

# Curtin Residents Association Inc. *Newsletter*

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14 November 2017

## **Curtin Group Centre Master Plan and the Community Panel**

The Curtin Group Centre Draft Master Plan was completed in November 2015. Since February 2016 the ACT Government's planning agency has been promising to finalise it.

The ACT Government is experimenting with 'Community Panels' to achieve a consensus in the planning processes. A Curtin Community Panel was set up in July and has held three meetings. At the third, and last, meeting in early November we were told that the Master Plan was expected to be finalised by mid-2018 following publication of a revised draft that will be generated from the outcomes of the Community Panel meetings, and a subsequent period of open public feedback.

### **About the Master Plan**

The Master Plan is very important to the future of Curtin—a plan can't say everything and it can't control all the details, but having a Master Plan ensures that the community and planners' goals, vision and planning strategies are firmly stated, to say what's important for the future of Curtin.

The current Draft Master Plan was well accepted by the community at the time and the Curtin Residents Association has argued for its timely finalisation since then. The Master Plan is the most significant input to the Precinct Plan that is the next document in the legal framework for planning future developments. The Master Plan will be 'accepted' by the ACT Legislative Assembly ahead of legislating the Precinct Plan as part of the overall ACT Territory Plan.

It was expected that the Draft Master Plan would be finalised last year. However, the Government was persuaded not to do so until some of its recommendations had been re-examined in the light of potential developments. Earlier this year the ACT Government's Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) set up the Curtin Community Panel to consider changes to the Draft Master Plan. The Residents Association accepted an invitation to sit on the Panel, to get the best we can out of the extended process and to argue for constraints on upcoming developments. There were three meetings, in July, August and November.

The decision not to finalise the plan last year was partly political: the government has said that interested developers, planners and the community should have another say in case there are opportunities for developments in the Curtin Group Centre that have been overlooked.

This process is being managed by the EPSDD (as you will see on their website [www.yoursay.act.gov.au/curtin-master-plan](http://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/curtin-master-plan)) without involving directly visible input from the planning Minister or the members of the Legislative Assembly. The government's premise

### **AGM and members meeting**

- **Annual General Meeting 2 pm**
- **Members meeting 2.30 pm**
- **Sunday 3 December 2017**
- **St James Uniting Church, Curtin**

See page 3 for details.

is that planning is about inspiring and controlling possible development, and balancing the contest between development at commercial expense for commercial activity and the living community interest, with the government's underlying goals of keeping public costs down and increasing the population in Canberra's older, closer-in areas ('densification') around suburb and group centres.

The first stage has been the three meetings of the Community Panel. The Curtin Residents Association's participants were asked not to talk about the details of the discussions until after the third meeting, so that all of the participants in the panel could raise preliminary ideas and see initial reactions and support in a quieter space without being driven into corners in the noisy arena of public commentary, either in published or social media.

But now we can talk openly about the process and our interests... The third meeting, held on Wednesday 8 November, ended without agreement on important options for finalising the Master Plan. We expect to hear how the ACT Government will resolve those contested options before the end of November. A full report on the panel process and outcomes will be given at the Members Meeting on Sunday 3 December.

## **The process**

The process involves three community panel meetings; a report summarising the meetings which will be sent to the participants in the next few weeks; a report to the Minister; and a new plan proposal that will go out to everyone for public commentary and consultation in early 2018.

## **Community Panel meetings**

The Community Panel meetings had presentations from community interests such as the Curtin Residents Association, the churches, the Curtin Garden Group, cyclists and Curtin traders. The developers' teams gave presentations on potential developments around the centre, including 44 Curtin Place (the shops on the north-west side of Curtin Square) and the Statesman Hotel area, as well as the proposal for community housing on the Block (on Theodore Street over the road from the shops). The government planners presented existing and possible future plans and 3-D modelling of the Curtin Group Centre.

Each group put forward their view of the principles involved, specific interests, ideas for short- and medium-term development, and ideas for medium- and long-term needs.

## **Statesman proposal**

The most exciting development proposal is around the Statesman Hotel area. By building over some of the car park area in this corner, with access ways between the buildings, four-to six-storey development of commercial and retail, a renewed pub and underground parking throughout, this has potential to bring more activity into the Curtin centre without harming its urban village character. The developer behind this proposal has been willing to discuss community and planning views, and to be flexible in the areas of land that it covers, responding to the access and activity ideas in the draft plan. This idea shows a fresh look that could bring many benefits to residents and old and new users of the centre. It needs some changes to the Draft Master Plan for the area in the south of the group centre, changing the boundaries of the sections and car-parking areas, and setting maximum heights to six storeys, with setbacks at lower levels along Theodore Street. The new Master Plan is likely to include these changes.

## **Curtin Place proposal**

The proposal for 44 Curtin Place that was put up as a Development Application at the end of 2016 has been modified in part, but is much the same: a six-storey block of commercial residential

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## Annual General Meeting and members meeting

The Curtin Residents Association Annual General Meeting will be at **2 pm** on **Sunday 3 December 2017** at St James Uniting Church, 40 Gillies St, Curtin. This will be followed by a **general members meeting** at **2.30 pm**.

### Agenda for the AGM at 2 pm

- 1 Final call for nominations for offices and committee members
- 2 Treasurer's report
- 3 Outgoing committee report
- 4 Election of office-bearers and committee.

We expect the formal part of the meeting to last about 20 minutes.

### Agenda for the members meeting at 2.30 pm

- 1 Announcements
- 2 Presentations of Community Panel information and outcome, discussion to exchange views on the proposed revisions to Curtin Master Plan
- 3 44 Curtin Place action/campaign.

The meeting will close at 4 pm followed by refreshments.

***Nominations are being accepted now.*** See page 5 for the nomination form.

accommodation, with retail on the ground floor. It still asks for six storeys, over a slightly smaller area than previously, so it would need a change to the heights around the Square in the Master Plan (currently the Draft Master Plan has a small area of four storeys). We do not know whether the new Master Plan will include changes to accommodate this. This is the most difficult area of the Curtin centre, where its original layout has squeezed-in competing interests of commercial and retail, service access and pedestrian access to the Square and to the medical and dental centre. The developers have asked for a time extension to their existing Development Application.

Unfortunately, the ACT Government's goals do not appear to include keeping existing businesses open and running, despite the numbers of people employed and the value of their services to everyone in the community—this is not a stated aim of the community planning process. We will continue to consult planners and to brief politicians to ensure that the Master Plan does provide for the Curtin Group Centre to realise the great vision described in the current Draft Master Plan.

### Uniting Church proposal

Another proposal that is less developed in details is to put a mix of community-supported, affordable, and full-price housing units on the Uniting Church's block across Theodore Street (where the carols are held each Christmas). The Draft Master Plan specifies a maximum of four storeys here, but the possibility of allowing six storeys on the lower end of the block was discussed. The developer is asking for no more than four storeys at the moment, but the finances of building and the interests of the funding sources may drive the buildings higher. This development is further in the future, and the site might possibly be

used for replacement car-parking during the construction work around the Statesman Hotel site. The legal requirements to do this are still unknown.

## Other possible changes

Minor changes to the Draft Master Plan for consideration include rezoning the current open ground next to the service station, on the roundabout (to rezone this to keep it as open space—at the moment it is zoned for possible commercial use); and moving the blocks behind 44 Curtin Place, on Strangways St, from likely future development as these are probably too small for stand-alone commercial use.

## What happens next

We look forward to seeing the more detailed plan that comes out of this process—but it's only the next step. We are determined to make sure that the community has more say, and gets its voice heard. Once the consultation goes to the public we can use newspapers and other media to put Curtin's point of view even more strongly, with your support.

The proposals and summaries of Community Panel discussions will be presented, along with the Curtin Group Centre diagrams, at the Members Meeting on 3 December.

## Plants stolen from John Curtin Memorial Garden

More plants have been stolen from the John Curtin Garden. This is the garden with the stone wall which names our suburb and commemorates a former prime minister. It is part of the shopping centre precinct, on Carruthers Street at the traffic lights.

This is the second time in three months that plants have been stolen from the garden. In early November thieves stole nine plants, most of them *Nandina domestica* 'Moon Bay'. Some of these were recent re-plantings in response to the earlier theft.

Over the past few years this garden has been restored by the Curtin Shops Garden Group, local people keen to improve the public gardens and spaces around the Curtin shops. With the support of the local community, including many businesses, the group raised almost \$10,000 for the project. In collaboration with the ACT Government it did a radical makeover of the garden, removing a thicket of ivy and installing paved edging, steps and a ramp, seating and newly defined garden beds with many new plants, including a tree. The new garden was 'launched' at a public ceremony in March this year.

The group is saddened, angry and frustrated, as do many others in the local community. The Police and City Services have been informed. The group asks you to keep an eye on the garden and ring the Police on 131 444 if you see anything suspicious.

'The John Curtin garden is a wonderful community asset and the loss of plants is a loss for us all,' says Garden Group convenor Evan Mann. 'It goes without saying that the group is determined to rectify the damage and will go about doing so in the coming months.'

## Our revamped Facebook page

Have you visited the Association's Facebook page lately? For the latest news, views and photos, go to <https://www.facebook.com/curtinresidentsassociation> or open your own Facebook page and search for 'Curtin Residents Association'. Please 'Like' and 'Follow' the page to make sure you don't miss out on news. The page has been revamped, and is now kept up to date and interesting by our new Facebook guru, Ciara Spencer. Thanks, Ciara!

# Curtin Residents Association Inc.

## Officer and Committee nomination form 2017–18

Nominations are now open for the positions of ordinary committee members and office bearers to serve on the Curtin Residents Association for a period of one year until the Annual General Meeting in 2018.

The Association office bearers are:

President  
Vice-president  
Treasurer  
Secretary.

There will be up to four ordinary committee members.

Nominations will open on Wednesday 15 November 2017 and **close at 11.59 pm on Saturday 2 December 2017**. Completed nomination forms should be lodged with the Secretary by email ([info@curtinresidents.asn.au](mailto:info@curtinresidents.asn.au)) or by delivery to 52 Haines Street, Curtin, by Saturday 2 December 2017.

Should more than one nomination be received for any office position, an election will be held at the AGM. Should more than four nominations be received for general committee positions, an election will be held at the AGM. If insufficient nominations are received, the nominees will be deemed elected, and further nominations will be taken at the meeting.

A nominee must be a member of the Association. Previous office-bearers and committee are eligible for re-election normally for up to six years. The Secretary may be the same person as the Treasurer.

I nominate (name): \_\_\_\_\_ for election,

to serve on the committee of the Curtin Residents Association as:

- ☐ Ordinary committee member
- ☐ President
- ☐ Vice-president
- ☐ Treasurer
- ☐ Secretary

**Nominator** (member of the association)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Second** (member of the association)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I accept this nomination** (nominated member)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Office use only** Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_