



Australian Government
National Capital Authority

Consultation Report

Works Approval No 103350

Construction of the John Gorton Campus Multi Storey Car Park

(Block 1 Section 21 Parkes)

Date: October 2023

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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 (the Plan) 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.

On 15 March 2023 an application for works approval was received by the NCA from Department of Finance (DoF). The application is for the construction of a multi-storey car park structure and childcare centre located adjacent to the John Gorton Building, Kings Avenue, Parkes, ACT.

The proponent separated the works approval application for the John Gorton Campus Car Park into a number of staged packages.

The NCA granted works approval for early works (demolition) and site establishment associated with the construction of the car park on 12 July 2023.

The works approval application relating to the main building works was re-lodged on 28 July 2023. Landscaping, lighting, signage, materials/finishes are subject to a separate works approval application, once detailed construction plans are finalised.

Works to the Kings Avenue road reserve (landscaping and civil works, including the bus stop relocation) and intersection will be subject to a future works approval application once traffic, landscaping and civil works are finalised.

Public Consultation requirements

When an application for works approval is lodged and consultation is required, consultation with the community and stakeholders may 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.

1.1 National Capital Plan

Under the Plan, 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/Forrest Residential Area Precinct; and
- All residential and commercial development proposed for Section 5 Campbell.

This application was *not* required to be publicly notified by the National Capital Plan. However, consultation was undertaken on the application due to potential impacts on public space, refer to Part 1.2 below.

1.2 Commitment to Community Engagement

The NCA's *Commitment to Community Engagement (2023)* guides the way in which the agency engages with the community to keep people informed about decisions that have already been made and to offer opportunities for input into decision-making. The NCA considers how best to approach public participation processes having regard to the training curriculum delivered by the International Association for Public Participation.

The *Commitment to Community Engagement* sets out the following engagement principles:

Intentional

- Be clear about what we are trying to achieve.
- Be clear about the scope for people to influence outcomes and where other processes have made recommendations and decisions.
- Be clear about limitations and constraints for community comment and involvement.

Inclusive

- Use a variety of methods allowing as many Australians as possible to participate if they wish.
- Proactively seek appropriate participants where there are missing voices.

Timely

- Allow sufficient time for the community to participate in consultation processes.
- Begin engagement at the earliest appropriate stage in the life of a project.

Feedback

- Let people know how their input and feedback was used.
- Meet or exceed all statutory engagement requirements.

The NCA assesses whether a proposal is consistent with the National Capital Plan and if it requires public consultation. An assessment is made in relation to 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.

Public consultation was undertaken on the application as the proposal may have adverse impacts on public space, community amenity, environment, heritage and landscape values.

Summary of Public Consultation

2.1 The public consultation process

Public consultation was undertaken by the NCA between 20 March and 11 April 2023 in the following manner:

- On Saturday 18 March 2023, publishing a public notice in *The Canberra Times* outlining the proposed works and inviting submissions to be made to the NCA in relation to the proposal.
- Between 18 March and 11 April 2023, publishing details of the proposal on the NCA's website.
- On 20 March 2023 placing three A1 signs on site (Kings Avenue, Dorothy Tangney Place and King Edward Terrace frontages).
- On 22 March 2023, the NCA wrote to key stakeholders via email advising of the consultation process and inviting comments, including:
 - the Lake Burley Griffin Guardians;
 - the National Trust;
 - the Griffin Society;
 - the Australian Institute of Architects and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects;
 - Australian Parliament House;
 - National Institutions (National Museum of Australia, National Portrait Gallery, National Library of Australia, National Gallery of Australia and the High Court of Australia);
 - Adjacent and near by government departments (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Attorney General's Department, Australian Federal Police, Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Treasury, National Archives of Australia and the Office of National Intelligence).

Media coverage of the proposal included an article in the *Canberra Times* on 19 December 2022 and the *Riot Act* on 31 October 2022 which identified that the proposal was an enabling project to the new National Security Office Precinct at York Park in Barton. In addition, the project has received coverage on websites of the National trust of Australia, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Public Transport Association of Canberra.

2.2 Submissions Received, Comments and Response

The NCA received a total of 18 submissions on the proposal. 12 submissions did not support the proposal, while six others offered various views and made comment.

Emails of acknowledgment were sent to all submitters advising them that their submissions will be taken into consideration before a decision is made on the application.

Key issues raised in the submissions were:

1. The proposal encouraging private car use over active travel and public transport;
2. The proposal not in keeping with net zero carbon emissions/mitigation of climate change effects/sustainability objectives;
3. The proposal's impact on heritage values;
4. The proposal is inconsistent with National Capital Plan and significance of the Parliamentary Zone/ use of the Parliamentary Zone for a car park that services a building outside of the Parliamentary Zone;
5. Scale and design of the building, including landscaping, location/orientation;
6. Air quality impacts of the proposal - within the car park and ventilation/potential impact to childcare area
7. The proposal's impact on traffic/traffic modelling;
8. Existing car parking displacement;
9. Existing bus stop displacement;
10. Cost of the proposal.

Key issues raised and the NCA's response is provided at [Attachment B](#). A list of submitters can be found at [Attachment C](#) of this report. Names of submitters have been omitted where a submitter requested confidentiality.

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 assessed issues raised by submitters and have been taken into account as part of the assessment process.

The NCA is satisfied that major concerns of the community have been addressed. The proposal is not inconsistent with the provisions of the National Capital Plan, and is supported by the NCA.

The application was approved by the NCA on 29 August 2023.


Attachment A



Australian Government
National Capital Authority

WORKS APPROVAL

Open for Public Consultation
**Block 1 Section 21 Parkes -
Construction of the John Gorton
Campus Carpark Building**



The National Capital Authority (NCA) has received a works approval application for the construction of a multi-storey car park structure, childcare centre, landscaping and associated road works adjacent to the John Gorton Building, Kings Avenue, Parkes, ACT.




The plans and supporting documentation for the application can be viewed at the NCA's website at <https://www.nca.gov.au/planning/works-approval/wa-under-consultation>.

Submissions can be made by:

- Email to waconsultation@nca.gov.au
- Writing to GPO Box 373, Canberra ACT 2601


The NCA welcomes feedback on this application by **5:00pm Tuesday 11 April 2023**.

For further information, please contact the NCA on (02) 6271 2888.

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www.nca.gov.au

Canberra Times advertisement




Australian Government
National Capital Authority

HAVE YOUR SAY

BLOCK 1 SECTION 21 PARKES - CONSTRUCTION OF JOHN GORTON CAMPUS CARPARK

The National Capital Authority (NCA) has received a works approval application for the construction of a multi-storey car park structure, childcare centre, landscaping and associated road works adjacent to the John Gorton Building, Kings Avenue, Parkes, ACT.



The plans and supporting documentation for the application can be viewed at the NCA's website at <https://www.nca.gov.au/planning/consultations>.

Submissions can be made by:

- Email to WAconsultation@nca.gov.au
- Writing to GPO Box 373, Canberra ACT 2601

The NCA welcomes feedback on this application by **5:00pm on Tuesday 11 April 2023**.

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

www.nca.gov.au

On site signage



Signage in situ

Attachment B

Summary of submissions and NCA Response

1. The proposal encouraging private car use over active travel and public transport

The project includes the relocation of an existing bus stop and includes provision for bicycle parking.

The John Gorton Campus car park will replace displaced car parking on the York Park site in Barton and also support worker and visitor amenity, including for the John Gorton Campus and nearby cultural institutions.

The Department of Finance is consulting with the Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) regarding public transport in the vicinity.

2. The proposal not in keeping with net zero carbon emissions/mitigation of climate change effects/sustainability objectives

The John Gorton Campus Car Park will include electrical infrastructure for EV charging stations, bicycle parking, natural ventilation and materials chosen for maintenance-free longevity all contributing to the sustainability of the project.

3. The proposal's impact on heritage values

The site is within the 'Parliament House Vista', which is included on the Commonwealth Heritage List under the EPBC Act. Consequently, there are statutory obligations to conserve and protect the place's heritage values.

The Parliament House Vista area is a large and complex landscape with a range of values related to its history and historical associations, unique evolving design, aesthetic value, creative achievement and social value. It expresses the core of the Walter Burley Griffin design vision for Canberra with the dominant landscape feature of the Land Axis stretching from Parliament House to the Australian War Memorial. In the Parliamentary Zone, buildings are set within designed open space areas with tree-lined roads, with a balanced symmetry about the Land Axis.

The proposal was referred by the proponent, Finance, to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water in December 2022 and determined to be a controlled action. After further assessment, the Delegate of the Department approved the proposal, with conditions, on 28 April 2023 (Decision Notice EPBC 2022/09400). Through this process, The Department of Finance has addressed the necessary heritage obligations.

4. The proposal is inconsistent with National Capital Plan and significance of the Parliamentary Zone/ use of the Parliamentary Zone for a car park that services a building outside of the Parliamentary Zone

As the physical manifestation of Australian democratic government and home of the nation's most important cultural and judicial institutions the Parliamentary Zone is the symbolic heart of the national Capital and the geometric centre of the Griffins' plan for Canberra.

Development within the precinct is guided by the Objectives and Intentions at part 4.3.3 of the NCP. Permissible land uses include parliamentary uses, appropriate National Capital uses and other uses that enhance the function and character of the area.

The proposed works balance the objectives for the Parliamentary Zone Precinct by enabling a new employment location in Barton and supporting the existing and ongoing functioning of the Parliamentary Zone.

The proposed works support the welcoming of people and visitors into the Parliamentary Zone, improving the level of amenity, access and strengthening relationships between buildings and the landscape. Ancillary facilities such as the childcare centre provide a greater level of amenity to support existing and future land uses.

Different locations outside of the Parliamentary Zone were explored comprehensively and proved problematic. The five identified campuses within the NCP were considered with the following criteria:

- a developable site within close proximity from the proposed Precinct, including providing a convenient and safe pedestrian route.
- the availability of Commonwealth managed land within Barton; and
- a site that enables efficient traffic pathways and efficiently connects the greater traffic network for providing convenient access and egress to and from site.

After careful consideration of the five potential parliamentary campus locations, no feasible location outside of the Parliamentary Zone met the above criteria except the John Gorton Campus.

Basement level carparking was explored in multiple configurations and locations within the John Gorton Campus. A basement configuration was explored and subsequently eliminated for several reasons, including:

- construction time implications from the additional time required for excavation;
- the risk from existing watertable conditions;
- proximity to the heritage-listed Communications Bunker of the John Gorton Building and risks associated during construction;
- increased initial and ongoing cost implications of a basement solution, particularly related to additional mechanical plant requirements and environmental issues arising from groundwater discharge;
- a basement solution did not allow the development to include auxiliary functions, including retail and childcare that would provide greater activation and diversity to the precinct; and
- one of the key focuses of the area is one of sustainability, which would be substantially reduced by the introduction of a basement.

Hybrid alternatives were also explored, consisting of both above-ground and below -ground levels in a standalone carpark structure. Whilst it is acknowledged that these alternatives do lower the overall building height and thus visual impact, these options were not seen to be advantageous for the following reasons:

- The increase in materials, maintenance and embedded energy associated with the carpark retaining wall systems.
- An increased area of land would need to be disturbed because of the excavation requirements. Additionally, the disposal of excavated soil and the additional fossil fuel use associated with excavation and transport of soil were not deemed appropriate.
- The basement and above-ground configuration created traffic flow issues, including conflicting vehicle movements when exiting and entering the carpark. Additional technology for this option was required to indicate users to vacant spaces, and thus created concerns of visual permeability and light indicators being visible externally. Additional capital cost, ongoing cost and energy use would be associated with this technology.
- The initial intent was to maintain natural ventilation for the carpark, eliminating the need of mechanical ventilation systems. The inclusion of a basement reduces the carpark efficiency

through the requirement of plant allocation, plus additional excavation to accommodate ventilation ductwork and plant equipment. Additionally, these systems incur initial and on-going cost implications, as well as sustainability implications with increased energy consumption.

- The carpark ventilation system introduces additional acoustic noise whilst in operation.
- This option also included the reasons as noted above for a basement, including implications to initial and whole-of-life costs, watertable issues, additional construction time and construction risks.

The proposed structure has been designed to reflect a high standard of architecture and urban design while minimising impacts on the heritage significance of the Parliamentary Zone.

5. Scale and design of the building, including landscaping, location/orientation

The proposed car park is to be aligned with the built form of the Parliamentary Zone and replaces an existing surface car park, part road/carpark access, footpaths and small open space area.

Previous studies of the proposed John Gorton Building (JGB) campus describe two development sites, A and B (refer image below), both edging public places giving the John Gorton Building a formal address, enabling public squares and providing address points for two development sites.

The larger context of Kings Avenue is reflected in the setback alignment with East Block further to the south. On site B the southwest corner is held by the intersection of the two development sites ensuring an appropriately orthogonal relationship between the future development of site A and the existing geometry of JGB. This also enables the rectangular plan of the carpark to be sited primarily away from Kings Avenue and aligns with the King Edward Terrace face of JGB.



The site is located within the John Gorton Campus of the Parliamentary Zone. Part 4.3.5 of the NCP states:

Essentially, the policy is to use the existing buildings as 'anchors' for new development that has a compatible function.

The existing buildings will also influence the architectural and landscape character for each of the campuses. Urban design guidelines addressing aspects such as form, materials, scale and footprint

should ensure that successive development contributes to the integrity of the campus.

The symmetry of the visual structure of the Parliamentary Zone and Parliament House Vista Land Axis will be balanced over time. The design and siting (including scale and massing) of the structure ensures geometry is aligned parallel to the land axis and existing buildings. New landscaping to the site will reinforce the and enhance the existing formal landscape character of the Zone.

The importance of the public realm is identified, and pedestrian activity is encouraged through and around the site via new pedestrian pathways. On site directional and identification signage and new landscaping will provide a variety of public spaces.

The proposed development aims to support visitation and growth of the working population of the Parliamentary Zone and Barton (currently dominated by Government functions). The proposed works retains the geometry of the road layout and infrastructure whilst continuing the existing intersection and alignment of Blackall Street to the car park.

The proposed works are not inconsistent with the NCP.

6. Air quality impacts of the proposal - within the car park and ventilation/potential impact to childcare area

The ventilation and mechanical design for the car park and childcare will be designed to meet the requirements of the National Construction Code and associated Australian Standards with consideration of the occupants of the childcare centre and car park.

7. The proposal's impact on traffic/traffic modelling

Traffic analysis and modelling is ongoing. Works to Kings Avenue, including the new signalised intersection will be subject to a separate works approval application and ensure an appropriate level of service is achieved for vehicular movements.

8. Existing car parking displacement

Accessible car parking spaces displaced as a result of the car park closure were relocated adjacent the John Gorton Building. The NCA notes there is adequate parking elsewhere within the Parliamentary Zone to cater for other displaced car parking areas.

9. Existing bus stop displacement

The existing bus stop and shelter will be relocated from its current location, approximately 100m towards Parliament House on Kings Avenue. The exact location is yet to be determined and is subject to a future works approval application as part of the Kings Avenue civil and landscape works.

11. Cost of the proposal.

The NCA notes that expenditure of public money is a policy decision of the Federal Government and not a consideration in its assessment of the works approval application.

Attachment C

List of Submitters

Submission No.	Submitter
1	Wil and Rob
2	Drew Triebe
3	Bill Gemmell
4	Aalto Bowers
5	Hamish McKinnon
6	Name withheld
7	Peter Parker
8	Andrew Donnellan
9	LBG Guardians
10	Ryan Hemsley
11	Nathan Sibley DCCEEW
12	Name withheld
13	Mark Dando
14	National Gallery of Australia
15	Liam Foley
16	Eben Leifer
17	Amy Jelacic
18	Gillian King