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THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES



Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital
and External Territories
Department of the House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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INQUIRY INTO THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AUTHORITY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission as a private individual to this important inquiry into the role of the National Capital Authority (NCA).
- 1.2 I have prepared this submission in my capacity as Professor of Landscape Architecture and Director of the Urban Development & Design Program at the University of New South Wales, drawing upon my long research interest in the planning and design of Canberra.
- 1.3 I also serve as President of the Walter Burley Griffin Society, Inc. and fully support the Society's submission to this Inquiry, dated 11 April 2008.
- 1.4 The recommendations of the Walter Burley Griffin Society, Inc. are included as Appendix 2 to this submission
- 1.5 The following material supplements the Society's submission from an individual perspective, and provides specific, documented examples of the NCA's performance outlined in the Society's submission. This material is organised as follows:

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2.0 Overview

- 2.1 This submission comprises three principal sections:
- a review of the relationship between the Commonwealth Government and the ACT Government with respect to the planning, design and management of the Australian Capital Territory (Section 3.0);
 - a review of the NCA's record with respect to Design Standards in Areas of National Significance (Section 4.0);
 - a Case Study of the application of the NCA's Design Standards with respect to the highly controversial Extensions to the National Gallery of Australia, evaluated against the provisions of *The National Capital Plan* (Appendix 3).
- 2.2 The review of the relationship between the Commonwealth Government and the ACT Government, addresses Terms of Reference (a) and (d, taken together). Based on this analysis, I make the following recommendations:
- **Recommendation 1. Prior to any decision on the role of the NCA, there must be a thorough review of the 'costs of Canberra' that arise from the city's role and status as the National Capital and Seat of Government. Starting from the principle that Canberra must be an inspiration to the nation in terms of environmental sustainability, social equity and design excellence, Commonwealth-ACT transfers must fully cover (1) the rateable value of Commonwealth land; (2) the environmental and design quality of the city inherited from the Commonwealth in 1988; and (3) the environmental and design quality needed for Canberra to fulfill its role as the capital of Australia in the 21st century.**
 - **Recommendation 2. A comprehensive review of the legislative basis for the planning, design and management of the National Capital must be undertaken to create an integrated Commonwealth/ACT Planning Commission.**
- 2.3 The review of the NCA's record with respect to Design Standards in Areas of National Significance, addresses Terms of Reference (b) and (c), taken together.
- 2.4 Based on this analysis, I first conclude that two major National Projects, initiated by the Howard Government and overseen by the NCA are fundamentally flawed, and make the following recommendations:

- **Recommendation 3. Due to faulty decision-making by the NCA and other Commonwealth entities, work on the extensions to the National Gallery of Australia should be stopped and a full inquiry instituted into the design of this project.**
- **Recommendation 4. Location of the new ASIO/ONA Headquarters on Section 49, Constitution Avenue was a very bad idea of the Howard Government. Work on the design of the ASIO/ONA Headquarters should be stopped and a full inquiry instituted into the siting of this project, assuming it is still needed given 2008 Budget realities.**

2.5 I conclude that the disappointing record of the NCA with respect to the siting and design of National Public Works is a measure of its uncertain standing in the Commonwealth bureaucracy; its vulnerability to political whim; and its inability to embrace an open exchange of ideas with the broader community.

2.6 I suggest that the way forward is to end the in-house culture, and to balance the role of a new, integrated Planning Commission for the ACT (Recommendation 2, above) with two new bodies: (1) an Office of the Commonwealth Architect, and (2) an eminent Design Advisory Panel. I therefore make the following recommendation:

- **Recommendation 5. The four critical phases in the procurement of National Public Works need to be addressed by separate entities:**
 - **project inception, scoping, brief preparation, competition conditions, advice on selection of consultants etc by a new organisation, the Office of the Commonwealth Architect, engaged by all Commonwealth Departments and Statutory Authorities;**
 - **project approval by the proposed National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), following public consultation and an open inquiry;**
 - **design advice to the NCPC as part of the approval process by an eminent Design Advisory Panel, whose decisions are made public;**
 - **project management, overseen by the Office of the Commonwealth Architect.**

2.7 The solution to the Canberra dilemma resides in establishing (1) a sound financial basis for the presence of the Commonwealth Government in the ACT; (2) an integrated National Capital Planning Commission; (3) an Office of the Commonwealth Architect; (4) a Design Advisory Panel – and (5) an open, transparent and fully-consultative planning process, which will engage the citizens of Canberra and the citizens of Australia.

3.0 Commonwealth / Australian Capital Territory Relationship

3.1 Terms of Reference (a) and (d):

- (a) The administration of the National Capital Plan with particular emphasis on the reduction of red tape and duplication of municipal and local planning functions, the jurisdiction of ACT spatial policy and harmonisation of planning systems;**
- (d) Opportunities to ensure cooperation with the ACT planning authority and increased engagement with the Canberra community.**

3.2 Taken together, Terms of Reference (a) and (d) raise the issue of the relationship between the Commonwealth and the Australian Capital Territory that has developed since the implementation of ACT self-government in 1988/1989.

3.3 The Rudd Government has made a key policy decision in placing responsibility for the National Capital Authority in the Attorney-General's Department, under the Minister for Home Affairs.

3.4 This is the first time since Federation that the planning of Canberra has been placed within the Attorney-General's Department.

3.5 The move highlights the fact that the enabling legislation, funding arrangements and division of responsibilities between the Commonwealth Government and the ACT Government, which were put in place twenty years ago, have proved to be dysfunctional.

3.6 With respect to the Australian Capital Territory, the Attorney-General's Department is charged with the responsibility of providing strategic policy advice in relation to the Commonwealth's interests in the ACT; and managing the Commonwealth's residual responsibilities for the ACT.

3.7 The Department's role includes the development of policy and legislation to maintain an effective system of self-government in the ACT ; and the provision of policy and legislative advice on the role of the Commonwealth in the planning of the National Capital.¹

3.8 This is an historic opportunity to undertake legislative review and reform at the highest level to undo the mistakes of the past.

¹ Australian Government Attorney-General's Department website – Territories of Australia/Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory, http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/TerritoriesofAustralia_AustralianCapitalTerritoryandNorthernTerritory_AustralianCapitalTerritoryandNorthernTerritory - accessed 11 April 2008.

- 3.9 Canberra, a city of 340,000 people, has two planning authorities – the National Capital Authority (NCA) and the ACT Planning & Land Authority (ACTPLA) – which do not have the capacity to plan the city.
- 3.10 The combined failure of the NCA and ACTPLA is manifest in countless examples across Canberra but nowhere more clearly than in the chaos created by the Canberra Airport Development²- a public policy debacle whereby the sale of Canberra Airport for \$66.5 million³ and subsequent development of the site as a business park and retail outlet has necessitated taxpayer-funded upgrades of the airport access roads to the tune of \$126.5 million.⁴
- 3.11 However, the failure of the planning authorities only represents in microcosm the failure of the Commonwealth and ACT governments with respect to Canberra, manifest across many areas of civic responsibility but nowhere more tragically and comprehensively than in the 2003 Bushfire Disaster.
- 3.12 This event had its origins in the fundamental misallocation of resources at the time of the self-government, whereby a National Government became responsible for a City Park and a City Government became responsible for a National Park.⁵
- 3.13 For fifteen years, the National Government was fooling around with rose gardens while the ACT Government was failing to manage its forests – and the people of Canberra paid a truly terrible price.
- 3.14 The allocation of resources is the structural issue at the centre of the Canberra dilemma.

² 'NCA blameless; traffic fix starts,' *City News*, 6 March 2008, p.6.

³ 'New operator for Canberra Airport,' Joint Media Release, the Hon. John Fahey MP, Minister for Finance & Administration and the Hon. Mark Vaile MP, Minister for Transport & Regional Development, 20 March 1998, http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/1998/mr_1798_joint.html - accessed 2 July 2007.

⁴ This total comprises \$55 million of public funds for the Canberra Airport transport corridor; \$58.5 million for grade separation of the Parkes Way/Kings Avenue intersection plus Constitution Avenue upgrade; and \$13 million for Fairbairn Avenue duplication and initial Morshead Drive upgrade, see: 'Federal Labor commits \$30 million to upgrade Canberra Airport transport corridor,' Media Release: Martin Ferguson MP, Shadow Minister for Transport, Roads & Tourism, 12 October 2007, http://www.martinferguson.com.au/templates/martin_ferguson.aspx?pageID=3879 - accessed 11 April 2008; 'Canberra's roads: building the Griffin Legacy,' Media Release: the Hon. Jim Lloyd MP, Minister for Local Government, Territories & Roads, 8 May 2007, http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/departments/statements/2007_2008/media/016trs.aspx - accessed 11 April 2008; ACT Government 2000-2001 Budget: Revenue and Forward Estimates, Budget Paper 3, Table 5.4.1 Traffic Congestion & Road Safety Program.

⁵ James Weirick, 'The Canberra Bushfires: the complexity of a disaster,' *BE*, no.11, May 2003, pp.5-6.

- 3.15 Since granting self-government to the ACT, the Commonwealth has done everything to retreat from its responsibilities; and the ACT Government has struggled to find the resources to run the city it has inherited.
- 3.16 In the process, the character and quality of Canberra has been compromised.
- 3.17 The ACT Government has become dependent on revenues from land development totalling more than \$100 million per year.⁶ As a consequence, it is in the business of promoting land development wherever it can.
- 3.18 In part, this role has been forced upon it by the presence of the Commonwealth Government in the ACT and the constitutional constraint on the ACT Government to tax the Commonwealth. A high proportion of urban land in Canberra is owned or controlled by the Commonwealth – and is exempt from rates and taxes.
- 3.19 The compensation which the ACT Government receives from the Grants Commission for this fundamental reality through Special Purpose Payments is inconsequential – in 2006-2007, these payments amounted to \$32.9 million, a mere 1% of ACT Revenues.⁷
- 3.20 In the most recent review of the ‘National Capital Factors’, which determine the amount of these Special Purpose Payments, the ACT Government argued for an increase of \$75 million. The Commonwealth Grants Commission agreed to an increase of \$5 million.⁸
- 3.21 This ‘anti-Canberra’ policy by the Commonwealth Government has driven the ACT into the land development business in a big way.
- 3.22 In 2004, the ACT Government prepared *The Canberra Spatial Plan* as a blueprint for residential intensification and broadacre development across the Territory. For the past four years, the ACT Government has been proceeding on the basis of this plan, although as a metro strategy it has no statutory force and is inconsistent with *The National Capital Plan*.

⁶ ‘Minister outlines latest land strategies,’ Media Release: Simon Corbell MLA, Minister for Health & Planning, 31 May 2005, <http://www.chiefminister.act.gov.au/media.asp?media=268§ion=52&title=media&id=52> - accessed 11 April 2008; see also, ACT Government 2005-2006 Budget: Revenue and Forward Estimates, Budget Paper 3, Table 4.8.

⁷ For the SPP payments (*ACT National Capital Influences and Assistance for Water & Sewage*) see, ACT Government, *Submission to the Productivity Commission’s Issues Paper (May 2007)*, ‘Assessing Local Government Revenue Raising Capacity’, July 2007, p.14; for total ACT Revenue, see ACT Government 2006-2007 Budget, *Budget at a Glance*, Budget Paper 2, p.38.

⁸ Commonwealth Grants Commission, *National Capital Factors*, Draft Assessment Paper CGC2003/71, The Commission, Canberra, August 2003, Table 2.

- 3.23 As a large land owner in inner Canberra, the ACT Government supported the National Capital Authority in its poorly conceived scheme to develop the symbolic centre of Canberra (the so-called Griffin Legacy Amendments) - even though the over-development of inner Canberra has already achieved intolerable levels of traffic congestion, and new concentrations of commercial and residential development around Civic threaten the value and viability of centres in other parts of the ACT.⁹
- 3.24 The mismatch between Commonwealth and ACT endeavours occurs at every level. The Griffin Legacy Amendments to the National Capital Plan simultaneously permit large-scale urban development on National Land without any right of appeal, and on Territory Land with the right of appeal.
- 3.25 Similar anomalies occur with heritage protection and the procurement of National Public Works.
- 3.26 As recently stated by Dr Michael Pearson, Chairman of the ACT Heritage Council, heritage items of local significance on Designated Lands that are not owned by the Commonwealth – such as the Albert Hall, and many other places – effectively have no heritage protection under the combined provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*.¹⁰
- 3.27 Due to the provisions of the *Parliament Act 1974*, major public works in the Parliamentary Triangle north of the lake are subject to public scrutiny by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works – but not major works south of the lake.
- 3.28 As a consequence, the small East Building of the Australian War Memorial - budgeted at \$11.6 million, sited in accordance with an approved master plan and utterly uncontroversial – was submitted to a full public inquiry. The large-scale extension to the National Gallery of Australia – budgeted at \$92.9 million, sited in defiance of the NCA Parliamentary Zone Plan and highly controversial – was submitted to no public inquiry.¹¹

⁹ The inadequacy of the Griffin Legacy Amendments, as submitted for approval by the NCA in 2006, is further discussed in Walter Burley Griffin Society, Statement for Members of the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital & External Territories, Roundtable Public Hearing, *Griffin Legacy Amendments 56, 59, 60 and 61 to the National Capital Plan*, Parliament House, Canberra, 23 February 2007, par. 2.4 - 2.9.

¹⁰ Michael Pearson, 'Complexities increase danger of ACT heritage ghetto,' *Canberra Times*, 11 April 2007.

¹¹ Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, *New East Building for the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, ACT*, December 2004; National Capital Authority, *Annual Report 2006-2007*, p.33 – for further discussion of the National Gallery Extension, see Appendix 3 to this submission.

- 3.29 The fundamental planning legislation of the ACT, the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*, was prepared before the concept of Sustainable Development was widely understood, much less adopted.¹² The NCA has still not caught up with Sustainable Development. It is not mentioned in the Vision, Mission, Goals or Values of the NCA – nor in its one-page Environmental Policy, adopted in 2002.¹³
- 3.30 In contrast, the ACT Government has embraced the concept of Sustainable Development in creative and effective ways from environmental management and environmental design to support for the nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and establishment of the Office of the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability & the Environment.
- 3.31 It is, of course, absurd that environmental sustainability is embraced at the Territory level but not at the Commonwealth level.
- 3.32 The totally dysfunctional relationship between the Commonwealth and ACT Governments across so many areas of responsibility demands a comprehensive review of the financial and legislative arrangements that were put in place 20 years ago.
- 3.33 The financial arrangements are fundamental to good governance of the ACT, underpinning the recurrent costs of the National Capital; the scale, timing and spatial extent of the urban development program; and the quality of the public works program.
- 3.34 Recommendation 1. Prior to any decision on the role of the NCA, there must be a thorough review of the ‘costs of Canberra’ that arise from the city’s role and status as the National Capital and Seat of Government. Starting from the principle that Canberra must be an inspiration to the nation in terms of environmental sustainability, social equity and design excellence, Commonwealth-ACT transfers must fully cover (1) the rateable value of Commonwealth land; (2) the environmental and design quality of the city inherited from the Commonwealth in 1988; and (3) the environmental and design quality needed for Canberra to fulfill its role as the capital of Australia in the 21st century.**
- 3.35 The legislative arrangements for the planning, design and management of the National Capital, which were cobbled together in the late 1980s to drive the ACT to self-government in the face of community opposition and bureaucratic

¹² The Sustainable Development movement is generally considered to date from the release of the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment & Development, *Our Common Future*.

¹³ NCA website: <http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au> - accessed 11 April 2008. One goal mentions a ‘sustainable planning framework’, which seems to refer more to self-perpetuation than a commitment to the planet.

prevarication, have failed for one simple reason – they were based on the proposition that Commonwealth and Territory planning responsibilities had to be divided.

- 3.36 The result - a two-tier planning system in which the citizens of the city have had no influence on the functions of the National Capital, and the National Government has had no interest in the citizens of the city.
- 3.37 The solution is not further division, relegating the citizens of the city to the shambles of a 'Native Quarter', with the National Government retreating to a 'Forbidden City' within the Parliamentary Triangle.
- 3.38 The solution is effective integration, in which the Commonwealth Government and the ACT Government share responsibility for the planning, design and management of the National Capital.
- 3.39 Recommendation 2. A comprehensive review of the legislative basis for the planning, design and management of the National Capital must be undertaken to create an integrated Commonwealth/ACT Planning Commission.**
- 3.40 My preferred model – a seven or nine member Commission, comprising an even number of Commonwealth Government and ACT Government representatives, chaired by an independent Sustainability Commissioner jointly funded by both Governments.

4.0 Design Standards in Areas of National Significance

4.1 Terms of Reference (b) and (c):

(b) Whether the governance arrangements for the NCA provide a sufficient balance between the independence of the Authority's planning decisions and its accountability for its operations;

(c) The appropriate level of oversight required to achieve the highest standards in design for areas of national significance.

4.2 Taken together, Terms of Reference (b) and (c) raise the issue of the National Capital Authority's capacity 'to achieve the highest standards in design for areas of national significance'; and the accountability of the Authority for its design decisions.

- 4.3 Throughout its existence, the National Capital Planning Authority/National Capital Authority has struggled to come anywhere close to the design achievement of the National Capital Development Commission, 1958-1988.
- 4.4 In part, this has resulted from a comparative lack of interest in Canberra by successive Commonwealth Governments, once the New and Permanent Parliament House was completed in 1988.
- 4.5 In this indifferent, if not hostile political environment, the NCA has managed some notable achievements, including the creation of permanent homes for the National Museum of Australia and the National Portrait Gallery; re-establishment of the National Archives in the Parliamentary Zone; and the addition of a substantial wing to the Australian War Memorial.
- 4.6 However, the design quality of these works has been affected by totally inadequate budgets, reflected in the drastic reduction from the final cost of the New and Permanent Parliament House (a still-astonishing \$1,076 million in 1989 dollars)¹⁴ to the budget appropriations for the National Museum of Australia (\$151.9 million in 1997)¹⁵ and the National Portrait Gallery (\$73.6 million in 2005).¹⁶
- 4.7 Design quality of National Public Works in Canberra has been further affected by the inherent contradiction within the NCA that it is the approvals authority for the projects it initiates.
- 4.8 Not surprisingly, this has created a 'Masters of the Universe' corporate culture, which has no place for informed, outside critique or community concerns.¹⁷
- 4.9 The 'unaccountability' of the NCA became obvious to the people of Canberra in the 2007 Albert Hall dispute, when a deeply-loved auditorium from the 1920s – the 'town hall' of the city – was threatened with inappropriate urban development. The Canberra community mobilised in response.¹⁸**
- 4.10 This issue highlighted a sad fact about the NCA that for all its apparent capability, it does not understand Canberra.**

¹⁴ Parliament House Construction Authority, *Project Parliament: the management experience*, The Authority, Canberra, 1990, p.64.

¹⁵ Joint Standing Committee on Public Works, *Report relating to the proposed new facilities for the National Museum of Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies*, 1998, p.88.

¹⁶ 'National Portrait Gallery design competition winner announced,' Joint Media Release: Senator the Hon. Rod Kemp, Minister for the Arts & Sport and the Hon. Dr Sharman Stone MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance & Administration, 7 December 2005, <http://www.stateart.com.au/sota/news/default.asp?fid=3937> - accessed 11 April 2008.

¹⁷ 'NCA rebuked for arrogance,' *Canberra Times*, 23 March 2007.

¹⁸ NCA, *National Capital Plan Draft Amendment 53 – Alfred Hall Precinct*, February 2007; Albert Hall Public Meeting, 27 May 2007, Minutes, http://www.ouralberthall.com/pdf/Albert_Hall_Public_Meeting_24%20May_Minutes_Final.pdf - accessed 11 April 2008.

- 4.11 Indeed, in the provision of National Public Works over the past 20 years, the NCA has managed to get the siting and design of these works completely wrong.
- 4.12 The National Museum of Australia is essentially a windowless box overlooking Lake Burley Griffin on the most beautiful site in the city, the Acton Peninsula – a profound mismatch of program and place.
- 4.13 The location of the National Archives in East Block has historical resonance but it is isolated from all urban activity and drastically reduced in scale and significance from the NCDC project for this all-important record of Australia, which was to have been built next to the National Library.
- 4.14 The National Library, our greatest institution from the NCDC/Menzies years, proclaims its cultural role and presence in the city through a commanding classicism, which the NCA has managed to demean and trivialise through approved works to the forecourt approach.
- 4.15 The National Portrait Gallery was poorly scoped and totally underfunded as a national project located on the central axis of the city; work started on a site that the NCA did not own – the land of the High Court of Australia – and the building had to be re-sited; procurement of this project through the Property division of the Department of Finance has compromised the design quality and environmental sustainability of the competition-winning scheme from the outset.¹⁹
- 4.16 Commonwealth Place, conceived as a ‘Place of the People’ which would bring activity to the lakefront, was built on a site separated from the water by an unnecessary roadway that has been re-configured as a ‘tank-trap’ traffic calming device in a way that compromises the elegance of the original design – and is wrongly attributed to the original designers of the project, Durbach Block.²⁰
- 4.17 Reconciliation Place was designed with a central mound that foreshortened the axial cut of Commonwealth Place, and thereby blocked the key concept of the Durbach Block scheme, the vista from the waterfront to Parliament House. The NCA thus built two schemes at the same time which contradict each other: Reconciliation Place is not reconciled with the ‘Place of the People’.
- 4.18 The extensions to the National Gallery of Australia – the largest, most prominent and most ill-conceived additions to a national institution in the Parliamentary Triangle – have been appallingly managed by the NCA from the initial competition in 1999 to date.

¹⁹ Information provided by the architect of the project, Richard Johnson MBE FRAIA, Principal of Johnson Pilton Walker and 2008 RAIA Gold Medallist, pers. comm., 16 April 2008.

²⁰ NCA, *Design Quality in the Capital*, The Authority, Canberra, pp.13-14.

- 4.19 The scheme for the NGA South Entrance and Indigenous Australian Galleries is not compatible with *The National Capital Plan*, for the reasons set out in my submission to the NCA dated 25 June 2007 (copy attached as Appendix 3 to this submission). This scheme should never have been approved.
- 4.20 Of course, the NCA approvals process is entirely in-house, with no provision for public consultation and public comment, so this submission was ignored.
- 4.21 Initial site works have begun. The Autumn Garden of the Sculpture Garden has been bulldozed for a carpark. The Prototype Building – constructed to test the spaces and heights of the galleries in association with leading artists of the day, such as Fred Williams and Leonard French, has been demolished.
- 4.22 The Minister for the Environment in the Howard Government, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull agreed to place the High Court/National Gallery Precinct on the National Heritage List on 19 February 2007²¹ – but did not gazette this decision until 23 November 2007.²² In those vital nine months, the current works were approved, without a heritage inquiry.²³
- 4.23 This cynical delay and manipulation of the decision process rendered the highest level of heritage protection in Australia worthless, and resulted in alterations and additions, which have already done great damage to the fabric and setting of the heritage item. If they proceed further, these works will irredeemably compromise the integrity of the National Gallery of Australia.
- 4.24 Support for this project by the NCA must be recognised as a very great error of judgement.
- 4.25 Recommendation 3. Due to faulty decision-making by the NCA and other Commonwealth entities, work on the extensions to the National Gallery of Australia should be stopped and a full inquiry instituted into the design of this project.**

²¹ Letter, Dr Robert Bruce, Director, Heritage Information Section, Department of the Environment & Water Resources – General Manager, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 19 February 2007, Reference no.2004/04327.

²² Australian Heritage Database, High Court-National Gallery Precinct, National Heritage Listing, Place ID105745, 23 November 2007, http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;search=place_name%3Dnational%2520gallery%2520of%2520australia%3Bstate%3DACT%3Bkeyword_PD%3Don%3Bkeyword_SS%3Don%3Bkeyword_PH%3Don%3Blatitude_1dir%3DS%3Blongitude_1dir%3DE%3Blongitude_2dir%3DE%3Blatitude_2dir%3DS%3Binregion%3Dpart;place_id=105745 - accessed 11 April 2008.

²³ The National Gallery was assessed as an item on the subsidiary Commonwealth Heritage List – not the all-important National Heritage List – see letter, Ms Alex Rankin, First Assistant Secretary, Approvals & Wildlife Division, Department of Environment & Water Resources – Peter Rigg, Partner, Deacons, 18 September 2007, ‘Statement of Reasons for Decision on Referral, Upgrade, National Gallery of Australia (EPBC 2007/3335)’, par. 14; for approval of the works, see *Senate Journal*, 21 June 2007, item 24.

- 4.26 The NCA's record for wrong decisions on public works extends to the major bureaucratic buildings of the last 20 years.
- 4.27 The 1996 R.G. Casey Building, headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT) was built in the suburb Barton, not on the central axis of the National Capital on a site of similar prominence to the J.G. Gorton Building, which it previously occupied. DFAT clearly should have remained in the Parliamentary Zone given the national and international significance of this premier policy Department. The Parliamentary Zone would, in turn, have benefited from more activity, relevance and intensity generated by its considerable workforce. The J.G. Casey Building in Barton makes no contribution to the prestige and significance of Canberra. Quite the reverse – it is built in a peculiarly ponderous style, complete with red tile roofs, which mimic and trivialise the red-tile roofs of Parliament House.
- 4.28 The reconstruction of the Russell Offices replaced the modernist and somewhat heroic grouping of slab blocks created by the NCDC in the 1950s/1960s with the beginnings of a 'New Urbanist' precinct of street-defining offices. However, the combination of Defence monoculture – not vibrant, mixed use urban life – and a group of bland buildings, has produced a pathetic parody of an urban quarter at this key location in the Parliamentary Triangle.
- 4.29 The Russell Precinct clearly needs more uses, more activities. Fully serviced lots stand empty on re-engineered streets. Yet the biggest Defence-related project of recent years, the new ASIO Headquarters, has not been located in the Russell complex. Plans are well-advanced to build the ASIO Headquarters at the worst possible location in Canberra for a spy agency, Constitution Avenue.
- 4.30 The project, announced in May 2006,²⁴ comprises a new central office for the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and the Office of National Assessments (ONA) located on Section 49, Parkes²⁵ - a 300m long site between Constitution Avenue and Parkes Way, diagonally opposite the southern entrance to Blamey Crescent, Campbell and overlooking Kings Park.
- 4.31 The NCA prepared urban design guidelines for this site in May 2006.²⁶
- 4.32 The ASIO/ONA project has proceeded without any public consultation. In 2006, the NCA spent months undertaking full consultation with the residents of Campbell on the location of a toilet block at the western gateway to their

²⁴ 'Budget funds enhanced resourcing for ASIO,' Media Release: the Hon. Philip Ruddock MP, Attorney-General, 9 May 2006.

²⁵ 'Overview of the Section 49 Office Project Branch,' Department of Finance & Deregulation website: http://www.finance.gov.au/property/section_49_office_project_bran.html - accessed 11 April 2008.

²⁶ NCA, *Annual Report, 2005-2006*, p.27.

suburb.²⁷ There has been no consultation with the residents of Campbell on the location of a potential terrorist target at the southern gateway to their suburb.

4.33 Recommendation 4. Location of the new ASIO/ONA Headquarters on Section 49, Constitution Avenue was a very bad idea of the Howard Government. Work on the design of the ASIO/ONA Headquarters should be stopped and a full inquiry instituted into the siting of this project, assuming it is still needed given 2008 Budget realities.

4.34 The disappointing record of the NCA with respect to the siting and design of National Public Works is a measure of its uncertain standing in the Commonwealth bureaucracy; its vulnerability to political whim; and its inability to embrace an open exchange of ideas with the broader community.

4.35 If it had addressed the latter, as it started to do with the historical research phase of the Griffin Legacy Project, the NCA would have built credibility and respect to empower it as an organisation.

4.36 Instead, the in-house culture has relied on advertising spin to project empty rhetoric.

4.37 This suggests that the way forward is to end the in-house culture, and to balance the role of a new, integrated Planning Commission for the ACT (Recommendation 2, above) with two new bodies: (1) an Office of the Commonwealth Architect, modeled on the highly successful Office of the Victorian Government Architect, located at the highest level of strategic policy advice in the Victorian Government, the Department of Premier & Cabinet²⁸; and (2) an eminent Design Advisory Panel, established with the presence and prestige of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts in Washington, D.C., which gives expert advice to the President, Congress and Federal Agencies 'to preserve the dignity' of the capital of the United States.²⁹

4.38 Recommendation 5. The four critical phases in the procurement of National Public Works need to be addressed by separate entities:

- **project inception, scoping, brief preparation, competition conditions, advice on selection of consultants etc by a new organisation, the Office of the Commonwealth Architect, engaged by all Commonwealth Departments and Statutory Authorities;**

²⁷ Purdon Associates, *Consultation Report: Anzac Parade Visitor Amenities*, Report to the National Capital Authority, The Consultants, Canberra, November 2006.

²⁸ Victorian Government Architect website:

<http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/CA256D8000265E1A/OrigDoc/~64FCAE108A8F69D4CA2572F4000A9C49?OpenDocument&1=10-Listing~&2=-Areas+of+responsibility~&3=0-The+Office+of+the+Victorian+Government+Architect~> - accessed 11 April 2008.

²⁹ U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C. website: <http://www.cfa.gov/> - accessed 11 April 2008.

- **project approval by the proposed National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), following public consultation and an open inquiry;**
- **design advice to the NCPC as part of the approval process by an eminent Design Advisory Panel, whose decisions are made public;**
- **project management, overseen by the Office of the Commonwealth Architect.**

4.39 At the scale of planning and urban design, the in-house culture of project initiation and approval at the NCA produced the Griffin Legacy Amendments, which were issued for approval without any supporting documentation.

4.40 As the Walter Burley Griffin Society pointed out at the Roundtable convened by the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital & External Territories in February 2007, large-scale urban development in the symbolic center of Canberra was put forward without any background studies or assessment reports, such as:

- the environmental impact of the proposals;
- the heritage impact of the proposals;
- the visual impact of the proposals with respect to major views and vistas in Canberra, the relationship with Parliament House and national institutions, the loss of substantial components of the existing tree canopy etc;
- the traffic and transport implications of major changes to the motorways, distributor roads and CBD intersections throughout Central Canberra from the airport approach at Pialligo to the Tuggeranong Freeway at Acton; and the increase in density along major urban arterials;
- the land use reality of the scheme, i.e. the type and area of land uses within the new subdivided estate;
- the demographic implications of the proposal, i.e. the number of new residents and new jobs proposed for Central Canberra;
- the implications of this new concentration of people and employment in Central Canberra on the rest of Canberra in terms of economic development, property values, employment distribution, retail activity, community facilities, public transport etc.
- the pattern and extent of Federal land and Territory land within the scheme, and the effect of this pattern on land release, phasing, timing, infrastructure provision etc.
- the market viability of the proposals, in terms of population growth in Canberra, the demographic profile of the Canberra community and existing patterns of commercial and residential investment throughout the Canberra-Queanbeyan region;
- the cost and funding of the proposals;
- the scale and timing of public sector investment.

- 4.41 After the Roundtable, the NCA began to make available some of the consultants' reports on which key planning decisions had been made.
- 4.42 Not surprisingly, these studies proved to be far from adequate. For example, an analysis the impact of large-scale urban development along Constitution Avenue on the heritage values of the Parliament House Vista, commissioned as part of Draft Amendment 60 to the National Capital Plan, did not diagram, model or analyse the height of the new wall of buildings along the base of the Parliamentary Triangle.
- 4.43 This report commented:
- The eastern side of the Vista, from Russell to Anzac Parade, will be particularly sensitive to DA 60 developments due to the removal of a proportion of trees on the median strip and the insertion of building masses to the north of Parkes Way onto space that has previously provided a visual extension to Kings Park. Attention to the architectural design, texture and colour of new buildings, and landscape design to ensure new plantings are incorporated, will be important for any development in this more visible part of the Vista.³⁰
- 4.44 Yet the report concluded that the proposal would have 'no impact' on the historic, aesthetic, technical, social or associative values of the Parliament House Vista. DA60 was approved.
- 4.45 A heritage report on the proposal to re-zone public open space for development on State Circle, Yarralumla, commissioned as part of Draft Amendment 66 to the National Capital Plan, managed to construct a 4000-word history of Capital Hill which did not mention Walter Burley Griffin, the Griffin Plan for Canberra, or Griffin's design for State Circle.³¹
- 4.46 The report was oblivious of Griffin's highly symbolic plan for avenues radiating from State Circle in the direction of the capital cities of the States and Territories – and therefore did not assess the heritage significance of eliminating the possibility of constructing or interpreting Griffin's proposal for Darwin Avenue, which the NCA rezoning and redevelopment scheme entailed.
- 4.47 It seems difficult to believe that the NCA would brief a consultant to undertake a heritage study of Capital Hill and not mention Walter Burley Griffin. However, by one means or another, Griffin got left out of the story. DA66 was approved.

³⁰ LFA (ACT) Pty Ltd, *The Griffin Legacy Constitution Avenue Urban Design Study: Parliament House Vista*, Report to the NCA, The Consultants, Canberra, February 2007, p.12.

³¹ Navin Officer Heritage Consultants Pty Ltd, *Blocks 2, 3 & 25, Section 44, Yarralumla: Cultural Heritage Assessment*, Report to the NCA, The Consultants, Kingston, ACT, December 2006.

- 4.48 The only way to overcome this level of manipulation and/or incompetence in planning the significant National Areas of Canberra is to divide responsibility for Design Standards among a number of eminent bodies, and institute an open, transparent, fully consultative decision process.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The dysfunctional planning system of Canberra, created at the time of self-government, can only be overcome by a comprehensive financial and legislative review aimed at creating an integrated Planning Commission for the whole of the ACT.

5.2 Dividing the planning system in some way will lead to disaster. The ACT Government will squander its inheritance in mediocre land development schemes. The Commonwealth Government will continue to produce mediocre public works and commercial developments in the symbolic center of Canberra.

5.3 The solution to the Canberra dilemma resides in establishing (1) a sound financial basis for the presence of the Commonwealth Government in the ACT; (2) an integrated National Capital Planning Commission; (3) an Office of the Commonwealth Architect; (4) a Design Advisory Panel – and (5) an open, transparent and fully-consultative planning process, which will engage the citizens of Canberra and the citizens of Australia.

5.4 I commend the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital & External Territories for commencing this process.

Appendix 1: Biographical Profile – Professor James Weirick

James Weirick is Professor of Landscape Architecture and Director, Urban Development & Design Program, Faculty of the Built Environment, University of New South Wales.

A graduate of Harvard University, Professor Weirick taught at the Boston Architectural Center, University of Massachusetts/Boston, University of Canberra and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, prior to his appointment to UNSW in 1991. In recent years, he has conducted international urban design studios in Beijing and Tokyo with the Graduate School of Landscape Architecture, Peking University and the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences, The University of Tokyo. His research interests include the history of architecture, landscape architecture and urbanism, with an emphasis on the ‘politics of design’, particularly the work of Walter Burley Griffin, the history of Canberra, and the urban landscape of Sydney. He is actively engaged in issues of contemporary urbanism throughout Australia as an educator, critic, and commentator.

Professor Weirick has served on the Environment Board of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (NSW); the Parliamentary Zone Advisory Panel, National Capital Authority, Canberra; the Urban Design Advisory Committee, NSW Department of Urban Affairs & Planning; the Gateways Design Review Panel, City of Sydney; and the Campus 2010 Design Review Panel, University of Sydney. He currently serves on the Design Review Panel, Sydney Olympic Park Authority and the Design Advisory Panel of the City of Sydney.

Professor Weirick has been a member of many design competition juries, most recently as a City of Sydney representative on the Design Excellence Competitions for the Westfield Sydney Centrepoint Project and the Goodsell Building Redevelopment, Chifley Square. He received the President’s Award of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (NSW Group) in 1999; and was named a ‘Built Environment Exemplar’ in the Year of the Built Environment 2004.

Professor Weirick has been President of the Walter Burley Griffin Society, Inc. since 2004, and previously served as Vice President, 1993-2004.

Appendix 2: Recommendations – Walter Burley Griffin Society submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital & External Territories Inquiry into the Role of the National Capital Authority, 11 April 2008

WBGs Recommendation 1

- (a) In the Canberra situation the ideal and most efficient form of integration would, in the long term, be amalgamation of the NCA and ACTPLA into a joint planning commission with governance arrangements devised to suit the primary and interdependent roles of each area. Resources commensurate with a global best standard planning authority should be given to make such a body succeed. The unified planning body would comprise a joint and over-arching authority directing national and Territory planning divisions. An ACT Land and Planning Advisory Council would need to be restored;
- (b) Such a body, say a statutory National Capital Planning Commission, should have effective powers and duties for coordination of Commonwealth Departments and the Canberra Airport with respect to land use, alienation, tenure provisions and management;
- (c) The Planning Commission would be accountable to the planning Ministers and the parliaments of the Commonwealth and the Territory. There is a need for the Commonwealth to clarify its commitment to the planning and development of the National Capital;
- (d) In the short term, arrangements should be made to adopt a range of integration measures designed to culminate in the creation of the Planning Commission. These moves with the prospect of an amalgamated and reconstituted planning authority can once again attract planners of the highest qualifications and competence, deploying more effectively and efficiently the resources allocated by the respective Governments and the private sector;
- (e) The higher order Commission should restore the levels of vision and influence that have characterised the planning of Canberra at earlier stages of its history and bring the capital city a new vigour.

WBGs Recommendation 2

The Society recommends, in line with the Joint Standing Committee's 2007 Report, that the National Capital Authority, preferably a National Capital Planning Commission, institutes an expert and public process to:

- (a) revive and carry further the Griffin Legacy Project;

- (b) review comprehensively and publicly the whole set of Griffin Legacy Amendments 56, 59, 60 and 61 to the National Capital Plan, particularly in relation to the Griffin Legacy Project and Griffin Plan review findings;
- (c) this review should take into account the statutory, regulatory and administrative framework and safeguards needed for the effective implementation of any Griffin Legacy Amendments.

WBSGS Recommendation 3

The Society endorses the Recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee's 2004 Report, with the exception of Recommendation 8, and further recommends that the membership of the Board or Authority of the new Planning Commission includes nine members, rather than six, in order to ensure ACT representation and experts in town planning and Australian history.

WBSGS Recommendation 4

The Society recommends:

- (a) the creation of an office of Commonwealth Government Architect be considered;
- (b) greater use of open competitions and competitive tendering for the preparation of master plans and design of significant structures;
- (c) conditions are required to ensure transparency of professional qualifications and reputation.

WBSGS Recommendation 5

The Society proposes that this term of reference can best be met by integration of the planning organisations and genuine commitment to democratic consultation processes needed by Canberra's communities and the wider national and professional constituencies.

WBSGS Recommendation 6

The Society recommends, within the framework of organisational integration of the National Capital and Territory planning organisations, that:

- (a) higher priority and resources be accorded the promotion of the National Capital and its development aspirations;
- (b) the NCA refrain from sponsoring events with little direct and enduring significance for the design, symbolism, distinction and representativeness of the National Capital.

**Appendix 3: Design Standards in Areas of National Significance
Case Study - National Gallery of Australia Extensions**

(Submission by Professor James Weirick to the National Capital Authority –
25 June 2007)

**National Gallery of Australia
South Entrance and Indigenous Australian Galleries Building Project, Stage 1
Evaluation with respect to the National Capital Plan**

Submission to the National Capital Authority

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25 June 2007

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1.0 Description of Proposal

- 1.1 The National Gallery of Australia (NGA) proposes extensive additions and alterations to the existing Gallery building and its setting, completed in 1982 to the design of architects Edwards Madigan Torzillo & Briggs International (Design Principal, Colin Madigan AO LFRAIA) in association with landscape architects Harry Howard & Associates.
- 1.2 The commission to design the National Gallery was awarded to Colin Madigan and EMTB in 1968, following a limited design competition conducted by the National Capital Development Commission. EMTB subsequently won the two-stage open competition for the design of the High Court of Australia in 1973.³² Colin Madigan remained Architect to the National Gallery until the early 1990s, when he resigned in protest at internal alterations proposed by the second Director, Betty Churcher.³³ EMTB, practising as HBO + EMTB, remain as design consultants to the High Court.³⁴
- 1.3 The current proposal for additions and alterations to the NGA has been designed by PTW Architects (Design Principal, Andrew Andersons AO ARAIA) in association with landscape architects McGregor + Partners.
- 1.4 The project to extend the NGA has been discussed for almost 20 years – extensions to the National Gallery, including an ‘Aboriginal Gallery’, were described as ‘actively under consideration’ at the time of the preparation of the National Capital Plan in 1989-1990.³⁵
- 1.5 An earlier scheme, termed the ‘NGA Enhancement Project’, designed by architects Tonkin Zulaikha Greer (TZG), was developed following a two-stage competition in 2000. The jury for this competition, chaired by Professor Michael Keniger LFRAIA, included Annabelle Pegrum, Chief Executive of the National Capital Authority.³⁶
- 1.6 The TZG scheme, which initially involved major changes to the entrance portico, was challenged by Colin Madigan under the Commonwealth moral rights legislation. Although the scheme was subsequently modified – and approved by the National Capital Authority – the TZG commission was

³² Jennifer Taylor, *Australian Architecture since 1960*, 2nd ed., Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Canberra, 1990, pp.95-96.

³³ Interview with Colin Madigan, Kirribilli 16 June 2007.

³⁴ High Court of Australia, *Annual Report 2004-2005*, p.36.

³⁵ National Capital Plan, pp.155, 188.

³⁶ *Architecture Australia*, March/April & May/June 2000, ‘Radar’ columns.

terminated by mutual agreement with the NGA in November 2002. Design fees paid to TZG and their consultants totalled \$3.36 million.³⁷

- 1.7 The current proposal – hereafter the Andersons scheme – has been in development since 2004.³⁸
- 1.8 In addition to Andrew Andersons/PTW Architects and McGregor + Partners, the NGA retained the consultant services of the original architect, Colin Madigan, practising as Madigan Architects. To 30 June 2006, PTW Architects and McGregor + Partners had been paid design fees of \$1,277,621; Madigan Architects had been paid \$79,080.³⁹
- 1.9 In May 2005, the Director of the NGA, Ron Radford told the Senate, ‘I am working very closely with our current architect and the former architect.’⁴⁰
- 1.10 The NGA had the opportunity to adopt the ‘best practice’ approach to the re-engagement of the original architect of a great twentieth century work developed by the Sydney Opera House Trust with respect to Jørn Utzon. Since 1999, Jørn Utzon has prepared a rigorous set of Design Principles for the Sydney Opera House⁴¹ and has guided improvement works in association with the Sydney architect Richard Johnson of Johnson Pilton Walker.
- 1.11 For reasons, which need to be thoroughly explained, the NGA did not adopt this course of action with respect to Colin Madigan.
- 1.12 As submitted for works approval, the NGA Building Project is entirely the work of Andrew Andersons/PTW Architects and McGregor + Partners.
- 1.13 The principal elements of the Andersons scheme include a new South Entrance; a new wing incorporating a sequence of Indigenous Australian Galleries; revised parking arrangements; and a new sculpture court.

³⁷ Australia. Senate. Environment, Communications, Information Technology & the Arts (ECITA) Committee, Budget Estimates Hearings: National Gallery of Australia, 25 May 2005, Answers to Questions on Notice, Questions 338 & 342.

³⁸ Australia. Senate. ECITA Committee, Budget Estimates Hearings: National Gallery of Australia, ECITA Hansard, 25 May 2005, p.90.

³⁹ NGA *Annual Report 2004-2005*, p.153; NGA *Annual Report 2005-2006*, p.235

⁴⁰ Australia. Senate. ECITA Committee, Budget Estimates Hearings: National Gallery of Australia, ECITA Hansard, 25 May 2005, p.86.

⁴¹ Jørn Utzon, *Sydney Opera House: Utzon design principles*, Sydney Opera House Trust, Sydney, May 2002.

1.14 As detailed in a submission to the Department of Environment & Water Resources⁴², the scheme comprises:

1.14.1 construction of a new extension to the south of the Gallery building, with two levels above ground, to incorporate:

- new entrance arrangements;
- entry gallery;
- multi function room;
- new display galleries;
- new service dock, staff entry and security arrangements;
- new below-ground plant rooms.

1.14.2 adaptation of existing spaces within the Gallery for new uses:

- new shop (replacing workshops);
- office and storage space (replacing service dock and security arrangements);
- office, art dock and art arrival/dispatch facilities (in void beneath Temporary Exhibitions building);
- demolition of sections of original Gallery building walls and prototype buildings to allow new construction and connections to be made;
- modification of the underground car park beneath Parkes Place, to seal the current entry ramp and construct a new entry ramp to the south west of the link road that runs parallel to King Edward Terrace, and provide new lift access to the proposed new entry and tunnel access to service plant rooms;
- conversion of the underground car park (currently used by staff) to a controlled parking area for the exclusive use of visitors to the Gallery.

1.14.3 removal of current (temporary) surface car park south of the Gallery and construction of:

- a moated outdoor function area and garden lawn;
- construction of a commissioned significant external 'Skyspace' sculpture by US artist James Turrell within a water feature;
- a promenade along King Edward Terrace;
- an outdoor café area at the new entrance and

⁴² National Gallery of Australia, Referral to the Department of Environment & Water Resources of Proposed Action under the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: South Entrance and Indigenous Australian Galleries Building Project, February 2007, p.4.

1.14.4 construction of a new (temporary) surface car park for use by staff to the east of the Gallery. It is envisaged that the new surface carpark will be removed, and replaced by a permanent underground carpark as part of Stage 2 works, which are currently at preliminary master planning stage.

1.14.5 general landscaping, including planting of native tree species, that incorporates environmentally responsible water management systems.

1.15 This assessment of the NGA proposal has been based on the following drawings:

PTW Architects, South Entrance & Indigenous Australian Galleries, Job no. 204.045.01, April 07, Level 1 (Basement) Plan, Level 2 (Ground) Plan; Level 3 Plan; Level 4 (Principal Gallery Floor) Plan; Level 5 Plan; Roof Plan; West and East Elevation; South Elevation and Section G; Section B & F; Section D & C; Section H – Scale 1: 400 @ A3.

PTW Architects, South Entrance & Indigenous Australian Galleries, Job no. 204.045.01, February 07, Exterior Finishes.

PTW Architects, South Entrance & Indigenous Australian Galleries, Exterior and Interior renderings of the April 07 scheme; rendered plan of Level 2 / Sculpture Court.

McGregor + Partners, South Entry & Indigenous Australian Galleries at the NGA, Landscape Plan, Scale 1: 500 @ B1, Drawing no. L-06, Revision S, February 2007.

McGregor + Partners, South Entry & Indigenous Australian Galleries at the NGA, Extent of Works, Scale 1: 600 @ B1, Drawing no. L-03, Revision C, March 2007.

McGregor + Partners, South Entry & Indigenous Australian Galleries at the NGA, Master Plan – Stage 2, Scale 1: 750 @ B1, Drawing no. L-04-2A, Revision G, November 2006.

2.0 Significance of the National Gallery of Australia & Proposed Extensions

- 2.1 The significance of the National Gallery of Australia is clearly established by its role as Australia's pre-eminent art institution,⁴³ its location in the Parliamentary Triangle of the National Capital, and its comprehensive heritage listings.
- 2.2 The Gallery itself, plus the Sculpture Garden, the adjoining High Court (also designed by Edwards Madigan Torzillo & Briggs), and the National Gallery of Australia / High Court of Australia Precinct are included on the Commonwealth Heritage Register and the Register of the National Estate.⁴⁴
- 2.3 The National Gallery of Australia / High Court of Australia Precinct has been nominated for inclusion on the National Heritage Register.⁴⁵ On 19 February 2007, the Department of Environment & Water Resources advised the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, that the Minister for the Environment had decided to include the Precinct on the National Heritage Register.⁴⁶ To date, the Gazette notice giving effect to this decision has not been issued.
- 2.4 The two public buildings and landscape setting of the National Gallery of Australia / High Court of Australia Precinct have been accorded international recognition as one of only eight (8) Australian items on the 'Architectural Heritage of the XXth Century' register of the International Union of Architects.⁴⁷
- 2.5 The current proposal to extend the NGA with a new Southern Entrance and Indigenous Australian Gallery is the most important addition to a national institution in the history of Canberra. No other extension has been so prominent in the Canberra landscape; so critical to the public address and civic presence of the institution; so major in its impact on the fabric and design intent of the original building and original setting; so radical in its changes to circulation patterns and experiential qualities.

⁴³ James Mollison & Laura Murray (eds), *Australian National Gallery: an introduction*, Australian National Gallery, Canberra, 1982; Pauline Green (ed.), *Building the Collection*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2003.

⁴⁴ Michael Pearson, *Assessment of Impacts on Heritage Values of Proposed Works at the National Gallery of Australia*, Report to the National Gallery of Australia, Heritage Management Consultants, Canberra, January 2007, pp.1, 27-43.

⁴⁵ Australian Heritage Database: Nominated Place, Place ID: 105745; Place File no.: 8/01/000/0533.

⁴⁶ Letter, Dr Robert Bruce, Director, Heritage Information Section, Department of the Environment & Water Resources – General Manager, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 19 February 2007, Reference no.2004/04327.

⁴⁷ International Union of Architects, 'Architectural Heritage of the XXth Century,' <http://www.archi.fr/UIA/uia.php?langue=2> - accessed 17 June 2007.

3.0 The Design Challenge

- 3.1 The Andersons scheme for the NGA forms part of a complex refurbishment project, which has been underway since 1999.⁴⁸
- 3.2 The total project presents three design challenges:
- provision of a new Southern Entrance;
 - addition of a new wing to house the Indigenous Australian Galleries;
 - refurbishment of gallery spaces within the existing building to undo unfortunate depredations that occurred in the 1990s.⁴⁹
- 3.3 The new Southern Entrance is deemed necessary because most members of the public are unaware of the underground car park, and perceive the surface car park off King Edward Terrace as the address point for the building. The circulation route from the surface car park – which was designed for NGA staff, not the general public – is utilitarian and circuitous. The route crosses the service drive and coach parking bays to an heroic but complex concrete ramp and stairway, which gives access from ground level (RL561) to the main entry level of the Gallery (RL566) and the pedestrian bridge to the High Court.⁵⁰
- 3.4 This route misses the intended entry sequence from the underground car park, to the main terrace of the Sculpture Garden on the lakeside of the building, then to the magnificent northern stair, which rises in generous flights to the entrance portico at RL566, where it meets the pedestrian bridge from the entry level of the High Court.
- 3.5 In short, most visitors to the Gallery enter from the rear, not the front.
- 3.6 The proposal to extend the NGA with a new wing comprising Indigenous Australian Galleries and other functions departs from the original concept of the National Gallery that as an institution, it ‘should not be designed for expansion.’
- 3.7 This concept – developed by the first Director of the Gallery, James Mollison, in association with the distinguished American curator and critic, James Johnson Sweeney (1900-1986) – was based on the proposition that ‘growth would come

⁴⁸ Australia. Senate. ECITA Committee, Budget Estimates Hearings: National Gallery of Australia, ECITA Hansard, 25 May 2005, pp.86-91.

⁴⁹ The refurbishment project also includes new workshops, delivery dock, services and safety upgrades, code compliance etc.

⁵⁰ To be accurate, the NGA entry level is RL566.32 (1858 ft) however, for convenience this figure has been rounded to 566.

from the hiving off of other galleries such as a gallery of modern art or of decorative arts.⁵¹

- 3.8 The first departure from this concept dates from the 1990s. Initiated by the second Director of the NGA, Betty Churcher, a \$7 million wing was added on the eastern side of the Madigan building to accommodate temporary 'blockbuster' exhibits. This wing, completed in March 1998, was designed by Andrew Andersons /PTW Architects.⁵²
- 3.9 The Temporary Exhibits Wing demonstrates the difficulty in adding to the spatial sequence and expressive forms of the Madigan building in terms of the 'break through' point, circulation pattern, scale relationship, design language and materials.
- 3.10 The proposed Indigenous Australian Galleries present similar difficulties, compounded by the decision to locate this new wing on the southern side of the Madigan building so the massing and bulk associated with its program introduce a whole new front to the NGA, as seen from King Edward Terrace.
- 3.11 The program to restore and refurbish key interior spaces of the Madigan building, initiated by Dr Brian Kennedy and carried forward by the current Director, Ron Radford has revealed the true drama and beauty of the original architecture.
- 3.12 Conversion of Gallery 11 to display major works of Indian and South East Asian Art has used lighting, designed by the New York consultant George Sexton, to set Indian temple sculptures and related works against the dramatic architectonic forms of the Madigan building.
- 3.13 The reconstruction and reopening of the Sculpture Gallery, closed by Betty Churcher in 1990, has similarly revealed Colin Madigan's masterful command of space and light, augmented with new lighting design by George Sexton. The reinstallation of the Brancusi *Birds in Space* and other great modernist sculptures in this serene, elemental space has revalidated the heroic vision of Madigan's architecture, in which the techniques of the twentieth century meet the culture of the world - and ennoble them both.
- 3.14 The refurbishment project demonstrates with compelling force that the key to the future of the NGA is to work with Madigan's architecture – not against it.

⁵¹ Roger Johnson, 'The siting and design of the building,' in: Mollison & Murray (eds), *Australian National Gallery: an introduction*, p.27.

⁵² 'National Gallery Extensions', project description, PTW Architects website: <http://www.ptw.com.au/> - accessed 17 June 2007.

- 3.15 Unfortunately, the Andersons scheme works against the Madigan architecture – and the landscape design of Harry Howard – in fundamental ways.
- 3.16 The scale and assertiveness of the Andersons scheme are so great that the proposal threatens to compromise the strength and integrity of the National Gallery of Australia, diminish its role as the pre-eminent guardian of artistic excellence in the nation – and as a consequence fail to meet the legislative object of the National Capital Plan: ‘to ensure that Canberra and the Australian Capital Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance.’⁵³
- 3.17 This assessment of the Andersons scheme is based on the following analysis of its Urban Design & Traffic Management, Site Planning & Landscape Design, Architectural Expression, and Heritage Assessment.

⁵³ National Capital Plan, p.5 – the legislative object is located at Section 9 of the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*.

4.0 Urban Design & Traffic Management

- 4.1 The problem with the NGA entrance is principally an issue of urban design and traffic management – and should have been addressed at this level before any architectural solutions were developed.
- 4.2 Given the 1969 decision by the National Capital Development Commission to site the NGA in the north-east corner of the Parliamentary Triangle – not on Constitution Avenue as Griffin intended, like the Art Institute of Chicago on Michigan Avenue⁵⁴ – the Gallery has always been detached from intense urban activity. The predominant means of access, now and in the foreseeable future, is by motor vehicle.
- 4.3 Two decisions by the NCDC in the 1970s further detached the Madigan building from its context. The loop road from King Edward Terrace via the High Court and National Gallery was made two-way, not one-way as designed – over the protests of the architect⁵⁵; and the concept of a ‘National Place’, designed as a great podium at RL566 between the National Gallery and the National Library was abandoned, despite the fact this NCDC proposal for the Parliamentary Triangle had set the entry level for both the National Gallery and the High Court.⁵⁶
- 4.4 Almost thirty (30) years have passed – and the urban design principles for the NGA setting have still not been resolved.
- 4.5 This is a major indictment of Canberra’s planning agencies – the National Capital Development Commission, the National Capital Planning Authority and the National Capital Authority.
- 4.6 All that has ever been necessary to overcome the disorientation experienced by visitors to the NGA has been to direct them to the front entry.

⁵⁴ Roger Johnson, *Design in Balance: designing the National Area of Canberra, 1968-1972*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1974, pp.69-71; for Griffin’s siting of Galleries of Graphic Arts and Galleries of Plastic Arts in his 1911-1912 Competition Plan, see: NCA, *The Griffin Legacy: Canberra, the Nation’s Capital in the 21st century*, The Authority, Canberra, 2004, p.42.

⁵⁵ Letter, Colin Madigan, EMTB to Tony Powell, NCDC 26 October 1978, copy courtesy of Colin Madigan.

⁵⁶ Johnson, *Design in Balance*, pp.53-99; the National Place concept was abandoned c.1980 when the NCDC began to develop Parliamentary Zone schemes in response to the winning design in the New Parliament House competition based on a formalist interpretation of (1) Griffin’s plan for the Government Group and (2) The Mall in Washington, D.C. – see NCDC, *Parliamentary Zone Development Plan*, The Commission, Canberra, June 1982, pp.23-29.

- 4.7 This could be achieved by (1) instituting the one-way road system as originally designed, to bring visitors down the loop road from King Edward Terrace past the High Court, the Sculpture Garden, the drop-off to the northern stairs and on to the underground car park, with clear pedestrian links from this point to the main terrace of the Sculpture Garden, and the choice of stairs or escalator to the entry level of the Gallery; (2) signage to this effect; and (3) further development of activities on the lakefront to reinforce public perception that this is, indeed, the front of the National Gallery.
- 4.8 The Andersons scheme, which appears to retain two-way traffic on the loop road, will have to rely on signage to direct visitors to the entry ramps of the underground car park, relocated to the High Court side of the loop road, approximately 100 metres from the new southern entrance, in a far from obvious relationship to the NGA.
- 4.9 Given that signage is necessary for the Andersons scheme to work, it has no advantage over the current access to the underground car park in terms of wayfinding, and has the disadvantage of dislocating the visitor experience from the lakefront and Sculpture Garden address of the NGA, which the one-way loop system aimed to reinforce.
- 4.10 Recommendation 1: Institute the one-way loop system, with appropriate signage, to activate the entry sequence designed by Colin Madigan. Retain the entry/access ramps to the underground car park in their current location and sculptural form. Retain the surface car park in its current location and restrict to staff use as originally intended through re-design of its entry, introduction of boom gates and effective parking management.**
- 4.11 To reinforce the northern, lakefront address of the NGA, a strong urban design is necessary to link the Gallery to the heavily-used foreshore in terms of built elements and program, comprising (1) completion of the Sculpture Garden amphitheatre as designed by Harry Howard, and introduction of regular cultural activities in this space; (2) extension of the underground car park to the north; (3) relocation of the singularly unfortunate restaurant from the Marsh Pond terrace in the Sculpture Garden to a roof terrace above the extended car park, set within a grove of eucalypts to enjoy superb filtered views of Lake Burley Griffin.
- 4.12 The failure of the Andersons scheme to include a 'northern strategy' is a measure of the complete failure of the NCA to develop Urban Design Guidelines for this all-important sector of the Parliamentary Triangle.
- 4.13 The only specific statutory controls over the National Gallery site are the Parliamentary Zone Principles of the National Capital Plan (NCP) and the Master Plan for the Parliamentary Zone, the latter derived from the

Parliamentary Zone Review Outcomes report of March 2000, incorporated as Amendment 33 to the NCP in September 2001.

- 4.14 The two-stage competition for the design of new additions to the NGA, which produced the TZG scheme in 2000-2001, was conducted after the release of the *Parliamentary Zone Review Outcomes* report, and with close involvement of the NCA – yet this competition and its outcome ignored the physical design proposals of the Parliamentary Zone Review.
- 4.15 Neither the 2000-2001 TZG scheme, nor the 2004-2007 Andersons scheme conform to the ‘Indicative Development Plan’ of the Parliamentary Zone, incorporated as Figure T6.1 of the National Capital Plan – even though the National Capital Plan clearly states: ‘The Indicative Development Plan should be used to guide all future planning and development in the Parliamentary Zone.’⁵⁷
- 4.16 Figure T6.1 shows no extension to the Madigan building.
- 4.17 Instead, new development around the NGA is shown as a series of free-standing buildings, grouped to form an ‘Arts and Civic Campus’ on King Edward Terrace.⁵⁸
- 4.18 Amendment 33 to the National Capital Plan proposes to expand the urban setting of the Arts & Civic Campus by the closure of Bowen Place and replacement of the cloverleaf intersection of Bowen Place, King Edward Terrace and Kings Avenue with a signalised T-intersection. The lot boundaries and ownership pattern of the new urban land created by the removal of 1960s road infrastructure is not established by the National Capital Plan.
- 4.19 However, the Indicative Master Plan for the Parliamentary Zone does show a courtyard to the south the Madigan building created by a new, street-defining building on King Edward Terrace, and another new building to the east, which is sited on the southern edge of the Sculpture Garden and extends onto a new site created by the closure of Bowen Place.
- 4.20 The clear intention of this Plan is to respect the integrity of the Madigan building and the Harry Howard Sculpture Garden – and to permit new buildings only as detached, free-standing elements.
- 4.21 The Andersons scheme defies this intention. It grafts a major new wing onto the Madigan building, extends the NGA into the proposed courtyard space of the

⁵⁷ National Capital Plan, p.292.

⁵⁸ For the ‘Statement of Policy’ behind the formation of campuses within the Parliamentary Zone, see National Capital Plan, Appendix T6: Master Plan for the Parliamentary Zone, p.288; the Indicative Master Plan (Figure T6.1) is located after p.294.

campus, builds on the Autumn Garden section of the Harry Howard Sculpture Garden, and precludes the possibility of a street-defining building on King Edward Terrace by siting a major, permanent work of environmental art, *Sky Space* by the American artist James Turrell, in this location.

- 4.22 The validity of the Parliamentary Zone 'Indicative Development Plan' is demonstrated by the siting and design of the National Portrait Gallery (NPG), which conforms to the principles of Figure T6.1 in the National Capital Plan, forms a street-defining edge to King Edward Terrace, and reinforces the campus concept by creating spatial enclosure within the larger landscape of the Parliamentary Triangle.
- 4.23 The National Portrait Gallery, designed by Johnson Pilton Walker (JPW), was the winning scheme in the 2005 competition conducted by the NPG, for which the National Capital Authority prepared clear Urban Design Guidelines.⁵⁹
- 4.24 These Guidelines, dated July 2005, apply to the immediate vicinity of the National Portrait Gallery. They do not extend to the lakefront, nor to NGA site east of Parkes Place. However, they demonstrate that the NCA has the capacity to produce such guidelines.
- 4.25 Similar Urban Design Guidelines should have been prepared for the NGA site years ago – certainly prior to the generation of the Andersons scheme. In failing to do this, the NCA is clearly complicit in the failure of the latest attempt to design extensions to the NGA.
- 4.26 Amendment 33 to the National Capital Plan, which gave statutory force to the campus concept for the Parliamentary Zone, states: 'urban design guidelines addressing aspects such as form, materials, scale and footprint should ensure that successive development contributes to the integrity of the campus.'⁶⁰
- 4.27 Amendment 33 was gazetted on 18 September 2001. Despite this statutory requirement, the NCA failed to prepare urban design guidelines for the NGA site after the TZG scheme was abandoned in November 2002 and prior to work beginning on the Andersons scheme in 2004.
- 4.28 The result is a scheme that compromises the integrity of the Arts & Civic Campus and the integrity of the NGA as a national institution in the Parliamentary Triangle.

⁵⁹ National Capital Authority & Tecknos Architecture, *Urban Design Guidelines – National Portrait Gallery, Arts & Civic Campus, Parliamentary Zone, Canberra*, The Authority, Canberra, July 2005.

⁶⁰ National Capital Plan, p.288 – source:

http://downloads.nationalcapital.gov.au/plan/ncp/feb2002_ncp.pdf - accessed 17 June 2007.

- 4.29 In contrast, the JPW scheme for the National Portrait Gallery makes a positive contribution to the spatial and symbolic qualities of the Parliamentary Triangle, most significantly in setting the entry level to the new cultural institution at RL566 – the same level as the entry to the High Court and the great entry portico of the NGA.
- 4.30 This move to activate the high level pedestrian space of the HCA/NGA Precinct has further validity as an extension of the commemorative landscape of Reconciliation Place, which flows from the National Library across the central axis of Canberra to the High Court terrace.
- 4.31 In defiance of these vital connections at RL566, the Andersons scheme seeks to shift the principal entry of the NGA to ground level – RL561 – at the new Southern Entrance.
- 4.32 This is clearly mistaken. In terms of urban design connections among the national institutions sited along the southern shore of Lake Burley Griffin, the high-level entry points are exhilarating and all-important.⁶¹
- 4.33 The role of a new Southern Entrance to the NGA should be to move people from ground level to the existing high-level entry, which opens from the Madigan portico – not to become the main entry in itself.
- 4.34 To the extent that it is needed, the new Southern Entrance should be simple, understated, efficient – a minor element in the larger landscape, which points the way to the grand portico and grand foyer at RL566.
- 4.35 The move to make the Southern Entrance the new front door to the NGA threatens to devalue and decommission the northern entrance from the lake and the western entrance from the High Court. Security considerations alone would preclude unrestricted ingress and egress on the north and west, if the principal control point of the Gallery is relocated from the RL566 foyer to the Southern Entrance as the Andersons scheme proposes.
- 4.36 Developing the Southern Entrance at the expense of the existing entrance also threatens to internalise the visitor experience of the Gallery – even more so when the proposed tunnel entrance from the underground car park is considered part of the approach sequence. To a very large extent, the visitor will be cut off from the Sculpture Garden, the lake, the mountain vistas – the great setting of the National Capital.
- 4.37 The Andersons scheme does not make a positive contribution to the ensemble of national institutions in the Parliamentary Triangle. In statutory terms, it does

⁶¹ The temple sites of Greece and Japan provided the original inspiration for the approach sequence to these institutions, see Johnson, *Design in Balance*, pp.40-43, 69-71.

not meet the following Principle for the Parliamentary Zone and its Setting in the National Capital Plan:

Principle 1.1.2(1) Canberra's role as Australia's National Capital is of continuing and paramount importance. National functions, organisations and activities are actively encouraged to locate in Canberra. They should be housed and located in prominent positions where they serve, *individually and collectively*, as effective symbols of the Nation and its Capital. (emphasis added)

4.38 Nor does the Andersons scheme meet the following Principle for Urban Design in the National Capital Plan:

Principle 7.2(2) Substantial works of architecture, engineering and landscape within Canberra Central should be designed to *contribute positively* to the overall composition and symbolism and dignity of the National Capital. (emphasis added)

4.39 Recommendation 2: The Andersons scheme for the National Gallery of Australia should not proceed in its current form. To meet the urban design principles of the National Capital Plan, the scheme needs to be revised in accordance with the following guidelines:

- **retain the NGA entry at RL566 in clear relationship with the entry to the High Court of Australia, the National Portrait Gallery and Reconciliation Place;**
- **recognise the grand portico and grand foyer of the Madigan building at RL566 as the 'front door' and signature element of the NGA, accessed by 'three ways in' from the north, west and south;**
- **site and scale a new southern entrance as a subsidiary element to the entrance portico and foyer at RL566, not as the 'front door' to the Gallery;**
- **accommodate new programmatic requirements for the NGA in separate structures in accordance with the Indicative Master Plan for the Parliamentary Zone (National Capital Plan Figure T6.1); or as**

articulated elements connected by understated links in accordance with the intent of the Indicative Master Plan to maintain the integrity of the Madigan building and the Harry Howard Sculpture Garden;

- **institute the entry sequence designed by Colin Madigan and activate the northern, lake front of the NGA, as per Recommendation 1 (above);**
- **maintain views of the entrance portico, tower and expressive forms of the original NGA building from King Edward Terrace and the High Court approach to conserve the civic presence, cultural significance and heroic vision of the Madigan building in the Parliamentary Triangle;**
- **restrict the bulk and scale of new structures in the vicinity of the NGA to maintain the primacy of the Madigan building as the home of the national collection of art and as a great work of twentieth century architecture;**
- **determine the physical extent of NGA land with respect to the proposed closure of Bowen Place in accordance with Amendment 33 to the National Capital Plan, and resolve the ownership pattern, uses, location, alignment, built form and landscape character of urban development in the north-east corner of the Parliamentary Triangle bounded by King Edward Terrace, Kings Avenue and Lake Burley Griffin.**

5.0 Site Planning & Landscape Design

- 5.1 At site planning scale, the Andersons scheme – developed in the absence of strong urban design guidelines – has made fundamental moves, which are fundamentally wrong.
- 5.2 These moves concern the following:
- location of the surface car park;
 - destruction of the Autumn Garden of the Harry Howard Sculpture Garden;
 - entry levels of the Southern Entrance;
 - pedestrian approach to the NGA;
 - indoor/outdoor relationship of the sunken garden/function room, and
 - location of the Turrell *Sky Space* environmental sculpture.
- 5.3 The existing surface car park at the NGA was installed as a planning expedient in 1978-1982, over the objections of the Madigan team at EMTB and the landscape architects, Harry Howard & Associates. The forecourt to the NGA on King Edward Terrace was intended to form part of the Sculpture Garden, extending 180° around the building to the lake front on the northern side.⁶²
- 5.4 Instead, an ‘overflow’ car park was sited in this location at the insistence of the NCDC, intended for use by NGA staff and office workers in the nearby Administration Building.
- 5.5 As predicted by the EMTB/HHA design team, the car park has functioned as the main visitor car park since the opening of the NGA, due to (1) its visibility and location on King Edward Terrace, and (2) vehicle circulation in the HCA/NGA Precinct, which has resulted from the NCDC decision to make the Parkes Place road loop two-way, thereby opening a road entrance to the NGA complex next to the surface car park.
- 5.6 The Andersons scheme aims to direct visitor car parking to the underground car park, as the EMTB/HHA design team intended.
- 5.7 However, the means of achieving this are unconvincing and destructive.
- 5.8 As discussed in Section 4.8 (above), the Andersons scheme relocates the underground car park ramps to the High Court side of the Parkes Place loop,

⁶² Roger Vidler & Barbara Buchanan, *The High Court and National Gallery Precinct, Canberra: the landscape design process*, September 2003, pp.18, 41.

just off King Edward Terrace. This location, more than 100 metres from the NGA entrance, is unconvincing in terms of traffic circulation and wayfinding. For visitors to find the car park entrance, extensive signage will be required.

- 5.9 Furthermore, to discourage use of the surface car park, the Andersons scheme (in its Stage 1 configuration) relocates this facility to the east of the NGA, with an entry drive off Bowen Place, and separated from the NGA forecourt by a sunken garden and the pyramidal mound of the Turrell *Sky Space* environmental sculpture.
- 5.10 This move entails destruction of the Autumn Garden component of the Harry Howard Sculpture Garden.
- 5.11 The Autumn Garden – the fourth Seasonal section of the brilliantly-conceived Sculpture Garden designed by Harry Howard and Barbara Buchanan, in consultation with Colin Madigan and Roger Vidler from EMTB – was formed with extensive earth mounding, but not the planned hardworks and complete planting scheme, due to budget cuts imposed by the NCDC in 1981-1982.⁶³
- 5.12 The Autumn Garden was conceived as an integral component of the Sculpture Garden in terms of its spatial structure - a series of outdoor rooms elevated above the Marsh Pond to the east of the Madigan building - its planting palette, and its water system. The garden was planned to have a series of Robert Woodward-designed water pools above the Marsh Pond terrace and a cascade fountain integrated with the retaining wall to circulate and aerate water entering the Marsh Pond.
- 5.13 The cascade fountain was built on a reduced budget in concrete, not black marble as designed – but without the upper level pools. As a consequence, this remnant Woodward element is detached and trivialized, not the great artwork that was intended. The Andersons scheme will eliminate the possibility of realizing this vital element of the Sculpture Garden.
- 5.14 Stage 2 of the Andersons scheme proposes to build a substantial new Gallery wing over the site of the Harry Howard Autumn Garden, with staff car parking transferred to a new underground structure along the King Edward Terrace frontage.
- 5.15 As a site planning exercise, neither Stage 1 nor Stage 2 of the Andersons scheme is appropriate or necessary.
- 5.16 The Stage 1 move to relocate the surface car park to the Autumn Garden site, with access from Bowen Drive, will require boom gates and parking

⁶³ Vidler & Buchanan, *The High Court and National Gallery Precinct, Canberra: the landscape design process*, p.41.

management to restrict its use to NGA staff. The same result can be achieved with the current surface car park by redesign of the entry – even its relocation to Bowen Drive – the installation of boom gates, and the introduction of parking management.

- 5.17 The Stage 2 move to extend the Gallery to the east and permanently eliminate the Harry Howard Autumn Garden is unacceptable – extensions to the Gallery over time should be developed with reference to the necessary urban design guidelines for the Arts & Civic Campus (see Recommendation 2, Section 4.39 above).
- 5.18 The Turrell *Sky Space* sculpture should be built in the Harry Howard Autumn Garden, not as front yard feature on King Edward Terrace.
- 5.19 The front address of the NGA proposed under the Andersons scheme has a totally unacceptable site condition for a national institution. Its entry level is set below the level of the street. Access to the door of the proposed Southern Entrance from King Edward Terrace requires a ramp descending from RL561.8 to RL560.1. The effect of this downward progression will be pervasive and powerful as a negative experience.
- 5.20 To enter a great cultural institution must be an uplifting experience, not a negative experience.
- 5.21 The transition from street to gallery is a profound and significant moment, comparable in contemporary culture to the transition from profane to sacred space in temple sites of antiquity.
- 5.22 The Southern Entrance of the Andersons scheme is both overblown in scale and weak as an entry sequence.
- 5.23 The scale of the Southern Entrance and associated Indigenous Australian Galleries wing is so overblown that it will dominate the pedestrian approach to the NGA. The renderings that have been used to promote the scheme have not been set up from true eye level.⁶⁴ No significant part of the Madigan building will be visible along the direct pedestrian approach from King Edward Terrace.
- 5.24 The associated landscape design contributes to the weakness of the address and entry sequence of the Andersons scheme by proposing a sunken garden off King Edward Terrace. As a consequence, the foundation of the national institution will not be set on a plinth, platform or raised *temenos* but on a low-level 'break out' space.

⁶⁴ See the NGA in-house publication, *artonview*, no.49, Autumn 2007, fold out cover, inside front cover & p.2.

- 5.25 This 'break out' space is designed to open from a large Function Room, which in turn, has access to the interior galleries of the NGA.
- 5.26 The barriers and controls necessary to provide complete security to the NGA and the national collection with respect to this indoor-outdoor relationship are not shown, apart from a partial water moat. There is no question that the sunken garden and associated Turrell sculpture will have to be fenced and protected to the very highest level of institutional security.
- 5.27 As a consequence, the sunken garden and Turrell installation will be isolated as a 'stand alone' exhibition space with its own internal circulation and will not form part of the Sculpture Garden, which is totally open as a public park
- 5.28 Thus the sunken garden/Turrell installation does not contribute to the original idea that the Sculpture Garden would extend 180° around the NGA to the lake front. Instead, it will introduce a new outdoor Sculpture space that will compete with the immensely significant, heritage listed Sculpture Garden on the northern side of the building.
- 5.29 The Andersons scheme makes no move to undo the depredations that the Harry Howard Sculpture Garden has suffered in recent years, most notably, construction of an *ad hoc* service yard and car park to the east of the Marsh Pond restaurant, which has introduced gas cylinders and parked cars in the immediate vicinity of some of the nation's greatest artworks, such as the Henry Moore *Hill Arches*.
- 5.30 The landscape design for the southern front of the NGA respects the eucalypt plantings and human-scale spaces of the Address Court between the High Court and National Gallery; and maintains the eucalypt canopy over the HCA-NGA pedestrian bridge.
- 5.31 However, the scheme relies on extensive use of water in tanks, pools and moats, which will require abstraction from Lake Burley Griffin to function in Canberra's extended droughts; and the feature element of the scheme - the Turrell *Sky Space* – isolated for security and safety reasons within a large water body, introduces a symbol of resource profligacy in the dryland landscape of Canberra.
- 5.32 As discussed in Section 4.21 (above), the siting of the Turrell *Sky Space* on King Edward Terrace will prevent construction of the street-defining building proposed for this location in the Indicative Master Plan for the Parliamentary Zone.

5.33 Overall, the site planning and landscape design of the Andersons scheme compounds the failings of the proposal at urban design scale, and similarly fails to comply with the objects and detailed provisions of the National Capital Plan.

5.34 **Recommendation 3: In terms of site planning and landscape design, the Andersons scheme needs major revision in accordance with the following guidelines:**

- **conserve the location and siteworks of the Autumn Garden component of the Sculpture Garden and complete in accordance with the original design by EMTB, Harry Howard & Associates and Robert Woodward;**
- **until appropriate underground parking is built, maintain the surface car park in its existing location, and limit to staff use through re-design of the entrance, introduction of boom gates and parking management;**
- **reduce the scale of the new southern entrance in accordance with Recommendation 2 (above) and fix its entry level above street level to make the entry experience positive and inspirational, not negative;**
- **reduce the height and bulk of the southern extensions to the NGA to maintain the primacy of the Madigan building, as experienced on the pedestrian approach from King Edward Terrace;**
- **design the garden ‘break out’ space for the Function Room as a secure, walled enclosure limited to that use, not as a putative Sculpture Garden; fully restore the Harry Howard Sculpture Garden on the north and east of the Madigan building, in accordance with its heritage significance, and maintain its accessibility and role as a public park;**
- **in the future, connect the Sculpture Garden to the south front as public space around the walled enclosure of the Function Room garden, to realise the original 180° concept;**
- **site the Turrell *Sky Space* in the mounded landscape of the Harry Howard Autumn Garden, as per Recommendation 2; reduce the profligate reliance on water features in the new landscape works.**

6.0 Internal Planning and Architectural Expression

- 6.1 The internal planning of the Andersons scheme is based on a totally unacceptable change to the entry experience and circulation pattern of the NGA.
- 6.2 The new Southern Entrance has been designed as the principal entrance to the Gallery, with the control point for visitors at Ground Level (RL561) in this location.
- 6.3 This means (1) visitors who arrive at RL566 from the northern stairs and western bridge, will have to descend to RL561 on the south for orientation, then go back to RL566 to experience the main sequence of gallery spaces; or (2) the north and west entries will be closed.
- 6.4 The most likely outcome, given security and staffing considerations, will be (2). However, in either case, the NGA will be detached from the other institutions in the Arts & Civic Campus – the High Court, National Portrait Gallery and Reconciliation Place, where the entry levels are set at RL566.
- 6.5 The Southern Entrance, as proposed in the Andersons Scheme, also introduces confusing choices within the extended Gallery. At RL561, two paths are possible (1) up the escalators to RL566; or (2) down half a flight of steps to the *Aboriginal Memorial* installation, Function Room and internal stairs to RL566.
- 6.6 The clear and obvious solution to these quite unnecessary address and circulation problems is to limit the function of the Southern Entrance to directing visitors to the existing foyer and gallery sequence on RL566 – the ‘three way in’ approach consistently advocated by Colin Madigan (discussed in Sections 4.33-4.35, above).
- 6.7 On this issue, the Madigan solution is right and the Andersons solution is wrong.
- 6.8 There are other internal issues, which raise serious questions about the role of the National Gallery – for example, displaying Aboriginal art in an all-white setting – however, critical considerations in terms of the National Capital Plan concern the address, setting and architectural presence of the NGA in the Parliamentary Triangle.
- 6.9 As a work of architecture, the Andersons scheme has grafted a substantial new wing across the south front of the Madigan building in a way which makes

these alterations and additions the dominant expression of the institution, seen from King Edward Terrace.

- 6.10 The design expression in glass, concrete and marble falls half way between the robust forms of the Madigan building and sterile works of retro-modernism, such as the Taniguchi extensions to the Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- 6.11 The design is neither a major work in itself, nor subservient to the Madigan building - it just occludes Madigan's architecture. Although the entry portico and tower of the Madigan building remain intact – unlike the TZG scheme of 2000 – the bulk and projection of the new southern wing will dominate the street frontage and pedestrian approach, and become the new image for the NGA, an ambition signalled by the feature column and oculus at the new entry.
- 6.12 The attempt to separate the new works from the Madigan building by strip skylights, 1 metre wide, is far from convincing.
- 6.13 The Andersons scheme will irredeemably compromise the integrity of the National Gallery of Australia, and communicate in its makeover of the Madigan building that, in 2007, Australia could not uphold the vision of one of its greatest architects.
- 6.14 As such, the National Gallery extensions will fail the legislative object of the National Capital Plan: 'to ensure that Canberra and the Australian Capital Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance.'⁶⁵
- 6.15 Recommendation 4: In terms of internal planning and architectural expression, the Andersons scheme needs major revision in accordance with the following guidelines:**
- **retain the NGA entry foyer at RL566 as the sole beginning point of internal circulation to the sequence of galleries that display and interpret the national collection of art;**
 - **design the southern entrance to fulfill one function – to direct visitors to the entry foyer at RL566 in a simple, direct manner;**
 - **retain access to the RL566 foyer from the northern stairs and western pedestrian bridge;**
 - **reduce the bulk and projection of the southern wing to maintain the visual prominence of the Madigan building, with new**

⁶⁵ National Capital Plan, p.5.

additions detached from the original expressive forms so that they read as subsidiary elements;

- **express the new elements in a design language that is different from, but subservient to the Madigan building.**

7.0 Heritage Assessment

- 7.1 The Heritage Significance of the National Gallery of Australia and its landscape setting was clearly established over many years, beginning with its inclusion on the Register of the National Estate in 1987,⁶⁶ and culminating with the comprehensive heritage listings on the Australian Heritage Database, which form the basis of its current inclusion on the Commonwealth Heritage List.⁶⁷
- 7.2 The decision by the Minister for the Environment & Water Resources, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, to include the High Court of Australia and National Gallery of Australia Precinct on the National Heritage Register, announced on 19 February 2007, is further testimony to the significance of these great national institutions as a design ensemble in the Canberra landscape.⁶⁸
- 7.3 The delay in the gazettal of this decision occurred at the same time as the referral of the Andersons scheme to the Department of the Environment & Water Resources (DEWR) for evaluation.
- 7.4 On 27 April 2007, DEWR determined that the 'upgrade works to the National Gallery of Australia' did not constitute a 'controlled action' under Section 75 of the *Environment Protection & Biodiversity Act 1999*, and therefore did not warrant further inquiry.⁶⁹
- 7.5 This decision appears to be based on a National Gallery of Australia Draft Conservation Management Plan, prepared for the NGA by a team headed by Dr Michael Pearson of Heritage Management Consultants Pty Ltd.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Register of the National Estate: NGA - Place ID: 102824, Registered: 11.08.87; NGA Sculpture Garden – Place ID: 18917, Registered: 11.08.87; HCA/NGA Precinct – Place ID: 102721, Registered: 11.08.87 – see Australian Heritage Database.

⁶⁷ Commonwealth Heritage List: NGA – Place ID: 105558, Listed: 22.06.04; NGA Sculpture Garden – Place ID: 105630, Listed 22.06.04; HCA/NGA Precinct – Place ID: 105544, Listed: 22.06.04 – see Australian Heritage Database.

⁶⁸ Letter, Dr Robert Bruce, Director, Heritage Information Section, Department of the Environment & Water Resources – General Manager, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 19 February 2007, Reference no.2004/04327.

⁶⁹ Ms Alex Rankin, Assistant Secretary, Environment Assessment Branch, Department of the Environment & Water Resources, Notification of Referral Decision – not controlled action, National Gallery of Australia Upgrade, ACT – EPBC Reference 2007/3335, 27 April 2007 – as stated in this document, DEWR received the NGA referral on 9 March 2007, with additional information on 11 April 2007.

⁷⁰ Michael Pearson & Duncan Marshall, *Assessment of Impacts on Heritage Values of Proposed Works at the National Gallery of Australia*, Report to the National Gallery of Australia, Heritage Management Consultants Pty Ltd, Canberra, January 2007, p.1

- 7.6 It is unclear whether evaluation of the NGA referral also considered the Heritage Management Plan for the HCA/NGA Precinct prepared for the National Capital Authority.⁷¹
- 7.7 The key document, which informed the DEWR decision, appears to be the Heritage Impact Assessment of the Andersons scheme prepared for the NGA by Dr Michael Pearson and Heritage Architect, Duncan Marshall.
- 7.8 This assessment concluded:
- the proposed facilities assessed in this report will have no significant or adverse impacts on the Commonwealth Heritage Listed National Gallery of Australia, High Court and National Gallery Precinct, or Parliament House Vista, or on the adjacent Sculpture Garden, High Court Building or John Gorton Building.⁷²
- 7.9 The Pearson/Marshall report did not consider the impact of relocating the ‘front door’ of the NGA to the Southern Entrance at RL561, away from the entries to the High Court, National Portrait Gallery; did not consider the internal circulation impacts of relocating the ‘front door’ to the Southern Entrance at RL561; did not consider that the Andersons additions diminished the Madigan architecture; did not consider the removal of the Autumn Garden of the Harry Howard Sculpture Garden to be irreversible.
- 7.10 Above all, the Pearson/Marshall report did not consider the impact on the reputation of the National Gallery of Australia of pushing through a project that will compromise one of the greatest works of twentieth century architecture and landscape architecture in the world.⁷³
- 7.11 In this respect, the National Gallery extensions again fail the legislative object of the National Capital Plan: ‘to ensure that Canberra and the Australian Capital Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance.’⁷⁴
- 7.12 Recommendation 5: To conserve the heritage significance of the NGA and its setting, the Andersons scheme needs major revisions in accordance with the following guidelines:**

⁷¹ This Heritage Management Plan is listed as ‘completed’ on the NCA website (see: http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au/education_and_understanding/heritage/ - accessed 17 June 2007) – however, it is not cited in the above report.

⁷² Pearson/Marshall report, p.19

⁷³ The Pearson/Marshall report does not refer to the International Union of Architects listing of the HCA/NGA Precinct on its register of significant twentieth century buildings.

⁷⁴ National Capital Plan, p.5.

- **maintain the 'front door' of the NGA at the grand portico and grand foyer at RL566;**
- **institute the entry sequence to the NGA designed by Colin Madigan, activate the northern stairs of the complex and retain the 'three ways in' strategy from the north, west and south;**
- **reduce the proposed southern entrance to a subsidiary element, with the sole function of directing visitors to the entry foyer at RL566;**
- **reduce the scale and bulk of new extensions to the NGA to maintain the primacy of the original architectural forms and expression of the building;**
- **conserve the Autumn Garden component of the Harry Howard Sculpture Garden.**

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The decision of whether or not to proceed with the additions and alterations to the National Gallery of Australia proposed by Andrew Andersons of PTW Architects and McGregor + Partners, Landscape Architects is a defining moment in the history of the National Capital Authority and the history of Canberra.
- 8.2 At stake, is the capacity of the Authority to maintain the world standing of a national institution.
- 8.3 For complex reasons, the NGA has followed a tortured path to produce the Andersons scheme in its current form. The National Capital Authority has the opportunity – and responsibility – to guide the NGA to a far superior outcome.
- 8.4 The changes and revisions to the Andersons scheme recommended in this report are consistent with the advice offered to the NGA and the NCA by the original architect, Colin Madigan and the original landscape architect, Barbara Buchanan.
- 8.5 This advice has been tendered over many years on the basis of great knowledge, wisdom and love for the National Gallery and its setting.
- 8.6 There is no reason to ignore this advice.
- 8.7 The programmatic changes to the NGA approved by its Council can be accommodated within a scheme that honours the strength of the original building, and the unique qualities of its landscape setting.
- 8.8 The Andersons scheme, in its current configuration, fails to reach this level of understanding and respect – and fails to achieve the standard of excellence that a national institution in the Parliamentary Zone of the National Capital demands.
- 8.9 I urge the NCA to uphold the legislative object of the National Capital Plan ‘to ensure that Canberra and the Australian Capital Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance’ – and reject the Andersons scheme as currently proposed.