



# Deakin Residents Association Inc.

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25 April 2018

Chief Planner  
National Capital Authority  
GPO Box 373  
Canberra ACT 2601

## **DEAKIN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION RESPONSE TO DRAFT AMENDMENT 89 (DA89)**

Dear Sir/Madam

The Deakin Residents' Association (DRA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on DA89.

The objects and principles of the Deakin Resident' Association are:

*“ to enhance the residential, suburban, social and environmental aspects of Deakin, consistent with garden city planning principles through participation in community discussion on and input to planning and land management in the ACT as it impacts on Deakin residents, including through advocacy to the ACT and Commonwealth Governments and advocacy to, and representation before, tribunals and courts*

You will recall that the DRA made an extensive submission on the April 2017 Issues Paper for the Deakin/Forrest Residential Precinct issued by the NCA prior to the publication of DA89. We do not plan to rehearse all these positions in this Submission. We note that the Issues Paper did not suggest that future development of the majority of the Deakin/Forrest Precinct should be limited to one dwelling per block. This is the priority issue for some Deakin residents in the Precinct.

The DRA appreciates that the NCA considers its decision will help preserve the 20th century Garden City planning concepts that the Griffins adopted in their design for Canberra. The DRA also supports the NCA's efforts to maintain the Griffins' vision for the area.

However the change from previous policy has caused considerable concern among some, but by no means all, residents in the affected Precinct in Deakin. We understand that some residents may have bought into the Precinct or have remained living in the zone on the assumption, given the previous policy, that they would have capacity redevelop their block or sell to a developer. DA89 would make this no longer possible, and these residents consider that this policy change would disadvantage them financially. There has also been concern that this policy change was not examined in the Issues Paper.

Other residents are concerned that the Precinct will lose the character that led to its special designation, if more intensive redevelopment is permitted. These residents value the Garden City concept and consider that large well-treed blocks make an important contribution to the character of the Precinct. These residents note with concern that some of the streets in the Precinct are narrow, making more intensive development problematic.

The DRA has long argued for Master Plan for Deakin that would cover the entire suburb including those areas in which the NCA has a primary responsibility. Currently uncoordinated, piecemeal and haphazard development is occurring in Deakin, threatening the Garden City status of our suburb, with negative traffic impacts and distortions to visual aspects of the suburb.

The DRA recognises that the NCA Precinct has special significance and has been concerned about previous unacceptable development in this Precinct — a concern that is shared by a number of residents in the Precinct. We appreciate that the Precinct's closeness to Parliament House and its design by the Griffins makes it a special area. We also appreciate that the NCA needs to take a long-term view of the Precinct, whereas individual residents may well have a shorter-term perspective.

In a recent meeting with community representatives, NCA CEO, Sally Barnes, stressed the importance of the national institutions and historically significant areas such as the Deakin/Forrest Precinct in promoting the National Capital and contributing to economic development through tourism. DRA supports this view as further justification of the need to enhance and protect the Griffin legacy. The Deakin/Forrest Precinct is a popular route for tourist buses and visitors to the capital. People will simply not be interested in visiting something which is just like anywhere else.

We agree with the NCA that there should be no more unacceptable multi-unit development and, other than on State Circle, there should be no further multistorey/multi-housing developments in the Precinct. We also agree that dual occupancies on smaller blocks in this Precinct should not be permitted.

However there may be a case for the NCA to consider allowing a few sensitively designed and located dual occupancies on some of the largest blocks in the Precinct. We understand that the size of residential blocks in the Precinct (other than diplomatic sites) ranges from 1050 sqm to 3832 sqm, with an average size of 1662 sqm. Some larger blocks also exist in the area adjacent to this Precinct. Subject to possible changes in ACT Government policy, some of these larger blocks could also become available for dual occupancy development. Under current ACT planning rules the minimum block size for dual occupancy in RZ2 zones is 700 sq metres. Given the special nature of the Forrest-Deakin Precinct, the DRA considers that the threshold block size for double occupancy should be much higher.

For example, one option for the Precinct is that blocks up to 1100 sq metres should be limited to a single dwelling, with blocks larger than this able to propose dual occupancies subject to strict controls. We also draw attention to some creative dual occupancy developments in the Precinct that we understand have been advised to the NCSA separately by a Deakin resident in the Precinct.

We were concerned to see that in the draft DA89 the soft landscaping requirement has been reduced from 40 per cent of the block (as proposed in the Issues Paper) to 35 per cent. In our view this is regrettable. If there is to be any additional development in the Precinct, the soft landscaping requirement should remain at 40 per cent of the block. There should be no change to the 0.4 plot ratio on individual blocks.

In summary, the DRA considers that consideration of our proposed minor modifications to DA89 regarding one dwelling per block could be a positive way forward. Coupled with observance of existing stringent conditions regarding future house and block developments, including no block amalgamations, this should satisfy the NCA aim of protecting and enhancing the Garden City concept and the Griffin legacy.

On another related matter the DRA is aware that the NCA has Precinct responsibility for matters affecting residential blocks and dwellings, and that responsibility for street scapes and nature strips, including street trees, rests with the ACT Government. In our earlier response to the Discussion Paper we referred to the many decaying and dying trees in the Precinct which have a negative impact on the overall visual outlook. There is a need for better coordination between the two levels of Government to overcome this problem.

Yours sincerely



John D Bell  
Vice-President