

Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

No. 23 June 2010

Griffith Oval No. 1 gains Heritage Register protection

The ACT Heritage Council has decided to enter Griffith Oval No. 1 into the Heritage Register (based on a nomination made by our association) because it has historic heritage significance under three of the criteria in the *Heritage Act*:

- It exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community.
- It is a rare or unique example of its kind, or is rare or unique in its comparative intactness.
- It has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase in local or national history.

The oval is located at the corner of Captain Cook Cres and Austin St. The registration gives the oval provisional statutory protection which ends 14 October. It is critically important that as many people as possible provide written comments in support of the registration because any decision to extend the registration beyond that date will be based on the results of public consultation.

We urge you to provide written comments by Wednesday 16 June to the ACT Heritage Council, GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601. Further details are available at:

www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2010-240/default.asp

ACT Rugby Union proposal to re-zone and redevelop Griffith Oval No. 1

The ACT and Southern NSW Rugby Union (Brumbies Rugby), working in conjunction with a major property developer, has made a formal application to the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) for a Draft Variation to the *Territory Plan* to re-zone and redevelop the land that is the site of the Brumbies' current headquarters and the former bowling club to construct approximately 150 apartments, and to re-zone and redevelop Griffith Oval No. 1 to build a large new headquarters building within the boundaries of the oval.

The proposal is to re-zone Griffith Oval No. 1 (Block 17) from Urban Open Space to Restricted Access Recreation; to reduce the oval to just a rugby rectangle; to restrict Griffith Oval No. 1 from public access; and to re-zone the site of the Brumbies' headquarters and the former bowling club (Block 15) from Leisure and Accommodation to Medium Density Residential.

ACTPLA are assessing the application and reportedly have asked the Brumbies to augment their Planning Study regarding several aspects of the proposal. **We urge you to contact ACTPLA and your elected representatives (both local and federal) to let them know what you think.**

Our association is analysing material obtained under the *Freedom of Information Act* including the Brumbies Planning Study.

We would like your help: If you have expertise on heritage or planning issues, especially in the areas of law, traffic/parking engineering, hydraulics or ecological assessment we would very much value your help. Please contact the Association.

Our association is committed to the preservation of community facilities and open space and is opposed to any re-zoning of Griffith Oval No. 1 (Block 17) from Urban Open Space. There are four main reasons:

1. Canberra's Urban Open Space network should be retained and strengthened

Griffith Oval No. 1 should be retained, preserved and enhanced in accordance with the provisions of *The Canberra Spatial Plan* and the principles of the *Territory Plan's* Statement of Strategic Directions. Griffith Oval No. 1 is not only public open space and a well-used sports oval; it is also part of a natural watercourse, a designed floodwater retention basin, and an integral part of an important landscape corridor leading from Red Hill to Lake Burley Griffin.

2. Need to retain this particular area of urban open space

The public open spaces of Griffith Oval No. 1 are currently zoned for all in the Canberra community to use and appreciate. People of all ages come to walk, play, engage in formal and informal sports, or just to sit and enjoy the beauty of this unique landscape. Restricting access to a few formal sporting teams would deprive the whole community of a well-used, well-loved public recreational asset.

It is one of the few remaining publicly accessible open spaces left in the Griffith-Narrabundah-Kingston area following the substantial urban in-fill taking place in the region. Increased population and urban intensification lead to a demand for more open space, not less. Alienating Griffith Oval No. 1 from general public access will leave only Griffith Oval No. 2, which is entirely inadequate for the current and future needs of our community.

3. Griffith Oval No. 1 must be preserved because of its heritage, social and sports values

The oval has been placed on the Heritage Register due to its historic heritage significance. The proposed development would damage the heritage significance of Griffith Oval No. 1 because it would involve removal of many trees; damage the unimpeded aesthetic backdrop to the oval; and intrude visually upon and compromise the relationship between the playing field and the perimeter plantings.

The *Territory Plan's* Statement of Strategic Directions states that heritage and cultural values will be safeguarded, and that the distinctive qualities of residential areas and other places, as well as elements of community heritage, will also be recognised and their conservation promoted.

Griffith Oval No. 1 was created as an oval during the 1930s. It has been used continuously since that time by many sporting codes including rugby, Aussie Rules, cricket and hockey. It was originally conceived as a multi-use public oval rather than an oval for elite sports, and many generations of local residents have formed strong attachments to the oval. The proposed large building within the oval itself would limit the oval's use to rugby alone. As well as damaging the area's heritage value, it would severely limit any possible future use by other sporting codes.

4. The Brumbies do not need *exclusive access* to the oval

There is no need for the Brumbies to have *exclusive use* of the oval. Current arrangements, where the "whole-of-community" share the oval, have been and are beneficial for all. The site that accommodates the current Brumbies' headquarters and the former bowling club (Block 15) will easily accommodate their administrative and training facilities requirements, for now and well into the future.

There is general respect within the community for the Brumbies' current use of the oval as a training ground and they have unhindered access to the Griffith Oval No. 1 whenever they wish. There is no need to disrupt this current harmonious arrangement.

We also have many significant concerns about the nature of the proposed residential development; including the large number of apartments being proposed (approximately 150) and the impact they would have on the character of the area, parking, traffic flows and safety, as well as adequacy of existing infrastructure to support such a development.

Aged Care Facility on the former O'Connell Centre site

Baptist Community Services (BCS) have made a proposal for a new aged care facility on the site of the former O'Connell Centre (corner of Stuart St and Blaxland St near the shops). It involves the demolition of the existing buildings and construction of a new 160 bed residential aged care facility. BCS presented initial plans in late 2008 for comment.

Our association made a submission in November 2008 supporting the facility in principle, but pointing out the need to address appropriate building height; setbacks; bulk; compatibility with existing development and streetscape; respect for trees and open space etc.

BCS recently presented new plans at a Community Information Session on 27 May. BCS is expected to lodge a formal Development Application (DA) with ACTPLA in early June. We urge you to take a closer look at these plans, the impact on the Griffith community and the loss of further open space. Please voice your opinion.

Draft Variation 302: Changes to Community Facilities Zone Rules

ACTPLA has proposed a Draft Variation to the *Territory Plan* which proposes changes to the Community Facility Zone including changes to the zone objectives, development table and development code. Further details can be obtained from ACTPLA's web-site. **We urge you to provide written comments by Tuesday 22 June.** Some major changes are:

- It creates greater flexibility in the use of former public school grounds for non-educational purposes.
- It states that numerous areas of Community Facility Zone land are no longer required for Community Use, and makes it easier to use those areas for Supportive Housing. Those areas include the sites of St. Edmunds College, St. Clares College and Canberra Grammar; the St. Christopher's Cathedral and St. Pauls Church precincts; St Benedicts School in Narrabundah; and the Baptist Church site in Currie St, Kingston.
- It deletes the criteria that developments on land in Community Facility Zones comply with the Parking and Vehicular Access General Code and the Bicycle Parking General Code.
- It sets a new general height limit of 4 storeys or 15m above natural ground level. Previously there was no general height limit.

For buildings that are within 30m of residential blocks: It changes the limit to "no higher than the highest permissible height of building on any adjacent residential block or two (2) storeys whichever is greater". Previously the limit was two storeys, with no reference to height on adjacent residential blocks.

- It removes all requirements for developments to demonstrate a response to the Key Strategies of Neighborhood Plans beyond a "sunset date" of 1 January 2011. This is of great concern to GNCA since considerable effort was put into gaining the undertakings from the current Government that are included in the Key Strategies of the Griffith Neighborhood Plan. The two applicable Key Strategies that will no longer apply are "retain the integrity of land defined under the Territory Plan as Community Facility" and "ensure that adequate Community Facility land is available for the needs of current and future residents".

Thank you to our Fine Dining Raffle sponsors

Our association would like to thank the three local restaurants, **Aubergine, EU Café and Rubicon**. They provided generous support to our association by donating meals to the value of \$100 in each of their restaurants. Congratulations to our winners who were Robyn Long, Janet Richardson and Andrew Buckland.

Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association Inc., PO Box 4127, Manuka ACT 2603

Membership Application / Renewal Form

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name: Membership Fee / Donation: \$.....
 Full Address: (Amount Enclosed)
 Post Code: Phone:
 Signature: Date: email Address: