

CONSULTATION REPORT

Consultation Objectives

1. Collect and comprehend information and ensure that community and government engagement mechanisms are informative, participatory and accessible to achieve the study outcomes.
2. Structure consultations so that information generated through the consultation process can be used for informing the review process and outcomes.
3. Provide clear information about the issues and challenges to all stakeholders.
4. Develop an understanding of the values, aspirations, concerns and interests of community and government stakeholders that will inform the study outcomes.

Government Agency Consultation

A consultation was held with ACT Government agencies prior to the community consultation process. The meeting included representatives from ACTPLA, LDA, ACT Heritage Unit and ACT Property.

There was considerable discussion about how remediation works are to be paid for. The meeting was advised that the ACT Treasury position is that funds from land sales in an area cannot be quarantined to fund specific public infrastructure such as the Brickworks. Treasury's approach is that developer contributions must go to consolidated revenue thus proposals for capital works must be subjected to a budget bid process and be assessed against other government program proposals.

In this context, there is particular concern that the Yarralumla community is of a view that there is a relationship between proposals for sale and development at the Brickworks and environs and expenditure on conservation and remediation works. As noted above, there is no direct relationship between these two factors and, that ACT Treasury requirements mandate a separation between land sales and public funds being allocated for remediation and conservation works. While this is the standard, the relevant Minister would have the option to put a case to Government to tie income from land sales to conservation and remediation works at the Brickworks.

ACT Property advised that there is a need to undertake a 10 year asset management plan for the site and buildings. The asset management plan should assist in determining which buildings are still suitable for small scale activities such as artist studios. Representatives from the Unit also advised that it would like to get advice on how to manage a heritage site and that there are perhaps issues with previous contamination audits as they have not been inclusive of all structures and areas

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across the site such as the brick pits and the area under blackberry brambles to the west of the kilns.

Regarding community consultation, there is considerable frustration at what is seen as the community changing its mind and holding sway over outcomes rather than outcomes being determined by policy and financial accountability measures. Participants believe that the community is more polarized than is presented via the YRA. While this may be true, exploiting this difference could be counter-productive and any community consultation process should seek to foster community capacity building rather than enhance divisions.

The meeting also recognised that a flaw in previous consultations has been the focus on residents from Yarralumla rather than putting the case for the role of the Brickworks to the ACT community and other external parties in recognition of the role of the Brickworks as a heritage site of national and Territory significance. This feedback demonstrates that future consultation processes need to be multi-faceted to enable diverse and divergent voices and opinions to be represented, preferably in a non-combatative environment.

All agencies are keen to see a resolution of the long term use and viability of the site including identification of what should be retained and how conservation and remediation works including removal and/or management of contaminated sites should be funded.

There was discussion about whether management of the Brickworks site should allow for 'graceful decay'. While some agencies may be sympathetic to this view the ACT Heritage Unit rejected this view categorically and advised that the ACT Heritage Council would not accept this as an option for the Yarralumla Brickworks.

Other issues noted in the meeting included:

- NCA policy over-rides ACT policy and must be taken into consideration in any proposals for future development.
- the need to consider the impact of the Spatial Plan and the proposed Molonglo Valley development as well as the draft Yarralumla Neighbourhood Plan on the Yarralumla Brickworks and environs.
- It is desirable to provide a landscape buffer around the whole site, particularly to east and west which abut residential neighbourhoods and to consider how new plantings interact with topography to maintain the buffer.
- Increasingly there is an infestation of weed species around the site which should be eradicated.
- Along the eastern boundary there is a need to establish a strip of open space to assist with site maintenance including bush fire hazard reduction activities. This zone may connect to pedestrian and cycles routes however it must be able to be used by maintenance and emergency vehicles as required.

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- Concerns about OH&S issues across the site.
- There should be clarification and separation between what constitutes good planning outcomes and long term management of the site.
- It was noted that the site's proximity to several tourist drive routes including the Cotter Road Circuit (Tourist Drive 5), Lake Burley Griffin Circuit (Tourist Drive 2) and the Embassy Circuit (Tourist Drive 6) which may all be exploited with regard to potential adaptive reuses for cultural, leisure and recreation activities.

The National Capital Authority (NCA), ArtsACT and ACT Tourism and Events were consulted separately. Summaries of discussions with these agencies are noted below.

The NCA were consulted to discuss potential overlaps between plans for the Yarralumla Brickworks and the Western Foreshores Study commissioned by the NCA. The NCA advised that it has commissioned the development of a planning framework for the Central National Area West however the Brickworks has been excluded from the study. The study is in the process of being finalised for public comment and the NCA representative was not in a position to provide detailed information about the framework.

As previously noted in the discussion on government policy, ArtsACT has developed a framework which has been endorsed for managing the ACT Government's responsibilities for arts and cultural facilities. Mandy Hillson from ArtsACT advised that the agency is generally sympathetic to proposals for low-cost options for artist studios however, the agency is seeking to consolidate its existing portfolio, they would not be keen to take this on and that currently there is no capacity to financially support another arts precinct. The basis for supporting current arts precincts is to build capacity and patrons with existing venues rather than having facilities located in isolation from other arts, commercial and community services and activities.

ArtsACT is keen to be informed about proposals with an arts focus for the Yarralumla Brickworks, particularly if they relate to consideration of development of an arts precinct for art studios/galleries. The agency would not support another government funded gallery at this time in a location such as the Brickworks because this would add to the existing fragmentation of arts facilities and venues in the ACT.

Cathy Winters from ACT Tourism and Events was also asked to comment on the potential for the Brickworks as a tourist and visitor destination. Cathy noted that it would be important to define what the niche market for this venture could be but that on first glance there would be concerns about how many similar initiatives can be supported by government. Cockington Green, Kingston Markets which are private initiatives as well as Floriade, Weston Park and the recently announced proposal for a national arboretum along with the well established arts, cultural and heritage

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facilities and venues across Canberra are existing and well established competitors. Ms Winter noted that there have been recent announcements by the NCA and the Chief Minister to confirm that Floriade will stay at Commonwealth Park.

Ms Winter advised that the capacity of infrastructure would play a role in how the site could support any significant visitor and tourist destination and that all similar activities and venues in Canberra rely on local support to sustain themselves across the year. Planning for such ventures in close proximity to housing really needs to consider the impact of activities and events on the amenity of neighbours. It was noted that places as 'open museum' experiences such as Ballarat and the recently closed Timber Town are costly and hard to sustain over time without extensive reinvention and capital investment.

Community Consultations

Community consultation included attending a meeting of the YRA Committee, one to one phone conversations with members of the YRA and other members of the community, a morning tea with several residents and a public meeting. The agenda and a transcript of the proceedings of the community consultation is provided at **Appendix 5**.

Public Meeting

A public meeting was held at the Uniting Church Hall on the 16th August 2004 commencing at 6pm which over 40 people attended. Initially participants were cynical and highly suspicious hence the first part of the meeting dealt with a range of issues and only loosely followed the agenda.

Initial issues raised included concern about patchy distribution of the flyer, commencement time of the meeting, status of DHA proposal, status of NCA and Neighbourhood Plan, belief that there was an underlying agenda for development and concern about traffic monitoring equipment on Bentham Street which were addressed individually before moving onto the agenda.

The participants were asked to comment and reconfirm the principles generated at the YRA Community Search Conference in 2002. A summary of the Yarralumla Community Search Conference Principles **is attached as Appendix 6**.

Generally participants endorsed the principles although it was suggested that the principles should be widened to recognise passive recreation opportunities, the need to develop a stronger articulation of the relationship between the Brickworks and the suburb, that any future development should not have a negative impact on the heritage values and, that future urban development should be driven by social and environmental sustainability.

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There were some specific implications for Territory Policy including the need to clarify the boundaries and planning controls for the 8A site that might be considered as a future development site, that Section 94 should be designated Open Space and that the adjacent area was valued as a non native 'woodland' landscape. Participants also asked for a copy of the 'good planning principles' to be provided to the community through the YRA.

There was considerable discussion about conservation of the Brickworks and additional urban development. The participants advised that the reason for developing proposals based on a nexus between land sales and conservation and adaptive redevelopment for the Brickworks was because they had been previously advised that it would be the only way government would consider contributing to funding future conservation and heritage restoration works at the Brickworks.

The consultant team advised the meeting that in their Brief there was no automatic link between land sale and expenditure of funds on the Brickworks by government.

While there was support for no relationship or nexus between conservation measures and additional urban development, community members were extremely wary and were concerned that if the nexus was broken now, that this would give future governments' opportunity to develop to a greater scale than agreed through the YRA's Community Search Conference. People were also concerned that if the nexus was broken that it would mean loss of the non heritage listed areas of European 'woodland' in the future.

The majority of participants confirmed their view that the Brickworks is a National and Territory asset and that funding for conservation of this heritage place should be viewed in this way. Therefore local Yarralumla residents should not "pay" figuratively or literally by additional (infill) urban development that may or may not provide Government revenue.

The majority of community members present (but not all) advised that a lot of the community sees no additional urban development in the Brickworks or vicinity as preferred and that the focus should be on remediation and stabilization not grand scale development. There was general support for adaptive reuse that is sympathetic to the range of heritage values of the place.

Two members disagreed with the no development approach, one member of the community advised that he thought that the land was valuable and that he would like to see active uses/development of the Brickworks in particular the development of the quarry as a park. The other participant runs a business on the Brickworks site and understandably was concerned about the potential to lose rights to operate on the site.

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Participants generally supported the proposal of the heritage walk proposed in the draft Neighbourhood Plan although there was concern that it could increase pressures on parking at the shopping centre. The Brickworks was identified as a possible parking area and as an appropriate termination for a Heritage Walk.

Traffic congestion, particularly with any future development was raised several times. Conrad noted that in order for any development to be successfully integrated into the suburb that vehicular access should be from within the suburb rather than as a separate entry off Cotter Road or a Brickworks access road. It was generally agreed that there should be:

- no access from Cotter Road to Denman Street or possibility of short cuts;
- new residential development should be accessed off Denman Street; and,
- access to Brickworks will need to minimise the need for any tree removal.

The meeting was advised that the Cotter Road / Dudley Street / Dunrossil Drive intersection needed to be carefully considered and was likely at some stage in the future to be upgraded for the new development area of Molonglo Valley, with access off Adelaide Avenue to Cotter Road.

The consultants sought clarification regarding size and locality of the YRA's nominated area for possible future urban development. The community members explained that the area nominated was based on the extent of the unused former gravel/road works depot which they considered had no aesthetic value.

The consultants also sought discussion about the nature of any potential development and clarification of potential site development boundaries. Mixed housing type and scale development may be acceptable but that this would need to be the subject of future community consultation and it was agreed that there weren't enough people left to discuss concepts.

As part of the discussion Mr Mac West, new President of the YRA, read out a motion passed at the YRA AGM of Sunday 15th August as follows:

"The YRA continues to vigorously support the existing YRA proposal that was developed for the brickworks in 2001 and that has been provided to ACTPLA on several occasions since then. The YRA also reaffirms its strong opposition to the intensive residential and commercial redevelopment of the brickworks site and surrounding open space such as was outlined in the 2001 Connell Wagner proposals." Proposed: Francis Perkins, seconded: Dean Terrell; carried (unanimously).

While community members endorsed this they felt that given the discussion at this public meeting, a more direct statement should be agreed by the meeting. The following statements were agreed by the majority of community members of the meeting.

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“The Yarralumla community is committed to preservation, restoration and maintenance of the YBW as a place of national and local heritage significance”.

“Participants of this meeting agree that there should be no financial nexus between heritage preservation and management of the YBW and the sale of land in Yarralumla.”

And a further statement that

“If any development should take place, such development should be environmentally and socially sustainable. That the magnitude of housing development be no greater than the YRA proposal for approximately 25 houses, and that it can only occur on non-wooded areas.”

At the end of the meeting a participant thanked the consultant team for their honesty and the way the consultants had responded to the community and its concerns regarding this Review and the future of the Brickworks.

YRA Committee Meeting

The consultants met with the YRA Committee on the 10th August prior to the public meeting in order to identify and address any key areas of concern. At this meeting the following matters were canvassed by the Committee:

- The DCP process was appalling and people were opposed to the concept irrespective of whether they supported development or not.
- The LAPAC didn't realize what they were agreeing to when they submitted their proposal. That the vision was informed by an urbanized, inner city rather than garden suburb aesthetic.
- The YRA is not keen on town house style development and wants to see kilns refurbished. The Brickworks potential should be not just monuments but a place where people live and work.
- Don't understand why DHA proposal couldn't be accepted or that it could have been the basis for an EOI process and if no other bids came in, that it could have been considered.
- Believe the idea of the heritage walk is acceptable.
- The YRA tested their proposal at 2003 AGM and got support from community participants.
- Should the YRA proposal of 25 houses proceed, the YRA and community don't want the new residents to feel excluded and any new development should be integrated with the surrounding suburb.

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- A member of the YRA advised that there have had discussions with Beaver Galleries at Deakin who've expressed an interest in perhaps moving or expanding their facilities to the Yarralumla Brickworks. Beaver Galleries has been a highly successful commercial gallery enterprise so it would be worth exploring in any future investigations for possible adaptive reuse of the Brickworks.
- The YRA also expressed concern about advertising for the public meeting and advised that many people including YRA members had not received the flyer.

In response to the advice regarding advertising of the public meeting, the consultants also placed notices in many of the shop windows at the Yarralumla and several of the schools.

Other Consultation Feedback

Bruce McDonald, the ex-caretaker was also interviewed to ascertain his views and to test and confirm information generated from other sources. Bruce advised that he felt the succession of government departments had not aided the case for developing an agreed outcome and direction for development at the Brickworks. The site went from earning \$35K per annum to zero once the tenancies were cancelled.

Mr. McDonald believes that there have always been issues about viability with previous proposals including AR Marr who first employed him as care taker in the '70's. Community sensitivity to the number of visitors to make such a site viable has also contributed to the downfall of previous proposals. He also believes that there is little interest in industrial heritage in Australia and that therefore the potential for community and tourist interest isn't there to make any future development sustainable at the Brickworks.

Mr McDonald noted that the chimney is the only one in the ACT and that the Stafford Kiln is the only one left in Australia and possibly the Southern Hemisphere so that despite the lack of interest, there should be concern to protect and showcase these valuable objects and the site. He is concerned that there is a process of destruction by neglect underway and that correct advice should be obtained from suitably qualified people regarding structures. He rejects the findings of a previous report about the instability of the kiln structures and believes that advice should be sought from people who build kiln structures (not people who build brick houses).

A representative of the Uniting Church confirmed that the Church did not support proposals for aged care accommodation as proposed in the draft DCP but the Church is supportive of further residential development as long as it is sensitive to the character of Yarralumla. The Church was opposed to the proposal for a road between Bentham and Dudley Streets however accepted that access to the Brickworks should be off Dudley Street. The Church also reiterated its concern about

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the lack of kerb and guttering along Bentham Street and they noted that their main concern was to ensure that the Church could maintain its viability as the community changes and develops.

Other comments across the community engagement activities included:

- That the proposal for a brick making museum which was part of the draft DCP was unlikely as a tourist attractor.
- Long term residents have advised the YRA that in the past, winds from the west were horrendous and that the pines which have grown up though the area adjacent to the Uniting Church have done much to ameliorate cold winter winds.
- Long term residents are unhappy about the villa/mansions style of development of new homes being built in the suburb and feel that they do not fit the character of Yarralumla *“wall to wall concrete is not part of the garden suburb character.”*
- For some, the Brickworks is now passé and boring and not essential to the lifestyle qualities and amenity of Yarralumla.
- People want to grow old in place and not be forced to relocate out of the suburbs they have lived in as active adults.
- Yarralumla has totally changed and the shops are working well.
- *“The Brickworks perhaps, has been a distraction from what is really going on and people concerned about Yarralumla should focus on the changes to houses and local streetscapes.”*
- Residents are fed up with inaction and perceived poor processes. People are `war weary`.
- A participant commented that he felt that the consultation process for the DCP was manipulative and that from the start it created conflict ... *“this is what we’ve come up with and we want you to vote.”*
- The community workshops organized by the community were rewarding and satisfying – it was suggested that this was due to the style and process used and that this was in direct comparison to the style and approach of other processes which have been used.
- Community is not aware of real issues about contamination. There is concern that several people have died of cancer related illnesses. As children they played around the Brickworks as a derelict site and some wonder if there is a relationship between the illness and where they played as children. Some feel that the contamination study was shallow and that government agency concern about contamination was used more as a threat than about real evidence.
- It was suggested that there could have been clearer explanations about proposals that were part of the DCP and how they addressed issues such as containment of site contaminants – the example being proposals for car park

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where blackberry brambles are would act to contain contaminants in that area.

- The density of plans and proposals is upsetting to people's perception of the character of the area.
- Future consultations need to be about bridge building.