

Canberra Grammar School's plans for car park prompt backlash from residents



By [Miriam Webber](#)

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Martin Male, Yvonna de Jong, David Honner and David Denham, are contesting plans by the school to permanently take over a car park. Picture by Elesa Kurtz

A Red Hill private school's plans to establish a permanent car park on public land has prompted backlash from residents.

Canberra Grammar School was granted permission by the ACT government to establish a temporary car park on a block off Monaro Crescent in 2019, as part of a temporary traffic management plan.

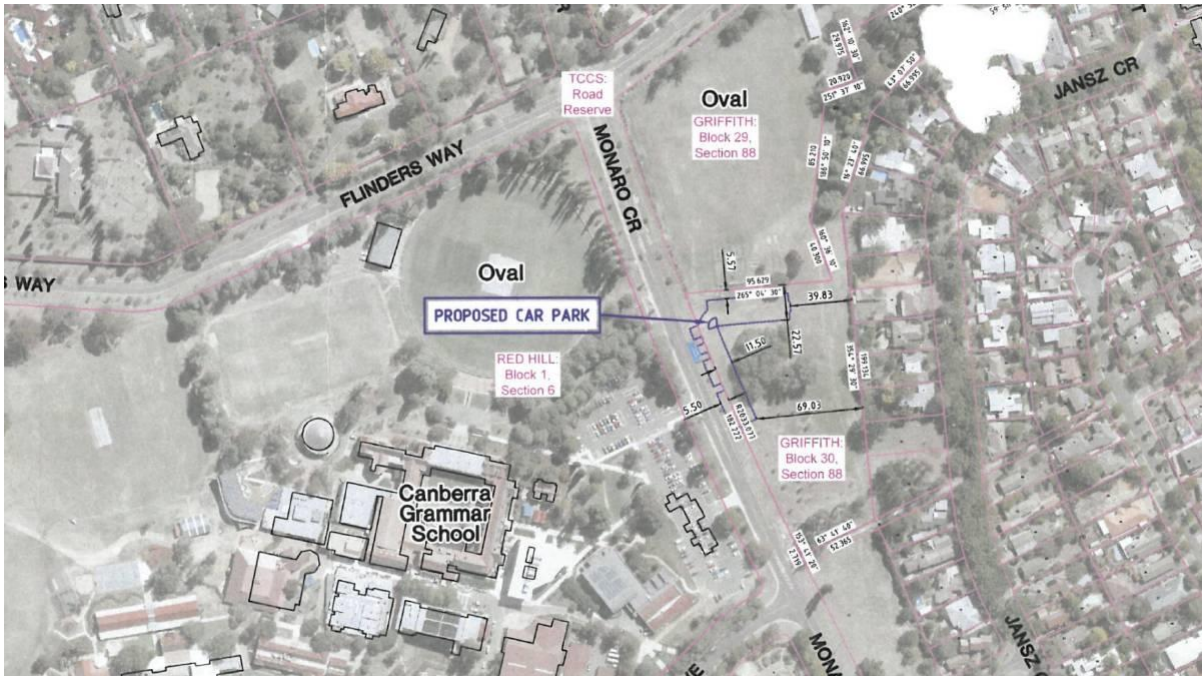
Residents understood that the temporary car park would be cleared by July 2021. On October 17, a letter signed by the school's director of business, Kent Peters, advised neighbours of plans to apply to make the car park permanent. It said this would provide the necessary parking for the school as well as the wider community.

"... Particularly to enhance the ongoing use of the Flinders Oval facilities (including the cricket nets) and also to provide for the public use of school sports, arts, childcare, and

educational [facilities including the recently opened Snow Concert Hall](#)," Mr Peters wrote in the letter.

"It also will continue to reduce street parking in residential areas and ease congestion on peak drop off and pick up times in the school operations."

The car park comprises 81 bays on a block which is zoned as urban open space (PRZ1).



An overview of the sites involved in the dispute. Picture supplied

David Honner, who lives nearby, said the car park is an inappropriate use of public land.

"I'm very much against [the car park] because this is public land and designated as an open space, it's a park," Mr Honner said.

"Open parkland in Canberra is under threat by developers particularly in the inner areas."

Parking as a stand-alone use on the block is not allowed by zoning regulations, but can be approved by the government as an ancillary or minor use where it facilitates the use of the playing fields of other facilities on the land.

"I bought my house specifically because it was adjacent to this park, so I have a vested interest and even financially if this turns into a bitumen covered car park," Mr Honner said, adding that the community as a whole would suffer the loss of more public land.

Martin Male, another resident, disputes that the car park will be of service to the local community.

Mr Male said he saw the plans as a wealthy Canberra school "getting more public assets for nothing".

"There's just absolutely no community benefit," he said.