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Stirling Park Precinct, Yarralumla, ACT

Photographs: None
List: Commonwealth Heritage List
Class: Natural
Legal Status: [Indicative Place](#)
Place ID: 105301
Place File No: 8/01/000/0521
Summary Statement of Significance: Not Available
Official Values: Not Available

Description:

Geology & Geomorphology

The major feature of Stirling Park is a ridge running on a northwest-southeast axis. The ridge was formed in the Middle and late Ordovician when the Canberra area was part of a large, deep ocean basin receiving extensive turbidity flows derived from the south. The lithology is principally of the Pittman, Canberra and Acton formations and is characterised by quartz-rich sandstone, feldspathic sandstone, siltstone and thick pelagic shales. The sandstones are the principal formations and were formed during the extended periods of turbidite flow. They make up the majority of the ridge extending from the southern and central sections to the northern extremity. During the periods when the area failed to receive turbidite flows the formation of deep shales resulted. The most significant shales are those of the Acton Formation on the southern end of the ridge. No volcanic debris has been recorded in the formations.

The ridge lies along the Deakin Fault, a major fracture zone which extends some 70 km in a north westerly line from the Queanbeyan area, through Belconnen and the rural landscape beyond the ACT border. At least two minor fault lines extend from the Deakin Fault on the ridge leading into Lake Burley Griffin.

Stirling ridge has the topographic development typical of most of the region. Natural processes of weathering and erosion have produced a low rounded crest to the ridge and gentle sloping sides. The ridge altitude is c. 600m ASL, rising c. 44m above the shore of Lake Burley Griffin. Several drainage lines lead from the mid slopes on the northern and southern sides and before urban and lake development would have flowed into the floodplain of the Molonglo River (Lake Burley Griffin). The removal of vegetation, vehicle tracks and in some areas possible mining activities have led to exposed areas of degraded sandstone soils which are eroding.

Vegetation

The vegetation is remnant and indicative of the general area prior to the incursion of pastoralism and urban development (Appendix A). It is the only such area around the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. Stirling Park is best described as a grassy, open, eucalypt woodland. The dominant species being yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), red gum (*E.*

blakleyi) and apple box (*E. bridgesiana*) on the slopes and white brittle gum (*E. mannifera* spp. *maculosa*), scribbly gum (*E. rossii*) and occasional broad-leaved peppermint (*E. dives*) along the ridge lines. Regeneration of the red gums and yellow box species is occurring. Locally endemic shrubs include urn heath (*Melichrus urceolatus*), *Cassinia* (*Cassinia* spp), bitter cryptandra (*Cryptandra amara*), early wattle (*Acacia genistifolia*), and red-stem wattle (*A. rubida*). There are some larger shrubs and small trees of green wattle (*A. mearnsii*). The ground layer consists primarily of kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) and wallaby grass (*Danthonia* spp.) with patches of button wrinklewort (*Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides*). The latter plants occur mainly on the upper portion of Stirling Park 3 between Blue Gum Point and Attunga Point in open gravelly areas where the kangaroo grass is thin. The majority of exotic trees, shrubs and flowers in Stirling Park, with the exception of those planted by the government after 1963, were grown by the former residents. They occur in the area of the Gap on the eastern side of the ridge. Rowan trees (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and hawthorn are found in the areas of Howie's settlement and other parts of the ridge. Old box thorns and sweet peas grow near the sites of the nineteenth century buildings and briar roses are throughout the park on and near the cottage sites. Remnant brick and stone edged garden beds still exist throughout the park. One group of stones surrounds a kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneum*), one of two, growing on a slope above Lotus Bay. Nearby is a large strawberry patch probably planted sometime in the 1920s. Ribbon gum (*E. viminalis*), Argyle apple (*E. cinerea*), Eurabbie (*E. bicostata*), and Cedar wattle (*Acacia elata*) have been planted in groups on the southern side of the park and Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*), Maritime pine (*P. pinaster*) and Canary Island pine (*P. canariensis*) in a small plantation in the southwest section near the intersection of Fitzgerald St. and Hopetoun Cr. Major woody weed species include evergreen Cootamundra wattle (*A. baileyana*), firethorn (*Pyrocantha* spp), cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster* spp.), deciduous hackberry (*Celtis australis*), rowan and Monterey pine.

Wildlife

The bushland setting of Stirling Park provides habitats for a wide variety of animals and acts as an island of open woodland confined by Lake Burley Griffin and the suburban areas. Some animals may move to and from the park, traversing suburban areas in the process. While many of the birds are able to do this efficiently the terrestrial mammals and reptiles cannot and are mainly confined to the area.

The Canberra Ornithologist Group have identified over eighty species of birds on Stirling Park. These species comprise mainly terrestrial-habitat birds common to the bush lands and open forest regions of southeast Australia. But because of its close proximity to Lake Burley Griffin, water habitat birds also frequent Stirling Park. The major mammalian and reptilian species found in the park include the ringtail possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*), brushtail possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*), bearded dragon (*Pagona barbatus*), common blue-tongue (*Tilqua nigrolutea*), shingleback (*Trachydosaurus rugosus*) & eastern brown snake (*Pseudonaja textilis*).

History: Not Available

Condition and Integrity: Not Available

Location:

An area bounded by Alexandrina Drive beginning at the junction of Hopetoun Circuit; thence Flynn Drive to the junction of Forster Crescent; thence Forster Crescent to the junction of Empire Circuit; thence the line delineating the north-western boundaries of Blocks 1 & 2 Section 22 Yarralumla to the junction of Fitzgerald Street; thence Fitzgerald Street to the junction of Hopetoun Circuit, thence Hopetoun Circuit to the junction of Alexandra Drive.

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