

Canberra HOUSEBOAT

A contemporary take on Walter Burley Griffin's romance with water features in city making. imagine....

- ≈ small moored villages gently engaging with our picturesque lakes and waterways – delightful and affordable and adding a new and fascinating community and visitor destination in the city.
- ≈ a house that shifts expectations and opens up fresh opportunities. A dwelling typology with the memory-print of the comforts of the traditional house and the convenience of a modern flat. A typology that adds value to local communities and demonstrates sustainable lifestyles that leverage off and complement existing urban and water infrastructure and amenity. Houseboats that become drawcards for the young and not so young as genuine alternatives to cottages and apartments.
- ≈ lifestyle choices for those looking for a stay-at-home adventure that feels like a complete sea change. Houseboats for singles, couples, groups or families plus student houseboats, studios for artists, serviced houseboats and tourist rentals sharing bike and storage sheds and jetty gardens. Mixed residential affordable water communities of character and style and with the spirit of a real neighbourhood.
- ≈ intrinsic maritime characteristics of simple geometry with functional good-looking interiors designed with marine precision and lots of shipshape 'batten down' storage. The houseboat form suits open planning and can be single or joined, have one or two levels or have upper decks as separate 'floating' lofts.
- ≈ jetty streetscapes with a unique character that encourages community access and engagement with the water for fishing, boating or just enjoying the fun of strolling past the houseboats.
- ≈ houseboats as an environmental change agent demonstrating the potential for people to enjoy and interact sensitively with our waterways. There is evidence that residents and visitors in Australia's wilderness areas, wetlands and national parks take their stewardship seriously.
- ≈ the notional site on Yerrabi Pond with the opportunity to link the Canberra Houseboat development to the Capital Metro initiative and to grow Gungahlin's identity and reputation as an innovative Australian 'township' and a 'must visit' in the national capital city.

The **Canberra HOUSEBOAT** proposal underscores the triple bottom line. Compact alternative living meets the expectations of the ACT Affordable Housing Action Plan to facilitate residential development 'on underutilised community facility sites'. **HOUSEBOAT** enhances appreciation of the environment, maximises the use of urban infrastructure, minimises building footprint and impact, can be delivered and constructed in multiple ways that reduce costs and offers a new quality residential product and lifestyle choice to the market at affordable prices.

'...maybe we should stay here, this is prettier than the Country Club...' quoted in *Houseboat* – 1958 movie starring Sophia Loren and Cary Grant

Housing is a verb as well as a noun

affordable housing

HOUSEBOAT supports the affordable housing action plan with a basic living unit of 80m² which aligns with the T1 threshold.

The new typology encourages entrepreneurial developers to use innovative processes to reduce costs and contribute to government and community objectives for exciting affordable housing. **HOUSEBOAT** can be constructed to a timetable that suits the expectations and financial constraints of owners or tenants. A basic serviced living unit could be built to 60% complete at \$180,000 with interiors finished by the residents at their leisure.

Simple features, well-executed

sustainable development

HOUSEBOAT infrastructure will connect to existing town services for potable water and sewer with tank water and solar collectors. Practical orientation and cross ventilation will deliver comfortable interior environments. A planning module of 600mm will suit all standard structural and cladding materials.

Locally prefabricated pontoons will be delivered to site in sections. The waterfront environment suggests framing in sustainable timbers with floors, walls and ceilings in marine plywood. Various construction systems are possible – on-site assemblies of durable materials or perhaps monocoque shell structures with prefabricated bathrooms and kitchens. The external fabric will be insulated and sealed and bioclimatic façade principles will minimise heat gain and loss. Agreed palettes of materials and finishes will encourage visual variety and customisation. Quality design and construction will engender pride and maintain real estate values.

notional site
6 units
'Sophia Loren'

notional site
7 units
'Cary Grant'

Creating a community asset the site

Yerrabi Pond in Gungahlin is a fine setting for waterfront living close to the attractive and established town centre.

Two notional sites of 3,500m² each with indicative layouts for six or seven houseboats are shown on either side of the Pond. The design fits easily within the public foreshore with its large groupings of trees and pleasant pedestrian pathways. The small scale of the living units continues the urban pattern of narrow frontages.

A variety of architectural expressions are enabled by the **HOUSEBOAT** typology. We have shown 'Gary Grant' units on the south side of the Pond with a contemporary urban look of flat roofs plus stepped terraces and roof gardens. For contrast on the Amaroo side, the 'Sophia Loren' houseboats have whimsical pitched roofs responding to the suburban division behind with a playful silhouette against the darker lines of trees. Variations in form and materiality provide opportunity for visual delight. A public 'jetty street' pier from the south shore adds to the enjoyment of a popular community asset. With sensitive planning changes the houseboat dwelling pattern could adapt readily to other Canberra lakes and water bodies, maybe one day even to the shores of Lake Burley Griffin!

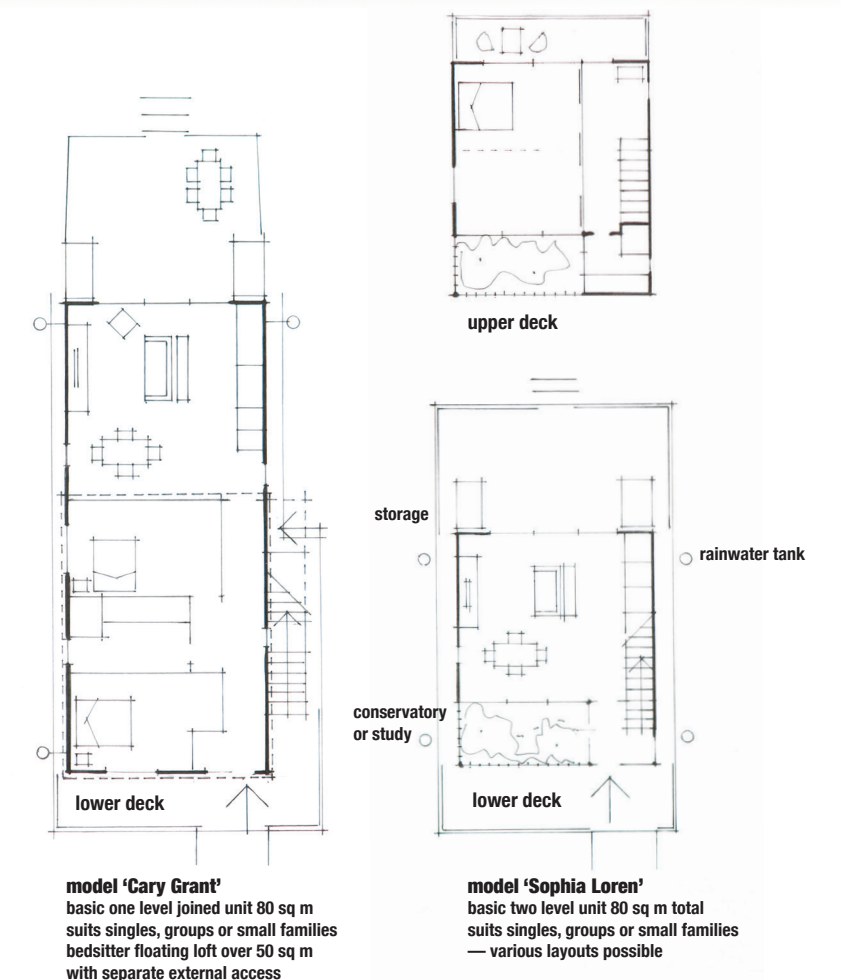
Yerrabi Pond

new public pier

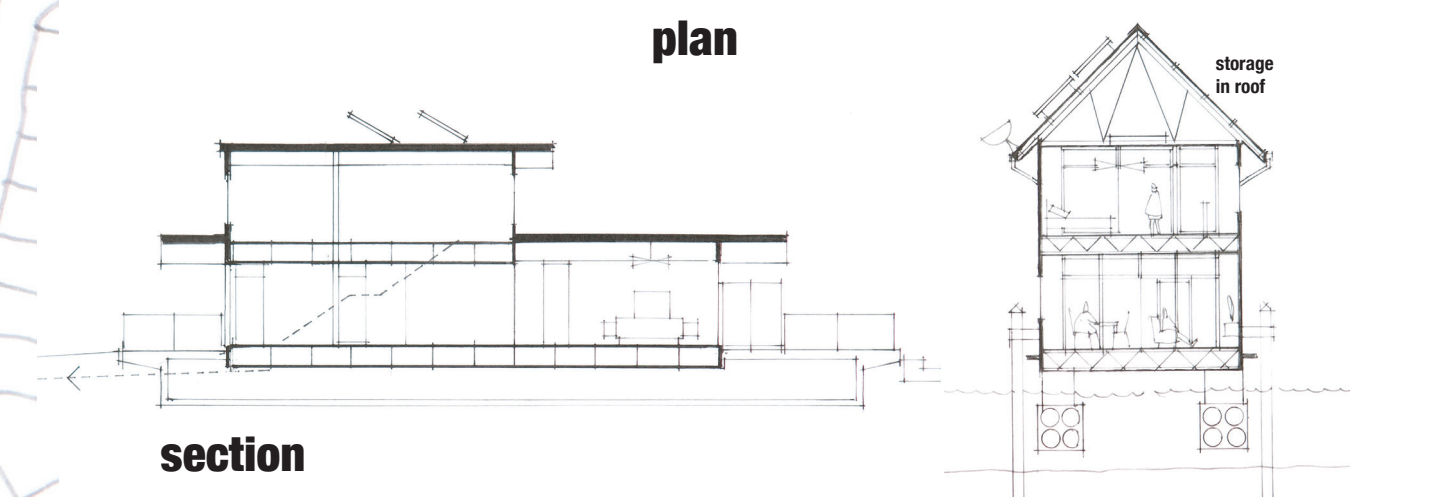
Innovation and experimentation planning

HOUSEBOAT supports the role of planning to facilitate desirable built outcomes and can sensitively enliven our urban waterways. Yerrabi Pond is a declared lake under section 5 of the Lakes Act 1976 which prohibits houseboats. It is Urban Open Space Zones (PRZ1) in the Territory Plan which also prohibits residential development. However the objectives for the PRZ1 Zones and for the Territory Plan are not incompatible with careful insertions of detached housing at a small scale. There is good reason to vary the Plan and amend the Lakes Act for a limited number of waterfront sites.

The requirements of the Parks and Recreation Zones Development Code can be readily satisfied by the typology while the majority of traditional residential development rules can be discarded – building setbacks, basements, car parking etc – to allow innovative dwellings and experimental lifestyle choices. **HOUSEBOAT** residents will be those who do not own cars and are happy to use public transport, time-share cars or cycle. A modest driveway and standing area will accommodate emergency and service vehicles. There will be no garbage collection service to the waterfront. Typically you would take your rubbish to a designated hopper near the road, tram, bus stop or similar. **HOUSEBOAT** residents will have chosen a distinctive lifestyle. They will welcome proximity to neighbours and be happy to support tourism and appreciation of Canberra's waterfronts – planning should support this lifestyle and typology.



plan



section

