

2021/8935 – CSIRO Yarralumla – Demolition of Minor Structure

The Yarralumla Residents Association considers the proposed action to demolish a number of buildings on the site will have a significant impact on the values of the CSIRO Forestry Precinct (Commonwealth Heritage List ID105595) and should be considered as a controlled action and should be subject to the assessment and approval process under the EPBC Act.

The action includes the demolition of Buildings 4A, 4B, 4C and 4D Glasshouses.

The use of the precinct for forestry research over many years is a key heritage value as recognised in its listing on the Commonwealth heritage list. For example, the opening paragraph of the Summary Statement of Significance notes *[the precinct] demonstrates both the Commonwealth's interest in scientific endeavour and a vision for Canberra as the location for science* The Statement of Significance also recognises the precinct is associated with an array of scientific achievements.

This complex of four Greenhouses was established between 1955 and 1958 and is typical of this era of plant house design. The complex is neither minor nor insignificant but is an integral part of the research processes carried out at the site. It demonstrates the large-scale horticultural research undertaken by AFS in post WW II and contributes to the overall understanding of the site as a horticultural and forestry research facility.

The demolition will have a significant and irreversible impact to the heritage values of the site overall as these Glasshouses are particularly representative of this type of building and the only remaining Glasshouses within the site.

The action also involves the demolition of Building 26 Wind Tower. The Pyrotron wind tunnel, built in 2008, is a rare example of new bushfire research technology and is associated with the 21st century scientific research uses of the site. Its removal will eliminate a key item of scientific research illustrative of this era of the precinct's heritage.

Contrary to Sub-section 1.13 of the Referral and Section 5 of the Statement of Heritage Impact, there has been no explicit consultation with the community. Only now is the extent of the demolition apparent. A formal environmental assessment process under the EPBC Act will provide an opportunity for public comment.

Michael Lewis

President YRA

info@yarralumlaresidents.org.au

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