

Parliamentary Paper
No. 183/1983

The Parliament of the
Commonwealth of Australia

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Report on Proposals for
Variations of the Plan of the
Layout of the City of Canberra
and its Environs

(Seventy-eighth Series - Second
Report)

The Commonwealth Government Printer
Canberra 1984

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
TERMS OF REFERENCE

That a joint committee be appointed to inquire into and report on:

- (a) all proposals for modification or variations of the plan of layout of the City of Canberra and its environs published in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette on 19 November 1925, as previously modified or varied, which are referred to the committee by the Minister for Territories and Local Government, and
- (b) such matters relating to the Australian Capital Territory as may be referred to it by -
 - (i) resolution of either House of the Parliament, or
 - (ii) the Minister for Territories and Local Government.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mr K.L. Fry, MP

Deputy Chairman: Senator M.E. Reid

Members: Senator P.J. Giles
Senator M.E. Lajovic
Senator M. Reynolds
Mr C. Hollis, MP
Mrs R.J. Kelly, MP
Mr P.J. McGauran, MP
Mr P.M. Ruddock, MP
Mr J.H. Snow, MP

Secretary: Mr A.J. Kelly

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee approves the variations at:

- . Kings Avenue/State Circle Intersection, Parkes/Barton;
and
- . State Circle/Canberra Avenue Intersection.

The Committee approves the extensions to Commonwealth and Kings Avenues, provided that the visual impact of the rising road ways is minimised. The ramps should be harmonised with their surroundings by having a contoured and undulating landform supporting the ramp, complemented by an appropriate level of plantings and concealed parapet lighting instead of overhead lighting.

Introduction

1 The National Capital Development Commission (NCDC), the Department of the Capital Territory, now Territories and Local Government (DTLG), and the Parliament House Construction Authority (PHCA) presented the 78th Series of Variations to the City Plan to the Committee, in September 1982, as one variation. The variation provided for vehicular access to Capital Hill from Kings, Commonwealth and Melbourne Avenues, a perimeter road around the new Parliament House, and minor modifications to the intersections of Langton Crescent and Commonwealth Avenue, and State Circle and Kings Avenue. Consistent with the design of the new Parliament House and its main entrance forecourt the variation also provides for linking Camp Hill and Capital Hill.

2. The previous Committee was concerned that a number of substantial modifications were being presented to it as one item. Accordingly, this Committee divided the Variation into 10 separate items.

- Parliament Perimeter Road
- Land Bridge
- Commonwealth Avenue Ramp
- Kings Avenue Ramp
- Kings Avenue/State Circle Intersection
- Canberra Avenue/State Circle Intersection
- Melbourne Avenue/State Circle Intersection
- Melbourne Avenue Ramp
- Adelaide Avenue/State Circle Intersection
- Langton Crescent/Queen Victoria Terrace/Commonwealth Avenue

The Committee also criticised the poor quality of the briefing notes supplied to it by the NCDC/DCT/PHCA. Much of the necessary detail required in Variations briefs was lacking, and the quality was uneven.

3. The Committee, in its report tabled on 14 October 1982, approved six of the ten items and deferred consideration of the other four, viz:

- the Commonwealth Avenue Ramp to the New House;
- the Kings Avenue Ramp to the New House;
- Kings Avenue/State Circle intersection; and
- Canberra Avenue/State Circle intersection.

4. The latter two items were deferred on the basis that they are dependent on the first two items. The Committee deferred these items until further information was provided which would allow the Committee to approve or reject the proposals.

5. In the first Report the Committee approved the Melbourne Avenue extension on the condition that a workable system be produced to deter through traffic to the south from using Melbourne Avenue. During the hearings, NCDC undertook to provide such a solution by the next Series of Variations (at the time, this would have been the Eightieth Series). The Committee has still not received definite proposals on this matter from NCDC although it believes work is well advanced on the project and some public consultation has been conducted.

6. The Committee has received a considerable number of submissions on the resolution of these traffic problems some of which have objected to the Commonwealth and Kings Avenue Ramp. The Committee has considered these objections and notes that they essentially object to the contribution these ramps will make to through traffic along Melbourne Avenue.

7. It is clear that the Committee will need to conduct public hearings on the proposals for minimising traffic problems to the south. The Committee has taken into account these objections which are dealt with later in this Report. However, the Committee does not wish to delay reporting on major works outstanding in this series and therefore defers reporting on traffic management to the south of the New House to a further report on the 78th Series.

8. On 16 May 1983, the Minister for Territories and Local Government, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1(a) of the Resolution of Appointment of this Committee, referred the outstanding items of the 78th Series of Variation for investigation and report. The Minister's letter referring the outstanding items is at Appendix I.

9. NCDC, DTLG and PHCA supplied jointly prepared briefing notes for the items for which approval was deferred. These briefing notes form Appendix 2. For the sake of brevity, details contained in the briefing notes are not repeated, unless necessary, in the Committee's report. The briefing notes explain details of the variations such as the purpose, cost, existing and proposed development and the extent of the community consultation. The Committee's Report should therefore be read in conjunction with the briefing notes and the previous Committee's report on the 78th Series of Variations. The cost involved in the proposals is approximately \$5.4m.

10. On 5 September 1983, the Committee received a joint briefing with the New Parliament House Committee by NCDC, DTLG, PHCA and the New Parliament House Architects, Mitchell/Giurgola and Thorp.

OUTSTANDING ITEMS SEVENTY-EIGHTH SERIES VARIATIONS

Commonwealth and Kings Avenue Ramps

11. The Competition Conditions for the new Parliament House architectural Design Competition, which were approved by Parliament on 5 April 1979, provided competitors with a range of traffic options to link the otherwise remote Parliament House site to the city transportation network. The proposed extensions to Commonwealth and Kings Avenues were allowed for in the competition conditions and will provide direct access to the new Parliament House.

12. Commonwealth Avenue is a major element of Canberra's transport system. There are two carriageways each carrying three lanes of traffic separated by a ten metre wide median. The Avenue connects to Capital Circle via two ramps containing bridges over State Circle. There is also a road connection between the two carriageways south of State Circle.

13. It is proposed to extend Commonwealth Avenue to the perimeter road around the new Parliament House via a ramp rising from the existing median level south of the Canadian High Commission. The ramp will be 341 metres long; it includes a new bridge over State Circle and a bridge spanning the site boundary of the new Parliament House. It will form a two-5 metre lane (compared with standard 3.7 metre lanes) single carriageway, with a maximum grade of 8 per cent. There is no overhang of one road over the other. Additional roadworks including modifications to the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Coronation Drive, and alterations to the median both north and south of the intersection are proposed.

14. The proposal will require construction works over approximately 700 metres from the vicinity of the Hotel Canberra south to the Parliament House. Most of the work will be undertaken within the existing gazetted reservation but gazettal of a short length of road between Capital Circle and the new Parliament House perimeter road is required.

15. The proposal will also require the removal of five mature trees from the median of Commonwealth Avenue. The estimated cost for the Commonwealth Avenue extension at April 1983 prices is \$3.6m.

16. At present Kings Avenue connects to Capital Circle via two ramps. One is used by traffic from Russell and Barton travelling to Woden, the other is little used since Capital Circle has been blocked off opposite Commonwealth Avenue. The current layout is considered to be unsatisfactory as there is a high accident rate at the entry from the ramp on to Capital Circle because of lack of sufficient room for merging traffic in Capital Circle and visibility problems.

17. The proposed variation will delete the two existing ramps and instead provide access from Kings Avenue and State Circle to the Parliament House perimeter road.

18. The road will be one of the primary access roads to the new building, and will directly link Parliament House to State Circle which is a major distributor road encircling the New House.

19. The Kings Avenue extension will proceed from an at-grade intersection with State Circle via a two-lane road to a bridge over Capital Circle, terminating at the Parliament House perimeter road. Apart from the bridge, no structure is involved in this approach which will rise at 8 per cent grade over most of its length. It is basically a road on fill and closely matches the gradient of Capital Hill at that point. No trees will be removed by the proposal and significant new landscaping will be undertaken.

20. The difficulties with the ramps encountered by the Committee in the previous Parliament are primarily those associated with Commonwealth Avenue. The Kings Avenue ramp, unlike the Commonwealth one, fits into the landscape but would create symmetry problems if built without the Commonwealth ramp.

21. Mr Peter Harrison, a former First Assistant Commissioner (Planning) at the NCDC and currently a member of the National Capital Planning Committee (an advisory body to the NCDC), was highly critical of the proposed ramps from Commonwealth and Kings Avenue onto Capital Hill, particularly the Commonwealth Avenue ramp. Mr Harrison described these ramps as 'ugly, expensive and unnecessary'. Mr M. Latham, an Associate Commissioner at the NCDC in his evidence stated that the Commonwealth Avenue Ramp in particular, 'is not ideal'. However he described it is a 'workable connection capable of being made visually attractive'.

22. Mr Harrison objections are set out below:

(a) He argued that the proposed ramps were not in accordance with Burley Griffin's criteria for avenues, which provided for a maximum 2.5 per cent grade; in contrast to the 8 per cent grade on the proposed ramps. (Mr Harrison is described by the NCDC as an acknowledged expert on Burley Griffin and his work.)

(b) In his submission, Mr Harrison also stated that:

"The ramps will be disruptive elements in the axial views along Commonwealth and Kings avenues towards Parliament House. These avenues, following Griffin's prescription, were intended to be uniform in cross-section,

that is, parallel carriageways separated by a median strip of uniform width for their entire length. Twin bridges [over the lake] for each carriageway (rather than a single bridge) were considered to be important to maintain this uniform separation of the carriageways. The insertion of ramps within the median and which take off and extend beyond the ends of the avenues, are entirely out of character with the criteria applicable to the design of an avenue."

- (c) Mr Harrison was also critical of the acute angle intersections that the two ramps make with the parliamentary perimeter road, which for the time being is referred to as Parliament Drive.
- (d) Further he claimed that the National Capital Planning Committee (NCPC), at its meeting in August 1981, was not enthusiastic about these proposals.

23. The previous Committee in its Report on the 78th Series stated:

The Committee is concerned about the visual impact of the proposed ramps and the effect they will have on traffic movements. The Committee notes the conflicting evidence of a respected town planner and of NCDC and is concerned that the ramps, particularly the Commonwealth Avenue Ramp, would seriously disrupt the visual character of these major Avenues. These avenues as presently constructed are important elements of the Burley Griffin Plan.

24. The NCDC in their response to the comments raised by Mr Harrison stated that the Parliament House Competition documents were prepared by the NCDC after consultation with the Joint Standing Committee on the New Parliament House. The competition documents describe existing and possible access routes to Capital Hill and their respective possible grades. The salient points from the conditions are:

- (a) Identification of access opportunities onto Capital Hill via extensions of each of the Avenues, including Melbourne Avenue, but excluding Brisbane Avenue;
- (b) Nomination of Commonwealth and Kings Avenues and the Land Axis as the 'Ceremonial Tourist and Business Access and Parking' routes. Adelaide Avenue and the existing east and west approach roads were described as 'Employee and Business Access and Parking';
- (c) A maximum allowable grade of 8 per cent was defined for all of the routes on to the site.

25. The NCDC went on to say that:

'The extensions of Commonwealth and Kings Avenues into the site was a deliberate design choice by the architects. The Parliament House Construction Authority has advised the Commission that it is inconceivable that the new Parliament House would have been designed as it has if the extensions had not been planned or were not to be constructed in the ways proposed. There should be no doubt that the architects of the Parliament House, Mitchell, Giurgola and Thorp, would have designed their building differently if the avenues were not to be extended.' ...

and that:

'it is proposed that the extension will be carried by a bridge between and harmonising with the existing twin bridges over State Circle. The underside will take the same form as the existing bridges and will be at the same level. On the upper side the parapets will be finished with pre-cast elements to give the bridge an elegant and light coloured appearance. The bridge will be well proportioned, sensitively detailed and finished with high quality and light coloured materials. It will not be ugly. It will not be like the heavy unfinished concrete ramps typical of big city urban freeways built in constrained asphalt environments without the benefit of a natural landscape into which the proposed extension will be fitted. Both the design of the structure and its materials have been matched to those of the new Parliament House, whose Architects, Landscape Architects, and clients, the Parliament House Construction Authority, have been closely involved in the detailed design of the approach roads. The Commission has no reservations on functional, aesthetic or traffic safety grounds about the acceptability of the proposal.'

26. The Parliament House Construction Authority in a submission to the Committee dated 29 August 1983 (Appendix III), stated:

One of the major criteria of the design competition for the new Parliament House was that the building should reinforce the physical position of Capital Hill as the focal point and apex of the Parliamentary Triangle. The site, established by Griffin's plan, represents the converging point of the two Avenues which connect the Parliamentary Triangle to the major areas of the city. In this respect the Avenue extensions are necessary to complete the visual and functional link between the building and the city. The architecture of the building itself, also clearly depends both for its functional and visual effectiveness on direct access from Commonwealth and Kings Avenues to the site.

27. Mr Romaldo Giurgola, the principal architect of the competition winning firm, Mitchell/Guirgola and Thorp informed the Committee that they are convinced that the actual physical connection between the ramps and Parliament Drive are essential elements of both the Parliament and the City for the following reasons:

- (a) The diagonal orientation of the ramps keeps the approaches to the Parliament in a constant visual contact with the Forecourt and the entry. Also, the sense of gravitation toward the Forecourt, the land axis and the apex of the triangle are maintained.

- (b) Proceeding from Parliamentary Road toward north, the intersection forces a slowdown in order to assess the alignment of the ramps. This, we believe will help in maintaining the prominence of the relationship of the ramps and will avoid an 'easy' flush of traffic from Parliamentary Road to the avenues. In other words, a final reference to the Parliament House within the geometry of the city is achieved prior to leaving the complex.

- (c) The directness of the connection will be an asset, considering the sloping approach of the ramp and the topography. In addition, it is important, in our view, to maintain a position of the viewer related to the rising slope of the lawns contained by the curved walls of the Parliament.

28. Mr Giurgola stressed to the Committee the geometry of the two avenues approaching the House at the apex of the triangle, the circular perimeter of the Capital Hill site and the rectangular Parliament Drive with Parliament House at the centre. A concrete retaining wall marks the circular perimeter in the Kings and Commonwealth Avenues area and the Committee was advised that the visual reinforcement of this circle would be undertaken in those areas where it was less obvious.

29. This Committee is concerned, as was its predecessor, about the visual impact of the ramps. The Committee was advised by NCDC that since the last presentation to the Committee the proposed ground level underneath the Commonwealth Avenue ramp would be raised slightly to soften its impact by reducing the visual height of the ramp. The Committee does not believe that the ground level is being raised sufficiently.

30. The architects do not want the ground raised so high as to obscure the circular perimeter wall. The wall at that point is quite high and fortress-like (an aspect which Mr Giurgola warned against in his letter) and sufficient can remain visible to clearly mark the circular perimeter.

31. The earth form on which the ramp sits should be as high as is practicable so as to better resemble the natural form of that part of Capital Hill before it was excavated for Capital Circle. There has been less objection to the Kings Avenue ramp as it is closely fitted to the natural incline of the hill.

32. The Committee believes that by providing an undulating earth form on which part of the ramp sits, with plantings to further soften its appearance, the circular perimeter will remain visible, without the ramp being the imposition on the landscape that it was in the form first proposed. The ramps should have parapet, rather than overhead, lighting to minimise their visual height.

33. In the Draft Parliamentary Zone Development Plan NCDC states that:

'It is proposed that the existing trees in the medians of both Commonwealth and Kings Avenues be removed, or not be replaced, so that there are clear views of the New Parliament House along the length of these two major approaches. This proposal is in accordance with the original design intention when the roads were constructed in the early 1960s. At the same time the trees on the edges of both avenues would be supplemented by further plantings so that the definition of the Parliamentary Triangle would be more pronounced.'

34. The Committee believes that before the trees are removed the matter should be referred to both the Joint Committee on the New Parliament House and to this Committee for further consideration and that this should occur only after the ramps are completed.

35. As mentioned earlier the Committee will make a further report to the Parliament on the resolution of traffic problems to the south of the New House, raised during this Inquiry. Several submissions received by the Committee contained objections to through traffic using Melbourne Avenue and Parliament Drive to reach Commonwealth and Kings Avenues. Concern was also expressed about the acute angled intersection of Commonwealth and Kings Avenue with Parliament Drive.

36. The Committee believes that the acute angled intersections, the sharp right-angled corners, pedestrians crossing and the relatively narrow carriageway of Parliament Drive will create a degree of friction that will deter the use of Parliament Drive as a through route.

37. NCDC advised that the Parliament House route would be slower than alternative routes in all cases and provided the following time estimates:

	via Arterial Roads	via Parliament House
Melbourne Avenue to Kings Avenue	2 min 55 sec	3 min 25 sec
Kings Avenue to Melbourne Avenue	2 min 25 sec	3 min 20 sec
Melbourne Avenue to Commonwealth Avenue	3 min 38 sec	4 min 10 sec
Commonwealth Avenue to Melbourne Avenue	3 min 50 sec	4 min 18 sec

The Committee has some reservation as to the accuracy of these estimates but will leave these to the next Report.

38. The Committee believes that if the traffic problems to the south are adequately resolved, the amount of through traffic using Parliament Drive will not be great. These problems need to be resolved within the areas concerned not at Commonwealth and Kings Avenues. Should through traffic choose to use Parliament Drive, despite its lack of advantages, traffic control devices could be used as further disincentives.

39. The Committee approves the extensions to Commonwealth and Kings Avenues, provided that the visual impact of the rising road ways is minimised. The ramps should be harmonised with their surroundings by having a contoured and undulating landform supporting the ramp, complemented by an appropriate level of plantings and concealed parapet lighting instead of overhead lighting.

Variation 3 - Kings Avenue/State Circle Intersection Parkes/Barton

40. The purpose of this variation is to permit a change in the operation of the Kings Avenue/State Circle intersection to handle traffic to and from the south which presently uses Kings Avenue.

41. The intersection currently allows a free left turn for traffic in a single lane from Kings Avenue into State Circle travelling south.

42. The proposal involves the rearrangement of the intersection to allow two lanes of traffic to turn left into State Circle with direct access from Kings Avenue to Capital Circle being removed.

43. The Committee approves this variation.

Variation 4 - State Circle/Canberra Avenue Intersection

44. The State Circle/Canberra Avenue Intersection is to be rearranged to provide an improved right turn facility for southbound traffic from State Circle onto Capital Circle. Two lanes will turn right, then merge, before entering Capital Circle in an exclusive lane. An additional lane is currently under construction on Capital Circle to allow this traffic from Kings Avenue and State Circle to enter Capital Circle and then Adelaide Avenue unobstructed.

45. The possibility to continue on State Circle and enter Adelaide Avenue via the ramp adjacent to the Prime Minister's Lodge will remain. But by offering easier entry, the proposal is expected to contain the peak hour traffic flows at about their current level along the residential section of State Circle.

46. The estimated cost of this proposed development is \$80 000.

47. The Committee approves this variation.

22 September 1983

(KEN FRY)
Chairman



MINISTER FOR TERRITORIES AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600

16 May 1983

Mr K.F. Fry MP
Chairman
Joint Committee on the ACT
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear colleague

On 26 April 1983, notice of my intention to vary the plan of layout of the City of Canberra and its environs, representing the 79th Series of Variations, was published in the Gazette.

In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1(a) of the Committee's Instrument of Appointment, I formally refer the variations to the Committee for investigation and report.

Twelve variations to the plan are included in this Series. In accordance with normal procedures public participation has been encouraged through media releases, press advertisements and displays. All comments or objections relating to the variation proposals will be forwarded to the Committee for consideration during its examination of the proposals.

During the thirty-second Parliament, the Joint Committee on the ACT considered the items referred by the then Minister for the Capital Territory in the 78th Series of Variations to the City Plan. The variations related to the provision of road works in the vicinity of the new Parliament House. The Committee approved the proposals with the exception of the following matters:-

- . Commonwealth Avenue ramp
- . Kings Avenue ramp
- . Kings Avenue/State Circle intersection
- . Canberra Avenue/State Circle intersection
(non-gazettal item)

I now formally refer these outstanding items to the Committee, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1(a) of the Committee's Instrument of Appointment, for investigation and report.

Yours fraternally

TOM UREN

Minister for Territories
and Local Government

Department
of
Territories
and Local
Government

National
Capital
Development
Commission

Parliament
House
Construction
Authority

Seat of Government
(Administration)
Act 1910

**Proposals for Variation
of the Plan of Layout
of the City of Canberra
and its Environs**

78th Series

**Briefing
Material
Public
Comments
and
Objections**

Prepared for the
Parliamentary
Joint Committee
on the ACT

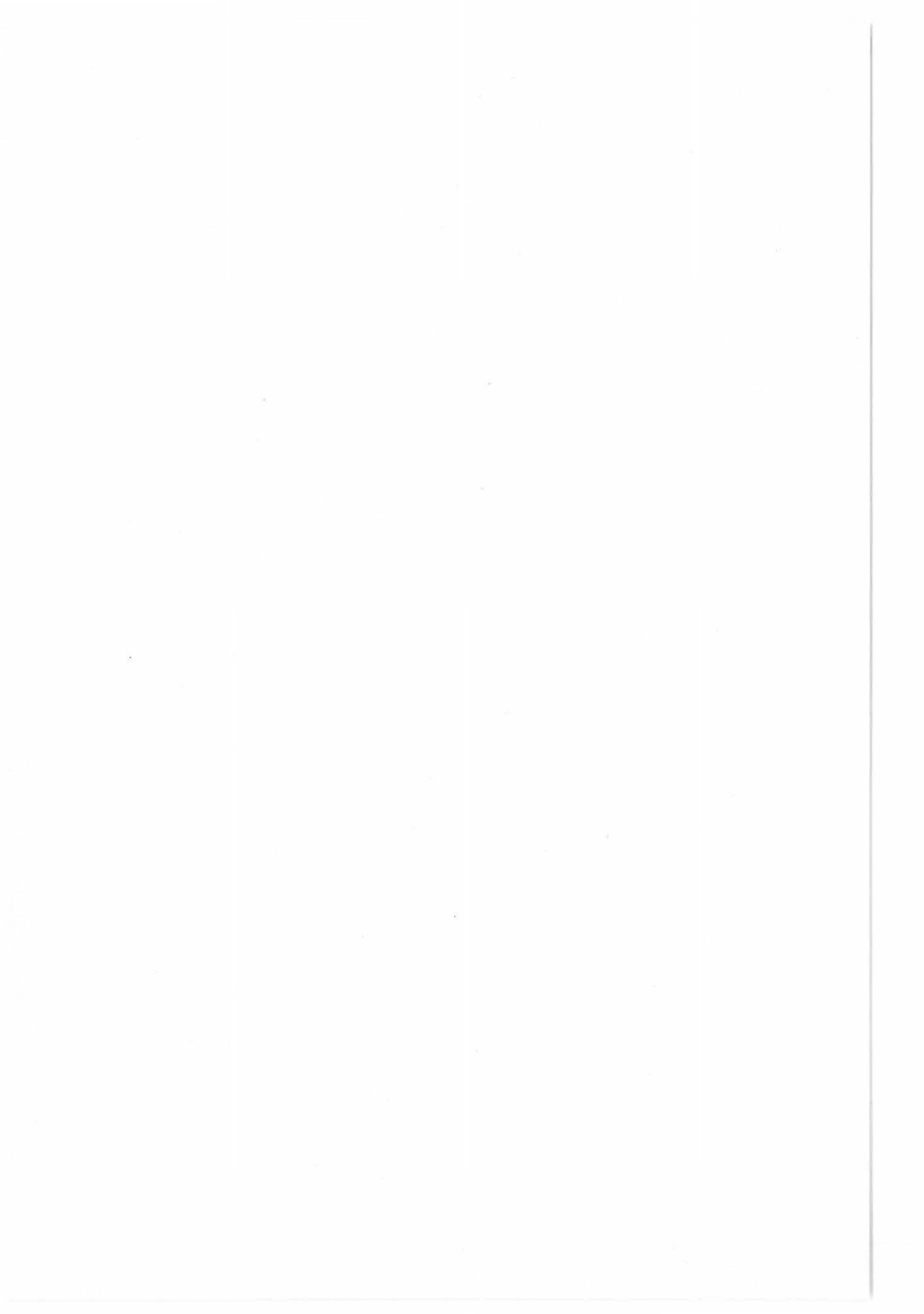
Canberra
June 1983

**Outstanding
Items**

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SEAT OF GOVERNMENT (ADMINISTRATION) ACT 1910

PROPOSALS TO VARY THE PLAN OF LAYOUT OF THE CITY AND ITS ENVIRONS (78TH SERIES-OUTSTANDING ITEMS).

During the 32nd Parliament the then Minister for the Capital Territory published in the Gazette S182 of 27 August 1982 Notice of Intention to vary the Plan of Layout of the City of Canberra to include roadways giving access to the new Parliament House.

The proposals were advertised in the Canberra Times, displays were placed in shopping and community centres and the Parliament House Exhibition Centre and residents and diplomatic establishments likely to be affected were advised directly. The ACT House of Assembly was informed and various interested organisations including the Institution of Engineers, NRMA, Geological Society, ACOA and others were notified.

The Joint Committee on the ACT held public hearings on the proposals on 27 September and 8 October 1982. Officers of the National Capital Development Commission, the then Department of the Capital Territory and the Parliament House Construction Authority, and 3 private citizens gave evidence.

The Committee approved the proposed variations except for the following items for which approval was deferred:

- Commonwealth Avenue Ramp
- Kings Avenue Ramp
- Kings Avenue/State Circle Intersection
- Canberra Avenue/State Circle Intersection (this item was identified by the Committee although the works would be carried out within the existing gazetted road alignment, and no proposal to vary the Plan in this respect was put forward)

This briefing material covers these items. Public comments and objections are included.



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

MINISTER FOR THE CAPITAL TERRITORY
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600

My dear Senator,

On 27 August 1982, notice of my intention to vary the plan of layout of the City of Canberra and its environs, representing the 78th Series of Variations, will be published in the Gazette.

In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1 (a) of the Committee's Instrument of Appointment, I formally refer the variation to the Committee for investigation and report.

The variation relates to the provision of roadways for the new and permanent Parliament House. As is usual, public participation will be encouraged through media releases, press advertisements and displays.

All comments or objections relating to the variation proposal which are received by the Department will be forwarded to the Committee for consideration during its examination of the proposals.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

MICHAEL HODGMAN
Minister for the Capital Territory

Senator Margaret Reid,
Chairman
Joint Committee on the A.C.T.,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA A.C.T. 2600



MINISTER FOR TERRITORIES AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600

16 May 1983

Mr K.F. Fry MP
Chairman
Joint Committee on the ACT
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear colleague

On 26 April 1983, notice of my intention to vary the plan of layout of the City of Canberra and its environs, representing the 79th Series of Variations, was published in the Gazette.

In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1(a) of the Committee's Instrument of Appointment, I formally refer the variations to the Committee for investigation and report.

Twelve variations to the plan are included in this Series. In accordance with normal procedures public participation has been encouraged through media releases, press advertisements and displays. All comments or objections relating to the variation proposals will be forwarded to the Committee for consideration during its examination of the proposals.

During the thirty-second Parliament, the Joint Committee on the ACT considered the items referred by the then Minister for the Capital Territory in the 78th Series of Variations to the City Plan. The variations related to the provision of road works in the vicinity of the new Parliament House. The Committee approved the proposals with the exception of the following matters:-

- . Commonwealth Avenue ramp
- . Kings Avenue ramp
- . Kings Avenue/State Circle intersection
- . Canberra Avenue/State Circle intersection
(non-gazettal item)

I now formally refer these outstanding items to the Committee, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1(a) of the Committee's Instrument of Appointment, for investigation and report.

Yours fraternally

TOM UREN

Minister for Territories
and Local Government

PUBLIC INFORMATION

As part of its policy to stimulate public interest in the proposals, the Department mounted displays showing the proposed variations at the Belconnen Mall, Monaro Mall, Woden Shopping Square, Cooleman Court, Dickson Library, Erindale Centre and the Parliament House Construction Authority Exhibition Centre. The Department also advertised the variations in the Canberra Times on three occasions.

Before gazettal the National Capital Development Commission wrote to residents in State Circle and Melbourne Avenue and to affected diplomatic establishments advising them of the proposals, notifying of the forthcoming gazettal, explaining the works and inviting residents and others to obtain more detailed information if required directly from the Commission.

The ACT House of Assembly was informed and briefed on the proposals, the Geological Society was advised in connection with the unconformity on State Circle and St. Andrews Church was informed. The Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association was advised in connection with parking for West Block and East Block. Pedal Power was advised of the proposals regarding cycle access. Letters were sent to five bodies interested in the rare daisy and advice was forwarded to such bodies as the Institution of Engineers, the Master Builders' Association of the ACT, the Australian Federation of Construction Contractors, the NRMA and the Tourist Commissioner.

Separately the proposals were discussed with representatives of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors, the Royal Australian Planning Institute, the Institution of Engineers, Australia and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.

STATEMENT FOR PRESS

THE MINISTER
FOR THE
CAPITAL TERRITORY

The proposed addition of several roads to provide access to the new and permanent Parliament House were announced today by the Minister for the Capital Territory, in the 78th series of Variations to the City Plan.

The variation provides for vehicular access to Capital Hill from Kings Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue and Melbourne Avenue; a perimeter road to the new Parliament House; and minor modification to the intersections of Langton Crescent and Commonwealth Avenue, and State Circle and Kings Avenue. Consistent with the design of the new Parliament House and its main entrance forecourt, the variation also provides for linking Camp Hill and Capital Hill.

Twenty-one days are allowed for public submissions or objections to any of the intended changes, which must be sent to the Department of the Capital Territory. All submissions received by the closing date of 16 September 1982 will be forwarded to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the ACT for consideration during their public hearings into the proposals.

The intended changes will be on display at Belconnen and Monaro Malls, Woden Shopping Square, Dickson Library, Cooleman Court, the Erindale Centre, Wanniasa and the Parliament House Construction Authority Exhibition Centre until the closing date for lodgement of submissions. Copies of the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette containing the Notice of intention to vary the plan are available at the Government Bookshop in Alinga Street.

27 August 1982



PO BOX 158 CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

DEPARTMENT OF THE
CAPITAL TERRITORY

78th SERIES OF VARIATIONS TO THE CITY PLAN

In the Gazette No. S 182 of Friday 27 August 1982, the Minister for the Capital Territory the Hon. Michael Hodgman, gave notice of his intention to vary the layout of the City of Canberra and its environs (City Plan). Members of the public who wish to lodge submissions or objections on the proposal are invited to do so. All submissions must be lodged, in writing, with the Secretary, Department of the Capital Territory, P.O. Box 158, Canberra City, 2601, no later than 5.00 p.m. on Thursday 16 September 1982. Submissions may also be lodged by hand at Room 266, South Building, Civic Office, London Circuit, Canberra City.

The proposed variation and any objections or comments received will be referred to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the A.C.T., which will conduct public hearings into the proposals and will report to Parliament before the variation can take effect.

Displays showing the intended changes will be available at the Belconnen and Monaro Malls, Woden Shopping Square, Cooleman Court, Dickson Library, Erindale Centre, Wannassa and the Parliament House Construction Authority Exhibition Centre.

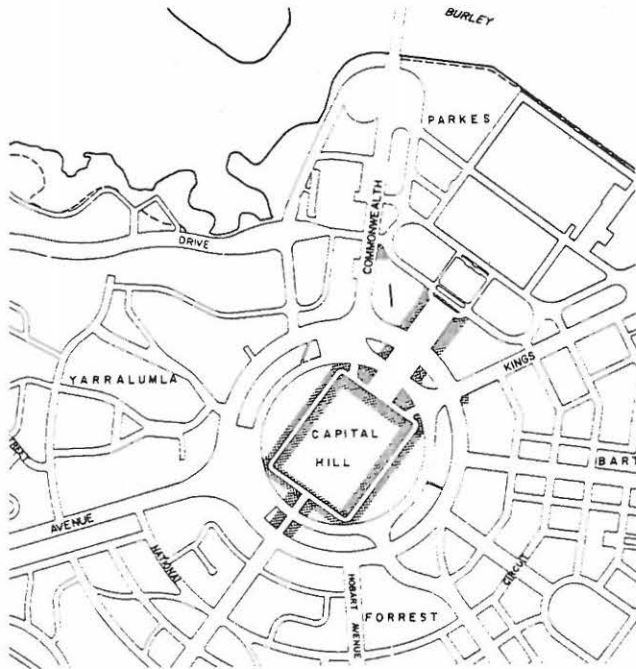
Variation 1:

Capital Hill, Parkes: Addition to the plan of several roads to provide access to the new and permanent Parliament House. The variation provides for vehicular access to Capital Hill from Kings Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue and Melbourne Avenue, a perimeter road around the new Parliament House, and minor modifications to the intersections of Langton Crescent and Commonwealth Avenue, and State Circle and Kings Avenue. Consistent with the design of the new Parliament House and its main entrance forecourt the variation also provides for linking Camp Hill and Capital Hill.

Telephone inquiries should be directed to Miss C. Boardman on 462750 or Mr K. Black on 462466.

As proposed in the Gazette No. S182 of 27 August 1982

CAPITAL HILL, PARKES: Addition to the plan of several roads to provide access to the new and permanent Parliament House. The variation provides for vehicular access to Capital Hill from Kings, Commonwealth and Melbourne Avenues, a perimeter road around the new Parliament House, and minor modifications to the intersections of Langton Crescent and Commonwealth Avenue, and State Circle and Kings Avenue. Consistent with the design of the new Parliament House and its main entrance forecourt the variation also provides for linking Camp Hill and Capital Hill.



VARIATION NO. 1

COMMONWEALTH AVENUE EXTENSION-PARKES

1. Purpose

The road will provide access to the new Parliament House from Commonwealth Avenue. It will serve as an important functional and symbolic link to the new building.

2. Length

Construction works will be required over approximately 700 metres from the vicinity of the Hotel Canberra south to the Parliament House. Most of the work will be undertaken within the existing gazetted reservation but gazettal of a short length of road between Capital Circle and the new Parliament House perimeter road is required.

3. Cost

\$.3.6M at April 1983 prices.

4. Existing Development

Commonwealth Avenue is a major element of Canberra's transport system. There are two carriageways each carrying three lanes of traffic separated by a ten metre wide median. The Avenue connects to Capital Circle via two ramps containing bridges over State Circle. There is also a road connection between the two carriageways south of State Circle.

5. Proposed Development

It is proposed to extend Commonwealth Avenue to the perimeter road around the new Parliament House via a ramp rising from the existing median level south of the Canadian High Commission. The ramp will be 340 metres long; it includes a new bridge over State Circle and a bridge spanning the site boundary of the new Parliament House. Additional roadworks including modifications to the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Coronation Drive, and alterations to the median both north and south of the intersection are proposed.

6. Particular Planning Considerations

The Parliament House competition documents described existing and possible access roads to Capital Hill and nominated Commonwealth and Kings Avenues and the Land Axis as the "ceremonial, tourist and business access and parking" routes. The maximum grade of 8% was defined.

The winning design proposed Commonwealth, Kings and Adelaide Avenues for primary business and commuting access, and the Land Axis for ceremonial, tourist and business access within the Parliamentary Zone.

The extension of Commonwealth and Kings Avenues into the site was a deliberate design choice by the architects. It is the view of the Parliament House Construction Authority that the new Parliament House would not have been designed as it has been, if the extensions had not been planned or were not to be constructed as proposed. The architects have stated they would have designed their building differently if the avenues were not to be extended.

The Commonwealth Avenue connection will provide an appropriate and efficient access to the new Parliament House in accordance with the prize winning design.

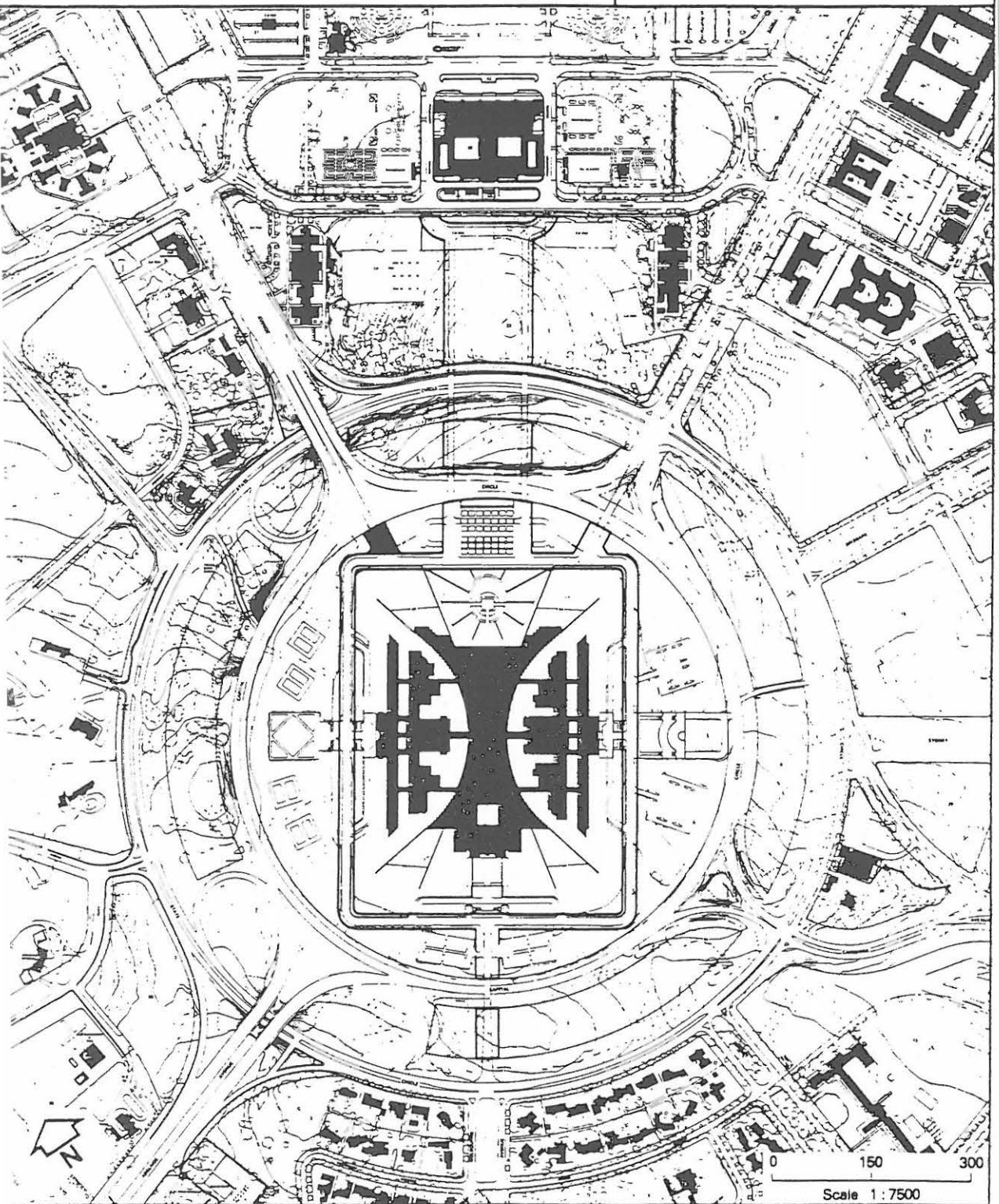
7. Environmental Considerations

The proposal would require the removal of five trees from the median of Commonwealth Avenue. It is proposed that the road will be carried by a bridge between and harmonising with the existing twin bridges over State Circle. The bridge will be well proportioned, sensitively detailed and finished with high quality and light coloured materials.

The Commission has no reservations on functional, aesthetic or traffic safety grounds about the acceptability of the proposal.

8. Public Participation

An extensive programme of public comment has been undertaken concerning the proposed Parliament House access roads. Details are set out separately in these briefing notes.



CAPITAL HILL, PARKES: Road Addition

ROAD ADDITION 
ROAD DELETION 

VARIATION NO. 2

KINGS AVENUE EXTENSION - PARKES

1. Purpose

The road will provide access from State Circle to the Parliament House perimeter road.

The road will link Parliament House to the major distributor road (State Circle), and will be one of the primary access roads to the new building.

2. Length

Approximately 200 metres.

3. Estimated Cost

\$1.7 million (April 1983 prices).

4. Existing Development

Kings Avenue connects to Capital Circle via two ramps. One is used by traffic from Russell and Barton travelling to Woden, the other carries traffic from Capital Circle to Kings Avenue. Generally, the current layout is considered to be deficient and there is an accident history at the entry from the ramp on to Capital Circle because of lack of sufficient room for merging traffic in Capital Circle.

5. Proposed Development

The Kings Avenue extension will proceed from an at-grade intersection with State Circle via a two-lane road to a bridge over Capital Circle, terminating at the Parliament House perimeter road. Essentially, the Kings Avenue extension is a road on fill and fitted into the surrounding topography. It will rise at 8% over most of its length.

The existing ramps from State Circle and Capital Circle will not be able to be retained and alternative traffic arrangements will be necessary.

6. Particular Planning Considerations

Kings Avenue is proposed in the winning design for Parliament House as a primary access. Its extension into the site was a deliberate choice by the architects. The Parliament House Construction Authority has advised that it is inconceivable that the new Parliament House would have been designed as it had, if the extensions of Kings and Commonwealth Avenues and the land axis had not been planned or were not to be constructed.

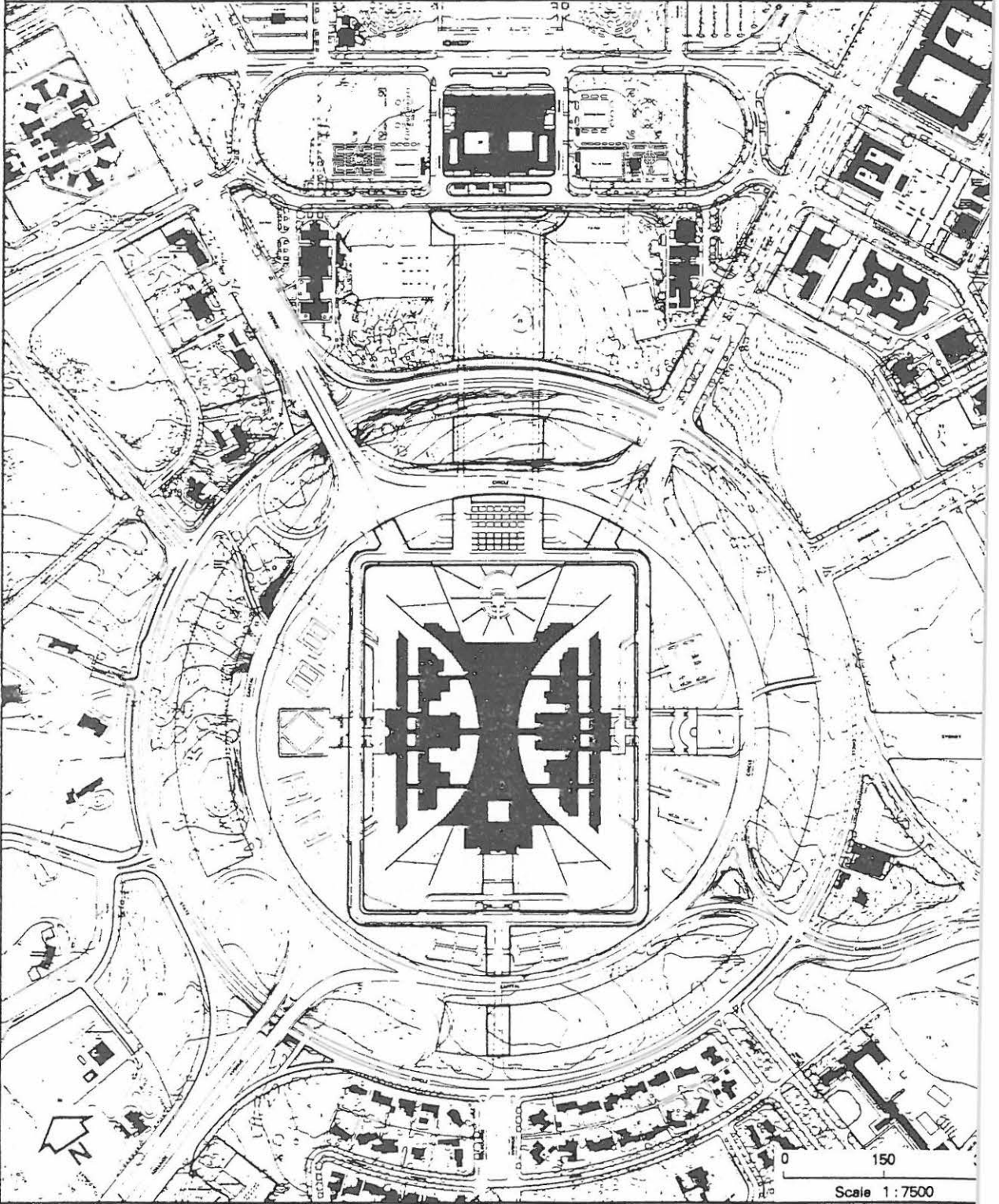
If Kings Avenue was not extended in the way proposed visitors and tourists would be attracted towards the new House but would be unable to enter the area except by the Melbourne Avenue entrance, or by turning away from the building and approaching it through the Parliamentary Zone via the land axis. This would be most inappropriate for a building of the significance of the new Parliament House.

7. Environmental Considerations

In the preparation of plans for these works considerable attention has been paid to fitting the road into the surrounding topography. No trees will be removed by the proposal and significant new landscaping will be undertaken.

8. Public Participation

As detailed elsewhere in these notes a comprehensive programme of public consultation has been undertaken.



CAPITAL HILL, PARKES: Road Addition

ROAD ADDITION 
ROAD DELETION 

20 September 1982

The Secretary,
Department of the Capital Territory,
CANBERRA, ACT, 2600.

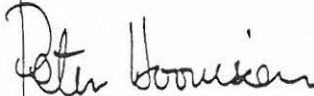
Dear Sir,

78TH SERIES OF VARIATIONS TO THE CITY PLAN

Attached is a late submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the A.C.T. on the 78th Series.

I apologise for the fact that it is late and accept that it may well be disqualified for that reason. However, I believe that the Joint Parliamentary Committee should be fully informed of the likely consequences of those parts of variations with which this submission is concerned and I make no apology for trying to ensure that.

Yours faithfully,


(Peter Harrison)

78TH SERIES OF VARIATIONS TO THE CITY PLAN

Submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the A.C.T.

Peter Firman Harrison A.M.

33 Booroondora Street

REID, A.C.T.

Master in Architecture, University of New South Wales
Diploma in Town and Country Planning, University of Sydney
Life Fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects
Life Fellow of the Royal Australian Planning Institute

Former Director/First Assistant Commissioner, Town Planning,
National Capital Development Commission, 1958-1967
Member, National Capital Planning Committee
Commissioner, Land Commission of New South Wales
Visiting Fellow, Urban Research Unit, Australian National
University

* * * * *

1. The purpose of this submission is to question the proposal, implicit in the proposed City Plan variations, that there should be approaches to the new Parliament House by way of traffic ramps from Commonwealth and Kings avenues, and in particular the size and appearance of the ramp from Commonwealth Avenue and the areas flanking it.

2. The ramps as proposed will be ugly, expensive and are unnecessary.

3. The ramps will be disruptive elements in the axial views along Commonwealth and Kings avenues towards Parliament House. These avenues, following Griffin's prescription, were intended to be uniform in cross-section, that is, parallel carriageways separated by a median strip of uniform width for their entire length. Twin bridges for each carriageway (rather than a single bridge) were considered to be important to maintain this uniform separation of the carriageways. The insertion of ramps within the median and which take off and extend beyond the ends of the avenues, are entirely out of character with the criteria applicable to the design of an avenue.

4. Anzac Parade, the ceremonial approach to the Australian Memorial, is a good example of a properly designed avenue. A central ramp taking off from the median of Anzac Parade to climb to the upper forecourt of the Memorial would be indicative of the visual disruption that this submission is concerned with: except that the ramp proposed from Commonwealth Avenue will be much longer, much steeper and much more prominent.

5. As well as allowing clear lines of sight along the avenues, thus accentuating the terminal feature (as Anzac Parade provides a frame, focussing on the War Memorial), the medians have the important function of separating opposing streams of traffic. To use one end of the median of Commonwealth Avenue for a third parallel carriageway carrying two-way traffic seems to be inviting trouble. Vehicles using this ramp will be entering and leaving the traffic streams moving along the main carriageways of the Avenue from what, on this and every other avenue, is accepted by drivers as a safe barrier against conflicting traffic movements. It will require any number of traffic warning signs to let drivers know that this part of the median is unique in having become a trafficway.

6. The ramps themselves will be steep: they appear to be steeper than the steepest grade encountered on any avenue in the central area and will terminate at an acute-angled junction with the road proposed across the front of Parliament House. These acute-angled intersections, where the sloping ramps meet the horizontal road, will be awkward and ugly.

7. The question as to whether these ramps, particularly the ramp from Commonwealth Avenue, are really necessary and how much each will cost must be asked. They will certainly detract from the civic design quality of the avenues and be vastly expensive.

8. The main approach to Parliament House as provided by the proposed 'land bridge', an expensive but necessary connection, will be markedly more dignified and more than adequate to meet all likely traffic movements to and from the forecourt of Parliament House. There appears to be no reason why this main approach could not be used for access from the avenues rather than the 'bee-line' taken by the proposed ramps, especially the clumsy arrangement intended to provide access from Commonwealth Avenue.

Canberra
20 September 1982

Peter Harrison

VARIATION NO. 3

KINGS AVENUE/STATE CIRCLE INTERSECTION PARKES/BARTON

1. Purpose

The variation will permit a change in the operation of the Kings Avenue/State Circle intersection to handle traffic which presently uses Kings Avenue.

2. Length

20 metres.

3. Estimated Cost

\$25,000.

4. Existing Development

The Intersection currently allows a free left turn for traffic in a single lane from Kings Avenue into State Circle travelling south.

5. Proposed Development

It is proposed to rearrange the intersection to allow two lanes of traffic to turn left. This requires a small additional gazettal.

6. Particular Planning Considerations

The following arrangements are proposed for traffic travelling south west along Kings Avenue to Woden via Adelaide Avenue;

- (a) Provision of a two lane signalised left turn at the Kings Avenue/State Circle intersection.
- (b) Re-arrangement of the State Circle/Canberra Avenue Intersection to provide an improved right turn facility.

- (c) Use of the additional lane now being constructed on Capital Circle as an exclusive lane allowing traffic to enter Adelaide Avenue unobstructed.

This proposal is the most efficient method of handling peak hour flows. It will still be possible to continue on State Circle and enter Adelaide Avenue via the ramp adjacent to the Prime Minister's Lodge.

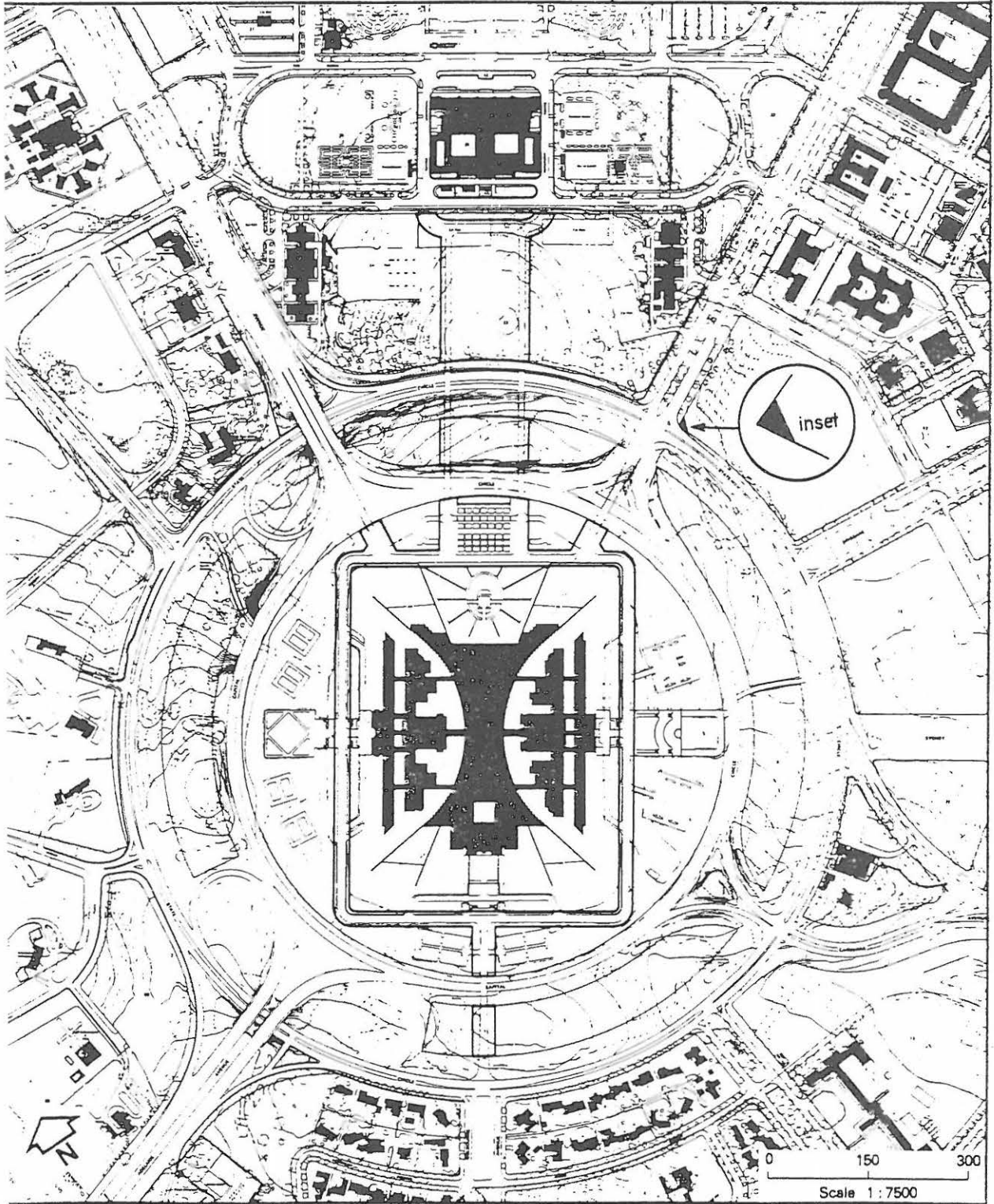
7. Environmental Considerations

This proposal is directed at containing the peak hour traffic flows at about their current level along the residential section of State Circle.

No trees will be removed by this proposal.

8. Public Participation

As detailed elsewhere in these notes a comprehensive programme of public consultation has been undertaken.



CAPITAL HILL, PARKES: Road Addition

ROAD ADDITION 
ROAD DELETION 

INFORMATION ITEM

STATE CIRCLE - CANBERRA AVENUE INTERSECTION

1. Purpose

This item is presented for the information of the Committee. Works will be carried out within the gazetted road alignment and no variation to the City Plan is being proposed.

As noted in the previous item it is proposed to rearrange the State Circle/Canberra Avenue intersection to provide improved right-turn facility in the wake of the extension of Kings Avenue.

2. Length

Not applicable.

3. Cost

\$80,000.

4. Existing Development

The intersection design does not currently give emphasis or priority to any particular traffic flow.

5. Proposed Development

The rearranged intersection will encourage traffic to turn right and enter on or an exclusive land on Capital Circle.

6. Particular Planning Considerations

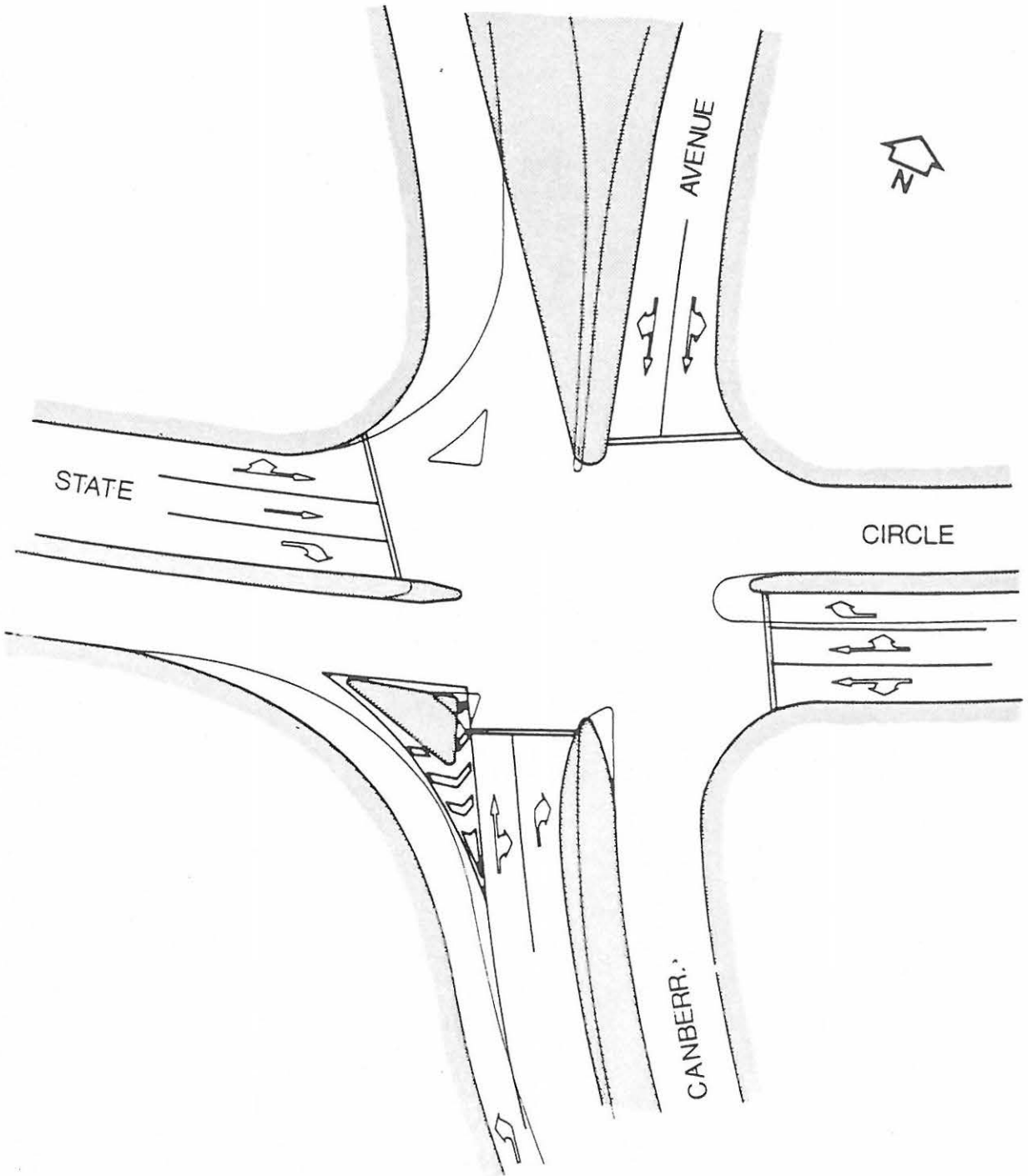
This work is a necessary adjunct to the works proposed at Kings and Canberra Avenues and State Circle and is integral to the satisfactory operation of the traffic system in the area.

7. Environmental Considerations

The proposal will help to protect the residential amenities of properties fronting State Circle. No trees will be affected.

8. Public Participation

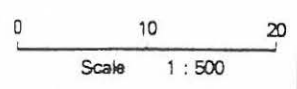
As noted elsewhere an extensive programme of public participation has been implemented.



Existing Kerb Line

Proposed Kerb Line

CANBERRA AVENUE - STATE CIRCLE
INTERSECTION DETAIL



SUBMISSION ON THE PROPOSED EXTENSION OF COMMONWEALTH
AND KINGS AVENUES ON TO THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE SITE

The Competition Conditions for the new Parliament House Architectural Design Competition, which were approved by Parliament on 5 April 1979, provided competitors with a range of traffic options to link the otherwise remote Parliament House site to the city transportation network. These options included the extension of Commonwealth and Kings Avenues.

As described in the attached paper prepared by the Principal Architect of the Competition winning firm, the selected design used the connection of Commonwealth and Kings Avenues on to the site not only from a traffic management aspect but more importantly as a major generator of the building form.

One of the major criteria of the design competition for the new Parliament House was that the building should reinforce the physical position of Capital Hill as the focal point and apex of the Parliamentary Triangle. The site, established by Griffin's plan, represents the converging point of the two Avenues which connect the Parliamentary Triangle to the major areas of the city. In this respect the Avenue extensions are necessary to complete the visual and functional link between the building and the city. The architecture of the building itself, also clearly depends both for its functional and visual effectiveness on direct access from Commonwealth and Kings Avenues to the site.

Symbolically the extension of the Avenues represent the physical connection of Parliament House as the place of national debate, with the metropolitan and business centre of the city and with the airport representing the link with the rest of Australia and the world. They, therefore, provide the physical link of the building with "the present", while the land axis connections link the building with the monumental and historical buildings such as the War Memorial and the provisional Parliament House which are evidence of "the past".

In a functional sense it is most desirable that the more leisurely visitor traffic is clearly separated from the much faster business traffic. The overall design proposal is for the land axis connection to provide a tourist link between the main entrance and visitor parking of the new Parliament House and the growing number of tourist attractions in the Parliamentary Triangle Zone. It will also provide a convenient link with the Government offices located in or close to the Parliamentary Triangle. The Kings and Commonwealth Avenue extensions provide a different type of connection to the new Parliament House. Commonwealth links to the city and northern suburbs of Canberra, while Kings provides convenient access from the airport and major Government office complexes.

The Authority would be most concerned that if the Commonwealth and Kings Avenues are not extended on to the Parliament House site, then the new building would be seen to be incomplete and the design concept would become unrecognizable. Equally importantly, the mixing of tourist and business traffic will lead to confusion and a significant reduction in the overall amenity and character of the building environment.



To: The Parliament House Construction Authority
Subject: Proposed ramps from Commonwealth and Kings Avenues

Gentlemen,

In discussing the architectural value of the proposed ramps that connect the new Parliament House complex with Commonwealth and Kings Avenues, there are three major issues that should be addressed:

- . The geometry of the city
- . Functional considerations
- . Symbolism

1. THE GEOMETRY OF THE CITY

The plan of the Parliament House has often been perceived by individuals other than its architects as being generated by the geometry of the city plan to which, indeed, we too feel it is inevitably bound. In this instance, the basic symmetry of the complex is not a self-centred one, but rather the resolution of a system which expects its conclusion at the vertex of a triangle having at its "base" the London Circle - American War Memorial connection and as "sides" Commonwealth and Kings Avenue.

Since the inception of the Parliament House design these two sides of the triangle acquired a great importance in the composition and the same importance was assigned for them even though their usage is quantitatively different. This was an important decision made in the earliest design period and was based on the consideration that to tip the balance on the side of the avenue of higher traffic would have inevitably upset the entire concept of the plan of Canberra with unforeseen consequences in terms of ordering its perception.

Thus, with our solution, we maintained that for a project of such a scale, two basic rules were to be respected: the order of the city fabric, and the order of the natural environment. The connection of the Parliamentary complex with the avenues, stated in the brief of the competition had a geometrically sound basis. In many ways the structural strength of the geometry of the Canberra plan is based on this triangle where the two sides are structurally of greater importance than the height of the triangle represented by the land axis.



2. FUNCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The functional argument on the needs for two connecting ramps may be carried at different levels. For one, it will be difficult, if not impossible to conceive of an active complex like the Parliament House with a daily population of up to 10,000, to have only two street connections to the road network of the city. An accident or road repair on either the land axis or Melbourne Avenue leaves the complex with only a single connection! Both are indirect, circuitous and not directly related to the major streets close at hand. The first is largely a ceremonial approach and serves the area of the Parliamentary triangle, the second is related to the southern residential region of the city and an avenue of limited access to the Executive portion of the Parliamentary complex, thus, in some ways, the least representative.

At another level, the absence of connecting ramps with Commonwealth and Kings Avenue will create a serious problem for anyone approaching the Parliament from those streets. Clearly a large signage system would have to be instituted to defer traffic from their clearly visible destination, since from those avenues there is no visual relation with the land axis. Travel time through the triangle and along the land axis will clearly be longer than completing the trip on the avenues. Also that route would include five intersections - decision points through which a visitor must pass, a proposal which cannot be described as a quality traffic solution when compared to a direct path toward a visible goal.

Lastly, without the avenue connections, the visual perception created by the directive of the avenues with the form of the Parliament House complex would be deceptive and ambiguous because no conclusion would be apparent. This problem would be further aggravated when one considers the approach from the south if the Melbourne Avenue connection should be missed.

3. SYMBOLISM

The ramps as physical connections have a symbolic connection not to be underestimated. They indeed, represent the connection of the Parliament House as the place of national debate, with the business center of the city, and with the airport as the link to the country and the world. Thus, the ramps represent an active relationship with the "present", while the land axis passing through the old Parliament, the monumental areas, and the War Memorial testifies to a memorable "past".



The mockup built by the NCDC indicates, in my view, the soundness of the ramp connection from an urban design and architectural standpoint. From the Commonwealth Avenue side, the ramp appears to be rising without dramatically upsetting the general configuration of the topography. In fact, the absence of such a ramp would make the Parliament House complex appear as isolated as a fortress, an event that would occur no matter what architectural solution would have been chosen for the site. Parliament Road within the complex appears at the proper level between the base of the circular perimeter and the top of the building, leaving the proper emphasis to the upper part of the complex. From the Kings Avenue side, the rise appears even more gentle, but is adequately visible.

The design of the bridges involved in these ramps is of great relevance in ensuring that they fulfill their important role as transitional elements linking the Parliament complex with the triangle. This is particularly true with regard to their lighting system, their materials and the design of other urban elements which make up their form.

CONCLUSION

The actual physical connection between the ramps and Parliamentary Road may, in the view of some, appear simplistic. We are convinced they are essential elements of both the Parliament and the City for the following reasons:

1. The diagonal orientation of the ramps keeps the approaches to the Parliament in a constant visual contact with the Forecourt and the entry. Also, the sense of gravitation toward the Forecourt, the land axis and the apex of the triangle are maintained.
2. Proceeding from Parliamentary Road toward the north, the intersection forces a slowdown in order to assess the alignment of the ramps. This, we believe will help in maintaining the prominence of the relationship of the ramps and will avoid an "easy" flush of traffic from Parliamentary Road to the avenues. In other words, a final reference to the Parliament House within the geometry of the city is achieved prior to leaving the complex.
3. The directness of the connection will be an asset, considering the sloping approach of the ramp and the topography. In addition, it is important, in our view, to maintain a position of the viewer related to the rising slope of the lawns contained by the curved walls of the Parliament.

Romaldo Giurgola
July, 1983

RG:lt