
Planning Matters - 24 September 2019

ITEM 5.2 Livable Housing Discussion Paper

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PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement to exhibit a Discussion Paper on options to make new homes easier to use for the community, and designed to meet their changing needs throughout their lifetime.

ISSUE

Residents and families want homes that are easy to enter, easy to navigate in and around, and designed to meet their changing needs across their lifetime. Residents would also like to age-in-place as it can be expensive and inconvenient to relocate because their home is no longer suitable for them.

Council recognises these needs and is looking at options to make new homes easier to use for our community including seniors, people with temporary injuries, families with young children, and people with disabilities and their families.

As a first step, Council has prepared a Discussion Paper for exhibition with options on how Council may proceed to address future demand for livable housing. Following community and industry feedback, the intended outcome is for Council to amend the development controls based on a preferred option to be endorsed by Council.

RECOMMENDATION That–

1. Council exhibit the Discussion Paper, as provided in Attachment A, in accordance with the Draft Community Participation Plan.
2. The matter be reported to Council following the exhibition.

ATTACHMENTS [Click here for attachment](#)

- A. Draft Discussion Paper

POLICY IMPACT

The intended outcome of the Discussion Paper is to inform future amendments to Council's development controls based on a preferred option to make new homes easier to use for the community.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This matter has no financial implication for Council.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Council has prepared a Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement to guide the future of the City of Canterbury Bankstown to 2036.

The Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement recognises a need to provide housing choice to suit each life stage of the community. For example, the mature aged community is becoming increasingly important as the population is projected to age rapidly, with a high growth rate in the over 65 demographics. Older people generally like to stay near their families and friends, which is why residents look for homes where they can age-in-place.

The 2016 Census also reported that over 23,000 residents in the City needed assistance in their day-to-day lives due to a disability.

It is important for Council to consider these needs when making decisions about future building design controls.

An action in the Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement is to encourage homes that enable our community to age-in-place and to encourage homes that are easier to use for all occupants including seniors, people with temporary injuries, families with young children, and people with disabilities and their families.

This Discussion Paper looks at options to implement this action of the Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement.

DETAILED INFORMATION

Background

For the last 20 years, Council has applied the Adaptable Housing Australian Standard (4299–1995) to provide custom–designed homes for seniors and people with disabilities (either living independently or with family support). This is currently the same approach as most other councils in Sydney.

Council’s Development Control Plans currently require a minimum 10% of dwellings in villas, town houses and apartments to be adaptable housing.

Council recognises there is a need to review these requirements to reflect the Draft Strategic Planning Statement and industry best practice directions.

Industry best practice directions

The NSW Government, industry, social housing providers and some councils are moving from the Adaptable Housing Australian Standard to a new set of guidelines, known as the Livable Housing Design Guidelines.

The Livable Housing Design Guidelines were introduced in 2010 following the National Conference on Universal Housing Design. The Commonwealth Government supports the Guidelines as a way to provide nationally consistent guidelines. Livable Housing Australia (a not–for–profit organisation) was created to administer the Guidelines.

The Guidelines aim to provide suitable accommodation for a broad range of the community including seniors, people with temporary injuries, families with young children, and people with disabilities and their families; plus enable people to age–in–place.

The Guidelines contain three types of building design standards: Platinum, Gold and Silver. Livable Housing Australia’s goal is for all new homes to achieve a minimum standard (Silver), however this target is not legislated and is therefore discretionary.

The table below provides a comparison of the Adaptable Housing Australian Standard and the Livable Housing Design Guidelines.

Adaptable Housing Australian Standard	Livable Housing Design Guidelines
<p>The Australian Standard is specific to designing homes to accommodate varying degrees of physical ability over time.</p> <p>It is designed to meet the needs of people requiring higher level access from the outset, and usually designed and built with a specific person’s needs in mind.</p> <p>The basic premise is that every home should be accessible to a visitor using a wheelchair. The Australian Standard also requires the</p>	<p>The Livable Housing Design Guidelines contain three types of building design standards:</p> <p><u>Silver Standard:</u> The minimum standard which focusses on seven core design elements (refer to the Discussion Paper) to ensure future flexibility and adaptability of the home (namely entry and corridor widths, and bathrooms). Incorporating these features will avoid more costly home modification if required at a later date.</p>

Adaptable Housing Australian Standard	Livable Housing Design Guidelines
home to be adaptable for an occupant using a wheelchair.	<p><u>Gold Standard:</u> This higher standard enhances the requirements for most of the core design elements plus additional elements. It provides for more generous dimensions for most of the core design elements and introduces additional elements in areas such as the kitchen and bedroom.</p> <p><u>Platinum Standard:</u> This is the highest standard. All 15 elements are featured in the platinum level. This standard describes the design elements that would better accommodate ageing in place and people with higher mobility needs. This standard requires more generous dimensions for most of the core design elements and introduces additional elements for features such as the living room and flooring.</p>

Discussion Paper

Council does not currently subscribe to the Livable Housing Design Guidelines however a number of options are available to update the development controls, with a view to increase the levels of livable homes in the City.

For the purposes of the exhibition, the Discussion Paper outlines a range of options that Council may consider before deciding a preferred way forward. The Discussion Paper uses the terms ‘adaptable housing’ and ‘livable housing’ to describe the options as follows:

- Adaptable housing means a home that is designed to meet the needs of people requiring a higher level of access from the outset, and is usually designed and built with a specific person’s needs in mind.
- Livable housing means a home that is designed to meet the changing needs of a broader cross-section of the community throughout their lifetime.

The options identified in the Discussion Paper include:

Options	Implications
<p><u>Option 1 (Livable Housing):</u> Apply the minimum standard (Silver) under the Livable Housing Design Guidelines to all new homes that require development approval.</p>	<p><u>Benefits:</u> This option provides the minimum standard to meet the changing needs of most home occupants throughout their lifetime. It uses standard building products and practices to overcome access and usability problems.</p> <p>The likely average yield under this option may be approximately 2,000–2,500 dwellings per year.</p> <p><u>Limitations:</u> This option applies mainly to entry ways, corridors and bathrooms, and does not apply to the design of other rooms in the home. The Silver Standard does not require bedrooms on the ground floor.</p>

<p><u>Option 2 (Livable Housing):</u> Apply a mix of the minimum and higher standards (Silver, Gold and Platinum) under the Livable Housing Design Guidelines to most new homes that require development approval.</p>	<p><u>Benefits:</u> Rather than limit the building design to the minimum Silver Standard, this option proposes to apply a mix of the Platinum, Gold and Silver Standards as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% Silver, 10% Gold and 10% Platinum to new apartments and multi dwelling housing (e.g. villas and townhouses); • Gold Standard to at least one dwelling in a dual occupancy; and • Silver Standard to new secondary dwellings and houses requiring a development application. <p>It provides a mix of housing products where the rooms and services are of a size that are usable by a broader cross-section of our community. For example, slightly wider doorways or passageways are more easily navigated by users of mobility devices such as walking frames, wheelchairs or a child's pram. The Gold Standard requires bedrooms on the ground floor.</p> <p>The likely average yield under this option would be approximately 1,000 dwellings per year.</p> <p><u>Limitations:</u> This option requires more generous dimensions for most rooms compared to the Silver Standard under Option 1.</p>
<p><u>Option 3 (Adaptable Housing):</u> This option proposes to continue with the current policy, rather than apply the Livable Housing Design Guidelines.</p>	<p><u>Benefits:</u> This option proposes to continue with the current policy, rather than apply the Livable Housing Design Guidelines.</p> <p><u>Limitations:</u> This option does not meet a growing trend toward industry best practice directions. The Australian Standard does not require bedrooms on the ground floor.</p> <p>The likely average yield under this option may be low at approximately 100 dwellings per year.</p>

It is noted that the above options would apply to new residential development that require development application approval (not including alterations and additions to existing homes). It is not possible to apply Council's DCP controls to complying development (such as houses and secondary dwellings) under the State Codes.

Costs

The table below provides an indicative cost comparison between the Australian Standard and the Livable Housing Design Guidelines. The comparison indicates the Silver and Gold Standards would cost less to construct compared to the Australian Standard. It is assumed all development types would be more expensive under the Platinum Standard.

New homes	Constructions costs	Adaptable Housing Australian Standard	Livable Housing Design Guidelines (Silver Standard)	Livable Housing Design Guidelines (Gold Standard)
Houses	\$365,000	\$26,200	\$4,169	\$20,710
Dual occupancies (per dwelling)	\$365,000	\$25,890	\$4,169	\$20,710

New homes	Constructions costs	Adaptable Housing Australian Standard	Livable Housing Design Guidelines (Silver Standard)	Livable Housing Design Guidelines (Gold Standard)
Villas and town houses (per dwelling)	\$298,000	\$25,815	\$11,276	\$28,766
Apartments (per dwelling)	\$348,000	\$25,890	\$11,276	\$28,766

Source: Australian Building Codes Board (platinum not costed by ABCB)

NEXT STEPS

The first step is to exhibit a Discussion Paper with options on how Council may proceed to address the community needs. The exhibition would be a minimum 28 days in accordance with the Draft Community Participation Plan. The community and industry would have the opportunity to identify a preferred option or to highlight other options which Council may consider.

As part of a further report to Council and based on community and industry feedback, Council would select a preferred option to amend the development controls to make new homes easier to use for the community.