

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R112

Name of Place: ANU Cottage No. 3

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: Lennox Crossing, Australian National University ACTON ACT 2601

Block Section of Acton

Listing Status:

Date of Listing:

Citation Revision No:

Citation Revision Date:

Other Heritage Listings:

Level of Significance:

Category:

Style:

Date of Design:

Construction Period:

Date of Additions:

Designer:

Client/Owner/Lessee:

Builder:

Statement of Significance

Cottage No 3 is significant as one of the first Federal Capital style timber bungalows to be constructed in Canberra. (This statement is based on Freeman Collett & Partners 1992)

It is important as a component of a body of architecture to be found currently in Canberra.

It is highly significant for its ability to demonstrate a distinctive way of life, taste, land use and custom no longer practised.

The cottage is valued highly for its association with the establishment phase of the National Capital.

The site is highly significant as a comparatively intact example of its type.

The site is significant as one of a set of seven federation cottages constructed in Acton, and remains a component of the larger Acton House.

The site has significance for its associations with people responsible for shaping the face of Canberra.

The site has value for its ability to indicate a changing cultural landscape.

The site has considerable interpretative potential.

Description

Not available.

Condition and Integrity

Not available.

Background/History

Early Development of Acton 1911-13

By June 1911 a camp had been established on the ridge to the north of Acton homestead.¹ (This history is based on Freeman Collett & Partners 1992)

According to Banks², the ridge area was covered by savannah woodland with Eucalyptus melliodora, E. blakelyi and E. bridgesiana. The grassland consisted of Danthonia and Stipa, a result of sheep grazing on the existing grass species, Themeda australis. Moriarty in his valuation of 1912 recorded the area as being first class grazing, lightly covered with box gum and a little apple; E. melliodora and E. bridgesiana respectively.³

In a letter, dated 11/6/1912, C.R. Scrivener described the subdivision of Acton as follows:

- Robertson 104 acres
- Boreham 1393 acres
- Schumack 237 acres
- Acton House 6 acres
- Scrivener 59 acres

The remainder of the estate, 214 acres, was to be retained for administrative offices, residences, nursery etc.⁴ The map accompanying Moriarty's valuation of 1912 shows two houses, a number of sheds and a stable block on the ridge above Acton House in this area. In 18/10/1911 C.R.Scrivener, as temporary government representative, had moved into Acton homestead.⁵

The Department of Home Affairs had not implemented Griffin's design following the competition, preferring instead to develop its own version, the 'Departmental Board' plan.⁶ The Board at that time comprised Col. D. Miller, Col. P.T. Owen, Mr C.R. Scrivener, Mr G.J. Oakeshott, Mr J.S. Murdoch and Mr T. Hill.

Significantly J.S. Murdoch, the Commonwealth's first architect, had a particular interest in stud framed weatherboard building, a consequence of his background in the Queensland Government. Virtually all RAAF Point Cook (1913) and much of HMAS Cerberus (1911) utilised stud framed weatherboard cladding as did several early post offices generated from the drawing boards of the Department of the Interior.⁷

Four weatherboard cottages were to be built initially to house married staff, with a weatherboard barracks below for bachelors.⁸ These cottages were to be located to take advantage of the existing track along the ridge above the buildings recorded by Moriarty in 1912. The bachelor's barracks were to occupy the site of these buildings whilst the cottages were in a more exposed position.

The first office building (Commonwealth Offices) was completed on 22/8/1912, Colonel Miller becoming resident administrator on 3/10/1912 and occupying one of the newly constructed cottages. By 1913 a further 3 cottages had been constructed for married administrative staff, Colonel Miller occupying the newly constructed 'Residency'.⁹ Contemporary illustrations from the 1913-14 Queensland Workers Dwellings Board 4th Annual Report show remarkable similarities

¹ Gibbney 1984 p5.

² 1979 in Dexter 1991 p8-10

³ AA A657/1 DS12/2408 Book A146 Fol 15,22

⁴ A202/1 13/255 Inst No 633, Paper no F11/3140.

⁵ Gibbney 1984 p5.

⁶ Fischer 1984 p20.

⁷ Nelsen 1990 p71.

⁸ Gibbney 1984 p5.

⁹ Gibbney 1984 p5.

with these cottages as do contemporary advertising material of the Queensland timber companies.¹⁰

A drawing dated 18/12/1912, from the Works Director NSW shows details of the construction and layout of the stables and buggy sheds which appear to have been erected shortly after the married men's quarters.¹¹

To the north-west a large stud framed weatherboard clad hospital had been built by May 1913. This was connected by a new track, crossing 'Acton Road', with the Bachelors' quarters below. Domestic life for administrative staff, was further assisted by a nine hole golf course, cricket ground and tennis court.¹² Staff in the growing offices now included H.M. Rolland, Architect; F.A. Piggin, Accounts (+5 clerks); P. Scheaffe, Surveyor; A. Percival, Surveyor; F. Broinowski, Draughtsman; C.S. Vautin, Draughtsman; and J.C. Brackenreg, Stock Inspector.

In April 1911 Colonel Miller had selected T.C. Weston to establish a nursery at Acton. An experimental pine plantation was established in the same year and by 1913 roses and tulips from Holland in addition to many other plants were available from the nursery.¹³ By 1913 the temporary camp had become the 'Village of Canberra' its boundaries defined by the fences to north and south.¹⁴

A change of government in mid 1913 was to result in the appointment of Griffin as Federal Director of Design and Construction, and his arrival in Australia in August 1913.¹⁵

Subsequent administrative and cultural events were to impact on the implementation of Griffin's plan and result in Acton becoming, by default, the social and cultural centre of the city. This was to lead to the survival of many of Acton's temporary buildings, including Cottage No. 3 at 16 Lennox Crossing, originally Acton Road.

Site Development

A photograph of the married draughtsmen's quarters in 1913² shows blocks 1, 2, and 3 from the south. Set at the edge of the existing tree cover it shows site conditions in 1913. Beyond the house is a tree covered area corresponding to the drainage north of Cottage No. 3. The picket fence at Cottage No. 1 reflects the detail shown on a map dated 1925-30.³ and suggests that the latter was the original layout. As expected, the cottages as temporary structures, show a generic plan, the major difference being in the fence surrounding the laundry and back entrance; north of the reserve this fence is of simple link construction only. The stable and 'buggy' building is shown in addition to fences and gates, which are in a standard position on all blocks.

A memorandum dated 28th October 1927 records the original fences in the subdivision:

- front fence; split posts, 3 wires and wire netting with 2 gates (to Acton Road)
- dividing fence; as front fence
- back fence; concrete posts, wrought iron strainers, 4 wires, the top one barbed and wire netting.⁴

This is confirmed by the 1913 photograph of the married draughtsmen's quarters.

¹⁰ Donald Watson, the Queensland House. A report into the nature and evolution of significant aspects of domestic architecture in Queensland, NTA (Qld), 1982.

¹¹ AA CRS A2502 AB150.

¹² Gibbney 1984 p19 .

¹³ Rolland 1988 p71,72

¹⁴ Gibbney 1988 p22

¹⁵ Fischer 1984 p20

² Nat. Library plate no. NL23102

³ AA CRS A2502 AB672: Ground Plan and Levels at Acton

⁴ AA CT86/1/1 405, memo S/GM FCC

Cottages were available by application, on the basis of position and income. A memorandum to Chief Surveyor Goodwin in Melbourne, concerning tenancies, indicates that in 1917, Cottage No. 3 was occupied by the District Surveyor at Acton.⁵ The District Surveyor at that time is thought to have been Percy Scheaffe.

The first recorded tenant of Cottage No. 3 was Lieutenant Coffey, in residence from 21 December 1917⁶ to 2 October 1919. The cottage was described as consisting of 4 rooms, a servant's room, kitchen and offices.⁷ On 15th November 1919, J. Kilgour, accountant Royal Military College (RMC), took over the lease remaining until 8th March 1921, followed by A.L. Richmond, Works Superintendent, 18th March 1921 to December 1925.⁸

The site appears to have been cleared of native trees but little use was made of the garden until Acton Nursery developed suitable stock. Mature plantings at the Yarralumla Nursery/Westbourne Woods Arboretum circa 1920 by T.C.G. Weston suggest that the larger trees in the shelter belt on the northern edge of the site as well as the larger specimens near the house were planted at this time.⁹

It would seem that the predominance of Cupressus species, macrocarpa and arizonica at that time reflect the need to plant shelter belts within the new city area. In 1912 Weston had ordered a quantity of plants including Cupressus macrocarpa and C. lawsoniana.¹⁰ Significantly Weston was resident in the cottage on block 5 to the north, from 1922, and would have been in charge of all the planting at this time as Officer-in-charge of afforestation. A.D.E. Bruce, later Superintendent of Parks and Gardens, took over the tenancy from Weston in 1926, remaining until May 1932.¹¹

A.L. Richmond was followed by H.R. Waterman who was the Internal Auditor for the FCC. Waterman was resident at the cottage until December 1925 to 28 November 1928 and he was followed by Constable Davies from that date to 18th March 1932.¹²

From 1928 the cottage was to become the permanent residence of Commonwealth Police Officers.

From 18th March 1932 Cottage No. 3 had been occupied by Constable Davies, but in 1936 it was taken over by a mounted Constable from Duntroon. A memorandum to the Department of the Interior requested the construction of a loose box on the premises, in addition to the fencing of a horse paddock on a portion of the adjoining ground. This was to be undertaken to make the place suitable for mounted police purposes.¹³ Subsequently in June 1936 it was requested that a new galvanised iron shed be painted green to make it inconspicuous¹⁴

A gate in the northern fence, providing access to the reserve area, suggests that this may have been fenced off at least in part, although the river flats at Acton were fenced and used for agistment.¹⁵ The request for a loose box for a horse implies that the stable and buggy shed had been adapted for motor vehicles by 1936. Given the occupation administration of the previous tenants it is likely that this took place in 1926 in line with the construction of other garages.

⁵ AA A363/1 DSL18/123 memo G.17/1561.

⁶ AA AS363/1 DSL18/123

⁷ AA A192 FCL18/901 memo FCL18/1070

⁸ ANU Housing Office File and Dexter 1991 p359).

⁹ Pryor 1991 p186

¹⁰ Murphy 1963 p43

¹¹ Dexter 1991 p359

¹² Housing Trust File and Dexter 1991 p359

¹³ ANU Housing Office Files L1659 15/4/36

¹⁴ ANU Housing Office File 1659 24/6/36

¹⁵ Brackenreg 1985 p6

Significantly, before Constable Hilton occupied the cottage as police residence, he requested the removal of 4 large trees and the lopping of 3 others with the intention of establishing a garden.¹⁶ Later that year over 100 feet of paling fence was replaced along the common boundary with Cottage No. 2, suggesting that at some time the original post and wire fence had been considered inadequate, and replaced for privacy.¹⁷ It would seem that the 1924 and 1937 Ordinances, applying to the erection of permanent front fences, were never applied to the boundaries of Cottage No 3.

Aerial photographs dated 12th March 1945¹⁸ show the stable extended to accommodate a car; no record was found within the research time available to identify the exact date, but this would have been between 1926 and 1936. No major changes were apparent in the landscape setting but the garden displayed a well established orchard, vegetable plot and discrete plantings of ornamentals. The wind break was now three rows in depth, those in the centre probably being planted in the late 1930s.

There were few additions to the landscape, with the exception of further fruit trees and a number of infill Cupressus trees in the driveway, during the period following the Second World War. There was however, maturation in the landscape in particular along the front boundary; *Ulmus procera*, *Cedrus deodara* and eucalypt species. At some stage the central row of windbreak trees has been removed and a number of new Cupressus trees used to fill the gaps in the row north of the drive.

There have been minor changes to the site in recent years, the most obvious being lopping of feature trees on the boundary with Lennox Crossing. The English elm (*U. procera*) has responded by suckering and the eucalypt by regrowth.

Today the orchards include *Prunus* sp., *Ficus carica* (fig), *Diospyros kaki* (persimmon), and a number of others which appear to be apple and cherry. Remnants of the decorative domestic planting remain, reflecting the layout of those in the pictorial record circa 1918:

- Lonicera sp (honeysuckle)
- Banksia Rose
- Syringia vulgaris (lilac)
- Flags
- Iris unguicularis (winter iris)
- Agapanthus
- Periwinkle
- Viola odorata (violet).

In the years since 1937 when the garden was first used to grow vegetables, it remained in continual use for many years. Inevitably with disuse many plants have self seeded including:

- Cotoneaster sp
- Schinus molle, pepper tree
- Prunus sp
- Photinia serratifolia (from the hedge in front of the Residence)
- Eucalyptus sp
- Brachychiton populneus.

The Hills hoist was probably added in the late 1950s, following standard practice with government housing in Canberra.

Following the transfer of tenancies to the Australian National University in 1960, The Acton Ridge Study by Roy Simpson in November 1973 (ANU 73/S/1235) designated the subject area zone no. 2, and included:

"...16 Lennox Crossing, Mrs Hilton, to be demolished as soon as possible".¹⁹

¹⁶ ANU Housing Office File; Property and Survey Branch, L.1659 22nd January 1937

¹⁷ ANU Housing Office File L1659 17/3/37

¹⁸ Nat. Library I-55-16-451, Canberra Parks and Gardens

¹⁹ (ANU; History of the Site Plan 1971-78 p16-17).

The 1977 to 1979 completion of Parkes Way and associated works impacted on the northern and eastern boundaries, causing the relocation of a large galvanised iron shed, which is presumed to have been the horse loose box of 1936.²⁰

Mrs Hilton was to remain in residence until 1990. A memorandum from the ANU Housing Office, dated 25/1/90, requested that security keep an eye on the property until such time as a decision had been made on the future of the site.²¹ Changes to the property in 1990 included demolition of the picket fence separating the block from 14 Lennox Street, and the removal of a small garden shed.

Following a 6 month period without tenants the property now provides on campus accommodation for students.

Acton Village: The Administrative and Cultural Context

1913-20 Walter Burley Griffin

Federal Capital development was under the control of the Department of Home Affairs until 1916, through the Administrator of the Federal Capital Territory, Colonel D. Miller. The Department of Works and Railways was responsible for building the city.¹⁶

Griffin's concept embraced long term growth without emphasis on any one centre. While he was to accept in the short term the concept of an initial city his aim was to establish the framework of his plan as a whole with its different functional centres north and south of the Molonglo River.¹⁷

Following the preliminary plan of 1913, the 1918 Griffin Plan, then known as the Official Plan was gazetted. The Acton Peninsula was designated as the site for both Hospital and University. Earlier versions of this Plan included a 'trial railway' along Acton Ridge as part of the public transport system, but this was later dropped. Walter Burley Griffin chose this area of land close to Civic Centre, which he described as 'overlooking the entire length of the four lakes of the chain' for the Hospital/University site.¹⁸ The budget constraints of 1916 were to lead to a complete suspension of construction until after the war; there was little to do but tree planting until 1920.

Thousands of trees were planted during the establishment of Canberra, including Australian natives, and exotic varieties, deciduous and evergreen. From 1916 there were major plantings of Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*), Cupressus species (Cypress) and Cedrus species (Cedar) from stock at the Acton nursery.¹⁹ A list of the main species which were available from the nursery at Acton 1917-18 was printed in a booklet for the Empire Forestry Conference by the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau in 1918; some 26 main species were planted.

Acton, as administrative centre, remained the social and cultural centre of Canberra. The only site adjacent to the future civic area with a full view of the city area, it was above flood level, had established tree cover, existing accommodation, tracks and a plentiful supply of water.

The arrival of the telephone was to coincide ominously with the onset of war in 1914.²⁰

Electricity, from the Kingston powerhouse, was available by August 1915²¹ but water was only available from rainwater tanks or the Molonglo River.

A memorandum to the District Surveyor dated 29 September 1917, from the Chief Surveyor, J.T.H. Goodwin, asked for details regarding the control of property in the Federal Capital Territory. Implicit in the instructions to Mr Thornhill, a Clerk of the Lands and Survey Branch, was the need to number houses and completed buildings. It would appear that the 7 blocks on the east side of

²⁰ (ANU 1978 Plate 40).

²¹ (Ref 12.1.4.14-439 cm.mj:\p\10590).

¹⁶ Fischer 1984 p34

¹⁷ Fischer 1984 p32

¹⁸ Winston 1968 p1

¹⁹ Murphy 1963 p48

²⁰ Gibbney 1988 p16

²¹ Brackenreg 1985 p4

Acton Road were numbered from south to north at this time.²² This coincided with the preparation of Holding Subdivision maps, giving block and section details, in 1917.²³ Major plantings of pines, eucalypts and elms on Acton Ridge around the present ANU Staff Centre and the old hospital were made by 1920.²⁴ With the end of grazing the existing native tree cover was also to become more developed, extending down the slope towards the river. By 1920 there were several buildings at the nursery, eight married officers and bachelors' quarters, the Commonwealth Offices, a Commonwealth Bank, Hospital and Post Office, but by that time, still no shopping facilities.

The necessity to get on with construction of the Capital, after the First World War, meant an end to Griffin's control at a time of political unrest. The government decided to hand over the development of Canberra to a committee on which Griffin would be advisor and member; on 31st December 1920 he declined the offer to join the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC).²⁵

1921-24 Federal Capital Advisory Committee

Griffin was replaced by a six man committee, under the chairmanship of the Sydney architect and town planner, John Sulman. The committee was responsible to the Department of Home and Territories. Although advisory in nature, it was closely coordinated with the construction process, since the main executive officers of the Department of Home and Territories and Works and Railways were members.²⁶ The continuing influence of John Sulman as chairman was to lead to concentration of permanent development in four areas; these areas were Braddon, Kingston and Barton, Forrest and Red Hill and Yarralumla. This reflected the Committee's policy whereby site area and cost were used to socially segregate the population.²⁷

Acton's landscape was to change very little during this period, remaining the administrative and cultural centre (by modern nomenclature) of Canberra. Street lighting was installed by May 1922, followed by the installation of electricity meters for lighting in July 1922.²⁸ Water from the Cotter was connected to Acton by 19 April 1921, but there were no meters provided.²⁹

During this period significant development was taking place within other inner areas of Canberra. During this period also plans were developed to implement in detail Griffin's Gazetted plan of 1918. The plans included the Acton area. In November 1925 Griffin's plan was gazetted.

The financial means allocated to the Capital increased under post-war prosperity and on 1st January 1925, the task of building Canberra was taken over by the Federal Capital Commission.

1925-30 Federal Capital Commission

In the Seat of Government Act (1924), the Commonwealth Government created a corporation with independent financing and authority for the planning, construction, maintenance and administration of the capital. Under the Administration of the Department of Home Affairs and Chief Commissioner John Butters, the plan to move government staff from Melbourne to Canberra seemed attainable.³⁰

In the first two years the number of brick cottages in Canberra, increased from 88 to 400. Among the public buildings constructed at this time was the Institute of Anatomy at Acton. In 1927 the

²² AA A363/1 DSL18/123, FCL18/40 & FCL17/1273

²³ CDHS unindexed maps

²⁴ Banks 1979 p8-10 in Dexter 1991

²⁵ Fischer 1984 p34

²⁶ Fischer 1984 p34

²⁷ Fischer 1984 p39-41

²⁸ AA A361 DSG25/500 G22/1914 and G22/716

²⁹ AA A192 FCL21/377 memo FC21/377 Works and Railways

³⁰ Fischer 1984 p42

shops at Civic were opened, followed by the transfer of 650 public servants from Melbourne.³¹ Canberra had grown from a construction camp into a small town. The Commission's tasks now concerned everything from law and order to the landscape.

By the end of 1924 workmen had planted 1,162,942 trees in Canberra.³² Under the Buildings and Service Ordinance, 1924, both the design of dwellings and their associated planting were expected to conform to the Commission's standards. The social planning principles of Sulman's Committee were continued, applied to different parts of the city as it grew, in its attempt to create a 'garden city'. On the ground this included the unifying effect of front hedges.³³

Hedges were to be planted instead of front fences. No fences were to be allowed in front of the building alignment, except temporary wire fences to protect hedges and other new plantings. Residents were expected to keep the hedges neatly clipped to a reasonable height. Hedge plants commonly used were Cotoneaster species, Lanicera species (honeysuckle), Ligustrum ovalifolium (privet), Euonymus japonica (spindle tree), Pyracantha yurinanensis and Viburnum tinus. Trees and shrubs were freely available from the nursery at Acton with no limit on numbers.³⁴ Acton retained its administrative functions in an expanded form. The main thoroughfare, Acton Road, was shaded with large trees on both sides and lined with the weatherboard houses of public servants.³⁵ W.M. Rolland, whose father H.M. Rolland was site architect from 1912, provides a glimpse of the domestic landscape at this time. Staff cottages were set among the naturally established gum trees, blocks separated by white post, rail and wire fences. There were no shops in Acton, supplies came from Queanbeyan or nearby farms. Domestic vegetable gardens were equipped with rabbit proof fences, and hens were obligatory. The houses were equipped with woodfired stoves and 2 or 3 galvanised iron rainwater tanks.

By 1925 there were many cars in Acton, both private and government.³⁶ Drawings completed in 1926 show garages proposed for the government residences at Acton. Balmain Crescent and Liversidge Street were implemented by 1927. Acton Road was planted with Ulmus species by 1930.³⁷

The opening of the Provisional Federal Houses of Parliament in 1927, plus the growth of suburbs in areas other than Acton, presaged a decline in the social importance of Acton.³⁸

The rapid development of Canberra was to lead to speculation in the sale and auction of leases. This reached a crisis in 1927, coinciding with the onset of the depression. During the financial year 1927/28 most major projects had to be cancelled due to severe cutbacks. Following an enquiry by the government the Commission was abolished in 1930.³⁹ Canberra was to remain under the administration of the Department of Home Affairs until the end of the Depression in 1932.

1932-58 Department of the Interior

In its final report the Federal Capital Commission warned that it would be tragic to subdivide the activities of the Commission and distribute them among two or more departments.⁴⁰

Under the additional control of the Departments of Health and Attorney-Generals, the Commission's warning proved to be realistic, Canberra coming last in priority and cooperation. An Advisory Council created in 1930 was little more than a figurehead. Planning, as John Sulman

31 Fischer 1984 p42

32 Linge 1963 p14

33 Fischer 1984 p47

34 McDougall 1972 p101

35 Gibbney 1986 p14

36 Rolland 1988 p78

37 AA CRS A2502 AB672 dwg dated 1925-30

38 Pumpurs 1984 p63

39 Fischer 1984 p49

40 Fischer 1984 p49

had suggested, drifted into the hands of administrators with little understanding of city planning.⁴¹ The efforts directed at the creation of a 'garden city' led, in 1937, to a new Lands Ordinance which emphasised the prohibition of permanent front fences, hoardings and advertising signs.⁴² In 1938 the National Capital Planning and Development Committee was established, but the onset of war in 1939, was to curtail development indefinitely. This, plus the preceding economic depression, resulted in an atmosphere of stagnation causing Canberra's society to turn in on itself, with gardening becoming a common denominator.⁴³ The landscape of Acton was little changed within the period 1933-43. Until 1943 Acton had been serviced by a separate septic system; from 28/12/43 the sewers were connected to the main system and treatment plant.⁴⁴

Following World War II, an effort was made to centralise and promote government from Canberra. Economic and political changes were to reinforce this, while population growth was to surge ahead. The gazetted plan of 19 Nov 1925 helped to maintain development at low overall densities; it showed street layouts only without details of land use, zoning or building development.⁴⁵ Important decisions affecting development were only made from the 1950s. Amongst these was the decision to choose a site for the Australian National University, founded by an Act passed by the Federal Government in August 1946.⁴⁶

The National University was given a site of 350 acres between Acton Ridge and Black Mountain.⁴⁷ It was not until 1950 that the boundaries for a lease in perpetuity over an area of 204 acres were vested. Significantly this reflected Griffin's choice of site and included the initial administration and temporary settlement areas at Acton.⁴⁸ Of concern to the Interim Council of the University were the questions of existing tenancies, maintenance, services and the racecourse below the site, beside Sullivan's Creek. In a letter dated 1 August 1950, it was suggested that the rights of occupiers, which had been protected for 5 years from 10 February 1947, would be respected but that University staff be given first choice of available tenancies. It was also requested that leasing of houses be handed over to the University by 10 February 1952.⁴⁹

In the years between 1946 and 1960 site plans were to be developed, which reflected the existing patterns of land use, in particular the area of first settlement. The first of these, by Professor Brian Lewis of Melbourne was completed in March 1948. The second plan, by Professor Denis Wilson and Grenfell Rudduck, was completed in 1955.

In 1958, following investigations into the planning of Canberra by Lord Holford, the Commonwealth government decided to appoint a Commissioner for the Development of Canberra. A planning authority, called the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC), came into effect on 1 March 1958.⁵⁰ Full control of the ANU site and tenancies was not achieved by the University until June 1960, following administrative changes introduced with the establishment of the NCDC.⁵¹

1960-92 Australian National University

In November 1959 Professor Winston, as advisor to the NCDC on site design, submitted his final plan for Canberra University College, which was to be associated with the ANU. Among the important principles adopted were that existing developments of value be retained and that the natural and man made landscape would be considered major elements in the scheme.⁵²

41 Fischer 1984 p49

42 Fischer 1984 p50

43 Denning 1945 p45-50

44 AA A292/T1 C20100 p101

45 Fischer 1984 p53

46 Dexter 1991 p77

47 West 1980 p1

48 Dexter 1991 p337, 373; see map appendix 85

49 Dexter 1991 p337-339

50 Fischer 1984 p66

51 W.S.Hamilton, Bursar; letter ref 12.1.4.0 17/6/60

52 ANU 1973 p12

Winston's successor, Roy Simpson, appointed in 1968, was to enshrine these ideas in his first ANU Plan. He proposed a naturalistic landscape, historically interesting, recording the University's evolution in a way that is uniquely Australian.⁵³ Simpson's plan of April 1969 accommodated the changes that had taken place in 1964 with the flooding of Lake Burley Griffin and the implications of the first official urban development plan by Chief Town Planner Peter Harrison.⁵⁴ The area south of Parkes Way designated residential by the plan of 1969, now reflected the changes to the site. Numbers 14 & 16 Acton Road (Lennox Crossing) and other temporary buildings were noted as being of uncertain future on the December 1971 site plan. The Acton Ridge Study by Roy Simpson in November 1973⁵⁵ designated the subject area no. 2 and included:

- Lennox Crossing, Mrs Hilton, to be demolished as soon as possible; and
- 14 Lennox Crossing, Professor Reid to be retained.

(no. 12 had been demolished in 1969.⁵⁶)

Acton Road (Lennox Crossing and Liversidge Street) since 1928 was now internal to the ANU campus and devoid of through traffic. The initial housing area of Acton was to be bisected by Parkes Way, routing traffic past the central areas as part of a system of Freeways. This was eventually to incorporate on site parking for the campus. Implemented 1976-78 it was to result in the demolition of a number of the earliest houses.

Some of these proposals predicated the demolition of Cottage No. 3.

Analysis against the Criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991

(The following analysis is based on Freeman Collett & Partners 1992)

(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

It was appropriate that the first buildings constructed for the Federal Capital were of the Federation style - a style characterised in this case by high pitched roofs, articulated weatherboard walls with casement windows, strongly expressed brick chimneys and well developed gables. This style came to be known as the Federal Capital Style. A number of subsequent building types in Canberra were designed using this "language" and it is possible to view the married men's quarters (including Cottage No 3) as being seminal in the evolution of Canberra's own Federal Capital Style.

It can be shown therefore that Cottage No 3 was valued as an archetype appropriate for the national capital.

(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 or being lost, or is of exceptional interest

Cottage No 3 demonstrates the way of life of the occupants who for many years had to be largely self sufficient. Shops in Canberra were not constructed until the 1920s and as a consequence vegetable gardens, orchards and chooks were kept for fresh food. Cottage No 3 retains evidence of these in its garden layout and fence lines, remnant plantings and chook shed. A pantry was included in the design for storage of foodstuffs.

⁵³ ANU 1973 p15

⁵⁴ Fischer 1984 p77

⁵⁵ ANU 73/S/1235

⁵⁶ ANU; History of the Site Plan 1971-78 p16-17

As electricity was not connected until 1915, cooking, water heating and house heating utilised wood fuel. Bath water was heated using a "chip heater", evidenced by the spatial layout of the bathroom and the remnants of the flue in the ceiling, and above the roofline. There were three open wood fires: one in the lounge, one in the dining room and one in the east bedroom. The kitchen was equipped with a wood stove and laundry water was heated in a copper.

Water was collected either from the roof into galvanised iron water tanks or alternatively, water was also available from the Molonglo River. At that time, water pressure would not have been available to supply an overhead shower, however "chip heaters" were most appropriate for low pressure systems. It would have been unlikely for a flush toilet to have been installed initially.

The Cotter dam was constructed in the early 1920s and with the completion of the pumping station and associated reticulation works, piped water was connected. Garden taps were located to allow for convenient watering of the vegetable garden, orchard and introduced plantings.

In the bathroom the galvanised plumbing was extended above the bath to provide for a cold shower. Some of the original drainage fittings remain in the form of sumps and vent pipes.

Following the construction of the Kingston Powerhouse, electricity was available to the cottage in August 1915. Cables were run in metal conduit over the surface of the walls and skirtings, and although the building has been rewired subsequently, some of the original installation remains. Mains power was slung overhead to two insulators on the western gable and thence into the house. Laundry power was provided by a pair of overhead wires from the house. Light switching was by ceiling mounted pull-switches and the drop chord to the lights was bound in cloth. The chip heater was replaced at some stage by an electrically powered shower heater.

Early transport was by horse. Stables and buggy shed were constructed away from the house, and backing the stables of the adjacent property. With the advent of the motor car in the mid twenties, the stables were extended to form a garage. The gravel driveway and edge plantings possibly date from this period.

The cottage accommodated members of the police force after the late 20s, and it was necessary to again provide stabling, known as a loose box, which was initially located at the eastern end of the block. The present location reflects changing road patterns following construction of Parkes Way. The loose box remains in good condition and still retains its stable door and louvred vent.

The internal walls of the house retain much of their surface decoration. In the living and sleeping rooms the walls were decorated with wallpapers of the period - much of which remains. The western room, used first as a maid's bedroom and later as an office for police matters, was treated with a utilitarian wash of pale blue calomine. Ceilings were of lath and plaster, and the cornice profile reflects the taste in these details at that time.

The changing requirements of the occupants is reflected in the sympathetic extensions to the building and the subsequent relocation of the east staircase. The various modifications to the fabric are closely related to the needs of the occupants and the altered circumstances resulting from the evolution of the City of Canberra. The overall quality of construction of Cottage No 3 is high and is indicative of its construction under government contract.

Not only is Cottage No 3 able to inform us of the daily domestic lifestyle in and around that home over the period of its existence, it can also assist our understanding of the society that existed in "Acton Village". The inhabitants of Acton were a group of people brought together for a specific purpose in a relatively remote and isolated area, who had to make their own amusement. By the end of the twenties Cottage No 3 was associated with seven married-officer's quarters, bachelor's quarters, Commonwealth Offices, a bank, hospital, post office, a nursery and a cricket ground and tennis court. Acton was the cultural and social centre of early Canberra.

Much of the fabric from the earlier Acton phase is now gone, as has the role of Lennox Crossing as a thoroughfare. The remnant Bachelors Quarters (Lennox House) and ANU Cottage No 3 do, however, demonstrate distinctive design solutions for that early Federal Capital phase.

(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

In the study on Acton Ridge conducted by Roy Simpson in 1973, Cottage No 3, and other timber buildings dating from the initial construction period were recommended for demolition. Indeed for various reasons only two of the original seven cottages remain.

Cottage No 3 is now recognised as having some degree of cultural significance and the effort presently being expended on its conservation is indicative of changes in the community's assessment of its own cultural heritage. It is anticipated that this building and site will be even more valued in the future.

(v) a place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type

Only two of the original seven married men's quarters at Acton remain. Cottage No 3 is remarkable in the extent of fabric from the earlier periods that is still intact.

(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

The cottage was designed by the Commonwealth's first architect (J. S. Murdoch) whose architectural style had been strongly influenced by the timber-framed weatherboard houses in Queensland. It is not surprising therefore that the married men's quarters bore striking similarity to many cottages in that state. The particular Federation bungalow style of building, the way it looked and the detailing evident in Cottage No 3 is apparent in photographs of other buildings (most since demolished) at Acton including the Bachelors Quarters (now Lennox House) and the first Canberra Hospital.

Many timber buildings subsequently constructed in Canberra, particularly around Ainslie, contain degrees of stylistic reference to Cottage No 3, but not to the same extent that the early Acton buildings had to one another.

Cottage No 3 is significant as an example of the early Acton style of timber house.

(vii) a place which has strong or special associations with person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history

The cottage and the site are highly significant for their association with the initial phase of development of Canberra.

Furthermore, the cottage has some degree of association with people significant for their role in shaping the very nature of the Federal National Capital, including T C G Weston who resided in Cottage No 5 and had considerable impact on the selection of plant species grown subsequently in Canberra.

(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

ANU Cottage No 3 has great interpretative and educational value. A study of this site can provide considerable insight into the life-style of the occupants, the conditions under which they lived and worked and the evolution of the townscape pertaining to early Canberra. An image of Cottage No 3 is already used to illustrate a comprehensive range of Canberra's architectural heritage.

In gaining an appreciation of the cottages' educative value it is important that it not be assessed in isolation. The building is indeed but one of a range of domestic buildings in the ACT able to contribute to an understanding of the cultural history of this Nation's Capital.

References

Freeman Collett & Partners 1992, ANU Cottage No. 3, Lennox Crossing, Australian National University, Conservation Plan, Conservation Analysis: Volume 1, unpublished report.

Other Information Sources