

## 4.11 Australian Capital Territory Area Strategy

### 4.11.1 North Canberra

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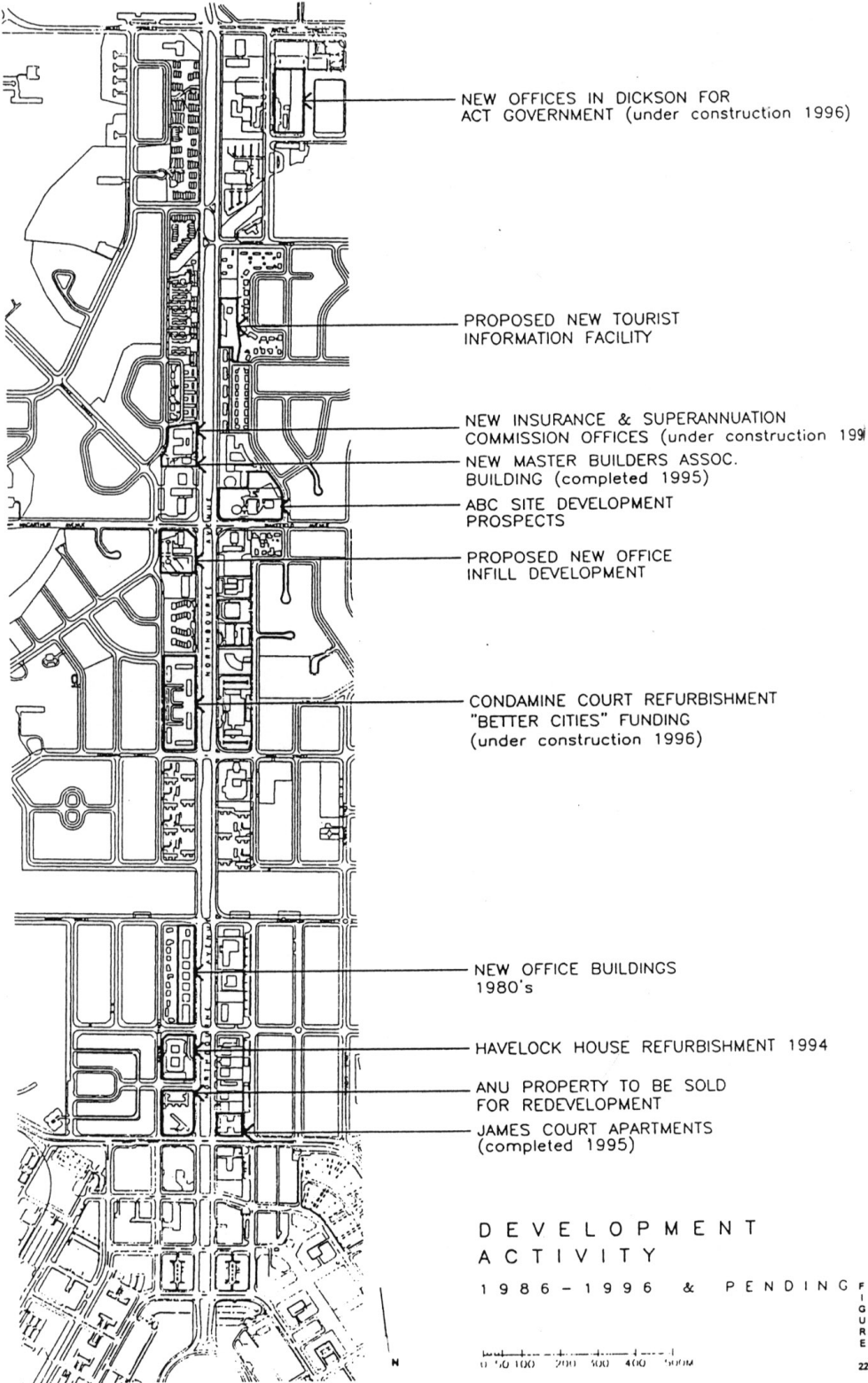


Illustration 4.128 North Canberra - locational map of Condamine Court along Northbourne Avenue (Hindmarsh Group. Northbourne Avenue Planning Study 1996, figure 22, p. 48)

### 4.11.1 North Canberra Area Strategy

#### Background

During the North Canberra Area Strategy program there was a refocusing of the original concept as the ACT Government moved to meet new housing requirements, thus gravitating to a 50:50 split between greenfields and urban renewal development. The original aim was the renewal of North Canberra's inner suburbs, supported by innovative housing options and enhanced infrastructure enabling the more efficient use of existing services and facilities. The strategy included some eleven established suburbs, the Civic and Dickson centres and two educational campuses. It is clear that all the original intentions failed to materialise in this Area Strategy. Because of the dispersed nature of this Area Strategy it is a Category 2 project.

#### Objectives (revised December 1995)

- 'To increase the proportion of urban renewal residential development in North Canberra with respect to total growth of the metropolitan area;
- to create higher urban densities and transit-oriented development to support more efficient and effective public transport systems;
- to provide models for urban redevelopment and to demonstrate the benefit of urban renewal;
- to supply sustainable water supply and waste water management systems for North Canberra;
- to improve area planning and management coordination, and
- to improve the urban environment and to preserve its heritage values.'  
(*The Report*, Vol. 1, pp. 63-64)

#### Urban design evaluation

Because of its multi-faceted nature the ACT Program initiatives are one of the most difficult to evaluate in terms of urban design. The intermix included: Condamine Flats masterplan and redevelopment, City West sewer augmentation, Northbourne Avenue planning study, formation of Local Area Advisory Committees (LAPACs), environmental costing of water, ACTH small scale demonstration housing, private small scale demonstration housing, Torrens Street B1 joint venture housing, private sector B1 housing, Inner North stormwater infrastructure, Southwell Park waste water pilot, North Watson infrastructure design, Bruce de-institutionalisation, Northbourne Avenue flats consultancy and public transport options study. To bring coherence to this plethora of objectives, it was decided to evaluate those within reasonable proximity to each other, and either on or close to Northbourne Avenue, and that over time it may be possible to perceive their collective contribution to a portion of Canberra's urban fabric. Those objectives selected included: waste water recycling at Southwell Park, the rehabilitation of the Condamine Flats, the medium density housing units in Braddon being a joint private and public sector initiative. The reason for this selection is that Planning and Land Management (PALM) continues to focus further studies along Northbourne Avenue which include *Northbourne Avenue Planning Study*, Draft Variation No 96, *Creating Our City - An Implementation Strategy and Section Masterplans*. Some of these further studies are included in the Program list above, and their eventual realisation when taken collectively with the selected Program initiatives will contribute to the redeveloped Northbourne Avenue precinct. (*Australian Capital Territory Evaluation Report, 1995-1996*, figure 1, p. 3)

### Buildings and their grouping

Both Braddon Gardens and the redeveloped Condamine Court are three-storey apartment blocks based on courtyard configurations.

#### Braddon Gardens

This combined private and public sector development is positioned between Fawkner and Torrens Streets in suburban Braddon and because of its location has access to and from both streets. Whilst parking is accommodated on site and the courtyards have some basic landscaped work the development, as a whole, is unexceptional. (*Illustration 4.129*)



*Illustration 4.129*      *Braddon Gardens*

#### Condamine Court

The objective of Condamine Court, Phase 1, was the creation of an ecologically sustainable development, and in this regard it has enjoyed some measure of success. The buildings, originally constructed as temporary accommodation for public servants, date back to 1960 and bear the hallmarks of flat design of that time, with three-storey walkup block construction, small flat sizes - on average 28m<sup>2</sup>, open carports, common laundries and central areas for garbage pick-up. The redevelopment required conformity with AMCORD, AMCORD URBAN Guidelines, ACT Territory planning guidelines and NCA requirements. The flats no longer met current standards for public housing or the Building Code of Australia and as well were inefficient in energy terms and solar orientation. The important ecological innovations associated with this Program initiative are referred to under Ecological response. (World Habitat Awards 1998, and *ACT Housing Condamine Court Redevelopment brochure*) (*Illustration 4.130*)



*Illustration 4.130*      *Condamine Court*

### Public domain

The wider public domain is Northbourne Avenue, whilst the selected ACT Program initiatives contain their own internal domains which are referred to further in Landscape.

### Safety and security

Braddon Gardens and Condamine Court are both courtyard configurations that serve to strengthen the role that informal surveillance can play in increasing safety and security.

### Activity

The selected ACT activities of this Area Strategy are those of the above housing projects and their associated ecological initiatives or individual ecological initiatives such as Southwell Park.

### Conservation and heritage

As a criterion conservation and heritage are not applicable to this Area Strategy, although in the broader precinctual context of Northbourne Avenue, the heritage dispute continues over whether Lyneham, Owen, Dickson and Karua Garden Flats on Northbourne Avenues should be placed on the Register of the National Estate as an extant example of 1960s modern movement flat design, although they fail to meet contemporary environmental, constructional and accommodation standards. This contemplation lies outside the ambit of this Program Area Strategy, although within the broad context of the evolving development of Northbourne Avenue.

### Landscape

The landscape for Braddon Gardens is nominal and does not warrant further evaluation, whilst the value of the landscape works at Condamine Court lies in its contribution to the greywater recycling scheme with its scrub beds and constructed wetlands.

### Environment

The selected housing units did not exhibit any particular adaptations to the rigours of the Canberra climate, other than those issues addressed in Ecological response, such as attending to the design principles for solar orientation and the inclusion of balcony passive solar collectors.

### Ecological response

The selected initiatives of both Condamine Court and Southwell Park both comprised a substantial ecological response.

### Condamine Court

The site was perceived as an 'ecoprecinct' with a number of ecologically oriented initiatives, including (*World Habitat Awards, 1998, p. 3*):

- information technology / communications infrastructure;
- efficiencies in heating, lighting and other resources;
- grey water recycling and water conservation;
- design principles for solar orientation, including passive balcony solar collectors;
- waste disposal / recycling;

- worm farming, and
- shared heating systems.

Of these initiatives water conservation and its reuse was the main objective of the redevelopment. The grey water from bathrooms and laundries is treated and stored on site and pumped to sub-surface irrigation pipes for the landscaped areas. Savings occur from this method both in a reduced need for sprinkler systems and the use of potable water. Water usage for both hot and cold water reticulation is considerably reduced by a water flow control system. Stormwater retention was addressed by the redevelopment which has an increased roof catchment area, resulting from increased population densities. The system retains stormwater on site and so maintains the flows that existed before its redevelopment. (World Habitat Awards, 1998 ) (Illustration 4.131)

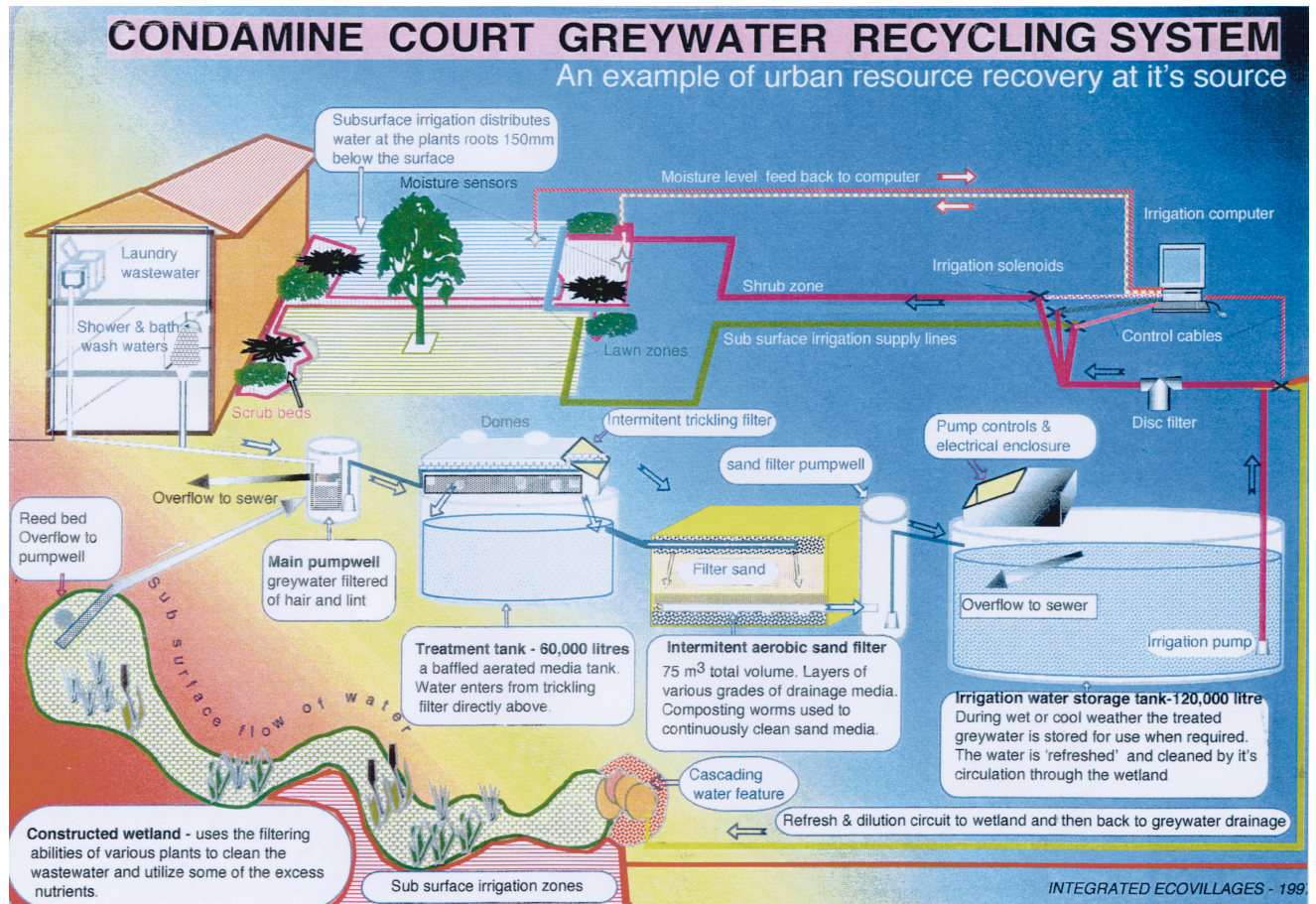


Illustration 4.131 Condomine Court grey water system

### Southwell Park

The Southwell Park waste water pilot plant at Lyneham has prompted local, national and international interest in water mining techniques. The installation is based on an ACT-developed CRAN-OSTM system that minimises the use of chemicals and achieves 'all effluent quality criteria that are likely to be required for future water mining schemes.' (ACT Government et al. *Australian Capital Territory Evaluation Report, 1995-1996*, p. 20)

The aim of this project has been to utilise flows from existing sewer (or-yet-to-be-constructed sewers on the urban fringe) to irrigate large areas of open space. The project is supported by a broader ACT Future Water Supply Strategy which charts directions to the year 2040.

The scheme demonstrates:

- utilisation of existing waste water facilities (sewers) as secondary water supply source by treating effluent to irrigate open spaces;
- potential for deferment of large-scale capital works e.g. water supply dams, as well as water and waste water treatment works and trunk mains, and
- reduction in overall nutrient loadings on the Murrumbidgee River by alternative disposal on land which will benefit. (ACT Government. *North Canberra Area Strategy Revised Agreement December 1995*, pp. 14-14)

### Circulation

Circulation criterion is not applicable in a macro sense, other than to observe that much of this Area Strategy is centred on one of the main arterial routes into Canberra, Northbourne Avenue. The individual circulation movements within the selected sites are such as to not warrant evaluation comment.

### Public art

The criterion of public art is not applicable, as no public work of art existed within the selected components of this Area Strategy.

### Social

Social criterion is applicable only as it affects the de-institutionalisation of 40 persons with intellectual disabilities from the Bruce Hostel, which has not been included in this study, although separate reports advise its success. (ACT Government. *North Canberra Area Strategy Revised Agreement*, December 1995, p. 15). The post occupancy survey of Condamine Court showed a high standard of tenant satisfaction with the redevelopment particularly when compared with the original development. The increased satisfaction was clearly indicated in a number of variables including safety and security, environmental issues and in the design performance of the individual units. (Manteena Pty. Ltd. The Planning Team, *Post Occupancy Survey of the Condamine Court Redevelopment Project for ACT Housing*, October 1999, pp. v-x)

### Management processes

No particular guidelines or other design oriented documents to assist the day to day management of this multifaceted Area Strategy were available for evaluation and comparison with those of other Area Strategies.

### Conclusion

The ACT Area Strategy was as difficult to analyse and evaluate as Bunbury in that the objectives in both cases were many, and frequently without connection now or in the future. Consequently, in terms of this research, their contribution was in particular and localised aspects only. The Area Strategy classification is therefore Category 2, and then mainly on the strength of Condamine Court and its ecological response.

End Notes - Chapter Four

Glebe

- (1) Residents not seeking change to the circulation patterns are to be found on page 73 of the following:

Gregory, J. & Richardson, R. 1993, 'New South Wales Case Study: Evolution or Revolution - the Glebe Estate, Sydney' in National Capital Planning Authority, *Restructuring Public Housing Precincts*, Occasional Paper, Series 1, Paper 4, Report prepared for Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

- (2) The community participation was regarded as successful on the Glebe Project, due to a number of reasons, including the location of the site office, the officer responsible and the community. From discussions 7 September 1999 with Henry Wardlaw, (refer Acknowledgments) Planner/ Manager Glebe Project.

Woolloomooloo

- (3) The other practices included Greg Burgess, Architect, Cocks & Carmichael Architects, Edmund & Corrigan Architects and Peter Crone, Architect.
- (4) From discussions with Col James (refer Acknowledgments) 10 May 2001, Resident Advocate for the Woolloomooloo project, appointed by the then Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Tom Uren in October 1974 to assist the residents. Further detail to be found in G.P. Webber's *The Design of Sydney*, pp. 110-111.

Ultimo-Pyrmont

- (5) On 8 September 1999 the author walked the boundaries of the Ultimo-Pyrmont site with the then Director, Sydney Region Central DUAP, Alan Davidson, (refer Acknowledgments) and found that the urban design controls in *Illustration 4.12* to be singularly effective in limiting overshadowing and any 'canyon' effects.

Eveleigh

- (6) Discussion at the ATP with CEO Dr Tom Forgan 8 September 1999 (refer Acknowledgments)
- (7) The author was a contributor to the research for this study in which the early use of pedestrian flow criteria was employed. These included estimates of numbers of pedestrians, width of pathways occupied and periods of high and low use from the various activity nodes of the University of Sydney, the Australian Technology Park and the commercial centre of Redfern.
- (8) Discussion at the ATP with CEO Dr Tom Forgan 8 September 1999 (refer Acknowledgments)
- (9) Discussion at the ATP with CEO Dr Tom Forgan 8 September 1999 (refer Acknowledgments)

### Honeysuckle

- (10) Discussions 23 November 1999 with Angus Dawson, (refer Acknowledgments) General Manager Honeysuckle Development Corporation .
- (11) Discussions 23 March 1999 with Bob Meyer (refer Acknowledgments) regarding the original intentions of the marina and its importance and how water should have been brought 'into the city' as a contributing element to the urban design outcome.
- (12) During its development, there was a general awareness that the Carrington estate was becoming a very uninspired and bland example of Australian suburban housing. Whilst effort was made to avert this outcome, the presence of the housing indicates that this was not successful. This particular development may be seen as an example that might have been avoided had there been strong urban design guidelines in place. This disappointing outcome was recounted by several parties with significant involvement in the Program, including Gabrielle Kibble, 8 August 2000 (refer Acknowledgments), Sue Holliday 8 August 2000 (refer Acknowledgments) and Alan Davidson 8 September 1999 (refer Acknowledgments). This episode was also described on more than one occasion by Geoff Campbell (refer Acknowledgments) who was instrumental in drawing attention to the shortcomings of the development.

### South West Corridor Area Strategy

- (13) Advice received from Craig Wilson, 11 January 2001 (refer Acknowledgments) Project Manager Urban Design, Department of Infrastructure Victoria of Infrastructure's own evaluation of the Victorian Area Strategies was that the conversion of the Dalgety Woolstores to a city campus at Deakin University and the adjoining Geelong waterfront regeneration was the most rewarding initiative of the South West Corridor Area Strategy.

### Lynch's Bridge

- (14) Discussions with Lyndsay Neilson 16 March 1999 (refer Acknowledgments), former CEO of the NCPA, and other senior positions, particularly the BCP on the pivotal role played by the flood mitigation works on the Maribyrnong River that allowed Lynch's Bridge and Kensington Banks to proceed.

### Brisbane - Gold Coast Corridor Area Strategy

- (15) From discussions with John Byrne 4 March 1999 (refer Acknowledgments) Director - Urban Design and Planning. Dept. of Housing Queensland. The railway line was seen to be contentious with a number of major shortcomings as outlined.

### Mackay Urban Consolidation Area Strategy

- (16) From discussions with John Byrne 4 March 1999 (refer Acknowledgments) and review of design drawings and their effort to respond to tropical environment of Queensland.

Refer also John Byrne's paper in Occasional Paper, Series 2, Paper 4.

Australia. Department of Housing and Regional Development 1996, *Achieving Quality Urban Design*, Occasional Paper, Series 2, Paper 4, Prepared by the National Capital Authority, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

### Bunbury

- (17) The Bunbury Area Strategy drew mixed responses; both Lyndsay Neilson and Marcus Spiller (refer Acknowledgments) were enthusiastic about the revitalisation of Bunbury. However, both Geoff Campbell and the author consider that in urban design terms, it was a weak Area Strategy. It was clearly a case where planning and economic objectives did not coincide with those of urban design.

### East Perth

- (18) From figures provided by Dr Wally Cox (refer Acknowledgments) 15 June 1999 , CEO East Perth Redevelopment Authority.
- (19) Dr Wally Cox who accompanied the author on an extensive tour of both East Perth and Subiaco 15 and 16 June 1999 was at pains to point out this failure in the design guidelines.
- (20) Discussions with Michael Ratcliffe, (refer Acknowledgments) 6 June 1999, previous CEO East Perth Redevelopment Authority.

### Subiaco

- (21) Discussions with Dr Wally Cox 16 June 1999 regarding the key importance of the civil works to the railway line to allow the re-unification of the suburb of Subiaco.

### Southern Areas

- (22) The author was responsible for the design and documentation of the original landscape works and can verify that new works were built on the design basis of the original.

### Elizabeth-Munno Para (Rosewood Village)

- (23) Discussions with Geoff Campbell 25 May 1998 that when Brian Howe visited Rosewood Estate, there was a grateful response from the residents that although they were in the lower socio-economic group, they had not been forgotten.

### Western Area Strategy

- (24) Aerial slide shot of the flushing to the Patawalonga from a slide shown by Geoff Campbell to post graduate students in the degree of Master of Urban Management, University of Canberra..

### Western Shores Hobart

- (25) The entire length of this public domain was walked, studied and photographed 1 December 1999, with Bruce Churchill, (refer Acknowledgments) Program Manager Environment Planning and Scientific Services. It is an excellent urban design example of connectivity.

### Inner City Launceston

- (26) The extent and cost of site remediation is often a substantial portion of the project budget. Other Program examples would include Ultimo-Pyrmont and Eveleigh (NSW), East Perth and Ascot Waters (WA) and Western Area Strategy - Horwood Bagshaw site (SA).