

New Deakin development prompts privacy and parking concerns for residents

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Deakin residents concerned that the suburb will be flooded with multi-unit developments have failed to stop an application they say could set a worrying precedent.

The plan for the development of seven two-storey three-bedroom units in Deakin has been approved despite concerns from local residents about privacy breaches and a negative impact on traffic and parking in the area.

The ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal found the development satisfied Deakin's zoning rules, which allowed for a mix of single dwellings and multi-unit developments.

At a recent tribunal hearing, Deakin Residents Association members argued the development would affect privacy, significantly increase traffic and cause parking issues during school hours because of the proximity to three educational facilities.

Developer Turco and Associates, which has developments in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne, submitted the original application for the Gawler Crescent units in April 2014, which was approved by the ACT Planning and Land Authority after minor changes.

The Deakin Residents Association called for further amendments and challenged Turco's proposal and the authority's approval in the tribunal.

Critics said residents standing on the deck of one of the units would be able to look directly into the rear of other Deakin homes.

There also were concerns that the scale of the development would not be in keeping with the neighbourhood character. Residents claimed the units would not comply with the area's zoning objectives.

Under the zoning rules, a development in Deakin must be consistent with the desired character and separation of

existing buildings in the immediate neighbourhood.

The objective of RZ2 zoning affecting the development was to provide "residential areas where the housing is low rise and contains a mix of single dwelling and multi-unit development that is low to medium density in character, particularly in areas close to facilities and services in commercial centres".

The tribunal noted there was no multi-unit development in the immediate area around the development site, other than dual occupancies on single blocks.

Consulting town planner Vivian Straw, who visited the site during the hearing and gave evidence for Turco, said the proposed development would make a positive contribution to the neighbourhood.

Mr Straw said Turco would redevelop a site that contained relatively old buildings close to the end of their economic usefulness, increase residential density, potentially improving commercial opportunities, and "provide a wider range of residential opportunities within the suburb".

He said it would refresh the building stock and the scale of the development was "not inconsistent with the height, bulk and appearance" of surrounding buildings and existing streetscape.

The development's latest proposal allowed for 15 parking spots for residents and another two for visitors.

The tribunal found extra traffic would not breach planning requirements.

"The tribunal does not doubt that school traffic in the area is, at times, congested, including by school buses," the tribunal decision said.

"But the tribunal does not regard it as appropriate to ask the further amended proposal to address this issue."

A construction date was yet to be set.