



LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN GUARDIANS

Land Development Agency
City to the Lake Team
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Dear City to Lake Team

Comments on the West Basin Waterfront Proposal By Lake Burley Griffin Guardians

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the proposal. Representatives of Lake Burley Griffin Guardians attended a briefing by your planner, Ian Wood-Bradley about the waterfront landscaping and water plantings on 4 March 2015.

For this consultation we note that there was an illogical lack of information provided. Firstly, the web based illustrative concept on part of the City to Lake development would not operate on some computers. Although the landscape plan is only part of the scheme, in order provide sensible constructive comments we needed to consider the landscape proposal in the context of the whole of the West Basin development proposal even if the development is to be conducted in stages spaced by years.

After many approaches by our members to your team more information was provided. We relied on the *The City Plan and City to the Lake Consultation Summary (Consultation Summary) 2013*, and *The Draft City to the Lake Strategic Urban Design Framework (the Framework) 2015 (CLSUDS)* as well as the *Griffin Legacy Plan 2004*. We are grateful to Ms Skinner who was able, at the 11th hour, to provide material to allow us to compare the existing and the proposed shorelines. We note other contributors may not have had the benefit of this additional material. We also note that there was insufficient time in this consultation for volunteer NGO groups to research and prepare comments.

1 General comments

Overcoming the barrier of the Parkes Way in the City to the Lake is a desirable goal. Providing a diverse landscaped lake shore is also desirable and may reduce the impacts on Commonwealth Park. However we strongly note that the West Basin development proposal is a huge loss of existing public open space, that currently provides important amenity such as access for people, car parking, vistas across the Basin and the western Lake from Commonwealth Bridge and to and from City Hill. Although the proposal makes reference to the Griffin 1918 Plan, that plan allowed for much greater landscape area with open areas to the lake.

2 Landscape Design

2.1 The proposal is for a highly designed landscape with urban style landscape pockets. There is no information on the planting or the effects of the developments on existing vegetation. Is the visual landscape connection with Black Mountain, the tree planting along Acton Ridge and the connection to ANU considered in the design?

2.2 The conceptual plan illustration notes key features but provides no explanation of what those features are. For example what is the bridge point

gateway?

2.3 Apart from the streamlined edge shown on the master plan diagram, other information also shows the Aquatic Centre and a Cultural Centre as huge structures projecting into the lake. The *Griffin Legacy Plan* p.125 states it is a 21st Century opportunity to have the water axis recognised and enhanced in West Basin. How will the Water Axis be expressed in relation to these buildings.

2.4 The *Griffin Legacy Plan* illustration for West Basin provided a stadium-like space, important for viewing events and conducting special events. This appears to no longer exist in the *Framework*.

2.5 At least an equal amount of board walk on the southern side of the basin is proposed. If diversity of design is desired why not less board walk and some on ground tracks. The boardwalk is overly long and although it may be appealing for some walkers it could also be monotonous particularly when there is no shade or trees to pass through. The plan shows only a few trees extending a little way over the walkway and therefore it could be very hot in summer. This would reduce the success of the park. Is it shared with cyclists, runners and walkers? There is no information on its fabric, such as if it is all concrete or wood or mixed fabric.

2.6 The proposed high apartment buildings in West Basin will throw shadows across the proposed landscape strip particularly in winter

2.7 The key to success of a large public parkland is access and parking. There appear to be two road entries to the area from Commonwealth Bridge. Are these the only public access points and where is the parking for visitors? Where does the City to the Lake route access the park. Is bus parking provided? Will electric people movers be provided for visitors with small children or the aged.

3 Heritage study

3.1 Has there been a heritage study of West Basin with the possible impacts of the proposal on Canberra's heritage features? Other heritage studies such as the *Lake Burley Griffin Heritage Assessment Report* 2009 for the NCA by GML and the *Acton Complex Heritage Management Plan* (Draft) 2015 for the NCA by Marshall et al note Indigenous heritage values on Acton spur. Have those values been considered? How will the streamlined shape balance the whole of the lake's physical expression as conveyed in its NCDC master plan of 1963.

3.2 Motorists and walkers enjoy the unfolding of vistas along Commonwealth Avenue to City Hill which is one of the major vertices of the National Triangle. Views over the western Lake, sometimes with sailing or other boats, toward the Bullen and Brindabella Ranges and some Inner Hills extend the *Welcome* to the Nation's Capital along Northbourne Ave from Antill St to Vernon Circle leading on toward Parliament House. This is all lost by the dramatic interspersed tall buildings blocks turning the drive into an ordinary concrete cityscape. Currently there are splendid views from Commonwealth Avenue across West Basin and the lake. Building heights need to match the carriageway elevation and not block this valuable view.

3.3 The proposed West Basin development introduces a loss of significant vistas to and across Lake Burley Griffin from key landmarks such as Commonwealth Bridge, along axes, to and from the hills that create the vertices of the National Triangle and are of heritage significance. The *Consultation Summary* as background to the proposal notes as one of the major themes:

maintain human scale in the city centre and access to views, vistas and trees, respecting the Griffin heritage (Consultation Summary page 8).

3.4 The *Griffin Legacy Plan* introduced the concept of the reduced water areas in

the basin and apartment development surrounding the basin which was far too much infill in the open spaces that did not reflect the Griffin 1918 plan. However while the illustrations in the *Griffin Legacy Plan* show the apartment blocks, the illustration in the *Framework* (page1) shows high blocks of buildings that will create a concrete wall against Commonwealth Bridge. Fig. 1.2 of *Framework* shows local visual connections from Commonwealth Avenue across West Basin. There will be no view from Commonwealth Avenue except from about where Point Park begins.

3.5 Very high buildings shown in the *Framework* near City Hill will narrow the vista to City Hill to a glimpse of a flagpole and block views from it to key locations, particularly the Lake and hills beyond. The West Basin proposal is highly detrimental to City Hill and has it disappearing to become a courtyard for high building surrounds.

4 Water Quality

4.1 West Basin's semi-closed shape minimises its waters mixing with the main expanse of open water in the Lake to disperse and dilute pollutants. Additional runoff from the proposed developments west of Commonwealth Avenue can only exacerbate the situation if pollutants are not fully stripped from it before entry. The water sensitive urban design comments in Place Points No.5, p.24 of the *Framework* need to be augmented to insist that exemplary engineering design provides the highest achievable efficiencies; 'best practice' answers to cost before efficiency and should not be the standard. Treatment units need to be distributed along the drainage lines to spread peak runoff loads and minimise overflow.

4.2 Has an environmental impact study been undertaken?

The parkland should provide an attractive landscape for Canberrans but importantly the area is part of the Central National Area and therefore a destination for visitors to the National Capital. However, until the public access and parking is clarified it is impossible to state whether we as individuals and other visitors to Canberra would use the proposed park.

A heritage survey is required to establish what features should be retained including water basin size, open space, building height limits, building extent of the nearby proposed apartments and access to vistas from and to City Hill and the Lake.

The need for claiming so much of the open space of the lakeshore landscape for apartments that block vistas and reduce lakeshore landscape is strongly opposed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for providing additional maps and reports.



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on behalf of Lake Burley Griffin Guardians
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