

Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association

PO Box 2147 Manuka ACT 2603

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NEWSLETTER

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Draft Neighbourhood Plans propose more multi-unit developments, townhouses & apartments

It is critical that residents of Griffith and Narrabundah have an input into the future of our neighbourhoods. The ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) released the Draft Neighbourhood Plans for Griffith and Narrabundah in mid July. You may have received a brochure from ACTPLA in your letter box. You can get copies of the Neighbourhood Plans from ACTPLA by calling them on 6205 0087 or you can view the plans on ACTPLA's website at www.actpla.act.gov.au/neighbourhood_plans. The period for public comment closes on **Monday, 23 August 2004**. Comments must be in writing and can be mailed to ACTPLA, Attention: Neighbourhood Planning in Griffith and Narrabundah, PO Box 1908, Canberra ACT 2601 or emailed to neighbourhoodplanning@act.gov.au

The Draft Neighbourhood Plans propose more multi-units, townhouses and apartments in higher density development areas known as A10 "Residential Core Areas"

- **What are the higher density A10 "Residential Core Areas"?**

Just over a year ago, the *Territory Plan* was changed to zone some areas near Town, Group and Local Centres as higher density redevelopment areas, designated as A10 areas. In Griffith and Narrabundah, some areas near Manuka, the Griffith Shops and Narrabundah Shops were designated A10. A10 zoning allows higher density residences that can be two stories, plus a habitable attic, plus basement parking, with a height limit of 8.5 metres. The plot ratio can be 50%. If only one dwelling directly fronts a street (as in a typical front and back dual occupancy), then the plot ratio is limited to 35%. The dwellings can be unit titled and sold separately. The ACTPLA brochure and the Draft Neighbourhood Plans show the location of the current and proposed A10 areas.

- **What changes are proposed in the Griffith and Narrabundah Neighbourhood Plans?**

The Neighbourhood Plans propose changes to the location of the A10 "Residential Core Areas". It is proposed that the A10 areas that currently exist to the West and South of the Griffith Shops could be deleted, but only if they are replaced by a new A10 area along both sides of Sturt Avenue, and a new A10 area in the vicinity of Captain Cook Crescent, Hann Street, Lockyer Street, Barrallier Street and Roe Street. The ACTPLA brochure shows these locations. However, if you want a full explanation for the "trade offs" that are proposed, you should refer to the Draft Griffith Neighbourhood Plan (in the maps/plans shown near the end of the plan).

- **Do you really want any A10 higher density development at all? Do you want more multi-units, townhouses and apartments?** Our Association and the vast majority of people consulted during the Neighbourhood Planning consultation period so far have said that we do not want any A10 areas at all.

- Griffith already has a very large amount of higher density redevelopment with less than 37% low density housing remaining, one of the lowest percentages of low density housing in all of Canberra. The small amount of low density housing that remains should be retained to maintain a diversity of housing choice.
- Other suburbs do not have any A10 at all, so it is perfectly reasonable for us to say that we do not want any A10 either. Turner, Reid, Braddon and Ainslie do not have any A10 areas. Regarding Turner, the Planning Minister has stated that the Turner Neighbourhood Plan does not include any A10 areas in Turner because they already have enough intensity of development.
- A10 higher density development with its increased plot ratio of 50% and unit titling will encourage the demolition of older housing stock, and speculative development. To maximize plot ratio, older solid brick homes will be demolished and replaced with two storied townhouses built side-by-side. It is very likely that new A10 development will have flat-roofs to maximize on the height limit. Boxy, flat-roofed buildings are out of character with the existing older brick homes with pitched, tiled roofs. We believe that A10 development will harm the streetscape qualities of our older suburbs, and cause additional traffic problems, parking problems and safety issues for children. In the near future our Association will be nominating all of the oldest areas of Griffith and Narrabundah to the ACT Heritage Places Register to hopefully give those areas the protections that they deserve.

- Prior to the changes to the *Territory Plan* that brought in A10, the older parts of Canberra, including most of Griffith and Narrabundah, were recognised as “Areas of Territorial Significance” and had some protections against inappropriate development. For example, dual occupancies were limited to a 35% plot ratio and two-story developments were only permissible if there was a direct visual relationship to an adjacent two-storey building. Most of the protections that previously existed were removed, and we want them back. If A10 is eliminated from Griffith, the protections that were given to “Areas of Territorial Significance” will be restored.
- It is fundamentally unfair to “trade off” or pit one area of the suburb against another area. Instead of sacrificing one area or one group of residents in order to benefit another, it is reasonable for us to ask for no A10 at all.
- A10 redevelopment in Griffith and Narrabundah is not going to increase housing affordability. The Government’s own data shows that new redevelopment has actually reduced affordability.
- **The wishes of local residents have so far been ignored**
The Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association has been opposed to any A10 development in the “Areas of Territorial Significance” for over two years. So far, all of our opposition has been ignored. ACTPLA maintains that

“there are certain outcomes the Government is committed to achieving, such as sustainability, affordability and catering for a diversity of lifestyle choices. The ACT Planning and Land Authority will ensure that the Plans are consistent with Government policy, the needs of the broader Canberra community and as much as possible, the desires of the current local residents.”

It appears that the wishes of the local community are last on the list.

The Griffith Neighbourhood Plan also proposes big changes to the Central Area around the Griffith Shops (Section 78)

- **Residential Care Accommodation on the old O’Connell Education Centre (OEC) site**
The Plan proposes that the site should be sold and redeveloped as a residential care accommodation facility. Our Association would support this proposal **only if** the primary purpose of the site is to provide nursing home beds, specifically “aged care homes” or “residential aged care facilities” with high and/or low level care beds, as defined by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. The site could also incorporate a small number of independent living units, but the number of independent living units should be strictly limited to the minimum number required to provide financial support to the nursing home. If it is determined that the site is not suitable for these uses then the future community uses of the site should be determined after extensive public consultation.
- **Additional development behind the Griffith Shops**
The Plan proposes “a community facility with medical suites and surface parking” in the area behind the Griffith Shops, taking part of Throsby Park near the playground. This proposal ignores the previous promise from the National Capital Development Authority that the Throsby Park area would remain as park land. What is going to happen to the very large trees that are on that site? Will more parts of Throsby Park be taken for additional parking?
- **Rezoning a large part of the open area next to the shops as Urban Open Space**
Excellent. Finally we are to have our open spaces formally recognised. This is also the subject of the newly released Draft Variation No. 165 to the *Territory Plan*, titled *Open Space Network*. It is currently open for comment, with the closing date of 3 September 2004. Please consider making a submission. Check the ACTPLA website for details.
- **A new Library? Is there really anything wrong with the existing one?**
A site for a possible new library has been designated immediately North of the Griffith shops. Why is there no funding in the budget, at least up to 2008, for a new library? What guarantees do we have that it will be built? Will the current Griffith Library be retained until a new library is up and running? How will parking be accommodated? Will it compete with parking for the Griffith Shops? Will even more open space be taken for additional parking?
- **Former Griffith Primary School (the site of the Griffith Library) to remain as a community facility**
Our Association supports the proposal to retain the site as a community facility. However, we have been urging that the buildings and site should become a South Canberra Community Centre which benefits the whole community by incorporating facilities such as the Griffith Library, a Community Hall, Meeting Rooms, a Senior Citizen’s Centre and Health Centre, Indoor Recreation facilities and arts and activities spaces.

Please make a submission to ACTPLA by Monday, 23 August 2004.

Comments must be in writing and can be mailed to ACTPLA, Attention: Neighbourhood Planning, PO Box 1908, Canberra ACT 2601 or by email to neighbourhoodplanning@act.gov.au Please provide a copy of your submission to our Association at our PO Box as shown in the banner.