



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

# Consultation Report

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## Works Approval No 101762

12 Somers Crescent, Forrest  
(Block 14 Section 6 Forrest)

Demolition of existing dwelling, construction of three residential dwellings and associated landscaping

*April 2020*

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# Introduction

**Under the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*, the National Capital Authority (NCA) prepares and administers the National Capital Plan (NCP) to ensure Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance.**

The Plan sets out the broad planning framework for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Areas designated as having special characteristics of the National Capital are subject to detailed planning policies and guidelines.

Any buildings or structures, demolition, landscaping or excavation works in Designated Areas require the approval of the NCA. The NCA considers such proposals in the context of the relevant provisions of the Plan.

## BACKGROUND

On 22 January 2020 the NCA received a works approval application for demolition of the existing dwelling, construction of three residential dwellings and associated landscaping and associated landscape works at 12 Somers Crescent, Forrester.

The proposal for three dwellings (two storey) presents as one building from the Somers Crescent street frontage, the other two dwellings are located behind. Each dwelling will have its own double garage that can be accessed from the one driveway. The new driveway will utilise the existing verge access and drive way. The dwellings are separate and all dwellings are encircled with soft landscaping. Primary living areas have northern orientation while maintaining privacy for and to neighbouring properties.

Materials and finishes are proposed to be of high quality using a mixture of natural and neutral colours.

The dwellings share one entry point from the street. The site features a significant amount of landscaping including canopy trees and gardens. Hedge planting is proposed to the southern perimeter of the block, facing Somers Crescent.

# Public Consultation requirements

## 1.1 National Capital Plan (NCP)

Under the NCP, requirements for public consultation apply to:

- Major developments proposed for Section 9 Barton;
- A landmark building to RL617 adjacent to Commonwealth Avenue (within the Constitution Avenue and Anzac Parade Precinct);
- Detailed plans for development at Academy Close, Campbell;
- High-impact telecommunications facilities;
- All residential proposals within the Deakin/Forrester Residential Area Precinct; and
- All residential and commercial development proposed for Section 5 Campbell.

Public consultation was undertaken on the application as it is mandatory under the National Capital Plan.

## 1.2 Commitment to Community Engagement

The NCA's 'Commitment to Community Engagement' details how the NCA conducts consultation. The purpose is to achieve a greater level of consistency and transparency in the NCA's decision making process.

The 'Commitment to Community Engagement' describes the minimum requirements for consultation, and the process by which Works Approval (WA) applications that are released for public consultation will be assessed.

Part 2.7 *Works Applications and Attachment C Protocol for Development Applications for Works Which Require Consultation* of the NCA's 'Commitment to Community Engagement' describes the consultation process for WA applications. The NCA undertakes an assessment of whether a proposal is consistent with the National Capital Plan and level of public consultation required. An assessment is made in relation to adverse impacts on:

- public space and community amenity;
- environment, heritage or landscape values;
- amenity of the locality in terms of materials, finishes, scale, massing, design and quality; and
- consistency with an existing Heritage Management Plan.

When an application for works is lodged and public consultation is required, consultation with the community and stakeholders will be undertaken by the applicant, the NCA or both. Where consultation is undertaken by the applicant, the NCA may choose to stipulate specific requirements that the applicant is required to implement.

The NCA may set aside the requirement to undertake full public consultation where:

- previous consultation has been undertaken on the proposal;
- minor amendments to previously approved works are required;
- the NCA determines no stakeholders will be affected; and
- proposals are given exemption, as outlined in Part 2.3 of the 'Commitment to Community Engagement'.

Public consultation was undertaken as it is a mandatory requirement under the NCP, and significant community interest has been demonstrated in recent developments of the precinct and in planning policy proposals for the Deakin Forrest Residential Area Precinct.

## Summary of Public Consultation

### 2.1 The public consultation process

Public consultation was undertaken on the WA application by the NCA between 29 February and 23 March 2020. Consultation took the form of:

- On Saturday 29 February 2020, the NCA published a public notice in The Canberra Times detailing the proposed works and inviting submissions to be made to the NCA in relation to the proposal ([Attachment A](#))
- Between 29 February and 23 March 2020, the NCA published the proposal and plans on the NCA's website
- On 2 March 2020, one A1 size signs were placed on site

- On 2 March 2020 the NCA wrote to key stakeholders and community groups via email advising of the consultation process and inviting comments (including Forrest Residents Group and Inner South Community Council)
- On 2 March the NCA provided hard copy letters to all adjoining and near-by neighbours advising of the consultation process and inviting comments (Somers Crescent, Melbourne Avenue and State Circle)

## **2.2 Key issues raised during consultation and NCA response**

The NCA received a total of three submissions on the proposal. All submissions objected the proposal. Key themes raised in the submissions included:

- The proposal is not in keeping with the character of the area
- Soft landscape ratio
- Increasing the density of the suburb
- The design is not suitable for aging in place

Emails of acknowledgment were sent to submitters advising them that their submission would be taken into consideration before a decision is made on the application. Issues raised in the submissions and NCA response to all issues raised is detailed in Attachment B of this report.

## **Conclusion**

The NCA's consultation process was carried out in accordance with the Plan and the NCA's 'Commitment to Community Engagement'. The NCA has considered issues raised in the submissions as part of the assessment process.

The NCA believes that key concerns raised during the public consultation period have been addressed. The proposal is not inconsistent with the National Capital Plan and the Deakin/Forrest Residential Area Precinct Code – Landscape and Sustainability Guidelines.

# Attachment A – The Canberra Times Public Notice and Site Notice



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**National Capital Authority**

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## WORKS APPROVAL

Open for Public Consultation  
**Block 14 Section 6 Forrest  
(12 Somers Crescent)**

The National Capital Authority (NCA) has received a Works Approval (WA) application from TT Architecture. The application is for the demolition of an existing dwelling, construction of three new dwellings and associated landscaping.



The plans and supporting documentation for this WA application can be viewed on the NCA's website.

The NCA welcomes feedback on this application **by close of business Monday 23 March 2020**. Submissions can be made via email to [worksapproval@nca.gov.au](mailto:worksapproval@nca.gov.au) or GPO Box 373, Canberra ACT 2601.

Please contact the NCA for further information on (02) 6271 2888.

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*Building the National Capital in the hearts of all Australians*

## HAVE YOUR SAY



### WORKS APPROVAL BLOCK 14 SECTION 6 FORREST (12 SOMERS CRESCENT)

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[www.nca.gov.au](https://www.nca.gov.au)

# Attachment B

The National Capital Authority (NCA) undertakes an open and transparent works approval application process. As part of this process the NCA prepares a Consultation Report for publication on the NCA website, which includes each submission, along with the name of each person making the submission.

Submission	Comment/Issue	NCA Response
1.	Mr Ernst Willheim	
1.1	<p>We, Ernst Willheim and Ann Kent, submit the following objections to the works approval application for 12 Somers Crescent Forrest.</p> <p>In doing so we note that we have been residents of Forrest for many years.</p> <p>Forrest is one of Canberra’s finest suburbs.</p> <p>Apart from a small area controlled by the National Capital Authority (NCA), Forrest consists primarily of single houses on large blocks.</p> <p>Forrest is recognised and widely sought after because of this character, fine single homes on large blocks together with its leafy environment.</p>	<p>The site is located within Figure 28 – Deakin Forrest Residential Precinct of the National Capital Plan (NCP). The land use policy for the site is Residential. The proposal will not alter the land use policy for the site.</p> <p>The residential character of the area will be retained as the land will be continued to be used for residential purposes.</p> <p>The importance of the Deakin/Forrest residential area precinct stems from its frontage to the Main Avenue of State Circle and close proximity and relationship to Parliament House, its location within the Griffins’ land axis, and as an example of twentieth century ‘Garden City’ planning concepts that the Griffins’ adopted in their design for Canberra.</p> <p>The NCA’s ‘Issues and Policy Response Paper’ formed the first part of the NCA’s investigation into the Deakin/Forrest Precinct, to ascertain whether current planning and design controls within the National Capital Plan (NCP) were adequate to maintain the ‘Garden City’ and ‘City Beautiful’ concepts on which the area is based. The NCA determined that greater emphasis and clarification was required in regards to the landscape and sustainability policies within the NCP, therefore the NCA prepared <i>Landscape and Sustainability Guidelines</i> (the Guidelines), July 2018. The Guidelines are advisory only and aim to support existing objectives and policies of the NCP to preserve the Garden City character of the Precinct.</p> <p>The proposed development includes 41% of the block to be used for landscaping, therefore meets the 40% landscaping requirement.</p>

Submission	Comment/Issue	NCA Response
	<p>Accordingly, the NCA should reject this works approval application for three three-level buildings on one block on the grounds that this sort of multiple occupancy is totally inappropriate for Forrest.</p>	<p>The block is 1821m<sup>2</sup> and the proposed development consists of three dwellings. The density of this development is significantly less than the surrounding multi-unit developments and allows for a large area of landscaping.</p> <p>The NCP and the Guidelines for the Precinct do not place a limit on the quantity of dwellings per block, however future development, including single dwelling proposals, will need to comply with specific requirements outlined in the Guidelines.</p> <p>The proposed development is for three dwellings that are two storeys each. The garage is not located on a separate level.</p> <p>The NCA considers that the proposal for three dwellings on the block allows sufficient space for landscaped areas, maintaining and enhancing the City Beautiful and Garden City concepts and character of the residential environment.</p> <p>Implementation of policies outlined in the NCP and the Guidelines naturally limit the built and hardscape environment in order to protect the Garden City and City Beautiful character of the Precinct.</p>
1.2	<p>The Planning Report now made available refers to 'ageing in place'. yet the proposed development is for obvious reasons completely unsuitable for older residents who wish to 'age in place'. A multi storey home is surely unsuitable for 'ageing in place'. The first thing older people look for when seeking to downsize is single level with a minimum of steps. I can say this with confidence from our own experience (my wife and I are in our late 70's) and from numerous meetings with agents who all remark that the inner south lacks single level developments suitable for older people.</p>	<p>Concerns are noted. While the NCP does not currently have specific objectives relating to 'aging in place', it is believed that the dwellings do meet needs of those who wish to age in place. Two out of the three dwellings have a location on the plans for a potential lift and all three have access to all essential rooms (bedroom, bathroom, kitchen etc) from the ground floor.</p>
2.	Richard Davis	
2.1	<p>I wish to object to the application for works approval for 3 dwelling to be erected at 12 Somers Cres Forrest. This is one of the old suburbs of Canberra with predominantly single houses on large blocks. Blocks in newer suburbs are becoming progressively smaller with larger, multi-storied houses on them and even some of the older areas of Canberra (e.g. Kingston, Braddon) are being converted to apartments and high density</p>	<p>See response 1.1</p>

Submission	Comment/Issue	NCA Response
	<p>developments while many areas are experiencing subdivision of blocks leading to increased density. The number of areas with single dwellings on larger blocks are becoming fewer and fewer.</p> <p>I would request that the area under NCA control in Forrest be spared from this push for an increased density of large multi-storied dwellings in order to retain a diversity of dwelling and block types across Canberra. Some areas should be retained as single dwellings on large blocks in order to provide a choice for those who do not wish to live in higher density, multi-story areas. Allowing this works approval to go ahead would be incompatible with surrounding dwellings.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Neville and Moria Smythe – Forrest Residents Group Committee Members</b>	
3.1	<p>This response comes from Neville and Moira Smythe, Forrest Residents Group committee members, who have enjoyed living for over 22 years on the corner of Hobart Avenue and Dominion Circuit. We love the greenery and open space of our neighbourhood and we deplore the encroachment of multiple occupancies which degrade the character of the area.</p> <p>The Deakin/Forrest Residential Area Precinct Code points to the area’s proximity to Parliament House, its location within the Griffins’ land axis, and its importance as an example of the twentieth century ‘Garden City’ planning concept used by the Griffins in their design for Canberra. The NCA is mandated to "maintain and enhance the character of the National Capital".</p> <p>12 Somers Crescent is located near the corner with Melbourne Avenue where there has been some multiple occupancy development in recent years. Its neighbour at 14 Somers Cres has four houses on a block of similar size, almost the entire block covered with buildings, concrete and paving, and only a small amount of greenery on the street front. 10 Somers Cres appears likely to be redeveloped too. Elsewhere in the street, dignified single houses are the norm and suit the character of the area. if the current</p>	See response 1.1

Submission	Comment/Issue	NCA Response
	proposal is approved, it will set yet another precedent for destroying that character. Please, can we put a stop to this before it gets any worse.	
3.2	This is the third proposed redevelopment replacing a single dwelling with three houses in the Deakin/Forrest Residential Area Precinct. We note that, like 10 Canterbury Cres, Deakin, it is described by the (same) architect as part of an Ageing in Place agenda. We also note that the non-NCA area of Forrest is provided with generous zones for multiple occupancies and there is no need for additional such developments scattered throughout the rest of the suburb.	Please see Response 1.2