

APPENDIX C: SOCIAL VALUE RESEARCH

C.1 SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE INDICATORS

The following significance indicators are based on an approach to social value assessment developed for the Australian Heritage Commission by Chris Johnston (Context Pty Ltd) and used in the RFA National Estate studies of social value in Victoria, NSW and Tasmania.

1. Important to a community as a landmark, marker or signature

Specific significance indicators:

- Landmarks
- Signature places and icons - places used to symbolically represent a locality or community
- Locational markers - places that mark where you are in a landscape/locality and places that figure as landmarks in daily life
- Understanding history and environment ("our place in the world") - special and unusual features that help explain the local environment in all its diversity

Likely place characteristics:

- Named landscape or built features
- Entry or centre points of a locality
- Place used as community signature

2. Important as a reference point in a community's identity or sense of itself

Specific significance indicators:

- Strong symbolic qualities which define a community
- Spiritual or traditional connection between past and present
- Represents (embodies) important collective (community) meaning/s
- Association with events having a profound effect on a community
- Symbolically represents the past in the present (connects the past and the present)
- Represents attitudes, beliefs, behaviours fundamental to community identity

Likely place characteristics:

- Mythological sites
- Places where continuing tradition/ceremony is practiced or where tradition is passed on
- Places where the continuity/survival of a community is celebrated
- Places where a community's identity has been forged such as disaster sites, foundation places, seminal events in a community's life

3. Strong or special community attachment developed from use and/or association

Specific significance indicators:

- Essential community function leading to special attachment
- Longevity of use or association including continuity to the present

Likely place characteristics:

- Places providing essential community functions such as schools, halls, churches

- Community meeting places (of all types)
- Places defended at times of threat (to the place) for reasons of attachment not just function
- Places with a long tradition and continuity of community use or access

Thresholds

In assessing social value, reaching the threshold requires the following:

1. Identified by a community which is in continued existence today as a definable entity.
2. Continuity of use or association, meanings, or symbolic importance over a period of 25 years or more (representing transition of values beyond one generation).
3. Existence of an attachment or association with a place by a defined community, including evidence of use developing into deeper attachment that goes beyond utility value.

C.2 SOCIAL VALUES ASSESSMENT RESULTS

This section contains the results of the three methods undertaken as part of this social values assessment. They are presented in the following order:

- interview/questionnaire;
- surveys; and
- focus group.

Interview/Questionnaire

An interview and questionnaire were conducted with two prominent figures with long involvement and senior positions with the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) – Richard Clough as a landscape architect from 1959, and Director of the Landscape Division from 1972 to 1980, and Keith Storey, Principal Planner with the NCDC. Both methods used the same questions. The responses have been clustered into three groups—connections, significance and issues.

Connections

Both respondents have long and multi-layered association through NCDC, and one as a former resident and now frequent visitor to Canberra (annually if not more often), the other as a long-time local Canberra resident, visiting and taking visitors to Parkes Place (and the wider Parliament House Vista landscapes). Both maintain an active interest and engagement in recent and future planning of the Canberra landscape and, through this process, contributed keen observations on the values of the place, and identified a range of issues for consideration based on long experience with the area’s planning and development, its achievements and challenges.

Significance

Parkes Place as a whole,

‘Parkes Place is a major section of the land axis and the first to be constructed. It set the design approach and so formed the basis for all future development of the land axis. It exemplifies the ideas of the [consortium] of designers, architects, planners, organisers, and landscapers, and those must be respected.’

‘It’s a nothing place... with the exception of the four avenues of trees [framing] and the central and cross axes’ (Survey participant/s)

The values of Parkes Place extends beyond today’s community,

'The community in 2108 or 2508 are more important than today's community.' (Survey participant/s)



Significant components

- The two cross axes
- Two double axial plantings, avenues running between King George Terrace and King Edward Terrace, and between Parkes Place East and Parkes Place West
- The vast axial lawns

[Those components above, representing] ‘an absolutely outstanding piece of landscaping’ (Survey participant/s)

- Open space
- Trees and commemorative plantings
- Aboriginal Tent Embassy
- King George V Memorial

Components of relatively lower significance

- National Rose Gardens

‘Not of interest to the public, especially not outside of Canberra’ (Survey participant/s)

Components of little to no significance

- The Lobby Restaurant
- The Mall Ponds
- Fountains

‘A feature with no meaning’

Relative significance

The values of Canberra’s community were identified as needing to be subservient to those potentially held by Australians as a whole. Specifically noted was the duty of those responsible for the maintenance and development of Canberra to look beyond the local community.

Important issues for the future management of the significance of Parkes Place

- The lack of unified design embracing buildings, traffic movements, parking, landscaping, pathways and circulation patterns, access, etc within the Parliamentary Zone
- Poor interpretation of history, significance, symbolic importance
- The removal of the original Rose Gardens
- Rose labelling is overdone
- Reticence of public to enter the space occupied by the Aboriginal Tent Embassy—out of fear, respect, uncertainty
- Resolution of debates between local Aboriginal community and wider Aboriginal community for whom the place is of major symbolic importance

Policy considerations

- Adopt an approach to the design of the Parliamentary Triangle that recognises the significance of Griffin’s ideas and those of the original design team
- The spaces should be democratic and not exclude people

- Explore opportunities for enlivening spaces (a small kiosk-style cafe was suggested)
- Appropriate use of buildings within the Parliamentary Triangle—should create an appropriate environment in terms of public accessibility; buildings should be non-exclusive, welcoming, and their function should be interpreted, in a small dedicated exhibition space, for instance (a good model suggested was the National Archives)

‘Canberra gets many visitors, national and from overseas. They want to understand.’ (Survey participant/s)

- National capital gives people an understanding of the role of government, how the government functions—from the serious to humorous issues they deal with to policy-making. This should be interpreted throughout the Parliamentary Triangle in an informative and welcoming way.
- Which Government offices should be allowed within the Parliamentary Triangle?
- What uses are appropriate?
- Within Parliamentary Triangle, retain the mix of monumental spaces and smaller oases (small, restful, surrounded by trees, interesting, varied), to counteract the dehumanising nature of the large open spaces.

Survey

The raw data gained from the surveys and preliminary analysis is contained in this the following section.

Six surveys were received (out of ten). Three respondents answered the survey in its entirety. Three respondents skipped to Question 10 (as instructed at Question 2) to answer specifically about their associations with the National Rose Gardens. In addition, one from this latter group answered questions in the first section, noting that this was because they felt comfortable answering both.

In several questions where respondents were asked to choose one option, some respondents selected several—hence the numbers presented in each table do not consistently tally precisely.

Q1: What is your connection with Parkes Place?

Description	Total
Work in Parkes Place	
Work in the National Rose Gardens	2
Work Nearby	2
Member of a Rose Society	2
Other	
<i>Total</i>	6

Comments included: Old Parliament House Gardens (volunteer); Old Parliament House Ladies Rose Gardens; The Rose Society of Western Australia; The Rose Society of NSW Inc.

Q2: Thinking about your association with Parkes Place, would you describe your connection *PRIMARILY* as?

Table 12.	
Primary Reason Given	Total
Someone who uses Parkes Place for recreation and leisure or attending events	3
Someone who appreciates Parkes Place as part of the broader landscape but who doesn't visit it	
Someone who has not seen nor been to Parkes Place at all	
Specifically with the National Rose Gardens	3
Other	
<i>Total</i>	6

Q3: What are the main things you do when you're there?

Table 13.	
Activity	Total
An organised activity *	2
Passive recreation or leisure	1
Attending or watching events **	1
Eat my lunch	
Running / jogging	1
Picnics	
Rose Garden activities such as plantings	2
General garden maintenance, pruning	
Other ***	1
<i>Total</i>	8

Comments:

* Working in Old Parliament House Gardens

** Art Show – Canberra Times Open Air, Canberra Times Art Show, hot air balloon fiesta

*** Always a pleasant space to bring visitors to Canberra to appreciate the openness of the city

Q4: How often do you/did you visit Parkes Place?

Table 14.	
Frequency	Total
Daily	
Weekly	4
Monthly	

A couple of times a year	
Rarely	
Only in association with special events	
Not Stated	
<i>Total</i>	4

Q5: For how long have you been visiting Parkes Place?

Table 15.	
Length of association	Total
0-10 years	
11-24 years	1
25 years and over	2
Not Stated	
<i>Total</i>	3

Q 6: Thinking about Parkes Place as a whole, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Respondents were asked to rate their response to a series of 14 value statements.

Table 16.						
Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
Parkes Place is important as the setting for the memorial, national institutions, the restaurant, NRG and government buildings located in and around it.	2	1				
Parkes Place is a beautiful and serene landscape	2	2				
The Parkes Place is important as a place for recreation and leisure.	2	2				
Parkes Place is a place of retreat, reflection and contemplation.	1	3				
Parkes Place is important as a ceremonial and commemorative landscape	2	1	1			
Parkes Place is only important as a setting for the buildings that surround it		1	1	1	1	
Parkes Place is important for its contribution to the central national landscape of Canberra	2	1	1			
Parkes Place is a special place for me and my family or my organisation.	2	1	1			
Parkes Place is important as a symbol of Canberra	3	1				
Parkes Place is important symbolically to the Nation	2	2				
Parkes Place is a strongly evocative landscape.		3	1			

Table 16.						
Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
The National Rose Gardens are strongly evocative of the events they commemorate		3	1			
The roses within the National Rose Garden are strongly evocative of the people or organisations who donated them	1	1	1	1		

Q 7: In your opinion, why is Parkes Place as a whole important to you?

It is a beautiful open space uncluttered with buildings. This factor enables it to provide extensive vistas of Canberra from many locations. When in blossom the rose gardens provide an extremely attractive setting for Parkes Place. [Canberra resident]

It is important because it is there! It is a beautiful, open space with deciduous trees and a sense of serenity. A vision from Canberra's foundation, a gift to the Nation to reflect a leisurely garden setting in our harsh environment. It is well laid out and well proportioned and complements Old Parliament House. It reflects the openness of the city – which is fast disappearing elsewhere! Along with Kings Park, the Lake and the Parliamentary triangle generally, it reflects open spaces comparable to any capital cities in the world. Of which, I might add, I have seen a lot! [Canberra resident]

I just love being there. It is a place of beauty (specifically set out as part of the parliamentary triangle) and a place of peace and tranquillity. It has places to sit and contemplate, places to walk, places to eat and involved with all of that are people working. The historical aspect is so important too. [Canberra resident]

Q 8: Is there ONE part of Parkes Place that is more important to you than others?

Table 17.	
Place	Total
National Rose Gardens	1
King George V Memorial	
Aboriginal Tent Embassy	
The Lobby Restaurant	
The Mall Ponds	
The trees and other commemorative plantings	1
The vast axial lawns	2
Other	
<i>Total</i>	4

Note: One respondent stated 'It is difficult to select one area of importance; Parkes Place is an overall concept'.

Q 9: Why is this part of Parkes Place more important to you?

Griffin Legacy [Canberra resident]

The attractive open space it provides [Canberra resident]

Because the trees in particular are wonderful! Huge and stoic they have withstood all the varied temperatures of the Limestone Plains. They were alien trees planted here along with the alien public servants expected also to adapt and live here. They were visions of our forebears who arranged for their planting though realising they were for the future. Similar to the Arboretum! [Canberra resident]

If you have ever visited the Old Parliament House Rose Gardens in spring you would know! A feast of beauty; perfumes in sensory overload. My oasis in the middle of a busy city. Everyone who visits loves it. Such a great part of Canberra's history. [Canberra resident]

Q10: Thinking about your association with the National Rose Gardens, would you describe the connection as stemming PRIMARILY from?

Primary Reason Given	Total
Your organisations donation of roses to the National Rose Gardens in 1933/4, the 1950s or more recently	3
Visiting the National Rose Gardens	2
Working in the National Rose Gardens	2
Other	
<i>Total</i>	7

Note: Two respondents selected multiple options. One respondent noted their connection as variously 'a rose donor, visitor, and horticultural volunteer'.

Q11: How often do you/did you visit the National Rose Gardens?

Frequency	Total
Daily	
Weekly	4
Monthly	1
A couple of times a year	
Rarely	1
Only in association with special events	
Other	
<i>Total</i>	6

Note: One respondent answered twice, commenting 'Weekly in the summer and rarely in winter'.

Q12: For how long have you had a connection with the National Rose gardens?

Length of association	Total
0-10 years	2

11-24 years	2
25 years and over	2
Not Stated	
<i>Total</i>	6

Q13: Now, thinking the National Rose Gardens (NRG) specifically, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Table 21.						
Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
The NRG are important and special to me because my family, or my organisation, has dedicated roses there	2	2		1	1	
The NRG are important as a symbol of Canberra	2	3	1			
The NRG are important as a symbol of the Nation	3	2	1			
The individual roses themselves within the NRG are not important to me	1*		2	2	1	
The roses within the NRG are important for their beauty, colour and fragrance	3	3				
If the older roses were replaced I would feel an incredible sense of loss	1	2	1	1	1	
The NRG provide important links to the past (events or people)	2	4				
The tradition of donating roses to the NRG is more important than the current plants themselves		2	4			

Q14: In your opinion why are the National Rose Gardens important to you?⁹⁷

Apart from their beauty and uniqueness they are important because they continue the tradition established when Old Parliament House was first occupied. [Canberra resident]

The National Rose Gardens are admired by the Australian and Overseas visitors and the Rose gardens are used for weddings and other events and photographed by many who visit. The rose is admired the world over and [is] the queen of flowers. [Rose Society Member]

I am informed by one of our life members that our organisation was involved with the garden during its establishment years. There is little record of activity in recent years. I am encouraged by the appearance and care of the garden which I inspected on behalf of the society and feel confident in saying that if my organisation was asked to provide assistance or advice we would be happy to do so. [Rose Society Member]

A part of Canberra's history, a beautiful place to visit and to work. An oasis in the midst of a large city and it is so special to be able to work there as a volunteer. [Canberra resident]

Q15: Which is/are your organisations roses? [location, bed, species, number of species if known]

Unknown

⁹⁷ Questions 14 and 15 were open-ended questions, inviting respondents to make further comments in their own words.

Rex Hazlewood garden, Belle Amour

Mostly Hybrid Tea roses, for example, Holtermans Gold [Rose Society Member]

Our rose is 'Simply Magic' one of ten of the species, a beautiful pink floribunda. Situated in the pink quadrant of the 'Ladies garden', far bed (under the big old gums) in the top right hand corner. In memory of my mum, also a rose grower. [Canberra resident]

Note: The above responses at least partly relate to the OPH rose gardens, not the National Rose Gardens.

Q16: What does it mean to you that your organisation donated roses to the National Rose Gardens from the 1930s?

Sentimental value mainly, and the opportunity to ensure that the new rose plantings actually went ahead and were not cancelled through lack of funding. [Canberra resident]

As a rose society we promote this beautiful flower so all can be rewarded with what the rose gives back to you. The rose is a symbol of Love, Peace and Happiness. Hopefully the National Rose Gardens will continue on for future generations to admire. [Rose Society Member]

Pleased that the Rose Society of NSW was involved in the promotion of public rose gardens in earlier times. [Rose Society Member]

Focus Group

The focus group was held on 9 December 2008, at Old Parliament House. Twelve out of thirty invitees attended (plus four members of the project team). See Section 1.6 for details.

Focus group participants represented a range of people with close associations with Parkes Place through use (various activities, ceremonies, and events held there), working nearby, caring for it (gardening, maintenance, conservation), studying it specifically or as part of a broader landscape. Participants were predominantly long term Canberra residents with long and continuing connections to Parkes Place from childhood, whose connections to Parkes Place were long, multi-layered, as well as involving frequent use—for instance, through working with the study area or nearby, participation in events and activities there, visiting, or taking visitors there.

People participated as individuals (providing personal responses) or as representatives of organisations with connections to Parkes Place. Some people participated representing both their personal and their organisation's views.

It is worth noting that participants found the definition of the study area problematic—'a mystery'—as a seemingly arbitrarily defined rectangle within a much larger Parliamentary Zone and Parliament House Vista landscapes. As well, participants found separation of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy from discussion challenging, by its exclusion from the study area, as they felt,

'The Tent Embassy is part of the place so much' (Survey participant/s)

In summary, participants represented a range of connections, long life experience, and varied experiences with the place, and continuing connections. Through experience people develop connections to place, in this study, Parkes Place. These connections are summarised below.

Connecting associations with places and activity

Through the associations described above, participants were asked to map those associations in relation to particular parts of the study area and patterns of use around and across the study area. They were asked to think about what they would miss if no longer there. Responses are

summarised below.

Places

The vista along the central Land Axis, the National Rose Gardens, the enclosed spaces of the tree-lined avenues, the large open space in front of the Treasury Building, the terrace above the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, and the unirrigated space immediately below King George Terrace including the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, were all identified as places with strong associations for the focus group participants.

Slightly fewer associations were noted for the Lobby Restaurant, the Mall Ponds, and the large open space in front of the John Gorton Building.

No associations were identified for the King George V Memorial. Further, no participants mapped an association with the section of the eastern end of the pathway lining the cross axis. It is interesting to note that along this section of pathway, the trees are smaller, with sparse foliage, and are relatively poorly formed, either because they have been replaced or because they are growing less successfully in that position.

Activity

Skirting the periphery

For some people, their association was located on the periphery of Parkes Place, at the various government and cultural institutions within the Parliamentary Zone (National Library of Australia, National Portrait Gallery, National Gallery of Australia, Archives, John Gorton and Treasury Buildings, Old Parliament House, the Senate and House of Representative Gardens on either side of Old Parliament House), and the spaces in between. In this sense, their association with Parkes Place was largely visual, providing an open setting (and axial vistas along the central and cross axes) that formed a part of their everyday lives.

Flowing into Parkes Place and pausing

In many cases, working nearby meant that participants' experience on the periphery of the study area frequently flowed into Parkes Place as they regularly walked (a) through Parkes Place from their place of work to other institutions, cafes, or offices, or (b) into Parkes Place, stopping to have lunch in the open air, under the shade of the trees, or at the Lobby Restaurant/Cafe.

Flowing into Parkes Place and playing, interacting (social, sport, action)

Particularly for the people who work in the Treasury Building and John Gorton Building, which terminate the vista in both directions along the cross axis, frequent organised activities provide opportunities to enjoy the large open spaces of Parkes Place for social games of sport and exercise classes, for instance.

Passing through

Most people follow the major pathways that line the central and cross axes as well as cutting diagonally across each part of the rose gardens. Well worn tracks observed on site suggest that this is a popular, if unofficial, route through the gardens. The main routes identified largely followed the tree-lined pathways framing the central and cross axes.

Note: When on site, it was observed that many people were having lunch on the benches within Parkes Place, were walking across the study area along the main avenue pathways with purpose (clearly on their way somewhere), were exercising, playing soccer in the large open space in front of the Treasury Building, or working with personal trainers.

Use

Participants use Parkes Place for important family events such as weddings. Places identified that were used for ceremonies or associated wedding activities (eg. photographs) were the four rose gardens (the National Rose Gardens and the two rose gardens either side of Old Parliament House), the avenues of trees, in the vicinity of the ponds (with their reflective surfaces), the Lobby Restaurant or kiosk (for receptions), and Old Parliament House.

The Department of Finance (in the Treasury and John Gorton Buildings) also use the space for a range of organised recreation activities, and as their evacuation marshalling point.

Asked how they feel towards Parkes Place today, participants responded as follows:

A very aesthetically pleasing place providing a calm and quiet oasis amidst the busy-ness of my working day. It frames my day – before and after work – and lunchtime and I enjoy the vistas, the established trees, the [...] smells of the roses and the pines and I love the colonies of chuffs(?), magpies, and parrots.

Congenial area for recreation. Wasted area because no national memorials or signage for buildings, e.g. centre for democracy and learning.

I take great pride in being responsible for the daily upkeep of this amenity – in particular the NRG. I would like to see a more user-friendly NRG i.e. wheel chair access, signs for both roses and trees upgraded. I love the view, the wildlife and the beauty of the area, I see it being used daily by thousands in one way or another and consider it a great pleasure to work here.'

My feelings are paradoxical. I feel strongly that it should be preserved because of its strong political, historical and aesthetic values, but at the same time, I feel that it fails in the planning sense. The major points of my interest are situated on its periphery.

A space between Edward Terrace and OPH when driving past. Value beauty of vista JG Building to Treasury (E-W). Connecting space N-S, E-W, in Parliamentary Triangle. A bit of a desert at its heart (but I don't want to see a circus there!) Symbolic of Australia's tolerance/democracy with Tent Embassy.

Provides wonderful open vista. Enhances the feeling of importance/relevance of a capital site. Works as a visual curtilage and intimate space (gardens, avenues). Enjoyable space to be in. love seeing it made use of.

Every time I come to work in John Gorton building I am in awe of Parkes Place. It is a tremendous facility for our department [Finance], especially for our exercise programs and social occasions. It amazes me that it is so historical and beautiful.

Pleasant attractive area of landscape – always enjoyable to walk through/visit. Important for public use, either for recreation or protests. One of the best areas in Canberra [relative importance] for mature exotic trees.

A sense of relationship with the past through my involvement with the [Canberra Horticultural] Society formed around 80 years ago; those first members being the ones who worked on the creation of the National Rose Gardens.

Strong wish for trees and walkways through the trees to be preserved. Attached to the Lobby building. Love the view from the steps of OPH through the site. Love the trees part[icularly] old cypress trees along the walkways and street on King George Terrace side.

It appears shabby and a place you walk around rather than want to be in.

Asked what Parkes Place represents to them, participants responded:

Parkes Place represents the politically and historically charged setting for OPH, where generations of Australians have interacted as they have visited OPH. A representation of the bush capital in effect, but also a place resonant with historical and social meaning.

The past, potential futures, space available for activities, democratisation [aspect] of Walter Burley Griffin,

and Plan of Canberra destroyed.

My office. Full of beauty, history, and personal contact with many Australians, learning their stories and seeing their enjoyment of this wonderful amenity, let alone the history and culture of roses and other plant material.

A place I take for granted – a place I have travelled and walked through and around all my life. To me it is a comfortable and familiar piece of landscape.

‘Part of the expressiveness of Canberra’s planning – and sometimes more than NCA as manager wants to [?chew].

Tent Embassy represents tension between cultural tolerance and planning. NCA has yet to get it right. With Reconciliation Place – it is a vista space, separating the heritage buildings of the Parliamentary Triangle.

Represents the leading to or entrance to OPH and APH. Its design and placement enhance the symbol of the capital.

A place to connect with the nation’s history or to participate in [national] events such as ‘The Sorry’ speech this year. Allows our department to hold functions and have an area to evacuate to.

A pleasant place to relax in. A significant Australian designed landscape of trees, spaces, and rose gardens. A significant Australian central space for public demonstration of national importance.

A significant place in the history of Canberra and strong links for me with early Canberra horticulture.

Part of my history – wedding photos, reception at the Lobby. As a place of beauty with the old/new trees part.[icularly] Cypress. Great shade from old trees. a lovely place to walk through, around (hot in summer out of the shade of the trees.

Site of considerable significance. Sadly rather neglected frequently.

Mapping relationships

Asked to identify and map relationships between Parkes Place and surrounding places— buildings, landscapes, spaces, desire lines—that are important for understanding the social values of Parkes Place, focus group participants identified the following:

- Old Parliament House and Parkes Place
- Old Parliament House and the Vista
- Old Parliament House and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy
- Old Parliament House and Parkes Place as a meeting place, or gathering/assembling point
- John Gorton Building and Treasury Building
- Walkway through the trees (meaning the visual corridors and pathways/desire lines)
- Walkways/desire lines between cultural institutions (traversed by Canberrans who work in the Vista area, visiting tourists, visiting school children)
- Natural walkway to the Australian Parliament House from other institutions
- Through all the 600 varieties of roses (rose enthusiasts)
- Meandering through parts of the rose gardens for other visitors and Canberrans
- Links between lunch spots—between surrounding buildings and favourite lunch spot within Parkes Place (benches, beneath trees, the Lobby Restaurant, its adjacent café), or from building to building traversing through Parkes Place en route from work place to café
- For visiting school children, the National Rose Gardens and the pavement surrounding the King George V Memorial were identified as stopping places for lunch. The link between the National Rose Gardens and the Senate and House of Representatives Gardens on either side of Old Parliament House were identified as important for practical reasons (toilets located in the Senate and House of Representatives Gardens on either side of OPH). This

was suggested as a reason why school children tend to use the gardens beside OPH more often than the National Rose Gardens, in spite of acknowledgement that there are public toilets beside the Lobby.

The cafes at the John Gorton Building, Treasury Building, Old Parliament House, the Lobby Restaurant, and the National Science and Technology Centre were noted in the discussions. One issue raised was that the only children friendly café was at the National Science and Technology Centre.

Summary and discussion

There were strong relationships mapped between Parkes Place and Old Parliament House and its gardens. Some of the linkages identified were visual, with views from the Old Parliament House steps, first floor windows and balcony to and over Parkes Place to the vista. The central axis and cross axis (between John Gorton Building and Treasury Building) were identified as major corridors for visual and physical reasons.

There is potential for strong or special attachment to places within Parkes Place used by Canberra couples and families who held wedding ceremonies (or parts of the celebrations) in these locations. Further exploration of these values to Canberrans falls outside the scope of this project.

All the values of Parkes Place

Focus group participants identified the following aspects of Parkes Place as having **historic** significance.

In terms of Parkes Place historic significance, participants identified a range of values. A summary of these grouped into four themes are as follows.

Aesthetic

- For design of tree planting spaces and rose gardens
- The Griffin Plan
- The Lobby for both history and architecture

Physical fabric

- Heritage value of plant material in Parkes Place, particularly the National Rose Gardens and its personal associations for many Australians

Historic associations

- Strong links between Parkes Place, the Canberra Horticultural Society, and its role in developing Canberra as a garden city
- Strong links between Parkes Place and the rose societies involved in establishing the gardens
- In part as having a long association between Old Parliament House's inhabitants: politicians, staffers, press, and Australia's political history

Nation-defining events

- 1927 opening events of the Old Parliament House (and thus should be recognised)
- The site of historical events associated with Old Parliament House
- Historic setting of memorable and seminal events in the political history of our country
- Place of gathering (from the opening of Old Parliament House to the 2008 *Sorry* speech)
- Important as a long term place of protest where Australians gathered to demonstrate to

- their Federal representatives, their views about issues that concerned them
- For the Aboriginal Tent Embassy site

Focus group participants identified the following aspects of Parkes Place as having **aesthetic** value:

- the grounds
- the tree collection as a whole: for its variety, for the mature old trees and their trunk textures, for the autumnal effects, and for the patterns of the trees (avenues, rows and clumping, framing the vistas)
- the mature Roman Cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens*)
- the fountains
- the axial view, the vista, opened framed vistas
- the landscape
- the landscape setting provided to Old Parliament House
- the rose gardens, and their colour, fragrance and beauty

Words used to describe their aesthetic value were ‘beautiful’, ‘very beautiful’, ‘beauty’, ‘unique’, and ‘sense of continuity’, ‘an integral part of design’ (regarding the axes), ‘very peaceful’ (regarding the Rose Gardens), ‘my beautiful office!’

Some **negative** values were identified, with Parkes Place described as an ‘opportunity missed’, in reference to compromises made to the original Griffins’ plan for Canberra. On occasions without people, ‘it’s like a burial ground for ancient kings’ and, in this way, ‘not people friendly’, with the monumental spaces having a tendency to be alienating and inhuman in scale.

In relation to the National Rose Gardens, a lack of interpretation and incremental changes to their original design and intent over time, were identified as having compromised their significance, with one participant noting that, although attractive and pleasant, the National Rose Gardens ‘were not a great rose garden’.

Focus group participants identified the following aspects of Parkes Place as having **social values**.

A public space, for meeting and gathering, and of social inclusion

- Place to meet together
- Gathering from time to time for seasonal festivals and for social inclusion
- Place of social amenity and enjoyment for the community, for large scale activities (Canberra Festival, Balloons and Art in the Park, Opera in the Park, for instance) and smaller gatherings (social gatherings, weddings and walks)
- Ability for the public to have access to the gardens and spaces
- Recreational and social needs of the inhabitants [of the vista] – sport, solace, quiet enjoyment by [workers]

A place to connect with history and historic events

- Daily visitors and their interest in the historical context of the view north from Old Parliament House. Also use of the area by school children, sporting groups, festivals, etc
- Important as reflecting the recreational needs and pursuits of the Parliament and its occupants over time

A place of democracy (identified in relation to the Aboriginal Tent Embassy) and gathering space in front of Old Parliament House

- For its symbolism and history
- Tent Embassy and the Aboriginal influence
- Site of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy [where] Elders would converse with tourists thereby establishing a democratic tradition of learning and understanding

Focus group participants identified the following aspects of Parkes Place as having **scientific** significance (research potential):

- Rose gardens and trees

Focus group participants identified the following aspects of Parkes Place as having significance for **spiritual** reasons:

- Social Spiritual
- Aboriginal Tent Embassy
- Views of axis

Specific Social Values of Parkes Place

Table 22.		
Whole Place	Parts, components, areas	Important to whom?
As large meeting place (still) Protest space	Tent Embassy site (political statement) - changed how people use the site - polarisation (passionate about it) - tension (design vs. anarchic)	
Events space		

Specific Aesthetic Values

Table 23.		
Whole Place	Parts, components, areas	Important to whom?
Vista – land axis (monumental space in the centre, more intimate spaces alongside the major central axis and cross axis)	The monumental feel of this view.	The nation, everyone
Parkes Place role in the larger Vista	Open spaces are critical. Function as a void, reinforcing appreciation of the ‘plan’	Parliament players Visitors to OPH Visiting school children
	Relationship between spaces and trees, framing the Vista	Figures in the national memory and likely also the nation’s photo albums (snapshot test)
	Contrast in scale between monumental spaces of the Vista and human scale of the roses and intimate, enclosed spaces beneath avenues of trees and alongside the central axis	

Table 23.		
Whole Place	Parts, components, areas	Important to whom?
Setting to OPH	Parkes Place is the forecourt for Parliament House and OPH	National symbolism, how people see the Nation
	Sequence of spaces	Part of the national image, landmark
	Trees, mix of species, grandeur, avenues, etc	
	Streets, avenues	
	Cross axis	
	National Rose Gardens	Local Canberrans, some visitors
	Fountains	
	King George V Memorial, the Art Deco piece of sculpture	Visiting school children stopping spot for lunch
Places to interact, pleasurable places to be in		Canberrans

Strength of Attachment

To test the strength of attachments to Parkes Place, participants were asked, ‘If Parkes Place was destroyed or severely damaged, who would feel the impact most?’

Canberra residents were identified as those who would be affected mostly if there a major change to Parkes Place eventuated. It was felt that the wider Australian community would not be concerned until they realised what was lost; their expectation of a vista would result in disappointment.

Particular emotive words and phrases chosen by participants also express strength of social value,

‘I would hate to see them cut down and replaced’ [trees]

‘Important heritage landmarks’ [trees]

‘I love seeing people play soccer’

‘...a great public space’

‘I enjoy the roses. I learnt to prune across the road (OPH gardens?) continuing connection for me and for the Society’

[Parkes Place] ‘filling up [with people] during sorry speech struck a chord’

‘Everything important to Canberra goes through Parkes Place’ (Survey participant/s)

What are the key issues which need to be addressed in managing the social values of Parkes Place? (summarised into eight key themes)

Interpretation

- commemoration of history, stories, significant events to the nation (memorials, signage, other means)

- intellectual access, enjoyment, enlightenment
- understanding and interpreting the values of the rose gardens
- name plates for significant plantings (trees and roses)

Management and maintenance

- improving maintenance of the area
- cues to care are lacking
- collections management (rose collection, tree collection)
- replacement/succession plan for the tree collection

Conservation of significant components (as opposed to replacement)

- keeping the heritage trees and gardens
- keeping Parkes Place as a landscape entity of spaces and trees and lawns without monuments
- keeping the remaining spaces intact
- retain large urban spaces with slightly naturalistic feel
- keeping the rose gardens
- keeping all the trees
- keeping (restoring) the symmetry of the vista
- retain and enhance the integrity of the cross axis vista
- enhance the human scale to appreciate the monumental
- keeping public use, democratic access
- respecting the significance of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy
- recording (or protection of) the ephemeral elements of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, including the pavement painting on King George Terrace

Recovery of significance by

- remove piecemeal hard landscaping and infrastructure
- remove fountains and any other half measures that attempt to provide micro visual interest
- remove effects of post-fifties 'prettifying'
- de-clutter the spaces

Use

- retaining public use, democratic access
- encouraging groups and large numbers to use the space for different purposes
- keeping large spaces intact for gatherings of large groups
- providing facilities for national activities (symbolic and functional location of facilities and/or buildings)
- providing adequate facilities for users, such as seats, bins, etc, gravel pathways through the rose gardens
- important to keep it as a useful public space

Access

- physical, intellectual access
- upgrade the National Rose Gardens to improve accessibility for wheelchairs, prams
- providing for access and amenities in a sympathetic way

Policy for water use

- fountains

- watering regimes for grass and trees

Issues needing resolution

- piecemeal accretions
- placement of King George V Memorial
- impermanence of Aboriginal Tent Embassy. What is its long-term future?