



Jonathon
Reynolds

POSTAL

PO Box 50
Mail Distribution Centre
Mitchell ACT 2911

PHONE

0418 812 281

EMAIL

mail@jonathonreynolds.com

WEB

www.jonathonreynolds.com

9 October 2007

Mr Mick Gentleman MLA
Committee Chair

Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601

DRAFT VARIATION TO THE TERRITORY PLAN NO 287 (DV287) – GOLD CREEK HOMESTEAD, BLOCKS 1 AND 2 SECTION 23 NGUNNAWAL

Dear Sir,

I make this submission, having been intimately involved with the community efforts to “save” the Gold Creek Homestead from the earliest days of the campaign.

My first recollections of this involvement were conversations with the original Gold Creek Homestead Community Working Group (GCHCWG) convener Ms. Julie Brodrick and other local community members in 2000. This was shortly after the then Liberal government proposed that the Homestead site be substantially redeveloped.

Needless to say the GCHCWG put up a solid and spirited fight to preserve what the community saw as the intrinsic values of the Gold Creek Homestead site¹. Looking at this document, now with several years hindsight, the submission could now be considered somewhat naive, far too optimistic and idealistic in its eventual aims and preferred outcomes.

The fight ensued and initially, through a change in Government it was thought that the original campaign to preserve the homestead had been successful as redevelopment of the site appeared to be off the political and planning agenda.

Over the intervening years the GCHCWG and wider community continued to fight hard to have the Homestead property maintained and returned for community uses, with the now Labor government refusing to spend any substantial amounts of money on the site, allowing the property to seriously decay and fall into general disrepair.

Unfortunately the lack of attention to ongoing repairs and general maintenance will now require a massive injection of funds to ensure that this heritage and historic site² and its buildings are returned to a fully useable state.

The proposed final variation 287 to the Territory Plan formalises the change of land use for this site, with what I personally believe appropriate safeguards, to allow appropriate future development and restoration work to occur.

I bring to your attention the following two paragraphs from the Explanatory Statement of the Variation document (my emphasis added) that outline the key imperatives for any proposed development of the site:

¹ Gold Creek Homestead Community Working Group (Gungahlin Residents Committee) response to Gold Creek Homestead Site Planning Feasibility Study Brief Number PALM 82/99

² Gold Creek: Reflections of Canberra's Rural Heritage - Softcover: 126 pages, Publisher: Gold Creek Working Group; December 2004, ISBN: 0-646-44071-3



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“The indicative concept plan in the Planning Study for the site provides for a fully integrated aged care and community facility. **The fundamental landscape and heritage qualities of the site are retained and enhanced** and residential aged care and supportive housing units are provided on the western part of the site. **The indicative concept plan provides for the Homestead and parts of its curtilage are restored to create a community meeting place that is suitable for art exhibitions, open days and the like. Opportunities exist to construct additional buildings in a vernacular style to accommodate community arts and craft spaces that would be managed as an adjunct to the aged care facility while also allowing for broader community involvement.**

It is intended that the indicative concept plan will form the basis of lease and development conditions, which will inform the release of the site for development following the variation to the Territory Plan. Any separate aged care dwellings will be part of a managed complex and will not be individually leased.”

I have grave concern that these key elements, that for the most part still reflect the ongoing will of the general community, will not be translated directly in the final legal Territory Plan variation document. Unfortunately this may ultimately result in the lease and actual development conditions being severely watered down or otherwise compromised, resulting in the proposed aspirations and concepts for the site never actually being met.

Thus, I urge the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment to strongly make a recommendation in their final report that the intent is made clear by fully incorporating such wording (as given in the explanatory document of the proposed variation) in the final approved Territory Plan variation.

Yours faithfully,

Jonathon Reynolds

cc: Mr. Zed Seselja MLA (Deputy Chair), Ms. Mary Porter AM MLA