



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

# Consultation Report

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## Works Approval No 102548

Works Associated with the refurbishment of West Block

(Block 3 Section 23 PARKES)

*Date: November 2022*

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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 24 December 2021 the NCA received a Works Approval application from Purdon Planning, on behalf of Oceana Property Partners (OPP) for the refurbishment of West Block as office accommodation including: a detached pavilion to the rear; external conservation works to the building; new driveway, porte cochere and entry ramp; bike storage; tree removal and associated landscaping located at Block 3 Section 23 PARKES.

# Public Consultation requirements

## 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.

## 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 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 will make an assessment of whether a proposal is consistent with the National Capital Plan and if it requires public consultation. 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
- consistency with an existing Heritage Management Plan.

When an application for works is lodged and 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
- proposals are given exemption, as outlined in Part 2.3 of the 'Commitment to Community Engagement'

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 Saturday 25 June 2022 and 15 July 2022 in the following manner:

- On Saturday 25 June 2022, publishing 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 24 June 2022 and 15 July 2022, publishing details of the proposal on the NCA's website
- Between 25 June 2022 and 15 July 2022, placing two A1 size signs on the Queen Victoria Terrace and Commonwealth Avenue frontages on the site
- The NCA writing to adjoining lessees, neighbours and interested stakeholders advising of the consultation process and inviting comments

Media coverage of the proposal included an article in the *Canberra Times* on 30 June 2022 and the *Riot Act* on 12 July 2022 which identified that the proposal was subject to a Works Approval application; the later article appearing during the public consultation period. Neither article was issued by the NCA.

On 4 July 2022 and 14 July 2022 a post was included on the NCA Facebook page encouraging comments on the proposed works by 15 July 2022.

## 2.2 Submissions Received, Comments and Response

The NCA received a total of 3 submissions on the proposal. One submission did not identify any concerns specific to the proposed works whilst two submissions raised issues or objections in relation to elements of the proposal or the whole proposal.

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:

- support of the continuing use of the West Block for office accommodation;
- questions raised whether changes to the exterior of West Block are needed;
- the potential impact of the new building (pavilion) and bike hub upon identified heritage values of West Block.

A summary of each submission and the NCA response is provided at [Attachment B](#).

# 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 8 November 2022.

# Attachment A

## The Canberra Times Public Notice, onsite signs and social media coverage



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

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**WORKS APPROVAL**  
Open for Public Consultation

**Block 3 Section 23 Parkes – Alterations and Additions to West Block**

The NCA has received a works approval application for the refurbishment of West Block for use as office accommodation including: a detached pavilion to the rear; external conservation works to the building; new driveway; portico and entry ramp; bike storage; tree removal and associated landscaping.



The plans and supporting documentation for the application can be viewed at the NCA's website.  
The NCA welcomes feedback on this application **by 5.00pm (AEST) Friday 15 July 2022.**  
Submissions can be made via email to [WAconsultation@nca.gov.au](mailto:WAconsultation@nca.gov.au) or in writing to GPO Box 373, Canberra ACT 2601.  
Please contact the NCA for further information on [WAconsultation@nca.gov.au](mailto:WAconsultation@nca.gov.au).

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Canberra Times advertisement

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

**HAVE YOUR SAY** 

**BLOCK 3 SECTION 23 PARKES**  
**– ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS TO WEST BLOCK**

The NCA has received a works approval application for the refurbishment of West Block for use as office accommodation including: a detached pavilion to the rear; external conservation works to the building; new driveway; portico and entry ramp; bike storage; tree removal and associated landscaping.



The plans and supporting information can be viewed at the NCA's website.  
The NCA welcomes feedback on this application **by close of business, Friday 15 July 2022.**  
Submissions can be made via email to [WAconsultation@nca.gov.au](mailto:WAconsultation@nca.gov.au) or in writing to GPO Box 373 Canberra ACT 2601.

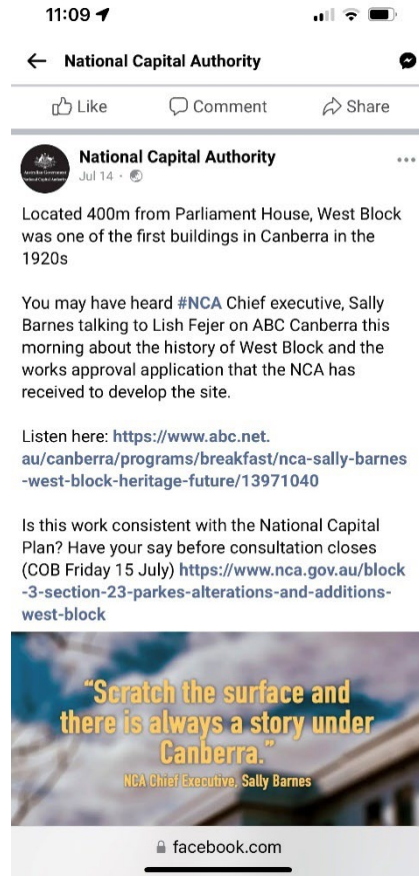
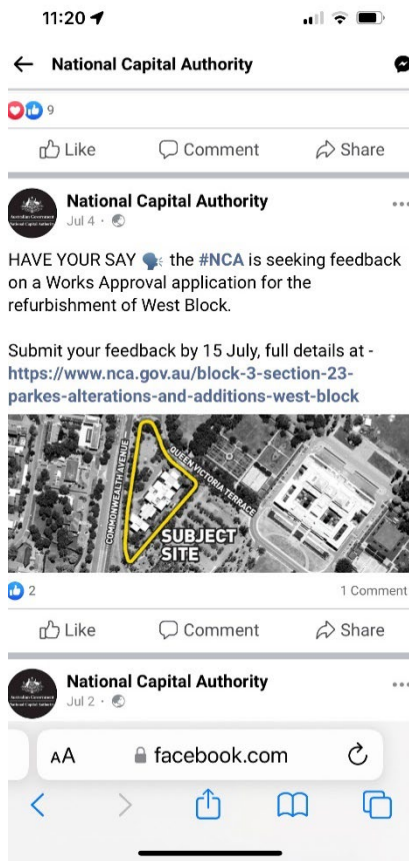
Please contact the NCA for further information on (02) 6271 2888  
[www.nca.gov.au](http://www.nca.gov.au)

On site signage



Signage in situ





Facebook posts 4 July (L) and 14 July 2022 (R)



# Attachment B

## Summary of submissions and NCA Response

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 a summary of each submission, along with the name of each person making the submission. Names of submitters have been omitted where a submitter requested confidentiality.

Submission	Issue	NCA response
<b>1. Department of Parliamentary Services</b>		
	<p>The Department did not have any specific comments on the proposed works at West Block however, identified that Parliament House has reached capacity to accommodate additional occupants and opportunities to expand accommodation growth are to be explored. As such, the submission identified that any new structures at West Block or East Block do not impeded future development opportunities adjacent to both East and West Block carparks.</p>	<p>The submission is noted. Proposed works to West Block are contained wholly within Block 3 Section 23 Parkes and will not impede any future development opportunities to the carparks located adjacent to East Block (National Archives of Australia) and West Block.</p>
<b>2. Lake Burley Griffin Guardians</b>		
	<p>The submission raises a number of concerns in relation to the <i>Works Approval Planning</i> Report (Purdon Planning, December 2021) including the reference to the previously proposed hotel use of West Block and that proposed internal demolition and fit out works are not subject to works approval by the NCA.</p> <p>Whilst acknowledging that a bike hub and end of trip facilities may be required for the intended office use of West Block, the submission questions the use of the proposed pavilion to potentially house a swimming pool, wellness centre or dining facility and ascertains that this may suggest that the pavilion in conjunction with the Porte Cochere, are intended for a future hotel use.</p> <p><i>Despite the NCP, still allowing a commercial accommodation use for West Block, by far the more appropriate heritage use is its continuity</i></p>	<p>The detached pavilion has been retained in the current scheme with its future use to be determined subject to the requirements of any new tenants. The <i>Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988</i> does not require the approval of internal or maintenance works.</p> <p>The National Capital Plan requires that the heritage assessment of all proposals subject to NCA planning approval are in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act).</p> <p>As a Commonwealth heritage listed place, the proposed works to West Block, and supporting documentation (HIS, HMP, internal works concept and conservation works) was referred by the applicant to the former Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE), now Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water</p>

Submission	Issue	NCA response
	<p><i>as an office within this Parliament House Secretariat Group. The accommodation option provided by the NCP should be ignored for the more heritage-appropriate office use also provided by the NCP.</i></p> <p>The submission also identifies that no Heritage Management Plan has been provided as part of the Works Approval documentation that was included on the NCA website during public consultation.</p> <p>Specifically, the submission identifies:</p> <p><i>The construction of the proposed pavilion will remove valuable natural vegetation (trees, shrubs and groundcover) and introduce a new, inappropriate, large structure (despite attempts to partly bury it), unnecessarily cluttering this eastern area of the West Block heritage landscape. A smaller structure for bicycles and ‘end of trip’ facilities, partly buried in this bank location, is recommended. In the case of the Port Cochère, although, suitably and minimally designed, it is an unnecessary and a visually confusing addition for an office, particularly on this primary, significant, heritage façade.</i></p>	<p>(DCCEEW) under the provisions of the <i>EPBC Act</i>. The works were publicly notified in January 2022 and in its decision of 1 March 2022, DAWE concluded that the proposed works were not a controlled action as outlined in Decision Notice -EPBC 2021/9139. This decision satisfies the heritage conditions of the National Capital Plan and has guided the NCA’s assessment of this application.</p>

### 3. National Trust of Australia (ACT)

With respect to the WA102548 the submission identifies concerns regarding the impact of proposed changes upon identified heritage values of West Block whilst recognising the intention to retain the façade and form of the building.

The submission identifies that the historic significance of the ‘Bunker’ has not been recognised as part of the proposed works;

*We note the intention to respect and follow the heritage objectives and requirements in relation to the façade and form of the building. However, we are concerned that the historic significance of the ‘Bunker’ has not been recognised in the plans.*

As identified above, as a Commonwealth heritage listed place, the proposed works to West Block and supporting documentation (HIS, HMP, internal works concept and conservation works) was referred to the former Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE), now Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) by the applicant under the provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. In its decision of 1 March 2022, DAWE concluded that the proposed works were not a controlled action as outlined in Decision Notice -EPBC 2021/9139.

The additional information provided in the submission in relation to the Bunker and concern regarding the removal of external balconies is noted. The proposed solar panel array is to be sited on the existing roofs of A, B, C and D blocks, and will not be visible above the parapet to the building.

Submission	Issue	NCA response
	<p>Further, the submission identifies that the removal of external balconies added to the building post construction should be further considered to ensure the character of the building is not impacted. Further, the submission supports arrangements for proposed improved energy efficiency rating which includes the installation of a solar panel array on the roof of the building noting that:</p> <p><i>Planning for this work should ensure that it does not impact on the heritage significance of the building.</i></p> <p>Comments on the Statement of Heritage Impact (SHI)(Lovell Chen 2021) relate to the consistency of proposed works against the policies of the HMP in relation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of proposed internal works upon identified heritage values: <i>The SHI makes many references to this internal work, with the assertion that there is little impact, but insufficient details are provided to allow informed comment on these aspects of the proposal.</i></li> <li>• Reference to the previously proposed use of West Block as a hotel;</li> <li>• The need for a porte cochere and additional entry ramp as part of the proposed office use of the building: <i>The Porte Cochere is not required for an office building and should be deleted as it is an element foreign to the building. It impacts on the aesthetics and is inconsistent with the complementary buildings of East Block and Old Parliament House. It appears to reflect a requirement for a hotel refurbishment, rather than an office. The application states that the Porte Cochere is not connected to the building; however, it touches the building and has a glass shelf connection, which will create the perception that it is an addition. Further, the entry ramp is identified as ....an intrusive element to the aesthetics of the façade and is quite</i></li> </ul>	<p>Whilst the NCA notes the comments regarding the SHI, these do not form part of its consideration of the proposal. As identified above, the NCA is satisfied that appropriate consideration has been given to heritage matters as the works were referred to and assessed by the Commonwealth’s heritage experts against the provisions of the EPBC Act. DAWE has determined the proposed work not to be a controlled action, demonstrating that heritage obligations have been met under the provisions of the EPBC Act.</p> <p>The HMP was included in the referral of the works to DAWE and made available as part of public notification in January 2022. Details of the proposed solar array were included on the NCA website as part of public consultation on WA102548.</p>

Submission	Issue	NCA response
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*different to any other detailing on the building. The mass of battens would not provide transparency.*

- The impact of the proposed bike hub and pavilion: *The new pavilion and bike shelter would provide a wall of buildings along the side of the building and, while low scale, are an intrusive block. The real impact does not appear to have been properly assessed.*
- Proposed landscaping works ;
- The use of bronze coloured finishes; and
- The nature of the proposed external building conservation works.

Additionally, the submission identified that the HMP and details of the solar panel array were not included as part of the works approval documentation and suggests that the proposal should be reconsidered and a refined proposal should be presented for public comment and review.

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