

Manuka set to undergo a shake-up

BY KATIE BURGESS

BUILDING height limitations around Manuka Oval could be increased by an extra storey under a proposed shake-up of planning restrictions.

The National Capital Authority has released a draft development control plan for the Manuka Circle precinct, which will simplify planning processes in the area, chief planner Andrew Smith said.

"Currently there are three development control plans in place, and there's some questions about how this precinct will develop in the future so we've put in place a design framework that will set the character for the precinct in future years," Mr Smith said.

"It's bringing together a disparate set of planning pol-

icies into one document and it increases the development capacities of sites in and around Manuka Oval."

The area covered includes Manuka Oval, St Christopher's Cathedral, St Paul's Church and parts of the Manuka group centre that front Canberra Avenue.

The plan will focus on landscape quality, building heights, stepbacks and "proposes to put measures in place that make sure that entire precinct is designed and developed in a cohesive manner", Mr Smith said.

The plan will also be used as a framework by the ACT government when they develop their masterplan for the area, he said.

"Canberra Avenue is one of the main avenues in the approach to the city, in particular its the gateway to

the approach to Parliament House, so it's very much of national importance and something that reflects on Canberra as the national capital," Mr Smith said.

Chair of the Inner Canberra Community Council Gary Kent said the review of planning processes in the precinct was "long overdue".

"We're really disappointed this didn't occur before the decision to rezone the land on the corner of State Circle and Canberra Avenue. We don't believe that should be turned into units or hotels, it's so close to Parliament House in some ways the horse has bolted on that one, we'd have much preferred the consultation occurred before the decision to rezone that land and make it for sale." Submissions close April 21.