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MEDIA RELEASE

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National Trust concerned for the future of McGregor Hall

McGregor Hall, situated at the northern edge of the ANU campus on Barry Drive, Acton, has been proposed for demolition.

McGregor Hall, as it is known today, was built in 1949 as the recreation hall for the Turner workers' hostel. Seven similar hostels of very modest facilities were built during the immediate post-war period to house the many migrant workers who were brought out to Australia to assist in the renewed building phase of Canberra.

Many of the workers had been brought out to Australia from Germany by the Jennings building organization and they became known locally as the 'Jennings Germans'.

Dr Peter Dowling, Heritage Officer for the National Trust, said that over the years the seven hostels which housed the workers have been dismantled and today McGregor Hall is the only remaining building left.

"The hostel consisted of McGregor Hall and several very austere dormitory blocks. After the building boom of the late forties and fifties workers had moved out of Turner Hostel it was used for many years by the Bureau of Mineral Resources and later the Department of Education."

Then they were used up until just a few years ago by community groups and post-graduate students. Senior citizens organizations, music and dancing groups have also recently been using the building.

The Trust believes that the McGregor Hall building has a strong historic significance in that it is the only surviving structure remaining of the workers' hostel and also a very strong social significance relating to the migration history of the ACT.

For further information contact: Dr Peter Dowling 6230 0533 or 0417 233 194