

Title: Backpacker Hostel Accommodation
Policy No: 21
Responsibility: Director Technical Services

Version	Decision Number	Decision Date	History
1	18\6272	27/01/04	Adopted
2	19\4604	12/06/07	Reviewed
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Goal

Council's goal is for Backpacker Hostel Accommodation to leave its patrons with a positive memory of their stay in Darwin, ultimately impacting on Darwin's reputation as a desirable backpacker's and tourist destination.

Aims

This policy addresses the main concerns which Council has raised in previous development applications for Backpackers Hostels.

This policy aims to ensure Backpackers Hostels are:

- Convenient and offer a high level of amenity to the backpacker;
- Located in appropriate locations, with no detrimental impact on residential properties; and
- Developed in accordance with the Planning Scheme, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles and Commonwealth Guidelines.

Policy Intent

This policy:

- Guides Council comments to the Development Consent Authority on development applications;
- Allows applicants to be aware of what level of support Council will offer to their proposals for developing Backpackers Hostels;
- Applies to the whole of the Darwin Municipal area; and
- Accepts that the relevant authorities will address the requirements of the Building Code of Australia (including fire safety requirements), and the Public Health (Nuisance Prevention) Regulations, Territory Health Services.

Policy Statement

It is a policy of Council that it will favourably consider Development Applications for Backpacker Hostel Accommodation provided:

- Communal areas are provided within the premises which create a pleasant environment for guests to relax and socialise;
- Adequate facilities are provided to cater for the basic needs of guests;
- Sleeping quarters are appropriate, pleasant and safe;
- Hostels and like accommodation are in locations which are convenient to public transport, shopping facilities, major tourist attractions and which do not negatively impact on residences;
- That they do not negatively impact on the amenity of the surrounding location.

Principles and Standards

When assessing an application Council will do so against the following:

- Requirements of the Planning Scheme;
- Building for Backpackers – Guidelines for Backpacker accommodation, Commonwealth Department of Tourism;
- CPTED Principles; and
- Objectives and standards outlined below.

Communal Areas

- Objective
 - To provide a pleasant environment within the premises for guests to relax and socialise.
- Standards
 - Provide at ground level a communal landscaped area not less than 30% of the area of the site being not less than 6 metres wide at any point, in accordance with the requirements of clause 17.2 (Landscape area for Hostels) of the Town Plan.
 - A waiver to the Town Plan may be supported for premises within the CBD, where a landscaped outdoor area as outlined above, is provided above ground level (eg. at a terrace level).
 - No waiver to the Town Plan will be supported for premises outside the CBD.
 - Provide a communal space protected from both rain and sun and being not less than 6 metres wide at any point. This could be either an indoor area or be part of the landscaped area as discussed above.
 - Provide a landscape buffer visually screening carparking from both outdoor and indoor communal areas.
 - A landscaping plan with full details of specifications and location of all proposed and existing plantings should be included in the development application, or be required as a condition of consent.

Facilities

- Objective
 - To provide adequate facilities on site to cater for the basic needs of guests.

- Standards
 - Kitchen facilities shall be provided with basic cooking utensils, cook tops and sinks. Backpackers regularly cook their own meals in an attempt to keep within their budgets even when cheap restaurant facilities are available (as within the CBD).
 - Clothes washing and drying facilities shall be provided within the hostel.
 - Toilet and shower facilities shall be located with convenient access to bedrooms and shall offer guests privacy particularly regarding gender separation.

Sleeping Quarters Amenity

- Objective
 - To provide comfortable, pleasant and safe sleeping quarters.
- Standards
 - Dormitory accommodation of more than 8 beds per room will not be supported.
 - Storage for backpacks should be provided to achieve amenity within the room, security for belongings, and to ensure the luggage does not obstruct access to emergency exits.
 - Evidence from Territory Health Services should be required as a condition of consent to ensure suitability of the proposed guest numbers and premises.

Location

- Objective
 - To locate Backpacker Hostels in locations, which are convenient to public transport, shopping facilities and major tourist attractions, and which do not negatively impact on residences.
- Standards
 - The main impacts of Backpacker Hostels are noise and traffic. Therefore Council will generally not support such accommodation in predominantly residential areas, or in central areas abutting low density residential properties. Backpacker Hostels will generally be supported in principle within the CBD and surrounding areas as the potential impacts on the amenity of surrounding properties are minimised in these commercial and higher density areas.
 - Hostels should be located within walking distance of shopping facilities, public transport and major tourist attractions as many travel by foot in an attempt to reduce their travelling costs.

Impacts

- Objective

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- To ensure Backpacker Hostels do not negatively impact on the amenity of the surrounding location.
 - Standards
 - A landscape buffer should be provided to visually screen carparking from roads, to ensure visual amenity of the streetscape is not negatively impacted upon.
 - Council will not support any waiver to on-site carparking requirements of the Town Plan. This is to ensure no increase to on-road carparking congestion.
 - A 1.8 metre fence shall be required along any boundary with a residential property. This is intended to provide security and privacy to the residential property. If the fence does not provide visual privacy, then landscaping shall be provided which visually screens the hostel from the residential property to a height of at least 1.8 metres.
 - Communal rooms, kitchens and communal outdoor areas shall be located such that they do not face residential properties. This will help to ensure visual and acoustic privacy of the adjoining residences.