

DRAFT INNER SOUTH CANBERRA DISTRICT STRATEGY



Inner South Canberra Community Council



Photo: Anne Forrest

INTRODUCTION

The Inner South is a unique and very special part of Canberra with a wonderfully diverse mix of old and new, the Parliamentary area, major national institutions, the primary diplomatic enclave, major employment areas (Barton offices and Fyshwick), iconic shopping centres, very high and very low density residential areas and beautiful streetscapes. The district is loved by both residents and visitors alike.

The Inner South Canberra Community Council (ISCCC) and its constituent resident associations have a major role as one of the key custodians of this wonderful area to protect its character and amenity for current and future generations.

The Government's proposed introduction of 'district level planning' seemed to the ISCCC to be an opportunity to put together our own 'Inner South Canberra District Strategy', to both reference the *ACT Planning Strategy 2018* and to provide guidance for the future development of the district based on the views of our member groups and other community conversations.

One of the main threats hanging over the Inner South is the ACT Planning Strategy's aim of continuing 'urban intensification', particularly in the vicinity of the major Avenues and associated with the Light Rail Stage 2 Civic to Woden route.

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Consistent with the local communities' love of and wish to protect the existing character of the Inner South, the ISCCC District Strategy opposes rezoning for high density redevelopment of the remaining high value suburban residential areas. Inner South Canberra already is the highest density district in Canberra and there are plenty of opportunities for more high density development without incursions into the long established, characterful suburban areas which must be protected and nurtured.

Gary Kent
Chair
Inner South Canberra Community Council
2 September 2021

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RESIDENTS SURVEY (ISCCC 2019/20)

The survey found that Inner South residents value most:

- Streetscape (*street trees, vegetation, gardens, width of streets*) – 71%
- Open spaces (*parks, ovals and bushland for recreation*) – 69%
- Character (*well planned, peaceful, safe, community feeling*) – 62%
- Environment (*reserves, trees, vegetation, wildlife, flora and fauna*) – 60%
- Location (*central location and investment potential, employment, friends and family, services and facilities*) – 53%
- Local shops (*proximity to, and variety of*) – 52%

The aspects of their streets that respondents wanted protected were:

- Trees/street trees, large mature leafy trees, heritage trees;
- Nature strips/verges, wide setbacks, streetscapes, tree lined streets – better maintenance, protect from cars parking/driving over them (verges);
- Parks, open/vegetated spaces, ovals, playgrounds;
- Housing no higher than 2 storeys, low density, domestic scale, no McMansions, single use blocks, setbacks from street;
- Heritage listed buildings, 1920s houses, old brick and tile houses, 1950s/1960s architecture, houses with heritage/good design elements;
- Footpaths, walkways linking streets and connecting to parks.

The “Community suggestions on future planning for a liveable district” from the report on the Inner South District Planning Workshop (11 June 2021) reflected the ISCCC Survey outcomes:

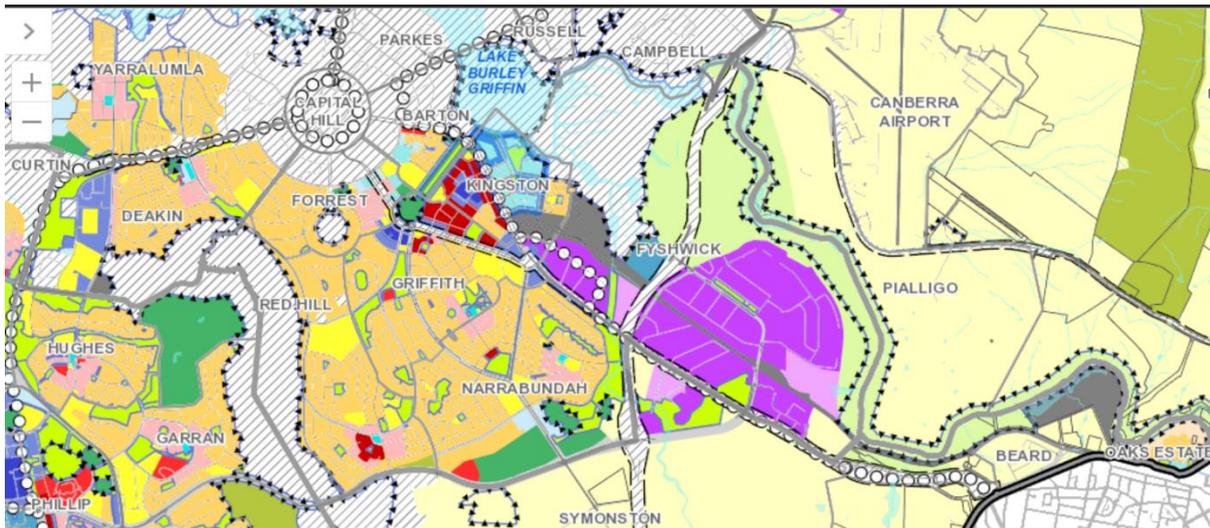
- “Concern about the level of urban infill occurring in the District and the impacts on character and amenity of the District including open space and infrastructure”
- “Enhanced playgrounds and open space for recreation”
- “Improved footpaths, pedestrian crossings and lighting”
- “Protection of heritage sites and existing character of the District”

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EXISTING DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER:

- Very diverse area, extending from Deakin and Yarralumla in the west to Oaks Estate in the east – high and low density residential, large Fyshwick light industrial area, Barton offices and West Deakin business area, Parkes government area and Yarralumla diplomatic missions, etc
- Existing population about 32,000
- Higher percentage of high density dwellings (45% in 2017) than any of the other urban districts and increasing. Of total dwellings, both Barton and Kingston had nearly 90% flats/apartments and Griffith around 50%.
- Fyshwick and Barton are the third and fifth largest employment centres in the ACT (about 26,000 jobs in total)
- Some of the oldest residential areas in Canberra; earliest large permanent building (Kingston Powerhouse); earliest shopping centres (Kingston & Manuka); first pool
- 63 places on the ACT Heritage Register (including six historic residential precincts), with a further 24 Nominated and 14 in NCA area
- Elements of Walter Burley Griffin's street layouts (Telopea Park and the Avenues) and early 'garden suburb' picturesque residential areas in Deakin, Forrest, Griffith and Red Hill; heritage tree plantings by Charles Weston
- The area is bordered to the north by Lake Burley Griffin and the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve, which is an important wildlife habitat and recreational area. To the southeast is the Symonston (Eastern Broadacre) area.
- Most of the existing urban area has been developed or redeveloped except for the remainder of the Old Canberra Brickworks, Kingston Arts Precinct site (adjacent to the old Kingston Power House), the eastern part of the Foreshore area (affected by the Kingston electricity station and overhead powerlines), the railway land (part of the East Lake urban renewal area, extending to West Fyshwick).
- The Stuart Flats and Gowrie Court and the Red Hill public housing precinct are currently being redeveloped and high density housing is planned for the eastern and southern parts of the Dairy Road Fyshwick complex.
- Oaks Estate is the oldest part of Canberra and has significant historical value that needs to be preserved. It contains a substantial amount of public housing, much of which needs redevelopment. There is no ACT public transport servicing Oaks Estate.

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TERRITORY PLAN EXISTING ZONING MAP

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN

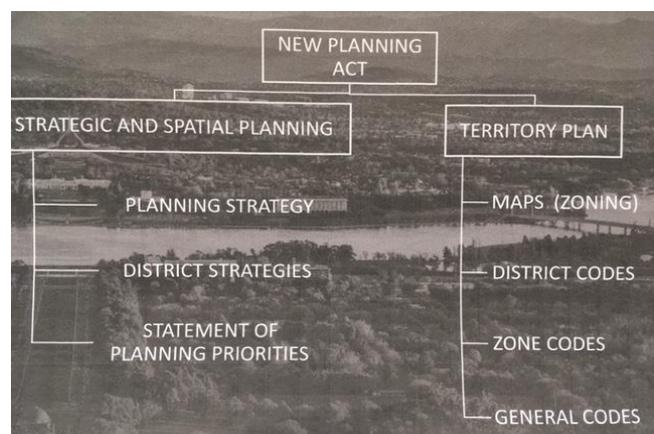
The cross-hatched areas shown above are **Designated Areas** under the **National Capital Plan** (NCP). These are areas having the **special characteristics of the National Capital**. They include Lake Burley Griffin and the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, the Parliamentary Zone around Capital Hill, the western Lake foreshore parklands, Red Hill, Collins Park and the Main Avenues. The National Capital Authority is responsible for planning policy and ‘works approval’ in those areas. There are also areas subject to **Special Requirements** under the NCP including Kingston Foreshore, Telopea Park and land fronting the Main Avenues.

NEW ACT PLANNING SYSTEM – DISTRICT STRATEGIES

District Level Planning was introduced in the *ACT Planning Strategy 2018*, to:

- Bridge the gap between ACT-wide and local area planning
- Build upon and expand master plans to deliver the ACT Planning Strategy
- Establish policy and implementation actions at a district scale
- Provide opportunity to recognize distinctive characters of districts

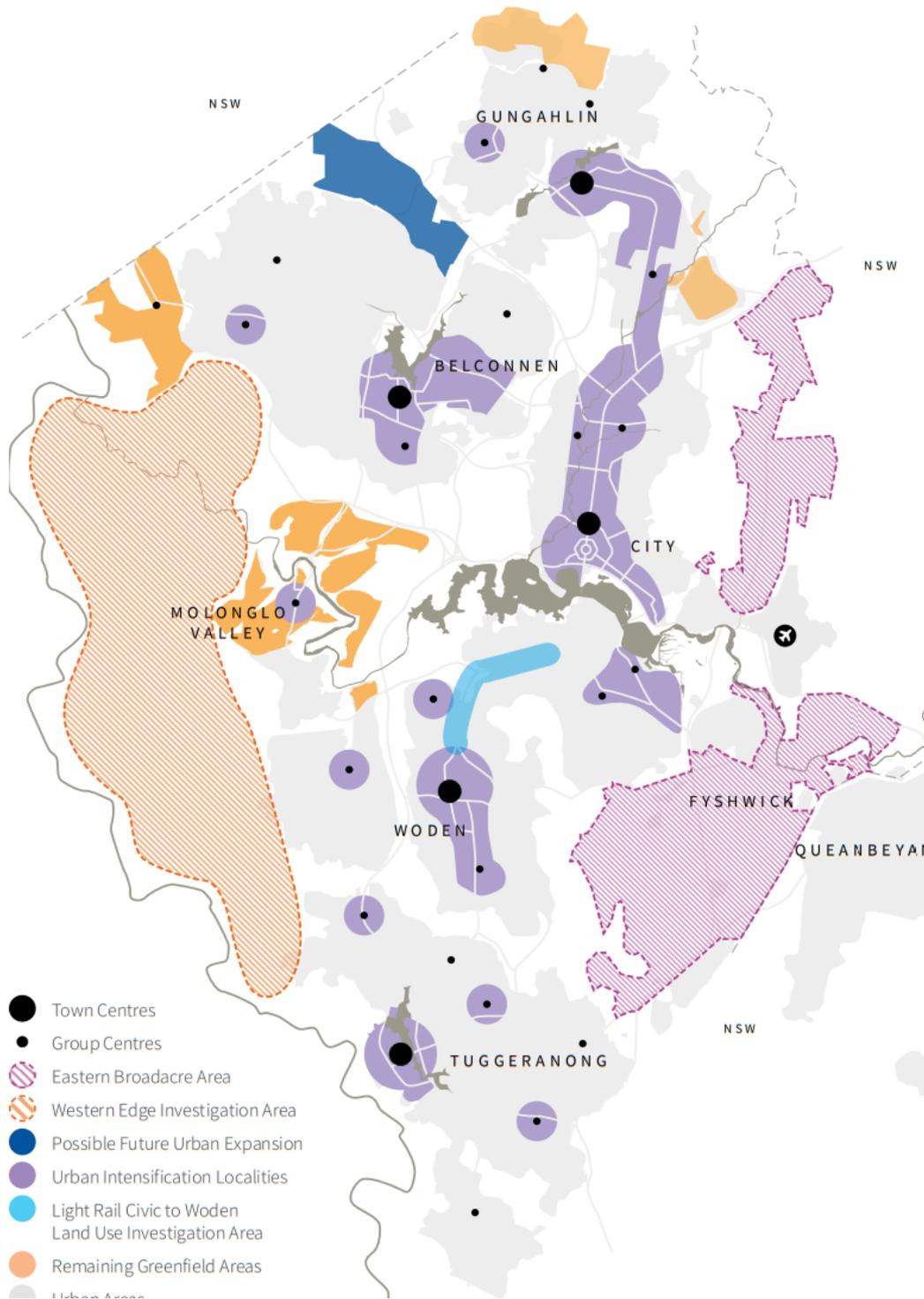
District Strategies need to reference the relevant **Strategic Directions** of the **ACT Planning Strategy**, with strategic planning actions appropriate to the locality, under each of the five **Themes** identified in the **ACT Planning Strategy**. [Note that, because of the unique character of Inner South Canberra, a sixth Theme has been added – Protect and Maximise Benefits of Heritage Assets.] A District Code will also be required, under the Territory Plan.



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ACT PLANNING STRATEGY 2018

MAP 6. GROWTH MAP



MAP FROM ACT PLANNING STRATEGY 2018

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THEME 1: COMPACT AND EFFICIENT CITY

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (from ACT Planning Strategy 2018):

1.1 Support sustainable urban growth by working towards delivering up to 70% of new housing within our existing urban footprint, and by concentrating development in areas located close to the city centre, town and group centres and along key transit corridors.

- **Rezoning for high density redevelopment of existing low density residential areas NOT supported as these areas contain high value streetscapes and are likely to be severely impacted by redevelopment through loss of tree cover, privacy and amenity, greatly increased traffic and car parking pressures, excessive pressure on infrastructure already at capacity including streets, sewers and drains, schools etc. Ample opportunities already existing for further high density development in the area, which is already the highest density district in Canberra (see EXISTING DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER – page 3).**
- **Multi-unit redevelopments not to be permitted in RZ1 zones.**
- **The future East Lake urban renewal area to respect its close proximity to Jerrabomberra Wetlands and to be developed for mixed private and public housing and a range of community facilities to service the broader area.**

1.2 Investigate the potential for new residential areas to the west of the city...

[Not relevant to ISCCS]

1.3 Use infrastructure efficiently to support our growing community.

- **School capacity in the area will need augmentation.**
- **Much of the utilities infrastructure including kerb and guttering is in need of upgrading or replacement.**
- **Shared paths need widening (and fixing) to cater for high level of mixed mode active travel and additional kerb crossings required, especially on busy roads such as Canberra Avenue near schools.**

1.4 Continue to work with the NSW Government and Councils to implement joint initiatives to understand and manage growth in the Region.

- **Upgrade rail passenger services to and from NSW and upgrade (or relocate) the Kingston Railway station to a district transport hub, including park and ride.**
- **If the station is relocated, examine potential to utilise the existing ACT rail corridor for public transport and local commuter needs.**
- **As a joint initiative, track the transport of waste in and out of the ACT including construction waste from the Sydney Metropolitan area, to ensure that ACT Government legislation to prevent growth in polluting waste industry in Fyshwick is adhered to.**

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THEME 2: DIVERSE CANBERRA

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (from ACT Planning Strategy 2018):

2.1 Respect Canberra's culturally rich and diverse community to foster inclusion and participation in our community.

- Existing public housing complexes such as Griffith Flats, the Causeway housing and in Oaks Estate to be retained where possible, enhanced and supplemented. Those in Oaks Estate require redevelopment for a broader mix of residents.
- More public housing to be provided in the East Lake urban renewal area, mixed in with private housing.
- Kingston Arts Precinct to exhibit the highest standards of architecture, planning and landscaping and to be a culturally rich mixed development respecting important heritage assets.
- Dairy Road complex and appropriate areas of Fyshwick to be diverse mixed uses.

2.2 Enhance the diversity and resilience of our centres to meet the needs of the community, support economic viability and improved liveability.

- Local centres to be upgraded in accordance with master plans while maximising the value arising from the heritage character of the buildings, streets and open spaces.
- Government to work with business and the community to regenerate Manuka as the leading retail, hospitality and entertainment centre for Inner South.
- Investigate appropriate locations for serviced apartments to support tourism but preserve residential amenity.

2.3 Improve the character of our city centre...

[Not relevant to ISCCDS]

2.4 Recognise and protect existing industrial areas and service trades areas as important elements of a diverse economy.

- Support Fyshwick transitioning to a diverse mixed use area. Phase out heavy industrial and polluting activities.

2.5 Plan for adequate employment land in the right location that supports a diverse range of uses including commercial and industrial land linked to supportive infrastructure, transport options and investment opportunities.

- Recognise Fyshwick as the third largest employment centre in the ACT and improve its transportation connections.
- No development in the Eastern Broadacre area without rigorous environmental assessment; efficient freight transport routes to be away from residential areas.

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THEME 3: SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT TERRITORY

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (from ACT Planning Strategy 2018):

3.1 Transitioning to a net zero emissions city through the uptake of renewable energy, improved building design and transport initiatives.

- **New development to be zero emissions and solar PV compatible.**
- **Future suburb of East Lake should have group solar energy management of collection and storage.**
- **Upgrade pathways throughout the area to cater for high level of mixed mode active travel.**
- **Electric buses to replace diesel bus fleet by 2030.**

3.2 Review planning policy and statutory mechanisms to incorporate climate change adaptation considerations and resilience criteria into urban planning and design processes...

- **Ensure adequate flood protection for existing and new developments.**
- **ACT Climate Change Strategy to apply to all new development applications for residential and commercial uses.**

3.3 Review planning policy and statutory mechanisms to incorporate climate change adaptation considerations and resilience criteria into urban planning and design processes...

- **All new development to achieve the 30% tree cover and 30% permeable surfaces standards, including on private land.**
- **All public realm to be provided with continuous tree canopy.**
- **Ensure the heritage urban forest is retained and celebrated.**

3.4 Plan for integrated water cycle management to support healthy waterways and a liveable city.

- **All new development to comply with water sensitive urban design principles.**
- **No heavy industrial use adjacent the Molonglo River Corridor and tributaries.**

3.5 Protect biodiversity and enhance habitat connectivity to improve landscape resilience.

- **Provide substantial tree planting within and connecting to existing parks.**
- **Protect Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve - provide appropriate visitor facilities that do not weaken the Reserve's nature conservation values.**

3.6 Reduce waste, improve resource efficiency and decrease our ecological footprint.

- **Waste recycling and processing facilities to be in appropriate locations remote from urban areas, particularly in the Hume Resource Recovery Estate.**

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THEME 4: LIVEABLE CANBERRA

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (from ACT Planning Strategy 2018):

4.1 Deliver social infrastructure that meets community needs and supports strong communities.

- **Ensure adequate community facilities are provided for the whole Inner South area, including affordable community meeting places.**

4.2 Deliver recreation, open (green) space and public spaces that support social interaction, physical and mental health and engagement in public life.

- **High quality, accessible local open space to be provided throughout the whole Inner South, particularly in higher density areas such as Kingston.**
- **All new development projects should connect easily to or include public community spaces and parks.**
- **Introduce play/recreational areas at Norgrove Park and Bowen Park and provide much needed toilets at Norgrove Park.**
- **Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve should not become the focus of all local or regional recreation needs. Future development must cater for these outside the Reserve – e.g. jogging tracks, outdoor gym stations, dog walking areas should be provided in sites of lower nature conservation value.**

4.3 Strengthen neighbourhoods and support their diverse character by creating strong local activity hubs.

- **Community meeting halls such as at Griffith to be included in the Kingston Arts Precinct and the future East Lake development.**

4.4 Deliver housing that is diverse and affordable to support a liveable city.

- **East Lake to be a priority high and medium density diverse housing area.**
- **All development in heritage areas to comply completely with heritage requirements.**

4.5 Encourage high quality design, built form and places for a changing climate.

- **As found in the ISCCC's 2019-20 online survey of 555 residents, 85 percent want a say on building construction occurring next door or nearby, in particular, on access to sunlight and natural light, building height, zoning changes, the amount of green space on the block, and protection of the character of the heritage precincts.**
- **The Kingston Arts Precinct design must respect the 2014 Master Plan, meet all heritage requirements and maintain significant sight lines to the Power House as well as minimising the heat island effect through green open space and tree canopy cover, and minimising traffic impacts on Eastlake Parade.**

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THEME 5: ACCESSIBLE CANBERRA

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (from ACT Planning Strategy 2018):

5.1 Enhance accessibility by better integrating transport and land use.

- **Improve public transport services throughout the Inner South and particularly to higher density areas, eg. reliable connections with Local area and Rapid bus services.**
- **If the proposed Light Rail Stage 2B proceeds it should be integrated with existing public transport Local area services and Rapid routes and timetables. Accessibility should be enhanced with connected pedestrian footpaths, cycle paths and parking facilities close to light rail stops where possible.**
- **Plan for connected transport services to new residential/commercial areas such as the East Lake and Dairy Flat Road developments.**
- **Improve vehicular access between Canberra Avenue and Majura Parkway to address traffic problems, such as congestion on Ipswich Street in Fyshwick.**

5.2 Deliver well designed, safe and sustainable streets and public spaces to create walkable neighbourhoods that are inclusive and fair.

- **Improve pedestrian comfort, safety and amenity of local streets by reduced speed limits, more tree planting, upgraded footways, cycleways and street and pathway lighting.**
- **Wider shared paths that are more accessible (eg for prams, wheelchairs and other mobility aids), that better connect streets to parks and other open spaces.**
- **Provide more safe pedestrian crossings to busy roads, eg. to Canberra Avenue and Sturt Avenue.**
- **Assess the need and location for pedestrian crossings and pathways throughout Fyshwick and connecting with the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and Dairy Road as part of a Master Plan.**
- **Provide pathway along Jerrabomberra Creek connecting Narrabundah and Jerrabomberra Wetlands.**

5.3 Create a better experience for walking and cycling into and within the city centre and our town centres.

[Not relevant to ISCCS]

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THEME 6: PROTECT AND MAXIMISE BENEFITS OF HERITAGE ASSETS

Heritage is a significant contributor to the distinctive and highly valued character of much of Inner South Canberra. There are many places entered onto or nominated for the ACT Heritage Register and large parts of the streetscape were established by Griffin, and following him John Sulman, together with the heritage plantings by T.C.G. Weston. The area was part of what was known as the 'Initial City' on Griffin's 1913 plan for the National Capital and is of considerable heritage significance.

Proposed actions:

- **Maximise the economic and social benefits of the area's heritage assets and ensure those assets are not degraded;**
- **Prioritise the assessment of heritage nominations for the Manuka Shopping Precinct, Kingston Shops, Kingston Post Office and Jardine Street Commercial Row;**
- **Ensure that all heritage requirements for the Kingston Power House Historic Precinct are met in the Kingston Arts Precinct development;**
- **Identify all significant heritage places in Inner South Canberra that have not yet been nominated for inclusion on the ACT Heritage Register;**
- **Ensure that sensitive and respectful buffer zones are created between higher density development and heritage places, especially for Garden City precincts where the surrounding streetscape is an integral feature. This includes avoiding excessive height and inadequate set backs;**
- **Respect and protect valued vistas in the inner south, including views towards the mountains, Lake Burley Griffin and treescapes.**
- **Ensure all requirements are met in heritage areas (e.g. no dual occupancies or two storey dwellings);**
- **Protect heritage streetscapes such as those planted by TCG Weston. Ensure root compaction is avoided by preventing parking under heritage trees;**
- **Ensure all street furniture in heritage precincts is properly maintained by the relevant authorities e.g. fire hydrants by Icon Water, street lighting by Evo Energy**
- **Exclude heritage places and precincts from all urban intensification areas**