

INTERIM HERITAGE PLACES REGISTER

CITATION

Name of Place: BARTON CONSERVATION AREA

LOCATION OF PLACE

Section and Block Suburb: Sections 21,24, 25, 26, 28, 30 Barton, ACT 2600

Area bounded by: Macquarie St, Darling St, NSW Crescent and Telopea Park

FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE:

The features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place are:

The area which includes Telopea Park and Brassey House, consists mainly of houses built for the Federal Capital Commission in the period 1926-27, in preparation for the transfer of Parliament to Canberra. These houses were designed by architects in the Federal Capital Commission under Mr WH Mason of Queanbeyan. They are all brick with red tiles roofs, and the majority have rough cast finish. There are approximately 9 different types, and all houses appear to be in good condition.

Brassey house, at the top of Belmore Gardens, is an important landmark in the area, while Telopea Park contributes greatly to the overall character of the area. The houses form a compact, and cohesive group, and there is little unsympathetic development.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Barton Urban Conservation Area has architectural, historic and social significance.

It is a key example of the first phase of housing development in Canberra, as well as demonstrating planned housing and landscape plantings of 1927. The overall residential planning concepts of Walter Burley Griffin are well preserved in the street and parkland lay-out, and this almost intact area fulfills this "garden city" ideal which so influenced Canberra's initial development.

The Cox/Tanner report commissioned by the Australian Heritage Commission on this area states the "townscape of cottages, planting and carefully planned streets is among the most cohesive surviving from the twenties in Australia".

Barton was designed as an early suburb for middle rung public servants and as such compliments the areas of smaller weatherboard housing for the working class (ie Corroboree Park in Ainslie, Registered) and the larger brick homes for the upper middle class (Forrest/Blandfordia, Registered). This nomination would complete the range of social aspects of public housing, demonstrating the stratification of society in Canberra by house size, quality and geographic location.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

In accordance with s.54(1) of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991, the following requirements are identified as essential to the conservation of the heritage significance of this place. These requirements are prepared to implement the following conservation policy for the place:

Any action relating to these requirements is development for the purposes of the Act and will require approval prior to undertaking the activity. To undertake development without such approval may be an offence.

1. Requirements Relating to the Building

1.1

1.2

2. Requirements Relating to the Setting

2.1

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

In assessing this place for the interim Heritage Places Register, the Council recommends that the following actions and activities should be undertaken which will enhance the heritage values of the place. They are made as recommendations and have no legal effect.

1.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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|----|------|---|
| 1. | date | Draft citation considered by ACT Heritage Council at Meeting (number) |
| 2. | date | Draft citation released for public comment |
| 3. | date | Revised citation for ACT Heritage Council Meeting (number) |
| 4. | date | Gazetted in an interim Heritage Places Register |

Attachment A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

Barton Housing -

The area contains 65 houses, all retaining their original setbacks and subdivision patterns. 46 of the houses have been identified as Federal Commission types and at least 12 styles of these are represented. They were built by WH Mason of Queanbeyan in 1926/27. The Subdivisions and streetscapes follow the garden city ideals which Burley Griffin planned. A 1933 map (Gibney 1986) indicates that only 3 vacant plots remained at that date.

Brassey House - Charlton (1984) describes it as follows "Brassey House has dark brick walls and slate roofs, which set it apart from the usual buildings of the period in Canberra. Architects Budden & Hood successfully integrated the plan with its setting, by splaying wings each side of the now well treed Belmore Gardens to the East."

Telopea Park - Telopea Park was laid out by Thomas Weston and appears on the original Burley Griffin Plan.

2. STATUS OF PLACE AT NOMINATION DATE:

The area retains a high degree of integrity. The streetscape qualities have survived intact as have the subdivision patterns and house groupings. More than 45% of the housing stock is wholly original from the exterior. A further 30 to 45% has had sympathetic external changes (in some cases very minor indeed) compatible with the National Capital Development Commission guidelines for alterations and extensions in heritage areas of Canberra.

Only one of the 5 houses has been completely demolished and replaced.

The extent of the alterations and additions to houses is certainly no greater and may be less in some instances, than in present heritage listed areas in Canberra.

Recent comparisons with early photographs (REA1960) suggest that Telopea Park plants retain a very high degree of integrity with the original.

The condition of the housing and maintenance of plantings etc has improved in recent years as appreciation of the heritage value has grown.

3. BACKGROUND:

The houses in this group were the result of an architectural competition held by the Federal Capital Advisory Committee Dec 1923-Feb 1924, for the design and layout of residences for officials. The competition was won by Messrs Oakley, Parkes and Scarborough, although their layout was not used. The final layout was based on an entry by Messrs Sale and Keage. Oakly and Parkes supervised the construction of the houses by three different contractors - Chapman and Eggleston, JJ McCarthy, and W McDonald, and all were completed by the end of 1926.

The houses (approximately 57) are large compared to the majority of early Government houses, and there are at least 38 different types. They are all of brick construction, with tiled roofs, although some roofs were apparently shingled originally. The roofs have wide overhangs. Most have rendered finish to brickwork. Some of the features common to many of the houses are timber shutters to windows,

rusticated brick angles at the corners, and arches to the front porch. Although most of the houses have been altered, this has generally been done sympathetically. The curved street layout is unusual, but unlike early Government housing in Reid and Barton, the area has no green space or focus.

4. RELEVANT PRINCIPAL NATIONAL HISTORIC THEMES:

Architectural -

The City residential Streetscape layout enclosed within the site provides the only remaining example of W Burley Griffin's original town plan (*Sites of Significance in the ACT, Vol 2, 1988*). The area is a fine example of a 1920's garden city style residential precinct containing the first Government housing occupied in Canberra and includes an early Government Hostel, Brassey House, and Telopea Park, which was laid out by T Weston. The area is said to contain "The best example of houses built in the early phase of the Federal Capital Era" (*Sites of Significance in the ACT, Vol 2, 1988*). This and similar areas in Canberra have been described as "arguably the finest realisation of 20th Century suburban ideals in Australia", (*Tanner 1988*).

The proposed area is contiguous with Manuka Swimming Pool and the Church and Manse in Currie Crescent, Kingston all of which already appear on the Register of the National Estate. It is situated close to the Kingston Power House which is similarly listed. Federal Canberra's first school, Telopea park, and Manuka Oval are also contiguous with the nominated area. Listing of the nominated area would preserve examples of recreational, religious, technical and residential amenities in a single unspoiled precinct. The precinct would arguably be the finest intact example of 1920's integrated suburban planning in Australia, also preserving links with Griffin's original plan.

Historical

The area has housed a number of important figures in Canberra's early history as the Nation's Capital.

Social

The area as an example of the Housing and Urban environment experienced by the first public servants to come to Canberra in 1927 with the opening of area is important the provisional Parliament House.

5. ANALYSIS AGAINST THE CRITERIA SPECIFIED IN SCHEDULE 2 OF THE LAND (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT) ACT 1991

Under Section 56 the criteria for the assessment of the heritage significance of places are:

- (i) a place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure, or representing a new achievement of its time;
- (ii): a place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group;
- (iii) a place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest;
- (iv): a place which is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations;
- (v) a place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type;
- (vi) a place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class;
- (vii): a place which has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history;

- (viii) **a place which represents the evolution of a natural landscape, including significant geological features, landforms, biota or natural processes;**
- (ix) **a place which is a significant habitat or locality for the life cycle of native species; for rare, endangered or uncommon species; for species at the limits of their natural range; or for district occurrences of species;**
- (x) **a place which exhibits unusual richness, diversity or significant transitions of flora, fauna or natural landscapes and their elements; or**
- (xi) **a place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site.**

6. **REFERENCES:**

Author Title date publication

Charlton K et al, *Federal Capital Architecture Canberra 1911-1932*

Cox/Tanner, *Government Cottage Construction in Canberra*, AHC 1979

MacDougall M, *Early Government Housing in Canberra - A History*, CCAE 1980

NCDC, *Sites of Significance in the ACT, Volume II*, 1988