

NEV Building & Landscape Standards - Stage 2 Recommendations - FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Latest presentation and summary is here [NEV Building & Landscape Standards - Stage 2 Review - Recommendations](#)

Please find a set of questions and answers from our presentations listed here (a work in progress).

Please add more questions below, and we can update the list accordingly.



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Question	Answer
Where on the NEV communication systems can we find maps of the Stage 2 subdivision that includes measurements, size of easements? or distances from borders we are allowed to build, etc	A package of documents for each Lot is being created and the setbacks will soon be finalised. Currently the Stage 2 docs are here https://wiki.nararaecovillage.com/display/BIMIT/Stage+2+-+Documents
What is Hill Thalís?	Hill Thalís were the architects who created the Stage 1 master plan guidelines for the village including the road network, the Lot layout, setbacks, common gardens and car parking. https://files.nararaecovillage.com/index.php/s/a8EwGSgyd5ffERP
What if timber is in short supply? Steel frame may be the only alternative	Steel may also be in short supply and costs may rise. 2nd hand timbers could be collected, or even hardwood used.
What is 'articulation', and provide examples	Articulation is a 90 degree change in the wall. A wall has an articulation when one room has a wall pushed out in front of another room wall, instead of there being a long straight wall at the front.
If we are an east west lot, can we make our own decision about which side is our front and which is our back?	The front usually is that towards the road, but the council has approved other interpretations in Stage 1. As long as there is access to a door near the road, or via the side, especially for emergency vehicle access.
Can these facts be put into a simple printable PDF document?	There is a Word document underway, with the differences to Stage 1 and made into a pdf.
Are all these improvements going to push building a home even more expensive for us all?	There is only a 1/2 star increase from the external start rating being adopted, whereas Stage 1 had a 1 star increase. For a project home, the capital cost of 1/2 star increase is around \$1,000, but this is recouped with lower energy fees to remain comfortable, and a higher resale value. The heatwave improvement saves lives as climate change increases the risk of heat stress.
Would it be possible to have some showcases (likely online) from members who have built well using thermal performance measures? eg almost passive housing?	We will start regular building meetings with expert talks and member examples in the New Year, building a library of designs, materials, and those providing services.

What is BASIX?	BASIX stands for the Building Sustainability Index and all NSW homes need to pass this standard. www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/basix
Who is responsible for the house monitoring?	The Research Group will monitor houses for research that may improve the NatHERS and BASIX standards.
WHAT IS BRP?	See Abbreviations at the end
Is there a minimum size rain water tank?	No. You may require one if you can't get the 40 points in the BASIX water section. Items which help include low flow taps, showers and toilets; grey water systems; and native gardens. If necessary, you may need a water tank, and 10,000L is common. They can be above ground, underground (e.g. under a deck or the house - can give thermal mass) or disguised below garden beds. The Renew association has a program to estimate the size of water tank, called tankulator https://renew.org.au/resources/tankulator/
Are underground water tanks permitted?	Yes. If they are exposed they count towards the impervious area which is the site coverage, although an exemption was given for 15m2 in Stage 2 to encourage more members to put tanks in
The common garden setback is 2m plus 1m on the western side of one lot in Stage 2. If you add a measurement to the eave rather than the wall that is another metre so with both east and west easements that reduces lot width by about 4m. Doesn't that make a collaborative design of primary and secondary dwelling almost impossible?	The eave setback and common garden issue for North-South blocks are under review.
Any idea when all the roads and infrastructure will be finished?	End of 2022 or Q1 2023
What is the purpose for the large frontal set back?	To maintain the streetscape with existing houses in Central Coast. This is under review given our 3m setback in Stage 1
I have a long street frontage 33m - will council require a setback of 4.5 m on the whole 33m? (I will thus lose over 100m of building space..?)	It is measured as an average across the block
If there is an easement on one side of the block for vehicle access, does a setback still apply?	No
Is the "average" across one block or across the whole of stage 2?	One block
The table in the presentation lists front set back for all lots as 3m. Is it 3 or 4.5?	This is under review - Hill Thalys promoted 3m in Stage 1, but the council could want 4.5m. See more information below on setback.
What about for Duplex on a long block with the street frontage narrow. Does one have to be behind the other?	No, but it may be difficult to have 2 side by side. Perhaps the rear one could extend out to the East or West behind the front one.
What about garages?	Garages are discouraged because we are trying to minimise the number of cars, and members are encouraged to socialise with each other rather than never see each other by driving into their houses directly. Carports are recommended to be subordinate to the house (e.g. underneath possibly with "wheel strip" driveway). We are reviewing the council requirement for garages in Dual Occupancies.
How would we get all the water and energy standards in a main house, secondary dwelling and tiny house, where the secondary dwelling and tiny house are self contained and the main dwelling is a cohousing dwelling. What I mean is that there will be several toilets and showers one shared kitchen and one other kitchen in the secondary dwelling. (I know that we can only have one kitchen in the main dwelling) I am not sure about the tiny house kitchen. Just would like your thoughts on cohousing on a regular lot	The tiny house rules are proposed in the proposal. For the Primary and Secondary dwellings, they both need to comply with the Building Standards for one of the approval pathways (7.5 stars with heatwave cooling load conditions or passive house), and pass the design and as-built scoresheets. An example was shown of the Barret house, and Graham spoke to some of the affordable features which gave this a good star rating.
Ques	Answer
Can we get the median house area (the size at which 50% of houses are smaller and 50% are larger)?	We will see if it is easy to be done - currently the clusters are not shown individually etc.
is there a preferred certifier that has been used in the Village before - that is user friendly?	There has been a variety of certifiers used and I'm sure people will be more than happy to give their feedback on the service provided.

Will the standards be accepted before Stage 2 members are edible to join the CA, or will that formal acceptance be held back until we can be included in the final approval?	Ask CA
why do we need air tight houses. blower tests, etc?	You do not have to build an airtight house, but must be airtight for Passive House accreditation - Andy Marlow
Comment on last question: I would have thought in a climate like Narara it would be better to have breezes and fresh air blowing thru the house	An airtight house does not exclude the ability to have breezes, i'll explain why shortly - Andy Marlow
what does articulation of street frontage > 10 mean?	Articulation means that you cannot have a straight wall across the front of the house. It needs to be broken up. This can be done by devices such as a step in the wall, a bay window, an entry porch etc - Graham Hunt
Which category: Principal or Principal & secondary dwelling - is appropriate for an attached dual occupancy?	Principal - cannot have a secondary dwelling on a dual occupancy
Setback defined as wall of house to boundary or to easement ?	Setbacks are measured to the boundary. In some locations an easement may be wider than the setback, both must be adhered to. - Andy Marlow
My east-west block has a long street frontage, does the council setback include decks?	See the Council DCP at link https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2-1-WDCP-2013-Dwelling-Houses-Secondary-Dwellings-and-Ancillary-Structures.pdf . Section 2.1.3.3 Articulation Zones allows some intrusion into the setback which includes balconies, decks, patios and verandas but there is a limit to the size. So expert help from your designer, Architect or planner is recommended. Graham Hunt
why is this Graham? (reason for articulation)	The articulation is required so as to create a more interesting streetscape and reduce the occurrence of big bulky walls - Graham Hunt
Do windows or front door count as 'articulation'?	The articulation needs to be a3D projection or recess not just an element in the wall - Graham Hunt
Where does stranded bamboo fit into the materials scheme?	You will get some benefit from the use of bamboo as it is considered a renewable product. Suggest you check the formaldehyde emission level from the glue used. - Graham Hunt
I would be interested in hearing more about the cohousing option. That is, we are 5 people (one couple and 3 individuals) who are not family, sharing one standard lot. I believe this will be as yet unique in the village. Our aim is to have a main building which will contain 3 individual private dwellings and a shared area with a self-contained secondary dwelling. The aim is social cohesion and to minimise the footprint. We have some designs in mind. From the outside the main building may appear as a big house but it will actually be 3 individual residences under one roof. We know that we can only have one main kitchen in the main house and we are already aware of some of the constraints, but if you have any thoughts, suggestions, ideas that would be much appreciated.	This is too broad a question for this forum - please consult designer, Architect, or Planner
Can the tiny house owner be related as a friend not necessary blood relation?	For long-term use, the Tiny House must be "used for habitation only by the owner or by members of the owner's household".
Could a co-owner of the property occupy a tiny home on a lot?	Yes
Can clarification be given about what NEV counts as a bedroom? If you have an office, does that require extra solar?	Any room that can be potentially used as a bedroom is classed as a bedroom for PV requirements - This should not be a problem as PV is cheap and the required amount is relatively low. The CMS includes an aspiration to pay back our embodied energy of the home in 30 years, and extra PV (around 2kW) could do this. For households wishing to be net-zero then transport and other energy should be estimated as well.
Is the "as built" stuff going to add much expense in hiring professionals to verify?	Your assessor should be able to do it as one extra assessment for a pretty reasonable fee given that they have already looked in depth at the plans, especially if there are few changes. During the build, there will need to be some inspections and collection of receipts or photos, and the drawings and specifications updated for the NatHERS rating after it is built. In some Stage 1 houses, the star rating has increased by almost 1 star due to additional features.

What happens if you fail the blower door test?	If you fail the blower door test, you either fix the issue and pass it, or lose the possibility to achieve PassivHaus standard. In that case, you comply with NatHERS minimum requirement (7.5 stars).
Are we free to choose our assessor, and where do we find them?	Yes - also talk to villagers for their reviews. You could ask your designer if they can do NatHERS assessments. See list at www.absa.net.au/find-an-assessor/
Where can we find the Narara specific windrose measured from previous occupants?	http://www.bom.gov.au/clim_data/cdio/tables/pdf/windrose/IDCJCM0021.061087.9amFeb.pdf
so, if we can reduce the SHGC by stopping the sun even entering the window, do we score point for this?	Not directly. You need to make the building perform to a good level, it is a balance of many factors. Window Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) is only one of them. There is really no one single answer
Is woodcrete a viable option for insulating building material?	Timbercrete is a good product that uses waste material and has it's own insulative value. However, the supply should be checked. It uses a small amount of cement.
NatHERS is based on energy use per square metre. Is passivhaus similar or if not, what is it based on?	Yes based on area BUT the area is measured slightly differently
Is there a short Passive House Standard video?	Passive House Standard (also called passivhaus) 90 second video: https://vimeo.com/74294955?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=3212423
Where is the Passive House in Australia book?	www.envirotecture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/passive-houses-Australia-low-res.pdf
Where is the Passive House Association?	https://passivehouseaustralia.org
Is there more non-natural materials required to build a passive house than a more natural build, i.e. due to membranes, sealant, windows, doors, etc ?	Passivhaus is agnostic on how you meet the Standard. It could be all natural or all petro-chemical. There are straw bale, rammed earth and many other types of passivhaus's - Andy Marlow
Is there a DIY Timbercrete?	http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/good_wood/sawment.htm
We had a question in our room about the scoresheet and how exactly certain things might change your score. We had the same question. Is there a "user guide" for the scoresheet so that we can explore what changes the score? For example, UPVC vs Timber vs Aluminum windows.	Your Sustainable Design Appraiser (SDA) helps you with the scoresheet. There is an extra tab called "Helps" where terms are defined and the calculations can be seen. Some "what if" analyses can be done by selecting different values on the main Scoresheet tab. However, window systems are embedded in NatHERS and alternatives should be explored while investigating your specific house design with your designer and NatHERS assessor, since they will affect the NatHERS rating.
Is it possible to build a passive two storey modular home?	If by 'modular' you mean generally 'prefab' (modular is a subset - a volumetric prefab typology), then check out https://www.eclipsepassivehouse.com.au/ who are based in NSW - Andy Marlow
@robert. The only modular company I know of who has built a certified passivhaus is ArkIT in Melbourne	If by 'modular' you mean generally 'prefab' (modular is a subset - a volumetric prefab typology), then check out https://www.eclipsepassivehouse.com.au/ who are based in NSW.
I thought we can choose our SDA?	BRP assigns an SDA to each project. Talk to the BRP if there are issues
I would like some guidance in the Building Standards document, to advise villagers about the different glass panels that may be used in their homes	The Building Standards does not specify or mandate the type of glass you can or should use in your homes. The level of fire protection is determined by the BAL rating for your home, and requires specialist advice from your designer/architect and bushfire consultant on using different glass panels and their thermal and fire performance implications.