning Code.

The most defining built-form characteristic that differentiates cohousing from other built form typologies is the creation of a medium or low density cluster of self contained dwellings. At the epicentre of the village-like precinct is a shared facility called the Common House which provides the physical hub for community engagement for residents.

Key features of a Cohousing Community will include:

- Participatory Process: the future residents participate in the planning and design of the building, and the establishment of their governance policies and procedures.
- Intentional Neighbourhood Design: the physical design purposefully encourages sociability that welcomes all age groups, is disability friendly, and embraces cultural diversity.
- Extensive Common Facilities: common areas are designed for daily use and supplement private living areas.
- Complete Resident Management: the residents manage the decisions of common concern at regular community meetings.
- Optimum Community Size: 15 - 35 dwellings, accommodating a full variety of age groups and household configurations, particularly families with children.
- Purposeful Separation of Cars: car parking is located away from the private residences.
- Meals: regular community meals are the life blood of a highly social cohousing community.
- Co-Development Process: the Steering Committee establish a strong working relationship with the design team, financiers, and construction team.

Many of the issues that cohousing seeks to address are succinctly summarised by the report prepared for the SA State Government by the Office for the Ageing SA Health in 2017.

http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/774f7180426a12449c029eadc5e910c3/Housing+for+Life_+Designed+for+Living-ONLINE.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-774f7180426a12449c029eadc5e910c3-IUH.omW

Executive Summary

The South Australian Government has a unique opportunity to demonstrate national leadership to be the first state to purposefully and formally include cohousing as a separate, distinct, and unique built form typology into the state’s Planning Code.

The nature of cohousing offers SA an opportunity to set the bar higher for our built form outcomes, enabling us to develop buildings that are resilient to the forces of climate change, changing population demographics, and to easefully meet the goals of the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide. Extensive international and national literature indicates that cohousing has the potential to become a mainstream housing typology of the 21st Century.

Most speculative medium density residential developments are built to a formula to maximize profit for the developer and to maximize profit for an absentee landlord investor. Many such developments fail to deliver ecologically sustainable built form and are usually designed upon a flawed premise that ‘privacy’ (ie isolation) delivers an appropriate housing solution and neighbourhood amenity. These conventional developments are typified by high ‘good neighbour’ fences, impenetrable fortress-like facades, absence of greenery, and cars dominating the streetscape.

Cohousing as a building typology is focused principally on human centred design to optimise wellbeing outcomes for residents and ecological sustainability principles embedded within Regenerative Design. The built form features of cohousing proactively encourages incidental interactions amongst residents, sharing resources, collaboration, incidental supervision, and residents purposefully coming together for community activities. In this way cohousing delivers very significant health and wellbeing outcomes (with flow on effect of decreasing reliance on the public health system), macro and micro environmental sustainability outcomes, and quantifiable financial savings over the long term.

Cohousing is a built form typology that is well recognised as a mainstream housing typology in Denmark, Belgium, Germany, Austria and the UK. It has a growing uptake in USA, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. See Useful Links for more information.

As such, cohousing is deserving of a separate and distinct classification within the South Australian Planning Code. Adelaide Co-Housing and The Verge Cohousing Community endorse the creation of subcategory within the Planning Code for standardised interpretation of legislation to improve assessment and reduce delays for the approval of cohousing precincts.

Recommendations for minimum code compliance of the Cohousing typology

	Minimum to be deemed code compliant (specific rules)	Maximum to be deemed code compliant	Ideal
Common House	Commercial kitchen 0.5m ² / bedroom		30m ²
	Dining hall 2.5m ² / bedroom Minimum passive solar design		Dining hall 3.5m ² / bedroom
	Lounge 0.8m ² / bedroom Minimum passive solar design		Lounge 1.2m ² / bedroom
			Studio 0.5m ² / bedroom
			Workshop 0.5m ² / bedroom

	Visitor toilets x2		End of trip shower and locker facilities
	Shared laundry 0.3m ² / dwelling		Shared laundry 0.5m ² / dwelling
	Recycling sorting 0.2m ² / dwelling		
	Storage Locker 2m ³ / dwelling Store Room (library of things) 2m ³ / dwelling		Individual storage lockers plus shared Library of Things
	Guest Room with ensuite X1		Guest Room with ensuite X2
Shared Open Green Space	3m ² / bedroom; recreational space plus potential for shared food production and children's play spaces and outdoor clothes lines. Minimum year round access to direct sunlight in the shared garden space.		8m ² / bedroom See explanatory notes
Number of Dwellings	8 self-contained dwellings plus Common House and shared garden areas	40 self-contained dwellings plus Common House and shared garden areas	25 – 35 self-contained dwellings plus Common House and shared garden areas; approximately 75 residents of mixed age
Dwelling Size	Studio 40m ² 1BR 50m ² 2BR 60m ² 3BR 75m ² 4BR 95m ²		Studio 50m ² 1BR 60m ² 2BR 80m ² 3BR 95m ² 4BR 115m ²
Private dwelling configuration	Self-contained dwelling with kitchen, lounge, dining, bathroom, separate entry, and bedroom(s), storage, excludes laundry		
Private Open Space; balcony or courtyard	Studio 10m ² 1BR 10m ² 2BR 12m ² 3BR 16m ² 4BR 28m ²		Studio 12m ² 1BR 12m ² 2BR 15m ² 3BR 20m ² 4BR 25m ²

Universal Design / Disability Design	25% of dwellings 100% of Common House 100% of shared outdoor spaces and access points		100% of dwellings 100% of Common House 100% of shared outdoor spaces and access points
Overlook	Exception of line of sight overlook from living areas to walkways, shared common spaces		See explanatory notes
Car Parking	0.2 car parking spaces per bedroom	0.5 car parking spaces per bedroom	0.3 car spaces; See explanatory notes
Bicycle Parking	0.8 parking spaces per bedroom		2.2 parking spaces per bedroom
Commercial Spaces			See explanatory notes
Legal Structure	Includes provision for shared cost of maintenance & and a maintenance plan agreement. Demonstrable resident-led self-governance structure included within the legal entity		

Explanatory Notes

Appropriate exemptions to the assessment guidelines

Code compliance exemptions to built-form appropriate for a cohousing precinct:

- Living areas, particularly kitchen windows, should offer incidental overlook to public spaces as much as possible. Ideally 4 - 8 kitchen windows would have incidental supervision of each shared space and walkway within the precinct.
- The Common House should have line of sight incidental supervision of the entrance foyer, all walkways, stairways, precinct access points, children's play areas, and swimming pools (if included).
- Reduction in car parking provision to offer as few as 0.3 car parking space per bedroom
 - To encourage human powered transport, usage of public transport, and usage of in-house car share facilities and public ride share services
 - Minimum and maximum numbers of car parking spaces are dependent upon proximity to fixed public transport and integrated transport plan
- Absence of private laundries

Appropriate inclusions to the assessment guidelines

- Minimum requirement of Universal Design / Disability Design / Ageing in Place Design for > 25% of all dwellings within the precinct
 - Ideally 100% of dwellings within the precinct are Universal Design and pet friendly
- Minimum requirement of Universal Design / Disability Design / Ageing in Place Design for all shared spaces including Common House, walkways, garaging, and access points
- Number of Dwellings: 'human scale' ideally accommodates a 'pocket community' of approximately 75 people = 60 adults of mixed ages plus 15 children of mixed ages. International experience indicates that more than this number precludes effective decision making and human interaction. Less than this number means there are not enough able-bodied adults (of working age) to do the 'work' to maintain the efficient operation of the

community, especially as the resident community ages and is faced with the dual challenge of managing the community and concurrent health challenges.

- Bedrooms and bathrooms should be free of overlook from within the precinct and from neighbouring properties
- Individual dwellings are purposefully of modest size to encourage residents to utilise shared community spaces and facilities.
- Minimum useable private outdoor space per dwelling prohibits ribbon strip balconies
- Balconies and courtyards should not be boxed in and should not have high 'good neighbour' fencing
- Exemption to minimum shared outdoor green space is to be dependent upon the proximity of neighbourhood facilities / shared public open space
- Electricity microgeneration and storage / precinct microgrid
- Higher energy efficiency ratings > 8+ Stars for built form due to:
 - economy of scale of the number of occupants using the facilities
 - sharing of upfront costs of infrastructure
 - sharing of ongoing maintenance costs of infrastructure
 - density and proximity of dwellings
 - anticipated lifespan of the built form; which should be planned for a 150 – 200 year lifespan
 - to offer long term cost of living savings to residents for ageing in place: especially relevant for SA's high proportion of ageing population and growing portion of the population living on a fixed income
 - to mitigate against health risks associated with urban heat banking during extreme heat events
 - to take pressure off public electricity infrastructure
 - to positively contribute towards SA's Carbon Neutral / Carbon Reduction targets Paris Agreement
 - to be a world standard leader attracting further industry investment
 - to be an exemplar for other residential typologies into the 21st Century
 - to attract ecotourism / architecture tourism to SA
- Rainwater tanks 5,000L per dwelling
- Shared recycling sorting space and waste transfer (rubbish bin storage)
- Precinct wide grey water and black water onsite treatment systems
- Car parking is purposefully located away from the dwellings at the perimeter of the precinct, with minimal provision made for visitor parking; acknowledging the rise of autonomous vehicles and improved city wide cycling infrastructure and improved public transport.
- Minimum bicycle garaging of 0.8 parking spaces per bedroom
 - to accommodate a variety of cycle storage: trailers, kids bikes, cargo bikes, prams, shopping jeeps, etc
 - ideally 2.2 parking spaces per bedroom
 - variations are considered according to an integrated transport plan: eg: in-house carbon free car share, green transit vouchers for public transport, walkability index for neighbourhood zone
- Commercial spaces: while not essential for a successful cohousing precinct, it can be useful &/or beneficial for a cohousing precinct to be included above or behind a commercial building within a mixed use neighbourhood zoning, eg retail precinct, recreational precinct, childcare precinct, community garden precinct, community hub precinct, etc.

Useful Links (in English)

- Wikipedia: Internationally recognised definition of cohousing <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cohousing>
- SA Government Office of the Ageing <http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/774f7180426a12449c029eadc5e910c3/Housing+for+Life+%2D+Designed+for+Living-ONLINE.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-774f7180426a12449c029eadc5e910c3-IUH.omW>

- University of Technology Sydney Institute for Sustainable Futures discussion paper on Cohousing for Seniors <https://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/our-research/institute-sustainable-futures/our-research/social-change-4>
- UK Cohousing <https://cohousing.org.uk/>
- Cohousing Association of USA <https://www.cohousing.org/>
- Regenerative Design https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regenerative_design
- NSW Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Housing/Medium-Density-Housing>

Conclusion

Adelaide Co-Housing and The Verge Cohousing Community support the inclusion of cohousing as a distinct category for code compliance within the South Australian Planning Code.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with the State Planning Commission to participate in a reiterative process to fine tune the final draft of the SA Planning Code prior to submitting the draft legislation for passage through the Parliament.

Kind Regards

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