



6 April 2013

Standing Committee on Planning,
Environment and TAMS,
Office of the ACT Legislative Assembly.

Dear Legislators,

DV308: Cooyong St Urban Renewal Area

In your *Invitation for Public Submissions* to your Committee, you invited comment on five issues. In this submission, I refer to four of these:

- *Implications for parking and traffic in the area*
- *The height, scale and associated impacts of the proposed redevelopment;*
- *The impact on amenity and character of the surrounding area;*
- *City/residential boundaries.*

My submission refers particularly to Section 7 (Reid) which comprises blocks IV and V on the revised Master Plan, i.e. the area bounded by Kogarah Lane, Ainslie Avenue, Cooyong St and Boolee St. Argyle Square, in which I live, lies immediately to the east of Section 7.

My submission will be brief. 137 submissions were made regarding the original proposal (the *Planning Report, Urban Renewal Project*, by Purdon and Associates, September 2011). You will no doubt wish to refer to these. In January 2013, the Community Services Directorate (CSD), the developer, published its response to these submissions, the *Report on Consultation*. It admitted on page 5, para 3.1, that only 4 submissions supported the proposal. This reflects not only the poor design of the proposal, but also the failure to consult adjacent and nearby residents.

Concerned citizens requested a meeting with CSD and ACTPLA in early 2012. At this meeting, on March 1, Mr Garrick Calman commented that the proposed development “ticked all the boxes”.

I base my submission on this significant comment. Mr Calman's form omitted boxes where it would have been appropriate to put a cross!

These include:

<i>Is there a good 'fit' between the proposed buildings and those immediately adjacent? (ie from the design point of view, is there an sensitive integration between the new and existing land uses?)</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Have the architects considered the layout and building materials of existing adjacent buildings and attempted to blend the new buildings with the existing development?</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Will the new development complement an existing, valuable, widely admired and well-maintained residential precinct, Argyle Square?</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Has every effort been made to avoid intrusive overlooking of existing, private residential spaces?</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Will Glebe Park continue to be a pleasant, sunny space for recreational use in winter?</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Does the proposal avoid shading residential buildings on winter afternoons?</i>	<i>X</i>

To summarise, the proposed redevelopment is a crudely designed insertion into a low- and medium-rise residential suburb. Reid is a heritage precinct. Argyle Square, which is immediately adjacent to the proposed redevelopment, is one of Canberra's most attractive medium-density precincts, carefully maintained and much enjoyed by residents. Jerilderie Court (public housing next to Argyle Square along Ainslie Avenue) won awards for its design, and Monterey Apartments on Boolee St are architecturally distinctive.

While preparing this submission, I read in the *Canberra Times* (26.3.13) comments by Mr Corbell: "... the new rules [regarding solar design] would encourage innovative and individual home design that contributed to the character of the suburb and provided a more appealing built form in the city." Clearly, the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development favours designs that "contribute to the character" of residential areas. The towering blocks of units proposed for Cooyong St do nothing to "contribute to

the character” of Reid. On the contrary, they will detract from it.

The redevelopment brings blocks rising steeply from six to 15 storeys right up against our homes. Although designated part of Canberra Central in the National Capital Plan, this area should not be regarded as part of Civic. It is separated from Civic by a major six-lane traffic artery, Cooyong St. During the working day, pedestrians and cyclists can only cross this highway safely at traffic lights. Furthermore, it faces service areas of Civic i.e. unsightly multi-storey car parks and goods vehicle delivery entrances. With this built infrastructure already in place, it is now impossible to integrate Section 7, Reid, into Civic.

Finally, please take careful note of the fact that, after receiving an avalanche of critical submissions in March 2012, the developer, the CSD, has not only made merely minimal revisions but in fact has intensified its proposal. The sole remaining 3-storey block of Bega Flats, retained in the 2011 plans, has been removed to make way for an additional high-rise (6 to 10-storey) building.

The list of consultations listed in the January 2013 *Report on Submissions* omits a community meeting that residents called on 18 January 2012. It was addressed by Mr Peter Johns, a senior staff member of CSD. I chaired this meeting, and roughly seventy concerned citizens attended. All were deeply concerned about the original proposal, and there was a unanimous vote against the proposal as it stood for fifteen storey buildings. Minutes are available should you wish to refer to them.

Despite the CSD’s claims that nearby residents had been contacted by a letter-box drop, few of those present at this meeting recalled receiving anything in their letter boxes. It is clear that the so-called ‘consultation’ was a botched job.

Please take the time to visit this site. In particular, note the ‘back lane’ (Kogarah Lane), which will be expected to operate as a busy traffic street as part of this plan. The width of Kogarah Lane, building line to building line, is 13 metres, less than one third that of Currong St across Ainslie Avenue in the Braddon section of this proposal (41 metres). If buildings of the proposed scale are to be constructed, with the associated need for parking access to underground car parks and increased traffic using Kogarah Lane, it must be made very

substantially wider. Yet CSD maintains that it cannot be widened (pp. 19-20 in *Report on Submissions*).

To continue with DV308 in its present, minimally-revised form, would be an outrageous act of civic vandalism, and an insult to a community of informed citizens who care deeply about their suburb and the quality of urban design in their city.

David Teather is also making a submission. We would both like to discuss DV 308 with the Committee.

Yours faithfully,

Elizabeth K. Teather.