

22 March 2004

Mr Quinton Clements
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



DRAFT AMENDMENT 39, NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN

This is a joint submission from a group of very concerned residents of the Deakin/ Forrest residential area most affected by the proposed Amendment 39 (Deakin/Forrest Residential Area) to the National Capital Plan, dated November 2003. The November 2003 Amendment 39 has major changes from the Draft Amendment 39, dated April 2002.

Our group has residents from Canterbury Crescent, Somers Crescent and State Circle (Section 3, Deakin and Section 6, Forrest) and from other streets in the Deakin/Forrest Residential Area.

In 2002 the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories held an Inquiry into Draft Amendment 39 to the National Capital Plan. The National Capital Authority provided a submission in support of the amendment and made a major presentation to the Committee by a senior team that included the Chief Executive, Ms Pegrum. The submission and presentation argued strongly for retention of the residential status of the area with development throughout the area limited to two storeys in height and at no point more than 8 metres above the ground level immediately below. On sites fronting State Circle between Hobart and Adelaide Avenues the National Capital Authority proposed mandatory two storeys for any redevelopment or consolidation of blocks. The Plot Ratio for residential development of existing blocks to be 0.4 but where blocks are amalgamated the Plot Ratio may be up to 0.6.

The following points were made to the Committee by the National Capital Authority in support of the draft amendment and the proposals for sites fronting State Circle.

- 'from our point of view this is not an approach avenue in the same sense as Canberra Avenue. This is a residential precinct that forms part of the immediate circle surrounding Parliament House and from which the avenues radiate'
- 'We are dealing here with an area that is one of the distinguished garden suburbs in Canberra, if not the nation'

In November 2003, the National Capital Authority proposed some major changes to Draft Amendment 39 which conflicted with the views that were presented by the Authority to the Joint Committee on 21 June 2002. It proposed that development on State Circle can be three storeys and generally 12 metres above ground level. For amalgamated blocks the Plot Ratio may be up to 0.8. We note that the word generally is now inserted before the height above ground level which means that the National Capital Authority could approve some construction higher than 12 metres. It is also proposed to allow a Plot Ratio of up to 0.8 (and presumably three storeys) for developments on single blocks on State Circle that flank Melbourne Avenue.

The members of the group are unanimous in their strong opposition to any three storey construction on State Circle. There is strong support from other residents of the Deakin and Forrest Residential Area between State Circle and National Circuit who consider that three storey development on State Circle would be completely out of character with the ambience of a very distinguished leafy suburb of Canberra with its low density of single residences.

Our main arguments against the provisions of the proposed Amendment 39 are:

- major impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents
- completely out of character with the ambience of a very distinguished garden suburb which includes the Prime Minister's Lodge, the Embassies of Switzerland, Austria and Cambodia, Malaysia House and the delightful green corridor between the Prime Minister's Lodge and Ministerial wing of Parliament House.

Residents of blocks on Canterbury and Somers Crescents and State Circle with a common boundary with the blocks on State Circle destined for three storey construction will be severely affected if three storey developments are permitted.

- The privacy of residents and their guests will be greatly diminished and lifestyle factors which make the area such an appealing place to live will be eroded.
- Overshadowing will be significant for the one storey and two storey residences on State Circle adjacent to any three storey development and there will be an impact on other neighbouring blocks despite the set backs prescribed in Amendment 39.
- Many residents will lose their views of the landscaped area between Parliament House and State Circle and the distinctive flagpole of Parliament House.
- There will be an adverse effect on property values..

Another factor militating against three storey unit development on State Circle between Adelaide and Hobart Avenues is the increased security risk for the Prime Minister's Lodge, the Ministerial wing of Parliament House and the Embassies in the Deakin/Forrest Residential Area. The increased height available to three storey development would also increase the 'over-look' and security risk associated with VIP road travel on State Circle, the Melbourne Avenue extension to Parliament House and along Adelaide Avenue from the Prime Minister's Lodge to Capital Circle.

To summarise, three storey unit developments will have an adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents. It is not in keeping with the 'green belt' environment of the Deakin/Forrest Residential Area or with the low density built environment in the area. It will increase the security risk for Parliament.

We believe that two storey dual occupancy on single blocks with appropriate setbacks and landscaping would be a good outcome for re-development on State Circle. Such re-development would not be out of character with the Deakin/ Forrest Residential Area and the proximity of State Circle to the National Parliament. The dual occupancy

development on 15 State Circle is an example of that type of development. Development of this kind may not require an amendment to the National Capital Plan.

The members of our group were angry on learning of the change in the position of the National Capital Authority between the April 2002 Amendment and the November 2003 Amendment. We conclude that the senior planners at the National Capital Authority were unduly influenced by the lobbying of the developer of blocks on State Circle and paid little attention to the deleterious impact of three storey unit construction on the privacy and lifestyles of neighbouring residents.

An issue we consider to be relevant to the Joint Standing Committee's current Inquiry on the National Capital Authority is the inadequacy of the consultation with the residents/lessees of the Deakin/ Forrest Residential Area. Some members of our group most affected by the proposed Amendment 39 did not receive the letter addressed to Residents/Lessees from the National Capital Authority inviting comment on the Amendment. The letter was dated 25 November 2003 with comment to reach the Authority by 15 December. We consider that on such a crucial issue for residents the National Capital Authority should have organised a meeting with Residents/Lessees and allowed more time for the receipt of their comments.

Yours sincerely

Annie Bain



James Bain



Karen Fogarty



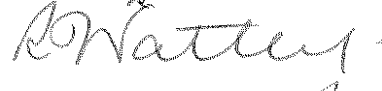
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