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On behalf of the Australian Garden History Society, ACT Monaro Riverina Branch I am pleased to be able to comment on the Acton Peninsula Precinct Draft Structure Plan.

AGHS is a national body with a membership of more than 1800 members. The Society was established in 1980 and aims to develop an appreciation of and concern for the parks, gardens and cultural landscapes which form part of Australia's heritage. The development of Lake Burley Griffin and its foreshore landscape remains the largest and most comprehensively designed landscape in Australia and as such our members continue to advocate for a comprehensive overarching management plan of the whole lake and lake foreshores and not the continued fragmentation by various development and management or structure plans. The Lake and foreshores have now been placed upon an AGHS national *Landscapes at Risk* list endorsed by more than 300 members present at our national conference held in Canberra last year.

The Acton Peninsula Precinct Draft Structure Plan stresses the visual and heritage aspects of this prominent site so it is pleasing to note that these characteristics are elements that will functionally integrate 'the peninsula into Canberra's broader landscape.' (p31) In the Study of the Social Value of Lake Burley Griffin and its Setting, a report to the National Trust of Australia (ACT) 2009 conducted by Shirley Pipitone, a survey concluded that '*Overall, the places visited more often are predominantly those with views and those attracting a large number of positive comments.*'

Unfortunately this broader landscape will be seriously eroded by the massed buildings planned for West Basin. The erosion of green public space with the construction of the West Basin Estate and a hard-edged built lake rim will impact on the outlook and visual panorama from Acton Peninsula. The proposed infill of the lake as part of the City to the Lake program to allow for private development close to the lake foreshore will not enhance the vistas now so pleasing from the northern side of the museum. A review of the West Basin precinct is urgently required so that the amenity of the Acton Peninsula is not compromised.

In this draft plan, reference has been made to two earlier management plans and a heritage assessment (p15) and it is to be hoped that the considerations made in these studies will contribute to the final precinct development. It is pleasing to note that the site is presently appreciated for its cultural meaning to the indigenous people, its natural landscape and its historical links to early Canberra. (p16).

There is however no reference to the aesthetic values inherent at the site. The framework used for assessing heritage significance (Draft Acton Conservation Area Heritage

Management Plan – Statement of Significance (e)) states *‘the place has significant heritage value because of the place’s importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.’* With a strong emphasis now on a built environment around the whole of West Basin, it would be appropriate to further assess the importance of the aesthetic experience of the West Basin and Acton Peninsula parklands, vistas and views before we lose all that is valuable and unique to our National Capital.

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