

Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association Inc.

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What's happening at the Stuart Flats and Gowrie Court?

One of the most prominent changes to our neighbourhood in the coming year will be the redevelopment of Stuart Flats and Gowrie Court. The Men's Link building on Stuart Street has been demolished and the Development Applications (DAs 201833237-9) for the demolition of all the buildings were lodged on 16 April. Griffith will never look the same again!

The Griffith Narrabundah Community Association (GNCA) has been in regular contact with the Government and we have been assured there will be extensive consultation before the Development Applications (DAs) are submitted and a Design Review Panel (DRP), headed by the government architect, will review the proposals for both sites. We were also advised that for Gowrie Court the site is likely to be sold as is and not after demolition.

The GNCA raised six issues with the Planning Directorate relating to Gowrie Court. These are shown below together with a summary of the government's responses:

GNCA issue	Government response
The whole site should be sold as one entity.	The intention at this stage is to sell Gowrie Court as one package.
Achieve best practice environmental sustainability throughout the whole complex by incorporating energy efficient standards.	A requirement will be placed in the sales contracts for the DRP to assess the proposals before the DAs are lodged. In terms of environmental sustainability, the current Territory Plan requires developers to incorporate landscape design, natural ventilation and water sensitive urban design.
Ensure that all dwellings have solar access in accordance with the planning rules.	Solar access of dwellings on the site will be considered at the Development Application stage and these will be mandated by the solar access requirements in the Territory Plan.
Ensure that the whole site has 50% permeable open space so that there is space to plant large trees for shade and cooling effect.	Any development will be required to provide adequate open space and planting in accordance with the relevant Territory Plan and Precinct Codes.
Undertake a traffic management study to assess the impact on traffic flow of the proposed re-developments.	An additional study on traffic flow will be undertaken and the results will be made available to the GNCA. Additionally, the specific requirements for site access will be assessed in full once the final proposal for the site is known.
Change the height of the 'towers' from six to four storeys.	Even though this development is 700 m from any shops, is not situated on a main transport corridor, and is surrounded by single storey detached houses, the government has refused to change the Precinct Code which permits six storeys on part of this site.

The Design Review Panel will review matters such as the consistency of proposed development with neighbourhood character, elements of the built form, functionality, build quality, public domain, landscape and sustainability. However, we are concerned that several of the solar access requirements are not mandatory and undefined criteria could be applied (see more in *Flaws in Planning Codes* in this Newsletter).

Flaws in the Planning Codes

The Territory Plan is the legislative framework that determines what can and cannot be built in the ACT. The Plan contains a number of codes. Each code has a number of elements and each element has one or more rules, and each rule has an associated criterion (unless the rule is mandatory). Rules provide quantitative, or definitive, controls. By contrast, criteria are chiefly qualitative in nature. Confusing isn't it?

The problem is that the qualitative criteria have precedence over the quantitative rules. Consequently, assessors/certifiers have only to say, for example, that a 10-meter-high building is consistent with the 'desired character' of the street and it will comply with the Territory Plan and be approved. An example of an element in the building code is shown below. The Rule (R5) is on the left and the Criterion (C5) is on the right.

1.4 Height of buildings (from the Single Dwelling Housing Developing Code)	
R5 Maximum <i>height of building</i> is: a) in RZ1, RZ2 and RZ3 – 8.5m b) in RZ4 – 12m.	C5 Buildings are consistent with the <i>desired character</i>

There are similar rules and criteria for solar access, building envelopes and set-backs. We have found several examples of the solar access rule being broken and the plans being approved – either by the government or a certifier.

The GNCA contends that the current rules are satisfactory and should all be mandatory. This would make the assessor's tasks easier and reduce the impact on neighbours. We believe it is crucial that the Government balances the needs of developers with the interests of existing neighbours, while adhering to the Territory Plan. The only way to do this is to try to persuade the government to simplify the codes and remove the criteria. We are continuously lobbying the government on this issue.

Trees and Open Spaces

Open spaces and our 'urban forests' are a vital part of Canberra's landscape and create the Garden City environment that we are all proud of. The trees contribute to the aesthetics of our city and have direct economic value as well as environmental benefits. We continue to actively encourage the government to plant and maintain trees throughout the Griffith Narrabundah area. This year we have been focusing on four areas:

Blaxland Park

Since Blaxland Park was gazetted in 2013, we have been encouraging the government to plant trees in the park. The plan is to have large deciduous trees at the southern end of the Park, near the Community Hall and eucalyptus trees at the northern end of the park near Blaxland Crescent.



(Left) A GNCA volunteer installing added protection for trees in Blaxland Park.

At the end of 2017, 36 new trees had been planted and we expect another 10 trees to be planted in autumn 2018. Using funds raised through our annual raffle, we have provided additional protection to ten trees in the park, to deter vandals and help the trees reach maturity.

Currently we are in talks with the government to establish a local group of volunteers to help maintain the park. If you are interested in volunteering please contact us.

Favenc Circle

Several trees in Favenc Circle (between Landsborough and Lindsay Streets) are dying. After petitioning by the GNCA, the government has recognised the challenge, and in Autumn 2018 is planning to plant 13 new trees in the circle. These will be mixed eucalypts and two large shade trees.

Griffith Oval No 1

When the old dilapidated shed on the oval was replaced by a new storage facility, it was decided to add three trees to the side of the new facility to maintain the heritage appearance of the oval. We consulted with the government on what species would be suitable as any new elms may be susceptible to the elm beetle, which is endemic throughout Canberra. Planting is expected to occur this autumn.

La Perouse Park

The Griffith Woodland Volunteer Group has started work on regenerating the open area between La Perouse Street and Jansz Crescent, informally named La Perouse Park. The Group has support from the government and the GNCA. Working bees to remove exotic plants and grasses from the park are being held; contact us if you would like to join in.



The Incinerator Story

Our last newsletter (September 2017) reported that Capital Recycling Solutions (CRS) had proposed the construction of a waste recycling facility, combined with an incinerator, in Ipswich Street in Fyshwick, about 500 metres from the nearest residences in Narrabundah. Following community protests about the health hazards of burning household waste, CRS has stated that it will not proceed with the proposal to build an incinerator. Nevertheless, the Scoping Document issued by the ACT Government remains valid until the end of 2018, and CRS can still submit an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) until then.

In January this year, the ACT Government issued a further Scoping Document (NI2018-27) that outlined a proposal by CRS to construct only a recycling facility at its Fyshwick site. We understand that CRS has submitted a draft EIS to the Government, as required by the Scoping Document, but it had not been released for public comment as at 18 April.

Preliminary concerns about the revised proposal to build only a recycling facility include:

- Regardless of any mitigative measures, putrescible household waste is likely to create unpleasant odours. Depending on wind direction, these are likely to affect the Fyshwick Markets, residents in Narrabundah and perhaps suburbs further afield.
- Because all garbage trucks currently delivering waste to Mugga Lane tip will be diverted to Fyshwick, traffic congestion will be highly likely in the area.
- The economies of scale and scope that CRS will be able to generate by combining its waste recycling and its metal recycling business will make it highly competitive in any future tender for waste management in the ACT. Constructing similar facilities with rail access would probably be uneconomic, leaving CRS with close to a natural monopoly. If

competition is curtailed, the future cost of waste management is likely to increase, imposing further strain on the ACT Budget. Rates would likely be increased in response.

- CRS appears to have adequate land available on-site to build an incinerator in the future. One can only speculate on whether its modified approach is simply a Trojan horse.

The GNCA will continue to monitor developments.

The Inner South Canberra Community Council

We participate in and support the Inner South Canberra Community Council, which represents eight separate Community Associations in Canberra's Inner South (of which GNCA is one). Have a look at the website <http://www.isccc.org.au/> to see its current activities. The ISCCC has a seat at the government's high-level Environment and Planning Forum and is a member of the Combined Community Councils of the ACT. It provides a representative voice to government for the whole of Canberra's Inner South and has been very active on many issues affecting this area. The ISCCC meets at 7 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Eastlake Club in Griffith and local residents are very welcome to attend and raise any issues of concern.

Eat, Drink and be Healthy in Griffith

Every year in February/March we hold a raffle to raise the funds required to operate the GNCA, so we can interact with local residents to discuss issues of concern, raise the profile of the GNCA and lobby the Government.

The theme for 2018 was **Eat, Drink and be Healthy in Griffith**. We received outstanding support from Griffith businesses and there was a total of 21 prizes to be won. Some of the funds raised will be allocated to maintain our local parklands. The prizes were drawn at the Griffith Shops on 17 March (see the image below).



From left to right, Dan from Gryphons with daughter, GNCA President Leo Dobes, Vice-President Venessa Tripp and Secretary Deborah Price, at the drawing of the prizes.

PRIZE DONORS	PRIZE WINNERS
Aubergine	Oggie Kolev
Gryphons 1	Kevin McGregor
Gryphons 2	Tui Davidson
Organic Energy	Mike Newman
Shop-Rite	Susan Flanagan
Your Discount Chemist	David Denham

Rubicon	Tony Webster
Body Temple	Bob Cotton
Essence Salon & Spa	Tony Firth
Soi VIII Thai	Miles Kupa
Mountain Creek Wholefoods	Robbie McGarvey
Loop Hairdressing	James Manning
Mackas Newsagency	Sonia Hathaway
Pro Thais Massage 1	Alan Pond
Pro Thais Massage 2	Dan @ Gryphons
The Hierophant 1	Robbie McGarvey
The Hierophant 2	Martin Dobes
The Hierophant 3	Juile Yend
InSync Institute	Susan Flanagan
Polit Bar 1	Ros Patterson
Polit Bar 2	Evert Bleys

Does anyone know Susan Flanagan? We could not track her down from the mobile phone number on the tickets. Please contact Paul Russell on 0412 614 966 if you think you can help