



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY
Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr Ed Cocks MLA

Exhibit

Inquiry into ACT's heritage arrangements

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The Wright thing to do

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017 THE CANBERRA TIMES

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Thanks for Howard Carew's reminder (CT Letters, September 23) of Walter Griffin's vision for Canberra, a person now remembered in a lake's name.

By contrast, America is having major retrospective of his one-time employer, Frank Lloyd Wright, with *Frank Wright — Unpacking the Archive* at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Walter worked for Wright at his Oak Park studio, between 1901 and 1905.

Marion also had intermittent employment with Wright, best known for her renderings of his designs. Between 1914 and 1920, Walter worked on implementing the Canberra plan. After falling out with Government planners in 1920, they moved to Castlecragh's bushland and designed, then built, its 15 initial houses (after designing 40).

Today, the Griffins' houses are treasured elements of Australia's architectural heritage. For their treasured place in Canberra's architectural heritage, Marion and Walter Griffin deserve Australia's honour. As their vision for 2020, it would be the Wright thing to do.

Peter Graves, Curtin

There has indeed been a major split in the direction of Canberra's urban planning, but it occurred nearly 50 years earlier than suggested by Howard Carew (Letters, September 23). Mr Carew appears to have confused the plans of Walter Burley Griffin with the planning policies pursued by the National Capital Development Commission.

The idea of a "small inner city

surrounded by equal town centres divided by green belts" more accurately describes the NCDC's bungalow and freeway-focused "Y-Plan" than it does Griffin's medium-density, tramway-oriented city of terraced boulevards. Griffin's final 1918 Canberra Plan extended no further north than Lyneham and no further south than Narabundah, with commercial development distributed along the main avenues rather than concentrated in designated town centres. Paul Reid's *Canberra Following Griffin* provides a fantastic account of this key divergence, and is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of Canberra's development.

Ryan Hemsley, Wright

Unhappy tale of two cities

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2017 THE CANBERRA TIMES

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The renewal of Stuart Flats is a further chapter in our own version of a tale of two cities.

The first city was Walter Griffin's vision of a small inner city surrounded by equal town centres divided by green belts and each town centre independent of the others. The second vision was developed by the Labor Party primarily and is of a central city with the surrounding town centres acting in most cases as dormitories to house the people working in Civic.

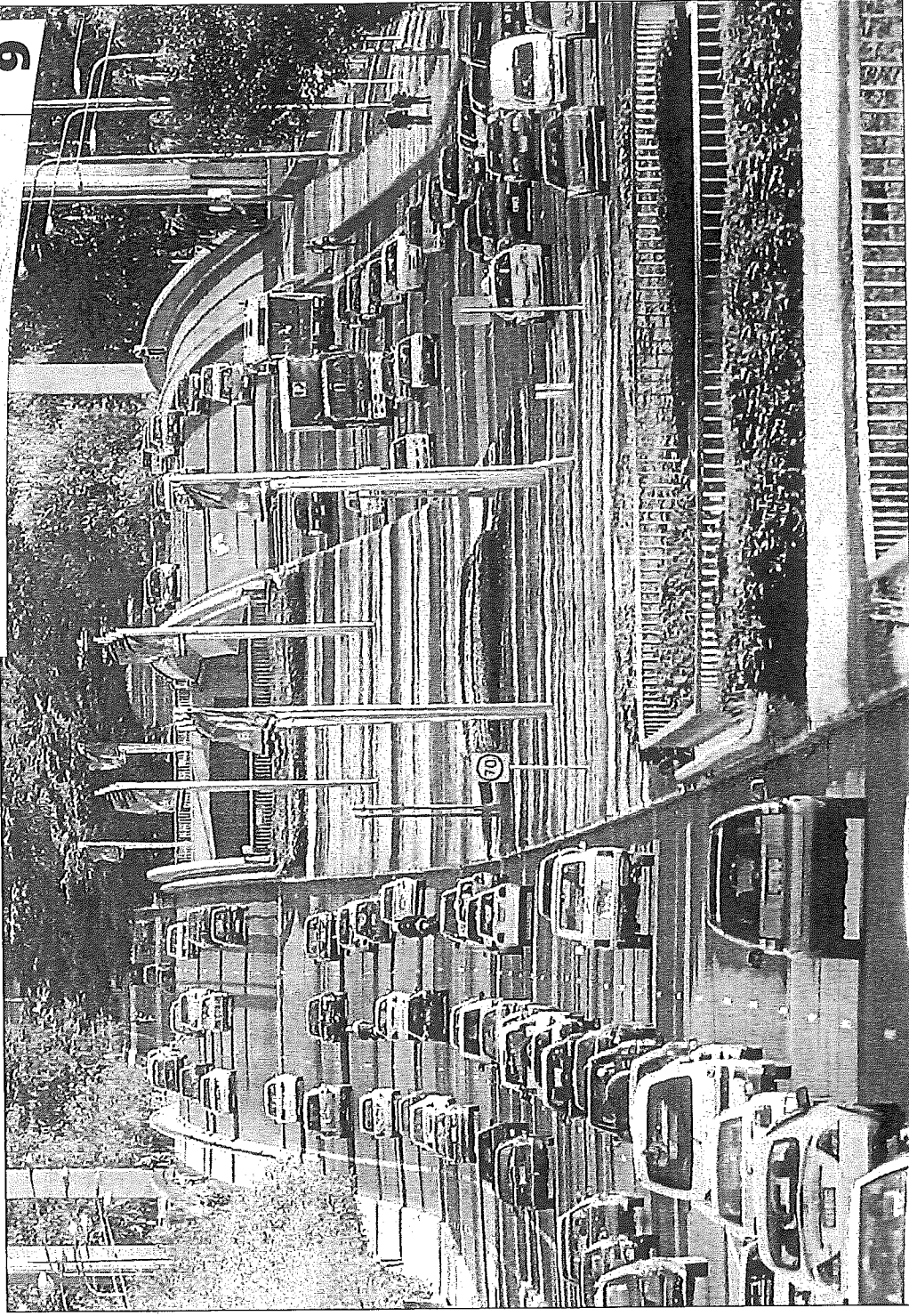
This latter vision is playing out disastrously. If we take Bega Flats as an example, the replacement for them will price the original tenants out of the market. They will have to shift out to apartments on the outskirts and life will be more difficult.

The worse part is apartment life has never been that successful for most who experience it. When you cram many people into close proximity the result can be very traumatic. We have pulled down Melba Flats and Burnie Flats for that reason.

The other main negative is traffic congestion. Instead of a Canberra of the '70s when driving through Canberra was a pleasure, we will have at peak hours semi-gridlock. If we have a serious accident on Commonwealth Avenue at 5.30pm on a wet Friday, traffic will pile up for kilometres.

Walter Griffin has been dead for many years. However, his vision for Canberra is infinitely more modern than our real estate focussed Chief Minister. Andrew Barr's solution of light rail costing at least \$1 billion would have been far better spent on decentralising Canberra.

Howard Carew, Isaacs



Some have argued current planning and development processes in the ACT go against Walter Burley Griffin's original plan for Canberra.

Failure of political vision over Canberra's planning a tragedy

Many recent letters to the editor or despair about the current state of urban planning in Canberra. It is a fact the development of Canberra has an unsteady history.

Canberra was set up as a model city to be the best in the world with commitment to its unique planning, lake, bushland setting, well-designed infrastructure, accommodation of government departments, well-planned schools, hospitals and residential suburbs.

Nothing of real value ever occurs without visionary commitment and hard work.

A true and rare model city cannot be achieved when guided by career politicians and compliant bureaucrats alone. Such is Canberra's lot, at present. As frustrating as it is, despairing letter writers will not change this historic fact.

In a city with no viable local political alternative to the one we already have, and with a compliant and toothless federal watchdog, our territory government will continue to sell off public parkland for private housing, continue to demolish the urban fabric which contains much of Canberra's unwritten history, and continue to turn Canberra from the potential it once showed into a town like any other.

Urban planning is not an exercise for individuals and battles are rarely won by citizens fighting rearguard actions.

The current failure of political vision and commitment to Canberra's planning, and the promise it once showed, is a national tragedy.

Penleigh Boyd, Reid

Exemplar no longer

Prior to self government Canberra was Australia's planning exemplar. Decisions of how the city should develop were shaped by a comprehensive analysis of the implications of alternative distributions of population, employment and facilities.

The purchase of rural leases to the west of the city, the government's land release program and the development of

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Stores will profit from recyclable drink bottles.

light rail and its associated corridor have all been made without the benefit of such analysis. The outcome is an increasingly unaffordable and congested inner city developing in parallel with car-dependent sprawl to the west.

Canberra's planning performance is now that of a poorly performing local government.

A perception is the government is heavily influenced by the need for land revenues from a future "government" greenfields development given revenues will be reduced from joint venture arrangements for Riverview and the CSIRO development.

If land revenues fall other options available include the culling of discretionary projects such as the untested extension of light rail. A review of the planning strategy should determine the location of the next greenfields area and would give confidence decisions are soundly based.

Canberra's planning has no pulse. It needs resuscitation. Are you up to the task Mr Barr?

Mike Quirk, Wanniasa

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2017 THE CANBERRA TIMES

Save our Canberra

It's always useful to be reminded Canberra IS the nation's capital (Letters, August 3). Our city was planned from the beginning by Walter and Marion Griffin, just as Washington DC was planned by Pierre L'Enfant and Brasilia by Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer.

That planning included what has become our Bush Capital. It's not the dense high-rise capital, too much at the mercy of property developers and their profit-driven whims. Canberra's origins are being sold out.

This city is not like Sydney or Melbourne or Brisbane. The cockatoos feed regularly on the nature strips and I walk past kookaburras every morning. Canberra's incomparable.

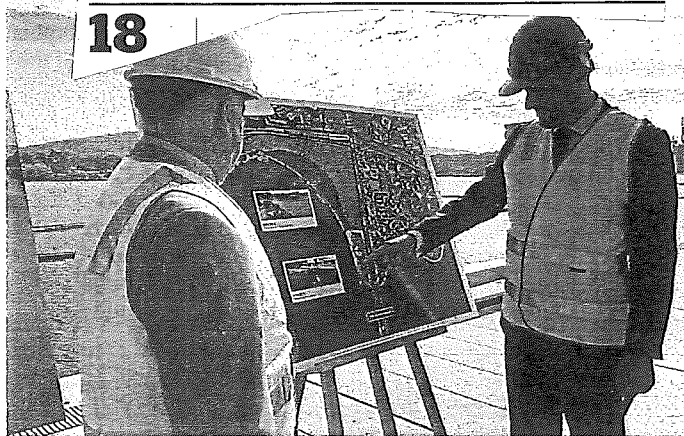
Peter Graves, Curtin

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Heart of the capital under attack and we're in the dark on detail

THE CANBERRA TIMES FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2017

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Andrew Barr and Mick Gentleman at the West Basin boardwalk.

I was hopeful after reading the Chief Minister's recent article (Opinion, May 20) that the way planning decisions are made in Canberra might take a turn for the better.

Unfortunately, I heard on the news on May 22 that the government is ploughing ahead with the West Basin development.

The consultation process for this project has been minimal at best and was done about 10 years ago.

Last Sunday I was part of a group that asked people, as they walked by the ferry terminal in West Basin, if they were aware of the development and that it included a private housing estate.

Of about 100 people consulted, not one person knew there would be private housing.

In addition, most were shocked that part of the lake was to be filled in. Surely there is a case for going back to the community and asking for their views.

We are yet to be told the cost of filling in the lake and what materials will be used to do this.

Once the lake is filled in and the concrete boardwalk erected there will be no turning back. At the very least, a professional heritage impact study needs to be conducted on the proposed building estate.

The lake is an icon of our national capital and Canberra's deserve to be fully consulted.

Penny Moyes, Hughes

Beggarly belief

The proposal, outlined in the paper today (May 23) to eliminate the clover leaf intersections at either end of Kings and Commonwealth avenues and replace them with conventional intersections in order to slow traffic down would have to suggest that the planners at the National Capital Authority (NCA) all need to be sacked or the agency abolished.

Those avenues are important through roads and traffic needs to move along them freely. The planners at the

NCA need to recognise that they live in the real world and these avenue, while they have ceremonial and symbolic significance, are primarily functional roads, important, as roads tend to be, for getting from A to B.

If they want to give more space for pedestrians and cyclists, then use the space beside the roads and, in any case, the cycle paths over the bridge were widened a few years ago.

It is beyond belief that such a proposal would even be contemplated.

Stan Marks, Hawker

Action needed now

Don Maye's "To the Point" (CT, May 22) on the state of Kambah Village Shops was timely and correct. His comment, as a recent arrival, doesn't mention the ACT government environment and sustainable development booklet "Kambah group centre master plan", dated July 2012.

Although some maintenance work is currently under way, none of it appears to follow this five-plus-year-old plan.

However, anything is positive for this rundown and dirty area that has needed renewal for decades. As most of local government "powers that be" live northside, the southside needs attention before the next election.

Even the Kambah Oval signs are almost unreadable. The whole master plan mentioned above needs to be implemented

after such a long gestation. And soon.

Ian Warren, Kambah

Election beckons

Andrew Barr's West Basin development ("The lake reclaimed: it's a shore thing at West Basin", May 24, p2) will concrete over two existing open areas: the lake and the adjacent lakeside park.

In exchange, the public will get a concrete walkway, the construction unions will get work for several years and developers will probably make a good profit (and both will continue to donate to Labor), and a few wealthy people will get lakeside apartments.

I forgot the ferry service - expect that to extend to Yarralumla and Weston Park to cater for further lakeside developments.

Unfortunately, it's probably too late to stop this "shore thing". However, at the 2020 ACT election, to be sure this race to the bottom does not continue, voters should elect several sensible independent candidates.

Bruce Paine, Red Hill

In father's footsteps

What a delight to see Heather Henderson's defence of our city so ably supported by her father Sir Robert Menzies ("Why are we spending millions of dollars to become less efficient?" (Letters, May 23).

He was a Liberal prime minister who believed in the

primacy of Canberra as our nation's capital and home for the dedicated public servants who support the government of the day. Unlike the government of today, which doesn't.

And what happened to evidence-based policy? Evidently and conveniently ignoring the inconvenient truth about the inefficiency of the APVMA's move to the Deputy Prime Minister's electorate.

Tell me, Barnaby and Fiona, why didn't you start by moving the headquarters of the National Party out of Canberra? Put it right amongst your voters, surely?

Peter Graves, Canberra

Heather Henderson (Letters, May 23) highlights the folly of attempting to turn one-dog towns in National Party electorates into two-dog towns by sending elements of the public service there.

One further point is worth adding. Unless there is bipartisan support for such moves (which seems unlikely so long as the destinations are safe seats), the substantial costs of sending people and organisations out are likely to be duplicated when sanity returns and they are brought back to Canberra following a change of government.

Michael Maley, Queanbeyan, NSW

Why are we spending millions of dollars to become less efficient?

THE CANBERRA TIMES TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2017

This continent was once a series of scattered settlements and colonies and states.

Our forebears had the wisdom and strength and determination to bring it all together as one nation: Australia.

It was decided to make a new capital: Canberra.

In the late 1950s the Prime Minister, R. G. Menzies, said "We are stuck with Canberra, whether we like it or not, so we might as well do it properly".

He was determined to make Canberra a capital city of which all Australians could be proud.

That included bringing government departments not already there to the capital.

Sure, the people involved came kicking and screaming, but they could understand and appreciate that it was practical and necessary to have the relevant people in the same city. There is no doubt it has helped to create good government.

Ministers need to be able to see and speak to their departmental officers, and those in different departments need to know each other.

It fills me with horror to think of present day public servants being forced to move away from Canberra.

It is harder now than it was 50 or 60 years ago.

Today both spouses are usually in paid employment. Of course, children have to change school and university, and houses have to be bought and sold and rented. These are human beings, not "mere public servants".

Recently I heard Barnaby Joyce say "There is a chemistry when people meet face to face".

Exactly so.

Modern communications are brilliant, but real personal contact remains vital.

Why are we taking this retrograde step, scattering our government?

Why are we spending millions to become less efficient?

All right, I confess. My father was (R. G.) Menzies.

**Heather Henderson,
Yarralumla**

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Robert Menzies' daughter Heather Henderson queries the moves.

Development application stress could bring down the curtain

Thanks to Caroline Le Couteur for her welcome examination of yet another Development Application meeting local resistance ("Building plan slammed", January 31, p.1).

Her opinions seem widely shared across our city ("City in State of Neglect"; Beware Rough Paths"; "Listen to the Experts": letters, January 31).

It now seems to be technologically difficult even to register such objections ("On Submission Roundabout", Letters, January 30).

David Biles' (recent) concerns about that DA at the Curtin shops are especially apposite.

Interested parties have just been advised that the owner will close down all the Curtin businesses involved, when their leases expire in October, and fence off the site, if the DA is not approved.

This "advice" included the following: "If the DA is not approved, indefinitely until such time as a development that the owners consider to be economically viable is approved."

So much for the owner's expressed concerns for the Curtin residents.

I do hope that this will not influence the final decision of the Planning and Land Directorate.

Peter Graves, Curtin

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Curtin Residents Association members. Photo: ELESIA KURTZ

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owners' attitudes to their DA on part of the Curtin shops. ("Curtin shops stand-off", February 2, p.1).

The run-down state of their building contrasts with the one of the same age in the square, containing the bank, hairdresser and baker among others.

It looks modern and maintained, by the various owners.

The owners of the block under review refuse to provide any details supporting their claim about "pumping money into it" and the building being at the end of its economic life.

If they intend not to continue with the purpose of their lease (operating commercial businesses), perhaps the ACT government should offer the lease to people who will.

The Curtin community should not pay when the owners won't.

Peter Graves, Curtin

West Basin wipeout

Encouraging to see Caroline Le Couteur blow the whistle on the execrable over-development "planned" for Braddon.

Now let her cast a critical eye on the even worse development set to pollute the lake shore and the natural amenity of West Basin.

I would not vote for some slogan on number plates because, apart from being pointless, the options are so banal.

Where was "Canberra - The Warehouse Capital", or "Canberra - The Developers' Paradise"?

A. Whiddett, Yarralumla

Curtin clash

The controversy over development in the Curtin shops is a microcosm of what happens in any city.

As a former resident of Curtin, who still goes there, two things are apparent.

One is the pleasure of the beautiful square surrounded by a variety of shops. The other is the increasing difficulty in finding a parking space.

If the developers have their way the square will be less pleasant and the parking access much worse.

I would suggest that if it is costing them money the owners of the shops, instead of boarding them up which will cost them more money, should relinquish their leases for a fair valuation to the government and move elsewhere. The patronage would ensure new tenants would do well.

Howard Carew, Isaacs

Thanks for the update on the

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The *Canberra Times* editorial ("Canary in the Coalmine/Destroying Canberra to save it", January 11) refers to the real stakeholders in Canberra, the people who live in, and love, this city. Many people have invested a lot in Canberra as residents – time and love.

They chose to come and live here and many have chosen to remain here.

Even ordinary citizens who are residents have invested a lot of money. If being a stakeholder means having an interest, that investment needs to be weighed up.

The current DA to put an outrageously high building into the Curtin shops values the development at just under \$15 million in construction costs, on a block of land already leased by the developer with unimproved value \$848,000.

This is less than \$16 million all up. Half of an average street of houses, about 25 properties, has a monetary value that is more than that.

Curtin has around 2500 dwellings – its residents have invested 100 times as much in Curtin as this developer is proposing.

Add in the surrounding suburbs who use Curtin as a group centre and even from a bean-counting point of view, this community has put up a lot more stake than the developer.

So who are the real stakeholders here?

The residents and the communities deserve to be listened to.

Chris Johnson, Curtin

Disease taking hold

The "no holds barred" trashing of Canberra continues, as outlined regularly in letters to the *Canberra Times* e.g. Colin Smeal (Letters, January 18).

The article by Juliet Ramsay ("West Basin's path to urban awfulness", January 18, p16) provides an excellent overview of the disease now taking hold in earnest.

Consultation processes are a farce, as flagged by Chris Emery (Letters, January 17).

I read the latest contributions in a cafe in Curtin; only to be reminded of what is occurring when walking through the Curtin Shopping Centre, with citizens seeking signatures with the sign "Development threat to Curtin Square, Rally 11 am Saturday 21 January".

The Manuka Oval development plans by stealth should have been signal enough to the Canberra populace. Apparently not, it seems.

Murray May, Cook

Lack of standards allows developers to tarnish our once beautiful city

Saturday's *Canberra Times* made me shudder as it dawned on me that here we were just two weeks into 2017 and the developers' rape of our once beautiful city was already in full swing.

The articles spruiking the Geocon development at the old NRMA site and QIC's plans for another massive development linked to the Canberra Centre ("Centre to be left in the shade", January 14, pp. 2-3) are just the start of the wholesale sell-off and over development of Civic as this government's mates cash in on the "opportunities" afforded by the tram and a lack of any overall plan or standards being applied to rampant development.

I moved to Canberra almost 60 years ago in wonder at its beauty, potential and amenity, which flourished under the careful guidance of the National Capital Development Commission and the Department of Works.

Everywhere I look now saddens me; has there ever been an uglier building in our suburbs than the shed housing the emergency services in Bindubi Street — who on earth approved this monstrosity?

What about the massive apartments behind Anzac Parade, the most sacred road in Australia?

I wonder now if those good citizens who went so blindly to the polls and re-installed the Developer Party, sorry Labor Party, might now be having second thoughts about their choice?

Colin Smeal, Holder

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Its wall height adjacent to the square is the equivalent of three residential floors. Documents note "ground floor with mezzanine" which may be why the commercial section is so high. The height could be reduced by 2m, satisfying the developer and lessening the shading of the courtyard. On the wall facing Strangways Street the floor height of the commercial section is the equivalent of three residential floors. The reduced height of the ground floor still would comply with the waste collection standard of a 6m overhead clearance.

Jeremy McGrane, Kingston

Future guardians

The *Canberra Times* editorial of January 12 is a timely reminder of the need for all Canberrans to engage more keenly with the planning and heritage issues they face as custodians of the future of this unique city and National Capital.

Governments today are generally more attentive to public opinion, especially when it represents a broad demographic and is well informed.

Besides residents' associations and community councils there are many community organisations quietly working to inform planning debate and protect Canberra's amenity and heritage.

Examples are National Trust (ACT), Friends of ACT Trees, Lake Burley Griffin Guardians, Canberra Woodland and Wetlands Trust and The Walter Burley Griffin Society. Inevitably perhaps, many of those best informed about these issues, and most actively engaged, are time rich retirees.

There is a special need for time poor younger Canberrans, the future guardians of their city, now busy with careers and family, to consider joining such organisations.

One easy and enjoyable way would be through the many heritage walks and events during the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival from April 18 to May 7.

Trevor Lipscombe,
Campbell

Trim mall size

Some Curtin residents are concerned the scale of a proposed shopping centre redevelopment is too large for the central square ("Curtin call to reduce size of development", January 11, p.1).

Public response for the preparation of Draft Master Plan, Master Plan and for the developer stressed the importance of scale and for no additional shadowing of the square.

The Development Application for Mrs Haridemos claims few people sit or linger in the central square in winter and that the proposed building, predominantly the commercial section, would shadow the courtyard progressively from noon on June 21, lengthening further from 2pm.

Destroying Canberra to save it?

There is a rising tide of discontent along the landlocked shores of Lake Burley Griffin among the defenders of the "Griffin Legacy". This not inconsiderable number of Canberra residents, whose ranks include former senior administrators, community leaders and heritage and planning experts, fear for the future of Walter and Marion's original vision for the bush capital.

They argue the ACT government is throwing the baby out with the bathwater by repeatedly choosing to put development and the revenue it brings ahead of good planning and heritage outcomes.

This is a debate Canberra needs to have. If, as has been repeatedly claimed, we are on the wrong track and at risk of undermining many of the features that make the city state such a great place to live, the sooner we pause and reassess the better.

A succession of issues, including the Kingston foreshore development, City to the Lake, the Manuka Oval debacle, the urban densification associated with the light rail project and the proposed infill of a part of West Basin to facilitate apartment block construction, have all put the Barr government in the firing line.

The latest canary in the coalmine is a plan by the owners to knock over the existing, single story, Curtin Square shops and replace them with a six-storey building locals have described as "a monolithic chunk" and incorporating 50 flats.

While the application has yet to be determined - submissions close on January 31 - objectors fear if past experience in areas such as Jamison is any guide then a less than optimum outcome is looming.

They make the point that while the area's master plan has yet to be finalised, the draft plan stipulates a two-storey height limit for buildings fronting the square and four storeys for buildings set back from the square at the southern end.

Growing public concern over these issues is timely given the recently installed chairman of the ACT Parliament's planning committee, Greens MLA Caroline Le Couteur, has flagged an inquiry into the Territory Plan this year.

Despite the fact the Greens have been largely supportive of the Barr government's planning agenda in recent years, with Ms Le Couteur telling the Lake Burley Griffin Guardians ahead of the election "ACT Greens support infill rather than urban sprawl", any inquiry is an open-ended process.

If a probe into the Territory Plan is commissioned the government will need to be ready for a well-targeted critique of its recent actions from the real stakeholders: the people who live in, and love, this city.

While there is much to commend in the desire by Labor and the Greens to increase housing density to reduce emissions, lower transport costs and achieve affordable housing, such goals cannot be at the price of community amenity.

Surely nobody is suggesting we have to destroy Canberra in order to save it.

Six storeys are an unwelcome development for area's amenity

Thanks for your article ("Curtin call to reduce size of development", January 11, p.1).

It's the latest in many residents' concerns about planning decisions: e.g. ("Forrest hotel consultation 'misleading'", September 24, 2016, p.17, "Soulless planning avoidable", letters, January 7, "Disaster in Curtin", letters, January 7).

It is noticeable the Curtin Group Centre Master Plan has not been finalised, nearly one year after comments closed.

This draft plan recommends a redevelopment height limit of two storeys.

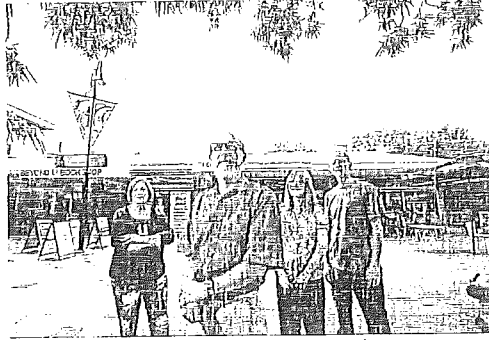
Yet the developers now want six, knowing this will reduce the winter sun in the town square and will also temporarily remove the public toilets presently on ACT land.

Not good developments for the commercial attractiveness of the centre.

It will also be quite disproportionate to the other three sides of single-storey buildings. I am unaware of any resident who welcomes this proposal.

It seems, once again, a public amenity in Canberra is set to be appropriated for private profit. Stick to the master plan - draft or final. Please.

Peter Graves, Curtin



Curtin Residents Association members are concerned.

Consultation? Don't ask

Krystian Seibert's article "Government of the people" (January 9, p12) and your editorial "Destroying Canberra to save it?" (January 12, p16) hit the nail on the head. Siebert mentions the need for proper and sincere community engagement which is severely lacking in the Canberra planning processes.

It is rather puzzling, as early last year the ACT government brought two Canadian planners to Canberra to discuss how community consultation could work to the benefit of all.

My hopes were raised that at last there would be a different approach to the archaic, bullying tactics of the LDA. But no. None of the wisdom of the Canadian planners has been taken on board, even though the City of Geraldton in WA and the South Australian government have had great success with such an approach.

For citizens juries to work effectively the government has to be sincere in wanting to hear what the community views are and have the community involved from the beginning.

Here in Canberra the opposite approach is taken - rather - this is what you are going to get unless you scream. With this approach the ACT government now has on its hands many issues that the community is very unhappy about - the City to the Lake, the Manuka Oval complex, the Curtin and Dickson shops developments, and the Currong flat development, not to mention West Basin where part of the Lake is due to be filled in and a private housing development

plonked right on our park. It is truly time for a more mature approach to our planning process so that we don't lose the city we love and treasure.

Penny Moyes, Hughes

Disaster in Curtin

The latest development application for Curtin shops deserves more scrutiny than the usual developer-friendly government rubber stamp.

The ink is barely dry on the imposed "master plan" and we see a proposal to erect a six-storey building with all the charm of a monolithic chunk right in the middle of the centre.

Must we compromise on quality design? Must all group centres meet the same fate as Jamison with its ugly collection of cheaply built apartments already visibly decaying and crumbling?

The Curtin shops proposal makes no attempt to respond to existing character, and it will overshadow and dominate the public square.

What is to become of the interesting and popular independent shops in the existing (fully tenanted) building that is to be displaced? Many questions must be answered, and the quality of the design significantly improved, before this major change to a perfectly functional and popular centre is approved.

I encourage interested users of Curtin shops to view the plans on the ACTPLA website and consider making a submission prior to the January 31 closing date.

Scott Humphries, Curtin

Maintain our origins

About time, National Capital Authority ("Residents fear date with density", December 15, p8)! Our garden city is being trashed by developers, assisted by an ACT government apparently caring more about revenue than the terminal damage being done to Canberra.

This city need not be like Sydney, as so frequently proposed by some. Usually by those who don't understand the origins of our city, in the planning theories of Marion and Walter Griffin and the planning practices of the former National Capital Development Commission.

Modernise (if 250-400-square metre blocks can be called that) in the new areas. Maintain the civic amenity in the older areas. That's what makes Canberra a living and liveable city.

Peter Graves, Curtin

Adjust the height

Some Curtin residents are concerned the scale of a proposed shopping centre redevelopment is too large for the central square ("Curtin call to reduce size of development", January 11, p.1).

Public response for the preparation of a Draft Master Plan, Master Plan, and for the developer stressed the importance of scale and for no additional shadowing of the square.

The development application for Mrs Haridemos claims few people sit or linger in the central square in winter and that the proposed building, predominantly the commercial section, would shadow the courtyard progressively from noon on June 21, lengthening further from 2pm. Its wall height adjacent to the square is the equivalent of three residential floors. Documents note "ground floor with mezzanine", which may be why the commercial section is so high.

The applicant states new retail developments tend to deliver floor-to-ceiling heights of five to six metres. The height could be reduced by two metres, satisfying the developer and lessening the shading of the courtyard. On the wall facing Strangways Street, the floor height of the commercial section equals three residential floors. The reduced height of the ground floor still would comply with the waste collection standard of a six-metre overhead clearance.

Jeremy McGrane, Kingston