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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. This policy replaces Policy Statement No. P.6 Special Residential Zones of the former Town Planning Board which was first published in April 1982 and modified in January 1985.
2. The policy was reconsidered and updated by the Commission in June 1998. Some minor recent modifications have been made to the policy which include:
 - a) The reintroduction of exceptions to the basic requirement that in the metropolitan region, all Special Residential zones should be located within areas zoned Urban by the Metropolitan Region Scheme.
 - b) It is made clearer that, while the Commission sets no standard requirement for the provision of public open space in Special Residential zones, a contribution will normally be required.
 - c) The requirement for Special Residential lots to be connected to underground power.
3. This policy also relates to other policies in this manual.
These are:
 - Policy No. DC 1.1 - Subdivision of Land - General Principles
 - Policy No. DC 2.1 - Residential Planning Codes
 - Policy No. DC 2.3 - Public Open Space in Residential Areas.

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In order to accommodate the various lifestyle requirements of all sections of the community, the Commission is committed to the provision of a wide range of lot sizes.
- 1.2 The purpose of Special Residential zones is to allow for lots of a size which will offer a style of spacious living at densities lower than those characteristic of traditional single residential developments but higher than those found in Special Rural zones.
- 1.3 This policy sets out the requirements of the Commission for the creation of such zones in terms of location, internal design and servicing, and statutory provisions.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To provide for the creation of lots of between 2,000 square metres and one hectare in suitable locations.
- To ensure that the use and development of such lots are subject to appropriate standards and controls.
- To protect the character and amenity of adjacent rural areas.

3. POLICY MEASURES

3.1 Locational Requirements

- 3.1.1 Because Special Residential zones are less efficient in both the use of land and utilisation of services when compared with conventional residential subdivisions, the Commission considers that such zoning should be used only sparingly and, as its name implies, only in special circumstances.
- 3.1.2 A local government's decision to create a Special Residential zone should be based upon a site analysis and take into consideration such matters as topography, soil and climate as well as an assessment of the effects of development on the environment.
- 3.1.3 In its consideration of a proposal, the Commission will have regard for the following, although the list is not exhaustive and in particular locations other factors may be equally relevant.

- a) While Special Residential zones represent an intermediate zoning between residential and rural living, the Commission considers that they are essentially residential. Such zones should be adjacent to existing or planned residential areas and have good access to schools, community facilities and other urban services.
- b) Special Residential zones should avoid good agricultural land, State Forests and water catchment areas, and should not prejudice important mineral or stone deposits.
- c) Landscape worthy of preservation and/or which is clearly visible from roads of regional or national importance should generally be avoided.
- d) Topographical features of the land (for example hilly or undulating), distinct attractions such as creeks or water features, distant views or fine trees will be considered.
- e) Cadastral information so that, in areas of existing small lots, Special Residential zones may rationalise a poor existing layout and provide for road access where this is inadequate.
- f) Advice from Main Roads Western Australia will be considered where the subject land is adjacent to highways, main roads and proposed bypasses. Such areas should be avoided, unless subdivided as part of an overall town planning scheme.

- 3.1.4 In the metropolitan region, Special Residential zones will generally be approved only for land which is zoned Urban in the Metropolitan Region Scheme. Exceptions to this policy will be considered only where:

- the proposal is for development with a rural-residential theme in a rural setting;
- the proposal relates to land which will remain in the Rural zone for the long term and is not likely to be required for future urban purposes;
- there is provision for land use and management controls to ensure the proposed subdivision and development is consistent with the predominantly rural character of the area.

3.2 Design and Servicing Requirements

3.2.1 Lots in Special Residential zones should have a range of sizes between 2,000 square metres and one hectare, related to the nature and purpose of the particular zone. The lower lot size generally equates to the lower density range provided for in residential subdivisions, while the larger lot size equates to the minimum acceptable to the Commission in Special Rural zones where reticulated water is provided. The relevant Residential Planning Codes are those up to R 5.

3.2.2 The lot sizes selected for a particular Special Residential zone should reflect the topographical and environmental characteristics of the land concerned. A variety of lot sizes should be provided.

3.2.3 Design and servicing considerations which should be applied to Special Residential zones are as follows:

- a) Because they are essentially residential, the Commission considers that Special Residential zones should be provided with the type and standard of services typical of normal Residential zones. In particular, reticulated water will be required as a condition of subdivision approval. Provided that the land is suitable for on-site effluent disposal, connection to a reticulated sewerage system may not be required.
- b) Because of their spacious character and large lot sizes, the Commission does not specify a standard open space contribution for Special Residential zones. Land for public open space will be required, however, when the provision of recreational open space is considered desirable or when it can include an important topographical feature such as a creek, lake or group of trees which is to be retained as a recreational amenity for residents of the subdivision and the district as a whole.
- c) Road networks should take account of the topography and be unobtrusive, and long culs-de-sac should be avoided. Consideration should be given to the use of road networks as strategic firebreaks.
- d) Lots should be designed to capitalise on the topography of the area and to achieve the best possible amenity by avoiding unnecessary regimentation in relation to size and design.

- e) As far as practicable, direct access to a major road should not be permitted and new subdivisions should be designed so that individual lot access is from minor roads.

Where access is proposed to a main road, advice from Main Roads Western Australia should be sought. Development should be set back an adequate distance from the road reserve - this is generally governed within the scheme provisions.

- f) Subdivisions for Special Residential zones may result in the need to widen main roads. Provision should be made for such widening in the design since in some instances it may be required as a condition of subdivision.
- g) Building setbacks, particularly to main frontage and subdivisional roads, should be varied to create a more interesting and spacious environment.
- h) The Commission will normally require the provision of underground power to lots within Special Residential zones. Where alternative power sources are proposed, the Commission may agree not to impose a reticulated underground power condition where the service provider has submitted evidence as to the availability of reticulated supply and a notice is attached to the titles of the affected lots to forewarn prospective purchasers of the circumstances under which reticulated power would be made available.

4. IMPLEMENTATION PROVISIONS

4.1 The development of a Special Residential zone should be controlled through provisions contained in a town planning scheme or scheme amendment, which in general terms should provide the following:

- a) that Council's prior approval to commence development is required for all development, including a single dwelling house;
- b) that not more than one single dwelling house per lot shall be erected;
- c) that buildings should be set back from the road by a specified minimum distance;

- d) that permitted uses should be confined to those which are consistent with maintaining the amenity of the residential environment; and
 - e) that once a Special Residential zone subdivision has been established, further subdivision of lots created will not occur.
- 4.2 The scheme or scheme amendment should include a subdivisional guide plan intended for the Special Residential zone. The subdivisional guide plan may optionally be superimposed on an appropriate mapping base and must show contours, approximate areas and dimensions, the proposed staging of development, public open space, areas of substantial vegetation cover which are to be preserved, building envelopes and any other details that may be appropriate.
- 4.3 Special Residential zones should be considered to be the maximum density to which the land should be put. Further subdivision will not, in general, be approved by the Commission.
- 4.4 In its consideration of applications for the subdivision of land within a Special Residential zone, the Commission will have regard for the relevant provisions of the town planning scheme under which the land is zoned. Accordingly, it will condition an approval in such a way as to give effect to these provisions.