Ms Amanda Bresnan MLA (Committee Chair)
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
Standing Committee for Education, Training and Youth Affairs
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Bresnan

Re: Future Use of the Fitter's Workshop within the Kingston Arts/Cultural Precinct

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views regarding the future use of the Fitter's Workshop and for the future opportunities for the Arts/Cultural Precinct within the Kingston Foreshore.

We would like to address the issues and how they relate to the Old Bus Depot Markets from two points of view:

- The Wider Opportunities for the Kingston Arts/Cultural Precinct
- The proposed Annex to the Fitter's Workshop and the negative impacts on the Old Bus Depot Markets

We would welcome the opportunity to present our concerns directly to the committee and appreciate the committee's time and energy in exploring all the factors relating to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Diane Hinds and Morna Whiting
Directors
Old Bus Depot Markets
22 February 2012

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Historical Context

The Old Bus Depot Markets has been operating from its current location on the Kingston Foreshore for 14 years. The business began in another building on the Kingston Foreshore in 1994, however moved after 4 years to the " Former Transport Depot" when the earlier building faced demolition. For 18 years we have operated our national award winning business from the Kingston Foreshore.

In being custodians of this building for 14 years, we are keenly aware of the value to the community and the potential for this building to not only be enhanced for the purpose it is now being used, but to evolve and develop and become integrated into a wider arts/cultural precinct. We are the only people with a serious interest in this building seven days a week. The Old Bus Depot Markets building is seen by large numbers in Canberra as a Heritage building, and the upper level of the Old Bus Depot Markets is the subject of an ACT Heritage Order.

The Old Bus Depot Markets has been described by many as one of Canberra's "Cultural Icons" and, together with the Australian War Memorial, are the only businesses within the ACT currently in the Australian Tourism Hall of Fame. We not only welcome local residents to the markets each weekend, but have a large tourist visitation from interstate and all over the world. We attract on average of between 4000 and 5000 people each Sunday with much higher numbers on our monthly special events and during Christmas and holiday periods. Free stalls are made available for community groups and charities each week, and we run a program of special events throughout the year. Megalo has participated in our Creative Fibre Day over many years, as have other arts organisations for special events. Musicians have provided music for patrons in the form of busking.

We have been participants in many architectural investigations, workshops, community consultation exercises and were foundation members of the ACT Government's Community Reference Group whose brief was to report on the community's expectations for the future development of the Foreshore and in particular, the Arts/Cultural Precinct.

Naturally the shape of the development has evolved in that time, and we are no strangers to change --having worked with the ACT government in managing the changes that have affected the operation of the Markets over many years.

We are however, concerned about change that does not have a basis in thorough planning and visioning for the whole of the area that is to make up the Kingston Arts/Cultural Precinct. We believe that the Kingston Foreshore Arts/Cultural precinct is too important an area for the whole of Canberra not to be afforded the opportunity of considered strategic planning for the site prior to important decisions being made.

One of the Directors of the Old Bus Depot Markets is a qualified Urban Planner and is a current corporate member of Planning Institute Australia.

We do not wish to comment on the suitability of Megalo or any other group having the exclusive use of the Fitter's Workshop. Our submission to this Committee is not focused on who goes into the Fitter's Workshop. It is focused on the proposed Annex and the lack of overall context for this proposed development.

The Wider Opportunities for the Kingston Arts/Cultural Precinct

We welcome the further development of the Kingston Arts/Cultural Precinct when it is subject to a considered Land Use context using good Urban Design Principles. That means looking at how the precinct can be successful as a whole, rather than being developed in an ad hoc way.

About 15 years ago, Colin Stewart Architects won a national design competition for the overall design and visioning for the Kingston Foreshore. That concept involved a Cultural Precinct with integrated residential, business, commercial and arts elements. The precinct was to be a centrepiece for the Kingston Foreshore development and was to have a strong sense of community.

We have seen drafts showing separate, purpose built buildings to be used by a variety of enterprises, including arts and commercial, located on the northeastern area of the central courtyard and with good connectivity to the areas near the lake. These concepts demonstrate good planning principles in finding a cohesive and energised area for an arts hub and this starts to form elements of a strong and thoughtful Arts/Cultural precinct.

In Susan Conroy's Report (Kingston Arts Precinct Strategy) and more recently in the draft Master planning work for the whole of Section 49 undertaken by Purdon Associates for the Land Development Agency (** we do not have access to the latest drafts of this Masterplan and cannot comment on its final form) a concept emerged for a central shared courtyard area to the north of the Markets building, and east of the Fitter's Workshop. This principle involves creating public open spaces that will reinforce the arts "hub". It is our view that the full potential of this concept cannot be reached with the current proposal for an Annex in its current location. The proposal involves a building which is poorly sited and its conception has a narrow focus and a narrow brief.

We believe the whole of the Kingston Arts/Cultural precinct can have a better outcome if an overarching vision can be reached, taking into consideration the studies and consultation that have already taken place; researching the functional requirements of the currently identified occupants (including the Old Bus Depot Markets) ; finessing the aspirations of other arts based groups in moving to the Foreshore; gauging what sort of commercial and business "energisers" are needed for the Precinct; and engaging outstanding design professionals, such as landscape architects to oversee connectivity and opportunities for introducing plant material and the natural environment, which has been, and continues to be a critical element in the public's mind in every single workshop/consultation exercise in which we have participated over the last 15 years.

As a business which has operated from and energised this site for many years, we would like to see detailed consideration and a positive solution that will enhance not only the whole of the Arts/Cultural precinct, but also address and facilitate the aesthetic, environmental, and operational needs and future flexibility of the Old Bus Depot Markets building.

The proposed Annex to the Fitter's Workshop and the Negative Impacts on the Old Bus Depot Markets.

We would like to be clear that we have no objections to Megalo as an organisation, locating to the Kingston Foreshore or using the Fitter's Workshop. It is an outstanding organisation with a distinguished history in the Canberra region and has a vibrant member base. It is just the type of visual arts organisation that would be an asset on the Kingston Foreshore and complementary to other arts and cultural activities.

It is this proposed Annex that, once construction starts, and forever more, will impact negatively on another building already operating on the site. It is not that it is a badly designed building, but there is a complete lack of integration with the Markets building, and currently no context for the whole of the precinct.

The construction of an Annex is not giving our business the opportunity to develop, and in building a new building within the precinct, consideration should have been given to this. We are running a successful business that the Canberra community supports and patronises in large numbers.

Operational Impacts

We have been told that during an 18 month construction phase, the back, northerly area to the markets will not be accessible **at all. This situation would have an enormous negative impact on our business, and the businesses of many stallholders when an area so intensively used on Sunday is no longer available.** There is no other area that can handle the necessary intensity of use of space to service the loading and off-loading of goods at the beginning and ending of each Sunday, and the constant deliveries during the day (e.g. fresh deliveries of bread, access to refrigerated vans for produce etc.). The only alternative, the northern courtyard between the Markets building and the Glassworks, is already overloaded and becomes the scene of intense "tempers" during the Christmas season. It is not a possible contingency.

The northern back area to the markets also currently acts as a service area with six commercial rubbish hoppers and a bank of stallholder storage sheds. There is not the space, or the desirability to re-locate these functions to the front entry area of the markets adjacent to the Glassworks, nor is it likely that the residents who live in the Gateway apartments would accept the "back of house" functions in such close proximity.

Without the benefit of a comprehensive plan for the development of the whole of the precinct, we have no idea how these important operational problems can be addressed.

We were not consulted about the operational requirements of the markets before the Development Application for an Annex was submitted to ACTPLA , nor has any government agency engaged with us about how these functional problems mentioned above, can be overcome. A development process that gives zero consideration to this is inherently flawed.

Aesthetic Impacts

The present plan has an Annex adjoining the Fitter's Workshop in a perpendicular angle to that building. The Annex would run parallel to the back area of the Old Bus Depot Markets**, less than 8 metres from the building** which includes a long set of 8 triple paned windows on the lower level. Thousands of patrons and stallholders would look out of the only windows on the lower level, to a six metre high wall of metal sheeting. Aesthetically, it could not be more uninviting as an immediate view. This view could be permanent.

Environmental Impacts

The proposed six metre high metal clad Annex would completely overshadow not only the back garden we have created and tended for 14 years, but for most of the day and most of the year, all of the bank of eight, three paned windows on the lower level, resulting in severely compromised natural light to the lower level.

Outdoor tables and chairs that support the food and café area of the market would no longer have northerly sunshine, but a large blank metal wall.

Of the three large mature trees within the garden, at least two of them would require severe pruning to allow this Annex to be built.

See attached images showing the relationship between the Fitter's workshop and the Old Bus Depot Markets building.

Summary

We hold tremendous hopes that the Arts/Cultural Precinct within the Kingston Foreshore can become a world class example of good urban design and functionality within the redevelopment of a former industrial area in Canberra. There are numerous successful examples in other parts of the world. It is certainly the case that those places have not developed in an ad hoc way, but have been the subject of considered planning and design, where old and treasured buildings on site have a context to each other, and to the larger "precinct" overall.

This is no time for random "plonking" of buildings.

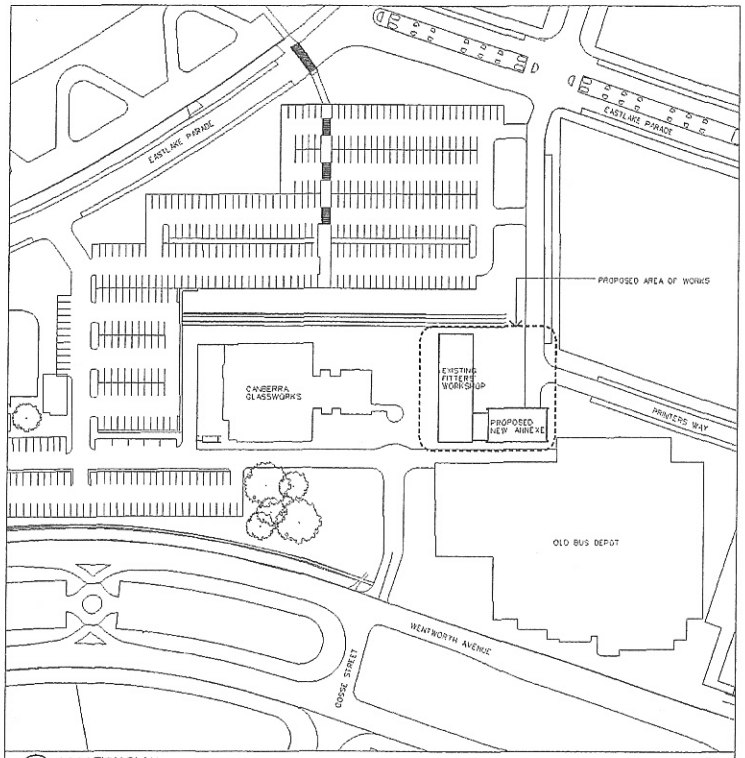
The Old Bus Depot Markets building is here to stay, the Glassworks is fantastic, and this is our last chance to ensure that we are left with a worthy legacy within this cultural landscape.

FITTERS' WORKSHOP

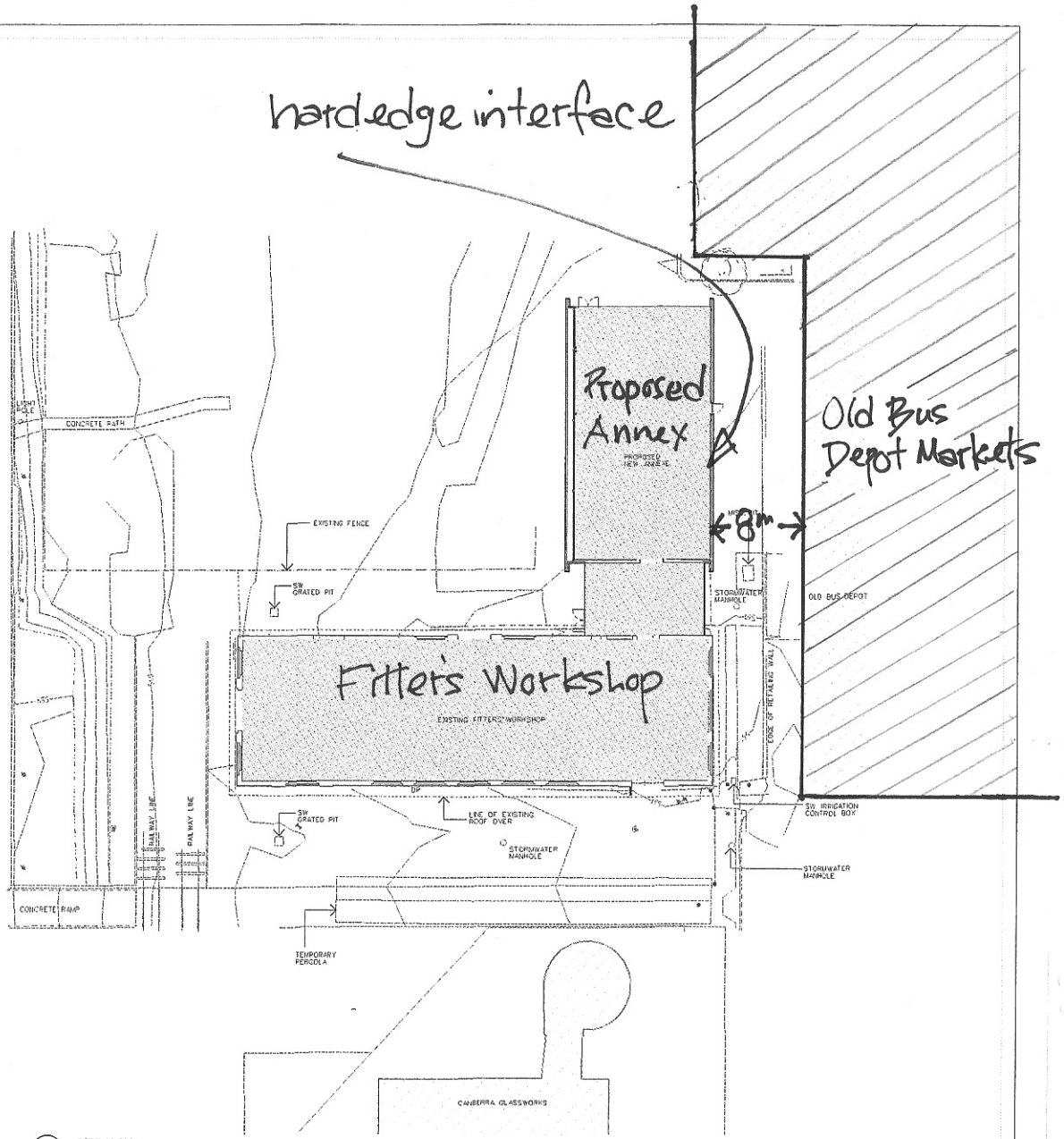
MEGALO PRINT STUDIO

DRAWING NUMBER	TITLE	SCALE
FSP MPS A-001	DRAWING LIST, LOCATION PLAN & SITE PLAN	AS SHOWN
FSP MPS A-101	GROUND FLOOR PLAN	1:100 @ A1
FSP MPS A-102	MEZZANINE FLOOR PLAN	1:100 @ A1
FSP MPS A-111	FURNITURE LAYOUT PLAN	1:100 @ A1
FSP MPS A-151	ROOF PLAN	1:100 @ A1
FSP MPS A-201	GROUND FLOOR REFLECTED CEILING PLAN	1:100 @ A1
FSP MPS A-202	MEZZANINE FLOOR REFLECTED CEILING PLAN	1:100 @ A1
FSP MPS A-301	ELEVATIONS	1:100 @ A1
FSP MPS A-401	SECTIONS	1:100 @ A1
FSP MPS A-501	INTERNAL ELEVATIONS	1:100 @ A1

01 DRAWING LIST
NTS



02 LOCATION PLAN
SCALE 1:1000



03 SITE PLAN
SCALE 1:200

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JACKSON ARCHITECTURE

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FITTERS' WORKSHOP
Megalo Print Studio

Location Plan & Site Plan

Project Number 10212
Scale As SHOWN

0 10m