



# Deakin Residents Association Inc.

P.O Box 3110, Manuka, ACT 2603

Email: [secretary@deakinresidents.asn.au](mailto:secretary@deakinresidents.asn.au)

Web: [www.deakinresidents.asn.au](http://www.deakinresidents.asn.au)

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ACT Heritage, Environment and Planning Directorate  
ACT Government  
GPO Box 158  
CANBERRA ACT 2611

Dear Sir/Madam

## **Proposed Five Year ACT Heritage Strategy 2016-2021**

The Deakin Residents Association (DRA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed Five Year ACT Heritage Strategy 2016-2021 and to provide comments that may assist in guiding the formulation of the strategy.

### **Deakin background**

The objects of the DRA are:

- *to enhance the residential, suburban, social and environmental qualities 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.*

A key document for Deakin, which guides community expectations of development in Deakin, is the Deakin Neighbourhood Plan published by ACTPLA in 2003. This notes that Deakin is a 'unique residential suburb of Canberra, adjacent to the National Parliament and the Governor-General's Residence and accommodating the Prime Minister's Lodge'.

The Neighbourhood Plan, at its outset, outlines a 'Vision' for Deakin that states, among other things, that 'key historical sites, parks and other green space, including the natural 'flow' of Red Hill into the suburb, are recognized and maintained for the whole of Canberra and the Australian community'; and that 'in keeping with the Garden City concept, Deakin's Garden City is preserved and considered in all planning and vision for the suburb'.

The Third Goal of the Neighbourhood Plan is 'Deakin's natural and cultural heritage enhanced' and the four associated objectives for this are

- Reflect and reinforce Deakin's special location in the National Capital
- Retain and enhance the heritage space and places
- Recognize and protect the distinctive qualities of streets
- Conserve, enhance and ensure access to open spaces, bushland and recreational areas

The Neighbourhood Plan also lists a number of 'Deakin's heritage places' on the ACT Heritage Register. The current list is as below:

Status	Place	Location
2	Historic Timber Bus Shelters of the ACT (refer also: Ainslie, Forrest, Griffith, Narrabundah, Reid) <a href="#">Decision</a> See 'Ainslie' for Background Information	Class E: MacGregor St after Strickland Cr
R2	<a href="#">The Lodge (Prime Minister's Lodge)</a> <a href="#">Commonwealth Heritage List Place ID number 105452</a>	Section 3 Block 1
3	<a href="#">CCEGGS - Boarding House (408 Kb)</a>	Section 9 Block 2
3	<a href="#">10 Gawler Crescent (75 Kb)</a>	Section 9 Block 6
1	11 Northcote Crescent	Section 9 Block 8
3	<a href="#">Deakin Anticline (8.3 MB)</a>	Section 36 Block 9
1	Red Hill Rutidosis Site	Section 51 Block 41 (part) Section 78 Block 8 (part) (includes part of Strickland Cres. Road reserve)
R2	<a href="#">Royal Australian Mint</a> <a href="#">Commonwealth Heritage List Place ID number 106191</a>	Section 65 Block 1
1	44 Beauchamp Street	Section 59 Block 13
R1	4 Hotham Crescent	Section 6 Block 10
3	<a href="#">70 Dominion Circuit</a> (PDF 922Kb)	Section 7 Block 9
R1	13 Canterbury Crescent	Section 2 Block 1

In addition to the Neighbourhood Plan, and given its garden suburb status, the later Garden City Principles (published 2008) are directly relevant to Deakin.

### Heritage issues in Deakin

The DRA is very concerned that, notwithstanding paper commitments to the Garden City concept for Deakin and the Garden City Principles, both are being quickly eroded in Deakin through inappropriate development. Individual blocks are being leveled and trees demolished to be replaced by large site-covering structures, with impermeable external areas and gardens of low shrubs, grasses and bushes. If this continues, there will be a significant reduction in the significant (and heat-reducing) tree cover in the suburb, with a detrimental impact on the heritage values of Deakin. Of a particular concern are prospective and likely intensive developments in the RZ2 zones in Deakin that are damaging the streetscapes and transforming the garden nature of the suburb.

The DRA has argued strongly for the development of a Precinct Code for Deakin to constrain inappropriate development. This has not yet been achieved despite the DRA taking this issue to Ministers. Such a Code would help preserve the suburb's heritage and Garden City values. As for the Garden City Principles, the DRA has argued for the Principles to be strictly applied only to see them being overridden by developers and planning authorities keen to promote intensive development. The inter-face between heritage and development is fraught at any time, but in a suburb such as Deakin with its unique character, and national significance, providing the

environment around and adjacent to national institutions, its Garden City status needs to be preserved and enhanced not eroded as is currently occurring.

In line with the Burra Charter, both Federal and ACT heritage legislation recognise social values in heritage. In Deakin, social values are largely connected to its small parks and open spaces. They have great value to the local community and especially to community living adjacent to them. There is always a threat to these of inappropriate development. Most recently there has been a proposal for the private development of part of Latrobe Park. The Neighbourhood Plan notes Latrobe Park is 'a small community park and plays a very significant role in the neighbourhood. Groups which use the park as a playground for sport and for recreational activities include Canberra Girls Grammar Schools, Deakin Pre-School, the Scout Group, local residents and families'.

The open unfenced character of Latrobe Park is also the clearest example of the 'natural flow of Red Hill into the suburb' that is noted in the Neighbourhood Plan as part of Deakin's character, deserving of preservation as national heritage. In addition, Latrobe Park's origins have historical significance, going back to Walter Burley Griffin's 1918 plan for Canberra's Main Avenues (in this case Melbourne Avenue) to culminate in appropriately named parks (<http://www.tams.act.gov.au/parks-conservation/parks-and-reserves/find-a-park/urban-parks/latrobe-park>)

The pressure on precious open spaces across the inner south of Canberra will increase with planned intensive development and their social value and heritage significance will increase. There is a clear need, to focus on preserving the heritage and social value of such areas in an increasingly pressured development environment.

### **The proposed heritage strategy**

The DRA would want to see reference made in the five Year ACT Heritage Strategy to the unique status and heritage significance of Deakin and a strong commitment to the preservation of its heritage values, including social values associated with its open spaces and parks. We would also want to see a strengthening of and significantly greater emphasis on the implementation of the Garden City Principles in the planning regime, rather than the sliding away that is happening in the face of pressures for development. We also look forward to the development of a Deakin Precinct Code that will assist in preserving Deakin's heritage status.

### **Next steps**

We look forward to seeing and commenting on the draft of the Five Year ACT Heritage Strategy. We hope that this will have in it clear cut objectives and timelines and measurable indicators to allow the assessment of its success.

Yours sincerely



John Bell  
President