

Greens Shane Rattenbury leaves open possibility of more compromise on Red Hill flats

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Greens balance-of-power Minister Shane Rattenbury has left open the possibility of further compromise on the Red Hill flats redevelopment, pushing back a decision till April.

On Thursday, the Liberals attempted to overturn the planning change that allows development of four storeys or higher on a block of streets near the Red Hill shops, replacing the public housing.

But Mr Rattenbury delayed debate on the Liberals "disallowance" motion till April, calling for more consultation with residents.

In February, the government backed down on its plans to allow six-storey development at the site, on either side of Cygnet Street and through to Discovery Street, instead restricting new apartment buildings to four storeys.

But [residents rejected the new option](#), with one leading opponent, Stuart Rogers describing it as smoke and mirrors, still allowing high density housing.

Mr Rogers calculated the proposal would still fit as many as 212 three-bedroom apartments, replacing the 144 units there now.

Residents want the area zoned RZ3 which would allow multi-unit development but limited to 9.5 metres in height and generally two storeys.

The government wants to rezone the area RZ5, the highest density zone. It specifies no more than four storeys, but it has no height limits, and allows an extra storey for basement parking and an extra storey for ground level development.

Mr Rattenbury said residents and planning officials appeared to have very different interpretations of the planning change, so he had asked the government to arrange a meeting between them to work through the detail.

"The best starting point is to work out what the actual Territory Plan variation means," he said. "I've got people saying there could be 1000 units at the site and the directorate saying there is never going to be 1000 units there. Let's get to the bottom of that."

While his interest will be welcomed by residents who are looking to him as their only chance of having the development changed, Mr Rattenbury's intervention might do no more than delay a decision.

"My preference is for this to go through," Mr Rattenbury said. "But we need to resolve whether these issues that have been cited are real issues or based on interpretations that are not there in the detail."

The site clearly needed redevelopment and updating, a view shared by residents, he said.

Liberal deputy leader Alistair Coe said the development was another example of "sham consultation" and poor planning.

"We repeatedly see situations where the government seemingly deliberately inflates development sizes and densities only to slightly wind it back later on and in doing so expect people to be grateful. This is not the way a government should conduct business with its citizens."

A height limit without a maximum number of metres was not a height limit at all, he said, describing the development as "yet another example of the government legislating for uncertainty".