

NATIONAL TRUST REGISTER OF SIGNIFICANT PLACES

CITATION

NAME OF PLACE: CITY HILL (VERNON HILL)

LOCATION OF PLACE:

Section and Block Suburb: Block 1, Section 34, City

Area bounded by: about 3.6ha, comprising the area within Vernon Circle, being Block 1, Section 34, City

FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE:

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

City Hill is important in defining one corner of Canberra's Parliamentary triangle at the critical point where the municipal axis in Griffin's 1912 plan intersects the line along Northbourne Avenue to Capital Hill. The layout, selection and massing of the mainly evergreen trees and the flagpole, all on an eminence above the city, are appropriate to the importance of the hill's location. (Criterion F.1.)

The Hill has special associations with the planner, WB Griffin, and TG Weston, who was responsible for selecting and planting the trees. (Criterion H.1.)

As a carefully landscaped hill top which closes vistas along the city's avenues., City Hill has aesthetic significance. (Criterion E.1.)

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

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:

1. Requirements Relating to the Building

1.1 Not applicable

1.2

2. Requirements Relating to the Setting

2.1

2.2

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

In assessing this place for the interim Heritage Places Register, the Trust recommends that the following actions and activities should be undertaken which will enhance the heritage values of the place.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

1. date Draft citation considered by Council at Meeting (number)
2. date Revised citation for Council Meeting (number).....APPROVED/NOT APPROVED
3. date Submitted for inclusion in interim Heritage Places Register

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

The circular landscaped hill bounded by Vernon Circle, which provides one of the three corners of Walter Burley Griffin's Parliamentary triangle in his 1912 plan for Canberra. The topography of the hill is asymmetrical, with a belt of tall Monterey pines (*Pinus Radiata*) around the crown and a taller flagpole near the centre. Circles of Roman Cyresses (*Cupessus Sempervirens*) are grouped around the hill. All trees are laid out in formal groups, with lines of Cyresses corresponding to the six corridors of the main avenues planned to radiate from the hill. Black locust trees (*Robina Pseudocacia*) are around the hill near the perimeter. The planting was carried out in the 1920s under the guidance of TG Weston, Canberra's first Superintendent of Parks and Gardens. The only later planting was a hedge opposite Commonwealth Avenue,

In Griffith's 1912 Plan, the hill provided a pivotal point for the hexagonal planning of the city. He originally envisaged it as the site for a city hall, but in his final 1918 Plan it was designated a "Civic Place" with no buildings. Weston chose evergreen trees to provide a dark green focal point in all seasons, fringed with deciduous trees, and grouped some of the cypresses in circles in the manner he had followed in Westbourne Woods Arboretum and other parks in Canberra.

Condition

Good. An intrusive bill board, erected in 1988, was removed in 1991. University and Constitution Avenues have been made narrower than their originally planned width, equal to Northbourne Avenue, and to the sides of their original centre lines, vistas along them are therefore not geometrically perfect and the flagpole is off-centre, except for the Northbourne/Commonwealth Avenues centre lines.

2. STATUS OF PLACE AT NOMINATION DATE:

Interim List - to remain pending advice.

3. BACKGROUND:

4. RELEVANT PRINCIPAL NATIONAL HISTORIC THEMES:

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