

New Experimental Typologies

This sketch proposal is only 'new and experimental' in Canberra. Examples of this sort of planning are found elsewhere where the houses and neighbourhoods are great to live in.

Current Situation

The proposal has been designed for Canberra's RZ3 zone. This zone is meant to create a level of density between the suburban RZ1 and RZ2 zones and the three storey apartments of RZ4. Under the existing planning regulation this intermediate density is hard to achieve in a cost effective way that at the same time creates quality indoor and outdoor spaces.

If an underground car park is used it is often necessary to fill the site with as many small apartments as possible to pay it off. The number of apartments on the site becomes similar to that of RZ4 - they just become smaller.

On the other hand, if above ground car parking is located behind the building line it becomes hard to fit many dwellings and private yards on the site as most of the backyard is taken up by driveways and car parks. The number of dwellings approaches that of RZ2 and it becomes hard to realise the value of the land.

The Proposal

By suspending a number of planning regulations this proposal could achieve a density of between 14 to 28 dwellings depending on the final mix of two storey townhouses to single level apartments.

Car Parking

The general planning philosophy of keeping cars behind the building line has been ignored. Instead car parks in front of the building allow for compact dwellings with good sized private gardens, as well as shared areas and facilities in the centre of the block.

The disadvantage of not having a covered car space directly linked to the dwelling is more than compensated for by the increase in amenity, including excellent access to private and semi private yards at ground level and better cross ventilation and access to light. It also allows the dwellings to be more affordable.

People walking to their cars also have a chance of bumping into their neighbours and having a chat!

The number of cars is reduced to one per dwelling. In the dwelling mix shown there would also be 4 visitor parks. This is thought to be an appropriate number considering RZ3 zones are located close to public transport and urban centres that can be reached by bike.

The de-emphasis of cars caters for the growing number of households who want zero to one car and don't want their house to be compromised or more costly to provide extra spaces they don't need.

Private parking spaces and shared central areas are differentiated from public roads by water permeable paving and signage.

A beautiful, green streetscape with large mature trees can still be achieved.

Setbacks

Current setbacks have been ignored so the dwellings can respond to the sun. All dwellings have large private northern yards and full access to winter sun. The dwellings are laid out in rows in contrast to the perimeter block development encouraged by the current planning regulation.

Affordability

Dwellings can affordably achieve a high level of energy efficiency and thermal comfort with the use of standard building techniques and technology due to good access to northern sun and by not having an underground carpark breaking the bond with the ground.

Car parking out the front allows compact dwellings with good sized gardens to become affordable. It also allows to more easily share communal spaces and facilities to avoid the expense of repeating the same function for all the dwellings.

Shared stuff

Possible shared spaces could include secure storage, bike parking, function room, bookable guest house, BBQ area, playground, vegetable garden, greenhouse and bin area. Possible shared things could include car sharing and garden tools.

The shared space would also include vehicular access for deliveries and emergency vehicles.

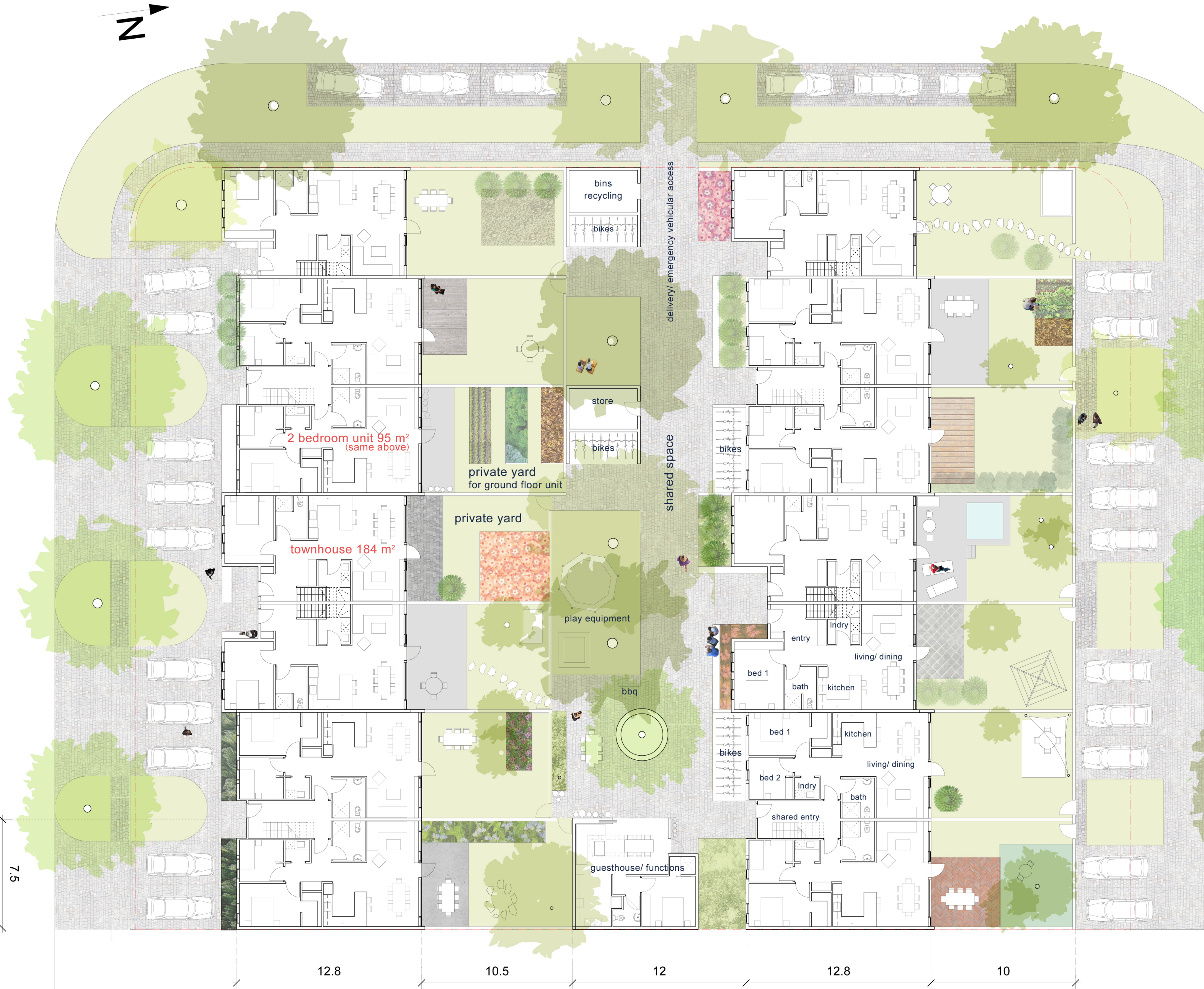
Dwelling floor plans

Two examples of possible dwelling types are provided to demonstrate how the scheme can work. It is not envisaged that these would be the only dwelling types; a mix of dwellings would be designed to create an opportunity for households of different sizes with different resources, needs and preferences to live here.

The main features that would be consistent throughout the site are the entrances, the 7.5m width of each dwelling and the maximum height of two storeys.

The width of 7.5m is important as it allows for adequate parking spaces on the street, good level of northern exposure, the possibility to create adaptable dwellings, and efficient use of space as the dwellings are two rooms wide.

The upper level apartments would not have northern balconies as required by the code. Instead they will have large openings that when open turn the room into a semi-outdoor space. Lining up the building structure above and below helps with affordability and maintains winter sun access to the lower level.



Sketch Plan 1:200 @ A2
Note: Only ground floor plans shown