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CANBERRA'S NATIONAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

The National Trust ACT totally support's and strongly agrees with the proposed national listing of Canberra. We support the nomination of Canberra – central National Area and Inner Hills nomination in lieu of the Canberra and surrounding areas nomination. The proposed nomination is more aligned to the nomination of the Central National Area and Inner Hills and is supported with one exception which is the retention of roads and public spaces only to the exclusion of properties.

The built form and planning controls on buildings are as much of the exemplar of twentieth century town planning as the street pattern. The creative and technical achievements in the fields of town planning, urban design and landscape architecture are as much about buildings and their setting as the street pattern. Both these qualities (town planning and urban design) have been identified in the documentation provided as to why might Canberra be included on the National Heritage list.

There is no discussion in any of the papers that we have read that argues, details or tries to defend a position that planning excludes the built form and urban design. There is no case presented to why public land only has been listed to the exclusion of private land which is an integral part of the garden city and city beautiful concepts promoted by Griffin and enshrined in subsequent planning controls.

There is mention that at the detail level the existing planning instruments on private land will not change and that the National listing can work with current planning controls without duplication or difficulty. If this is the case there is no argument not to support the listing of the whole area integrated with the proposed nominated road network which will include a number of conservation areas and other individual buildings. The management system or agreement to protect the heritage values of these areas can be the existing territory and commonwealth planning mechanisms. These mechanisms exist within other cities of world heritage listing without difficulty so there is no reason why they could not work for a national listing in Australia.

We would also like to see the future management plans and responsibilities more clearly defined to ensure the Heritage place and identified values continue to be conserved. The listing must address a durable regime and resourcing for monitoring, reporting and auditing of the listed areas and the facilities and infrastructure therein. Given that the Commonwealth was responsible for the creation of all the assets that comprise the listed area, and still holds freehold title to the whole area, we feel it should have a bigger role in the conservation and management of the site.

In conclusion the National listing is supported but needs to be redefined to ensure the built form and urban design which is an integral part of the planning significance of Canberra is also included and the currently listed conservation areas and heritage listed buildings are also identified as part of the significance of the design and development of Canberra recognized by the National listing. A more appropriate and comprehensive outline of conservation and future management of the listing also needs to be established to ensure the roles and responsibilities of each Government agency is understood and carried out.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. J. Martin', written in a cursive style.

Eric J Martin
President