

## **March 2022 letters between YRA and the owner and the developer of the CSIRO Forestry Place site**

The owner of the CSIRO Forestry site is the Shepherd Foundation.  
Shepherd Foundation has appointed Oakstand as the developer of the site.

The following letters are set out below:

14 March 2022	<p><a href="#">YRA to Mr Michael Shepherd</a> of the Shepherd Foundation noting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Yarralumla community’s objection to the scale of the development</li> <li>• YRA’s disappointment in Oakstand’s response at the online meeting to the NCA Stakeholder Consultation Report</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Attachment: NCA Stakeholder Consultation Report</a></p>
25 March 2022	<p><a href="#">Reply to YRA from Shepherd Foundation</a> commenting on YRA’s letter and noting that they have referred YRA’s letter to Oakstand, the developer.</p>
29 March 2022	<p><a href="#">Reply to YRA from Oakstand</a> (the developer)</p>

Mr Michael Shepherd AO  
Chair  
Shepherd Foundation  
By email

Dear Mr Shepherd

The Yarralumla Residents Association (YRA) is an incorporated association formed in 1988 to represent the views of all residents of Yarralumla. YRA aims to represent everyone who lives in Yarralumla, with particular emphasis on maintaining and improving the quality of life for the residents of Yarralumla. At the end of the last financial year, members comprised 23% percent of all Yarralumla households. YRA communicates regularly with members through monthly eNewsletters and with all residents through periodic hard copy newsletters delivered to every Yarralumla household.

I am writing in connection with the proposed development on the CSIRO site on Banks St Yarralumla and to express our serious objection to the size and scale of the proposal.

In particular, we found the response by Oakstand to the National Capital Authority's Stakeholder Consultation Report, as presented to the community at an online meeting on 24 February, to be extremely disappointing and a missed opportunity. The response reflects a very selective reading of the Report and ignores key findings of the consultation. A copy of the NCA Report is attached for your information.

#### *Density*

In particular, the Report (2.2) notes:

*Almost all the stakeholders expressed concern or objection to the density and scale of buildings proposed for Forestry Place. Most feel the density and scale of development is contrary to the character of Yarralumla, which is predominantly low-rise, single residences and townhouses.*

The revised proposal, while reducing the height of some buildings, increases the height of others, resulting in a reduction of 2 dwellings only. If this development were to proceed at the density proposed, Yarralumla's population would increase by an estimated 1000 people or one-third of the current population. Such a large increase will have a serious negative impact on the quality of life for all residents on top of a similar sized development at the adjoining Brickworks development.

The proposed density is also at odds with the Commonwealth Heritage protection afforded to the historical and landscape attributes of the whole of the CSIRO precinct, not just the Forestry School.

### *Traffic and Parking*

The Report also notes:

*Most of the stakeholders identified that traffic and parking generation is of key concern for the Yarralumla suburb.*

The revised proposal generates the same level of increased traffic as the original proposal ie 2000 extra vehicle movements per day. The meeting was advised that no mitigation measures are planned to deal with the extra volume of traffic.

We were also not convinced that adequate provision has been made for sufficient off-street parking to cater for residents, visitors, hotel guests and staff of the hotel, the aged care facility or the commercial premises, which may well be the Shepherd Foundation itself. Surrounding neighbours would be justifiably concerned if parking were to spread into adjoining streets.

### *Hotel*

Oakstand also asserted at the Meeting that the NCA was in support of a hotel on the site. The Report indicates no such support.

A survey conducted by YRA, which had a response rate of 11.5% of all adults of Yarralumla, showed a significant majority of local residents were opposed to the original proposal. The revised proposal, with the exception of some building heights, is unchanged. This situation poses not only a reputational risk to the Shepherd Foundation but is unacceptable to YRA who will continue to vigorously oppose the proposed development as it stands.

On the other hand, YRA is more than willing to meet with the Shepherd Foundation to discuss a scale of development that may be more acceptable to the community.

Should you or your staff wish to discuss this matter, please contact our Vice President, Mike Lewis on 0418 289 203. A copy of this letter has been sent to the NCA for their information.

Steve Foley CSC  
President

14 March 2022

Michael Shepherd AO  
15 Princes St  
McMahons Point NSW 2060

Mr Steve Foley CSC  
President, Yarralumla Residents Association  
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cc. NCA CEO Sally Barnes [sally.barnes@nca.gov.au](mailto:sally.barnes@nca.gov.au)

Dear Mr Foley

Thank you for your letter of 14 March 2022 in relation to Forestry Place revised master plan online community engagement on 24 February 2022.

As has been previously explained, the Shepherd Foundation has partnered with Oakstand to best realise the benefit of the Gunyar A.C.T. Properties Trust, to assist children with hearing loss. As such, we have established communication protocols which would be the most appropriate channel through which to express Yarralumla Residents' Association concerns about the revised master plan. I will forward your letter to Mr David Cullen, CEO of Oakstand for response.

I am disappointed that you suggest that the revised master plan could cause reputational damage to the Shepherd Foundation. The Foundation is simply following a process that it is entitled to pursue.

Yours sincerely



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29 March 2022

Mr Steve Foley CSC  
President, Yarralumla Residents Association  
[steven.foley@yarratek.com.au](mailto:steven.foley@yarratek.com.au)

cc. NCA CEO Ms Sally Barnes [sally.barnes@nca.gov.au](mailto:sally.barnes@nca.gov.au)

Dear Mr Foley,

Thank you for your continuing interest and advocacy on behalf of the Yarralumla Residents Association (YRA). Your letter of 14 March 2022 to the Shepherd Foundation in relation to the Forestry Place revised master plan has been forwarded to me for reply. As you know, the Shepherd Foundation has partnered with Oakstand on the Forestry Place development and have established communication protocols to ensure a professional process.

I would like to preface my comments to the specific matters you raise with the following statement.

On behalf of the Shepherd Foundation, Oakstand has retained a team of expert professional consultants to inform and advise development of the original Forestry Place master plan. We engaged early and long with key stakeholders, of which the YRA is one interest group, taking you through the detailed and exhaustive studies undertaken by the consultant team. Key stakeholders were taken through the comprehensive urban design analysis of the site, discussing the various land uses this analysis could lead to for the site. We made it clear from the start that the existing CSIRO lease allowed for an additional 10,000m<sup>2</sup> GFA development potential that had not been realized; and that the Shepherd Foundation would need a certain level of financial return, given that 75% of the increase in value is payable as a lease variation charge, and to ensure the ongoing maintenance and renewal of the site's building and treescape heritage values. The Shepherd Foundation has an obligation and right, without incurring reputational risk, to maximise the financial benefit of the Gunyar A.C.T. Properties Trust to assist children with hearing loss.

The consultation undertaken by Oakstand and the Shepherd Foundation has been comprehensive and exceeded the level of community and National Capital Authority's (NCA) engagement ordinarily undertaken at this stage of a development proposal. Consultation has been undertaken with:

- ACT Environment, Planning, Sustainability Development Directorate (EPSDD)
- ACT Heritage
- ACT Sport and Recreation
- ACT Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS)
- Adjoining Banks Street and Bentham Street property owners
- CSIRO
- Friends of ACT Trees
- Inner South Canberra Community Council
- The Institute of Foresters
- The Royal Canberra Golf Club
- Westridge House
- Yarralumla Residents Association

We have considered the views of all NCA, ACT Government and community stakeholders, including the YRA, in the development and revisions to the master plan. Should the YRA have suggestions for a better outcome we would be happy to give these matters consideration, however, we note that at no point has the YRA put forward any expert professional advice on the proposal.

The specific matters raised in your letter are addressed below. I note that your letter references selective quotations from the NCA Stakeholder Consultation Report, and that of those invited to make comment, the YRA and Inner South Canberra Community Council were the only groups "generally not supportive of the proposal". Other stakeholders "provided general support" or "were supportive of some aspects but not of others", or did not comment. I note also, that the YRA survey to

which you refer has a level of bias embedded within the questions that potentially compromises the survey's integrity. For example, the option for nothing to change on the site is deeply unrealistic.

### Density

Your letter quotes part of 2.2 of the NCA Stakeholder Consultation Report the remainder of which continues to state "The respondents who indicated support for development saw 'medium-density living close to the city centre' of benefit to Yarralumla in reducing house prices and providing opportunities for younger families".

The NCA Chief Executive Officer's letter dated 29 November 2021 refers to reducing building heights in the original master plan of 2-5 storeys to 3 storeys plus attic reflecting "the building heights currently permitted in the National Capital Plan, as well as the adjacent Old Canberra Brickworks development". The NCA letter does not refer to density.

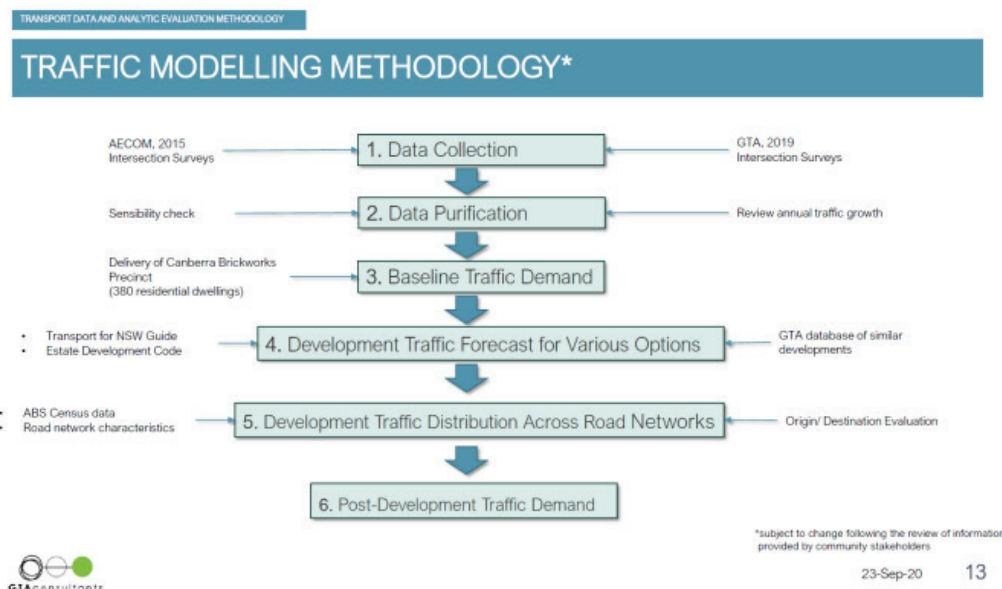
The revised master plan has reduced building heights across the Forestry Place site while:

- Addressing the needs of adjacent property owners;
- Retaining 60% open space;
- Limiting built form to existing developable areas;
- Preserving all heritage requirements for the entire site, including a 20 metre heritage curtilage and setback to adjoining neighbours;
- Incorporating all Forestry Place parking needs on site; and
- Retaining the level of density required for financial viability to maintain and renew the heritage items.

The original masterplan was based upon the planning principals of the Brickworks including setbacks and height. The 3 storeys plus attic building massing was then redistributed to provide an improved urban design outcome for the site, in the opinion of Oakstand and the experts retained by Oakstand. The level of density has been able to be retained because the original urban design analysis was sufficiently thorough to allow reorganization of the building heights to accommodate the NCA requirements.

### Traffic and Parking

The NCA letter does not refer to traffic or car parking for Forestry Place. I acknowledge that both traffic and parking have long been of concern to Yarralumla residents and you will recall that during the initial key stakeholder engagements those present agreed to the traffic modelling methodology below. This methodology has been used in the study.



- The modelling, based on survey data from late 2020 overlaid on to the network using TCCS model, indicates 200 vehicle trips per hour during the morning and evening peak hours, and around 2000 daily vehicle trips spread across the Yarralumla network. The seasonal variations in activity have been considered. The performance testing indicates that there will be an impact, but that it will be manageable.

- Upgrades to the Novar Street/Dudley Street/Adelaide Avenue intersection (signalisation) related to Light Rail Stage 2 to Woden are intended to improve traffic flow and will be completed well before Forestry Place development.
- TCCS have accepted the modelling. Included in their consideration is that the CSIRO lease allows for a further 10,000m<sup>2</sup> GFA, which if it had been realised, would have increased traffic flow to a similar level as the proposed development.
- It is acknowledged there are some parking matters at the Yarralumla shops and around the streets, but there have been discussions with TCCS that it is beyond the remit of this project to remedy.
- No mitigation measures or speed attenuation is proposed external to Forestry Place but there will be changes at the site access points to improve traffic circulation. There will also be active travel works on pedestrian and cycling path networks associated with the development.
- The revised master plan and any future works approvals will fully comply with all ACT Government parking requirements and will be accommodated in basement and kerbside parking internal to the site.

**Hotel**

The YRA queries agreement of the NCA to hotel as a land use.

The NCA response to the original master plan supports 'hospitality' as a land use and this has been subsequently confirmed in discussions with NCA officers.

Again, thank you for your continuing engagement. If you require further information, please contact Mr Justin Micallef at [Justin@oakstand.com.au](mailto:Justin@oakstand.com.au) or Dr Tania Parkes at [taniaparkes@taniaparkes.com.au](mailto:taniaparkes@taniaparkes.com.au).

Yours Sincerely,  
**Oakstand NSW Pty Limited**



David Cullen  
CEO



**Australian Government**  
**National Capital Authority**

## **STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION REPORT**

**Block 7 Section 4 Yarralumla – Forestry Place Proposal**  
**Request for National Capital Plan Amendment**

November 2021



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## 1. Introduction

The National Capital Authority (NCA) received a request for an Amendment to the National Capital Plan (the Plan) for Block 7 Section 4 Yarralumla, also known as Forestry Place. In June 2021, the NCA Board considered the request for Amendment and the sensitive nature of such proposals. The Board asked NCA officers to conduct an independent community engagement process to seek the views of stakeholders.

The stakeholders were consulted on a proposal which included the following:

- 222 residential apartments
- 54 independent living apartments
- 130 bed aged care
- 80 keys hotel
- 800m<sup>2</sup> of commercial space
- Other community uses such as a swimming pool and tennis courts.

### 1.1 Site background

Forestry Place is located within the suburb of Yarralumla, bounded by Banks Street to the east and Bentham Street to the south. See Figure 1 for site location.



Figure 1: Location of Block 7, Section 4, Yarralumla - Forestry Place

Under the Plan, Forestry Place is within a Designated Area and falls within the Lake Burley Griffin and Foreshores Precinct Code. The Plan currently allows for Community Facility uses which includes scientific research facility and ancillary office use. CSIRO are the current lessees on site and intend to vacate at the end of their lease in 2022.

The precinct is Commonwealth Heritage Listed as an important component of the arboretum and nursery landscape of Yarralumla. The old Forestry School is also individually Commonwealth Heritage listed.

## 1.2 Stakeholders and responses

Stakeholder consultation was undertaken throughout August and September 2021.

Invitations to engage with the NCA were sent to the following key stakeholders:

- ACT Government Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD), Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS), and the ACT Heritage Council
- Department of Finance (DoF)
- Yarralumla Residents' Association (YRA)
- Inner South Canberra Community Council (ISCCC)
- Inner South Canberra Business Council
- Royal Canberra Golf Club (the Golf Club)
- Friends of ACT Trees (FACTT)
- Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA)

Except for the Inner South Canberra Business Council, all groups engaged with the NCA through meetings, by providing comments or both. In terms of the responses, the stakeholder responses can be summarised as follows:

- The DoF and FACTT provided general support to an amendment or the proposal
- The YRA and ISCCC were generally not supportive of the proposal
- EPSDD, the IFA and the Golf Club were supportive of some aspects but not of others.

## 1.3 YRA community survey

In May/June 2021, the proponent submitted a referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) to the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE). As part of this referral process DAWE undertook public consultation. To gather their own community feedback, the YRA conducted an online community survey regarding the Forestry Place proposal.

Of the 266 responses received, 164 (62%) opposed or strongly opposed to any redevelopment of the site. Seventy-three (27%) responses supported or strongly supported redevelopment, while 29 (11%) remained neutral. During the meetings with the YRA and the ISCCC, both groups identified that the views they expressed stem from this survey.

The NCA note that some questions asked in the survey were limited and were written in a way that could elicit a negative submission by respondents. For example, question 2 asked respondents who opposed or strongly opposed any redevelopment to provide reasons. There was no opportunity in this section to respond with reasons of support for any or some redevelopment.

NCA officers have reviewed the community survey objectively and further analysis is included in the following sections of this report.

## 2. Key issues

This section identifies the key issues raised during the stakeholder consultation process. It identifies the themes raised in objection or support for some or all of the proposal.

### 2.1. Land use

Stakeholder comments regarding development and land uses ranged from not supporting any new uses, to some support for parts of the development. The comments received from the stakeholders and the survey revealed that:

- Hotel (Commercial Accommodation), Office and Retail are the least supported land uses as they are not considered desirable or appropriate in a residential neighbourhood.

- Limited commercial office and retail could, however, provide more amenity, employment opportunities, and potentially reduce pressure at the Yarralumla shops.
- Residential is generally supported but at a more limited scale (see section 2.2 for more details).
- Aged care is supported by most survey respondents and stakeholders.

## 2.2. Density and height

Across the 11-hectare site, the proponent proposes a maximum plot ratio of up to 60%, with buildings ranging from 2 to 5 storeys (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Proposed building heights

Almost all the stakeholders expressed concern or objection to the density and scale of buildings proposed for Forestry Place. Most feel the density and scale of development is contrary to the character of Yarralumla, which is predominantly low-rise, single residences and townhouses. Reasons for not supporting the proposed development include:

- The scale of development proposed cannot be sympathetic to the Garden City and City Beautiful values and the landscape setting of the National Capital.
- Four to 5 storey apartment buildings are imposing, and negatively impact heritage values and the landscape.
- The adjacent Old Canberra Brickworks development's height limit is 3 storeys with an attic, and it would be preferable for the dwelling yield and height of Forestry Place to be reduced to something similar.



The respondents who indicated support for development saw ‘medium-density living close to the city centre’ of benefit to Yarralumla in reducing house prices and providing opportunities for younger families.

### 2.3. Traffic and parking

Most of the stakeholders identified that traffic and parking generation is of key concern for the Yarralumla suburb. The parking and traffic concerns raised by stakeholders during consultation, and in the survey are as follows:

- the residential roads in Yarralumla are already at or near capacity
- the parking spaces at the Yarralumla shops are ‘...already 75 less than the Territory Plan Parking Code requires...’
- the addition of the Old Canberra Brickworks development (see Figure 3 for location) and the proposal will further exacerbate current traffic and parking issues
- with commercial and aged care, the increase of vehicle access to and from the site will impact quality of life, for example traffic noise throughout the day and in the evenings impacts the quietness of the suburban streets.



Figure 3: Forestry place in relation to Old Canberra Brickworks and key intersections.

### 2.4. Heritage and landscape

Most stakeholders raised issues regarding the heritage and landscape values of the site. These concerns include:

- the building and landscape heritage values have not been respected or adequately reflected in the development proposal and will be lost
- the loss of the landscape character as large trees will be removed due to weed species or trees coming to their end-of-life.

Some stakeholders expressed general support and suggested opportunities for the following:

- the proponent’s proposed retention of trees and the adaptive re-use of heritage-listed buildings
- the opportunity to incorporate management and interpretation of the landscape.

### 3. NCA consideration and next steps

While the NCA acknowledge that some local residents do not want to see any redevelopment at Forestry Place, principles in the Plan must be considered in the planning and development of this site. These principles include containing new development predominantly within existing urban areas and planning development which promotes community vitality and safety.

In considering these principles and the outcomes of the consultation, the Board reviewed the request for a draft amendment for Forestry Place at their meeting on 19 October 2021. The Board did not agree to the proposal presented as part of public consultation but agreed to reconsider a proposal in which building heights are no greater than 3 storeys plus attic. This is more in keeping with the existing and likely future urban fabric, and better maintains development within the landscape. This also reflects building heights generally permitted in the Plan and expected development outcomes at the nearby Old Canberra Brickworks.

The Board is supportive of residential and community facility land uses within Forestry Place. However, the types of commercial land uses will be re-considered in order to better complement the predominantly residential character of the area.

To address stakeholder concerns, in addition to the above requirements, a draft amendment could include:

- detailed conditions and limits for the types of commercial uses that may be proposed
- heritage requirements to ensure continued protection should the site revert to the Territory in the future
- detailed conditions for the retention of the landscape character and deep root planting zones.

Following the Board meeting, the proponent was advised of their decisions. The proponent has the opportunity to reconsider the development proposal and present an alternative to the NCA where development is no greater than three storeys plus attic, and further information supporting the commercial uses proposed. Should the Board agree to a revised draft amendment, further consultation with the community will be undertaken.