

3. OVERVIEW HISTORY

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO HISTORY

This history is structured into four main parts:

- a design history of Parkes Place;
- pre and post-contact Aboriginal history of the Canberra area;
- the story of the broader area from early European settlement through to the present day – dealing with the social, political, planning and landscape aspects of this story; and
- a more detailed discussion of the landscape history context.

The first part is intended as a summary of the history of the development of just Parkes Place. The remaining sections put the story of Parkes Place into a longer and a wider series of contexts.

While the social/planning/political history context and the landscape history context each have a different emphasis, there is a small measure of overlap between these sections. This has been minimised but some remains in order to create linkages between these two aspects of the same overall story.

Much of this history is broader than just Parkes Place. It relates to the region, to the story of Canberra as the national capital, and to the Parliament House Vista conservation area. This breadth provides context for understanding the development of Parkes Place which is connected to the larger story of the development of the national capital.

In addition, the history prepared for the 1997 conservation management plan (Gray 1997) remains a highly useful reference, and it has been included in full at Appendix B.

3.2 DESIGN HISTORY OF PARKES PLACE

Parkes Place and the National Rose Gardens are part of the central landscape of Canberra, the Australian capital. Their development is closely tied to the creation of the national capital, the influence of the Griffins' plans from 1912 and later, and the steps taken in the 1920s to build a Parliament House and the surrounding landscape.

Parkes Place, including the National Rose Gardens, has undergone three main periods of design and development.

First Period: Initial Layout and Development 1918-1954

Governmental Terraces, including an ornamental pool, are shown in front of Parliament House in the final 1918 plan of Walter Burley Griffin (Gray 1997 provides more details about the Griffins' plans for this area, see Appendix B). In 1923, with the decision to build a Provisional Parliament House (now Old Parliament House) north of the Griffin site, the Federal Capital Advisory Committee followed by the Federal Capital Commission continued the formal City Beautiful road and block configuration of Griffin and placed public terraces across the Land Axis in front of the House.



Figure 37. Griffin's 1918 Plan

Between 1925 and 1927 the FCC divided the gently north sloping site into three major sections separated by north-south gravel pathways. These spaces were further subdivided by a central east-west gravel pathway and another pathway bordering King Edward Terrace at the north of the site. Pathways, bordered by trees, encircled the site. The design intent of the grassed central terrace was to enhance the vista towards Mount Ainslie and to provide a public place of assembly.

The southern flanking terraces were designed as intimate garden rooms and were enclosed by a double line of broad-leaved deciduous trees on the street edge and evergreen conifers either side of the internal pathways. Material evidence remains of commemorative plantings undertaken by members of the Empire Parliamentary Association along the north-south pathways adjacent to the garden rooms in 1926.



Figure 38. Tree planting in front of Parliament House by the Empire Parliamentary Association, 1926

Source: National Archives of Australia, A3560, 152

The northern flanking spaces were left as open grassed terraces and an ornamental pond at the intersection with the central terrace was planned for the future. Entry points and intersections of the pathways were formally marked with square planting beds containing low shrubs and the columnar Lombardy poplar (*Populus nigra* 'Italica') that turn yellow in autumn.

These public garden areas complemented the development of the adjacent parliamentary gardens which were designed either side of the Provisional Parliament House at around the same time. While there were some similarities between the two sets of gardens, there were also significant differences in character and use. There was also a degree of competition in the early years.

Parkes Place was named in 1928 after Sir Henry Parkes, a prominent political figure in the Federation movement which created the Commonwealth of Australia.

Figure 39. Weston's Planting Plan for the Parliamentary Zone south of the lake (Drawing of 1928)

Source: National Capital Authority

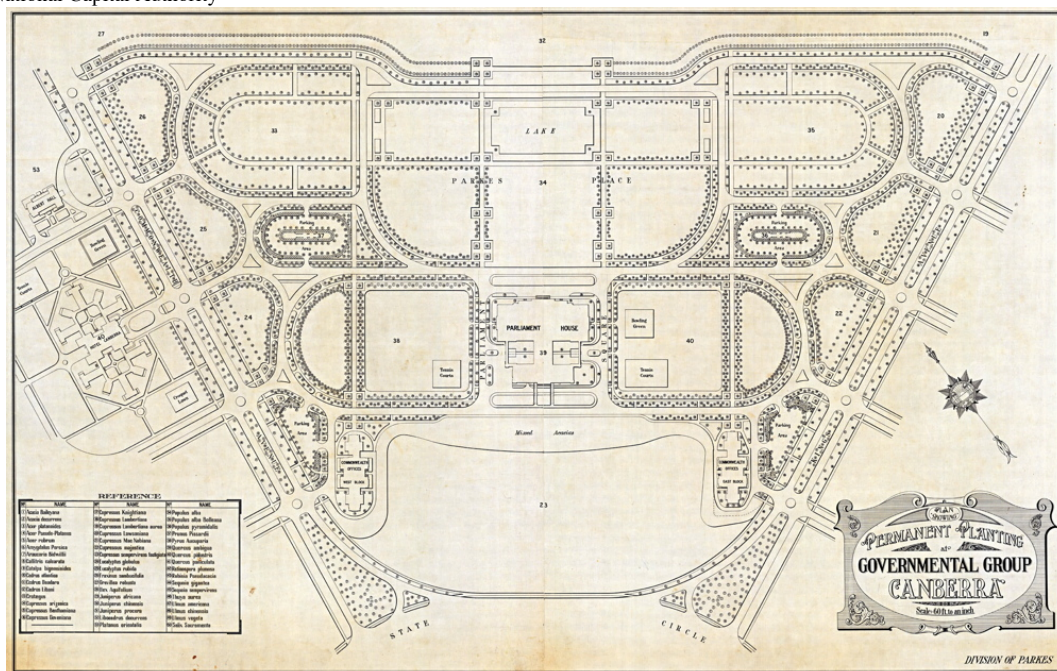




Figure 40. Detail of 1933 Plan of Canberra showing extent of development

Source: Detail of 1933 Map of Canberra prepared by the Property & Survey Branch of the Department of the Interior, National Library of Australia

Rose gardens were an early consideration. In 1924 the Director of Parks and Forestation Charles Weston proposed decorative rose gardens on the central terrace, but no action was taken at that time. At the time of Federation rose growing was popular. With each state having its own rose society, the concept of a national rose garden gained momentum. Each state could contribute not only to the beautification of the nation's capital, but because of its climate, would provide an ideal testing ground for Australian grown roses. In 1926 the National Rose Society of NSW approached the FCC with a proposal. Director of Parks and Gardens Alexander Bruce, Weston's successor and President of the Canberra Horticultural Society, worked with the FCC to establish a design brief for rose gardens set out symmetrically on terraces flanking the central terrace and to implement the project. Bruce also introduced roses to the verge of King George Terrace between flowering Plum trees.

Rex Hazlewood helped Bruce develop the plan to symbolise the petals of a fully opened rose consisting of a central circular bed surrounded by three further rings of beds in a formal quartered configuration. Large circular planting beds were also placed in the corners of Rose Gardens. The garden beds, separated by grass, were planted with consideration of flower colour and plant form. Donations of roses came from rose societies, other organisations and individuals across Australia. Planting commenced on 12 September 1933 and was completed by 1934.

Figure 41. Plan of National Rose Gardens, 1933

Source: National Archives of Australia, A3560, 6844

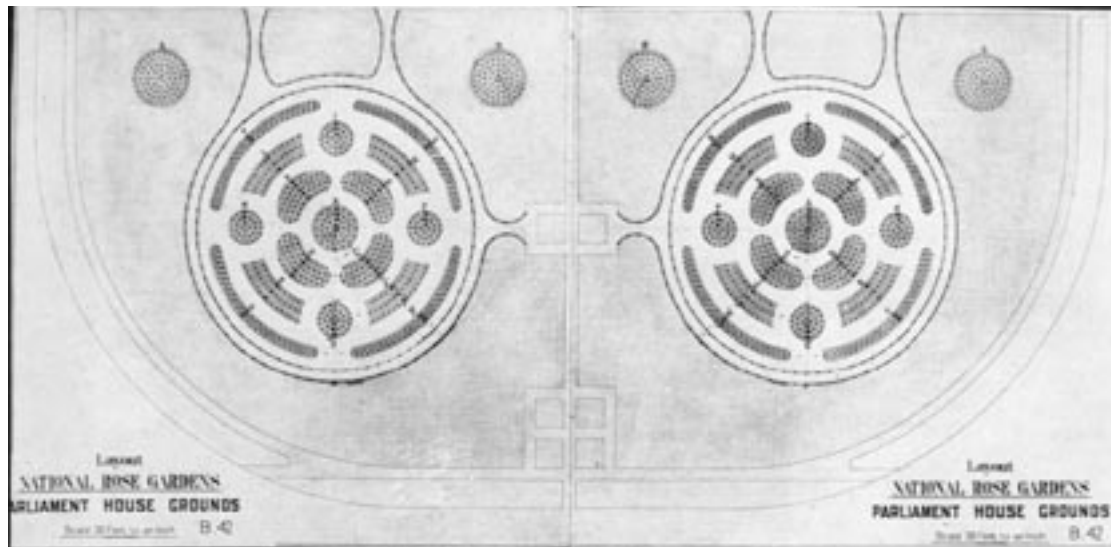
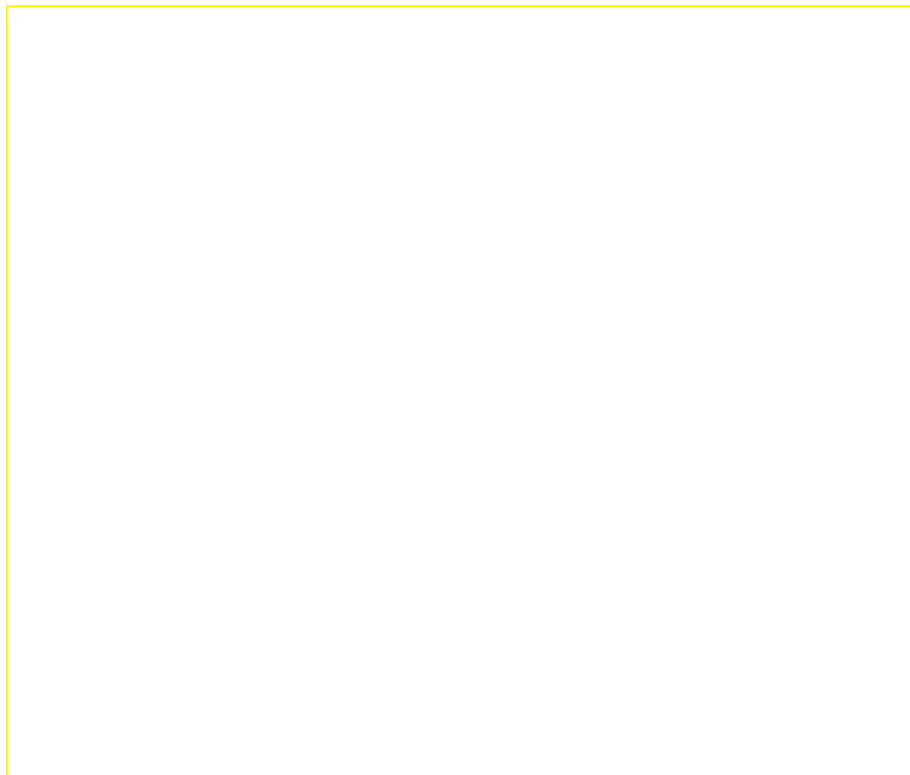


Figure 42. Colour layout of the East Rose Garden

Source: Gray 1997



Note: R = Red, Y = Yellow, W = White, P = Pink



Figure 43. First plantings in the National Rose Gardens by Minister for the Interior J A Perkins, with F A Piggin, President of the Canberra Horticultural Society and C S Daley of the FCC, 1933

Source: National Archives of Australia, A3560, 6957

Timber pyramid supports were provided for climbing roses. There was no constructed edging to the garden beds, and generally they were not mulched. The ensemble of beds was to be viewed from an encircling grass pathway, edged with roses, and accessed from the main north-south and east-west pathways. It could also be viewed from the Parkes Place perimeter pathway.



Figure 44. Light snow indicating the encircling grass pathway that was later converted to 4 long rose beds, and then broken into a number of smaller beds

Source: R C Strangman, Snow cover at National Rose Gardens..., National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an24894136

In 1934 tulip bulbs, a gift of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, were established in beds on the central terrace adjacent the King George Terrace but were phased out over the following decade. In 1940 work stated on the construction of the King George V Memorial on the Land Axis in front of Provisional Parliament House.

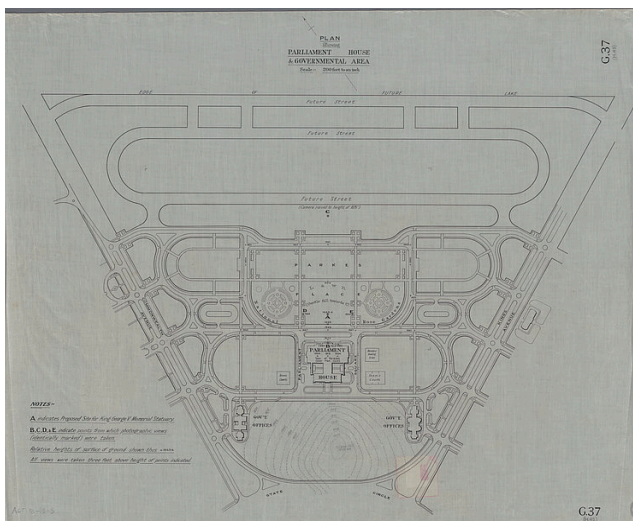


Figure 45. Parkes Place plan, about 1940

Source: National Library of Australia

In the late 1940s the Director of Parks and Gardens Lindsay Pryor undertook tree thinning and tree replacement in Parkes Place. In anticipation of a visit by Princess Elizabeth in 1952,

refurbishment of the rose beds commenced. This involved removing the original rose bushes, replanting with new roses and installing arbours at the ends of rose beds. The perimeter paths around the gardens were converted to rose garden beds. Parkes Place was the setting for public assembly during the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Canberra in 1954.



Figure 46. Aerial view with the western part of the National Rose Gardens, King George V Memorial in its original location, and (Old) Parliament House behind, 1948

Source: National Archives of Australia, A1200, L11331A



Figure 47. The refurbished Rose Gardens with rose arbours, about 1952

Source: Commonwealth Rose Gardens in Canberra..., National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an23206362



Figure 48. King George V Memorial in its original location, 1953

Source: Courtesy ACT Heritage Library, Department of Capital Territory Collection, Image 001596



Figure 49. Parkes Place, National Rose Gardens and King George V Memorial 1953 showing Parkes Place with Administrative Building under construction in the foreground

Source: Courtesy ACT Heritage Library, Department of Capital Territory Collection, Image 009658



Figure 50. Parkes Place with undeveloped areas closer to the Molonglo River, 1956

Source: National Archives of Australia, A1805, CU220/5



Figure 51. Aerial view of Parkes Place, 1957

Source: National Archives of Australia, A1200, L22778



Figure 52. Old Parliament House with rose plantings in Parkes Place in foreground

Source: R C Strangman, Parliament House..., National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an24894899

Second Period: Changes in relation to the NCDC Building Programme 1961-1982

One of the first tasks of the National Capital Development Commission in 1958 was to construct the lake on the Molonglo River flood plain. The NCDC developed policy for the dominant tree species in the parklands around the lake as well as species bordering the Land Axis. It established that the central Land Axis between Mount Ainslie and Capital Hill would comprise formal plantings of various eucalyptus species (NCDC 1963, p. 16).

The filling of Lake Burley Griffin in 1964 and new buildings in the Parliamentary area, such as the National Library of Australia, required changes to the road system and in 1968 the intersections of King George Terrace and Parkes Place East and West were reformed to create right-angled intersections. The additional land recovered at the south-western corner became a restaurant (now the Lobby), kiosk and public toilet. The quadrant footpaths edging the former roads were removed.

At the same time, the King George V Memorial was relocated to the south-western corner of the central terrace and a new paved terrace with lawn and shrubbery was formed through the construction of a low retaining wall and steps. Between 1969-1972 the central reflective pool with adjacent rectangular pools and fountains and paved areas were completed.

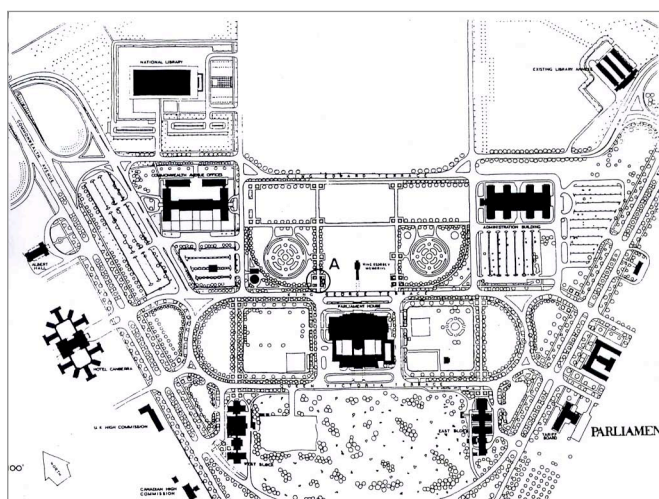


Figure 53. Plan of Parliamentary Zone in 1965, showing proposed relocation of King George V Memorial and changes to the King George Terrace road alignment

Source: Reproduced as Figure 15 in Freeman Collett & Partners 1994a

In 1979 Kind Edward Terrace was reformed to remove the bends in the road. This gave more space to Parkes Place, had the effect of moving the reflective pools back from the road, placing one of the nodal formations that had previously been on the other side of the road to within Parkes Place, and adding another double line of trees from those that had previously lined the

road. The line of the original road can be seen in the curving placement of specimen trees such as *Calocedrus decurrens* at the north-western corner. A third east-west pathway was established beneath these trees. The extra space between the pools and King Edward Terrace was grassed and *Casuarina cunninghamiana* were added north of the pools to continue the edge of the Land Axis.



Figure 54. Part of Vista looking North in 1971 showing recently installed ponds

Source: National Archives of Australia, A8746, KN19/10/71/2



Figure 55. The original alignment of King Edward Terrace was at the far right of the *Calocedrus decurrens* in the foreground

Source: D Firth 2008



Figure 56. The Aboriginal Tent Embassy when first established, 1972

Source: National Archives of Australia, A7973, INT1205/6

In 1972 the Aboriginal Tent Embassy protest gave a presence to Aboriginal occupation of the

site on the central terrace, and irrigation of the grassed areas was reduced.

Third Period: Changes in relation to the construction of Parliament House on Capital Hill

The 1982 NCDC Parliamentary Zone Development Plan documented proposed changes to the configuration of the Parliamentary area especially to the edge of the central terrace through the insertion of mall roads. This approach continued in the 1986 NCDC planning proposals.

The edge treatment of the central terrace underwent major change with the insertion of a double row of Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus elata*) along the edge of the Land Axis. A double row of broad-leaved deciduous trees (*Platanus x acerifolia* and *Quercus palustris*) were planted along the inner edge of the Rose Gardens in front of the conifers. The square planting beds at the nodal points were refurbished with granite edging, several ageing *Populus nigra* were replaced, and new shrubs were planted (*Buxus sempervirens*).

In 1993, a replanting ceremony of one of the original roses was held to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the first planting of the National Rose Gardens. In 2000 a bed in the western section was planted with a purpose-bred rose.

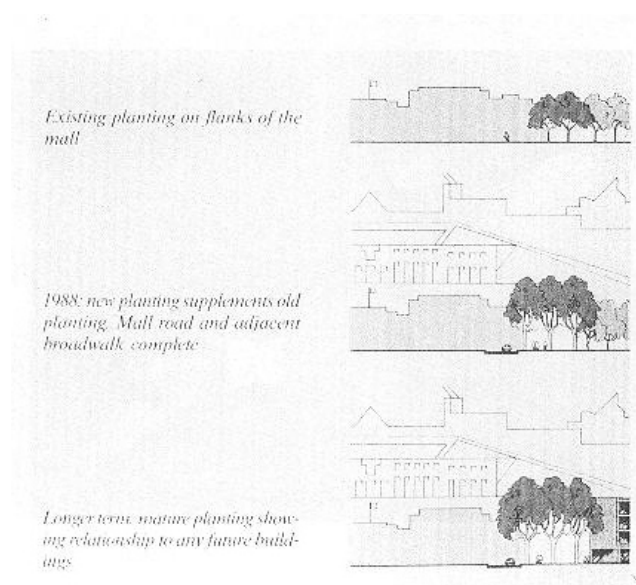


Figure 57. Edge treatment for the Land Axis
Source: NCDC, June 1982, Parliamentary Zone Development Plan, p. 63



Figure 58. Farmers' Demonstration, 1985
Source: National Archives of Australia, A6135, K9/7/85/32



Figure 59. Double row of broad-leaved deciduous trees planted parallel to conifers edging the Rose Gardens
Source: D Firth 2008

Summary Comments about the National Rose Gardens

The gardens have gone through several changes since the original planting in the 1930s. Records show the two gardens, Parkes Place East and West, have been updated 6 or 7 times over a period of 70 years.

Each time the roses were replanted the rose selection was from popular Hybrid Tea roses of those years, strongly dominated by releases from USA and Europe. The Floribunda or cluster flowering roses were not added until the 1960s.

In a sense, the rose gardens today reflect design by management regarding the colour pattern of the gardens. Replacements are undertaken on an as-needs basis. The original intent and what was implemented in the first planting phase seems to have been lost in the 1952-54 replanting period, and was certainly lost once the system of contract maintenance took hold.

Summary Chronology

- 1918 Walter Burley Griffin's final layout plan produced.
- 1923 Federal Capital Advisory Committee gives approval to develop a temporary Parliament House (Old Parliament House) building with public ornamental grounds in front (Gray 1997, p. 4).
- 1924 Rose Gardens are proposed by Director of Parks and Forestation Charles Weston on the central terrace directly in front of Old Parliament House, but no action is taken.
- 1925 The Federal Capital Commission, FCC, commences laying out public garden terraces on either side of the central terrace in readiness for planting later in the year with a mix of evergreens and broad leafed deciduous trees. (Figure 39)
- 1926 Nov 1926 Weston retires and is succeeded by Alexander Bruce.
Commemorative plantings (10 Roman cypress trees with plaques) are made by members of the Empire Parliamentary Association adjacent to the western north-south path. (Figure 38)
- 1927 National Rose Society of NSW proposes a national rose garden in Canberra.
Another commemorative Roman cypress tree is planted by the Young Australia League of Western Australia.
Temporary stands are set up on the central terrace in front of Old Parliament House for the opening of first Parliament on 9 May 1927. Marquees are set up on the sites of the future rose gardens.

- 1927-1941 The central terrace is the site for Anzac and Remembrance Day official ceremonies as well as other official public ceremonies.
- 1928 Parkes Place formally named.
- 1930 Excavation work for ornamental lake on terrace court undertaken
In the 1920s/early 1930s 384 exotic evergreen and deciduous trees were planted along the N/S and E/W paths and around the S-E/S-W sectors; including Atlas cedar, Arizona cypress, Golden cypress, Roman cypress, Lawson cypress, Lombardy poplar, Oriental plane, Pin oak, White poplar and Huntington elm.
- 1932 First public announcement of creation of a National Rose Gardens
- 1933 First plantings of the National Rose Gardens.
- 1934 Tulip bulbs, a gift of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, are established in beds in front of Parliament House on the central lawn. (The beds are visible in Figure 46)
- 1935 The ashes of Charles Weston (died 1 December 1935) are scattered in the gardens and plantations of Parkes Place.
- Mid 1940s Tulips are phased out.
- 1941 Base of the King George V Memorial constructed on the land axis in front of Parliament House.
- 1946 Lindsay Pryor, Superintendent Parks and Gardens undertakes tree thinning. All Golden cypress on paths are removed along with Pin oaks, White poplar and Lawson cypress on King George Terrace. Arizona cypress are planted on King George Terrace to match species on the opposite side of the road.
- 1952 Parkes Place streets are officially named with King Edward Terrace to the north and King George Terrace to the south.
Major replantings of new roses and insertion of arbours at the ends of beds are made at the National Rose Gardens in anticipated of the arrival of Princess Elizabeth.
Bronze figure of King George added to the King George V Memorial
- 1954 Queen Elizabeth II visits.
- 1958 NCDC established to plan, design and construct Canberra as the national capital
- 1961 NCDC establishes policy to define the Land Axis with eucalyptus
- 1963 A temporary pavilion built in front of Parliament House on the open lawn to celebrate Canberra's jubilee. Queen opened the celebrations on 12 March
- 1964 Lake Burley Griffin fills.
- 1968 To enhance the land axis vista, King George V Memorial is relocated to the western side of the central lawn adjacent to King George Terrace.
Parkes Place East and West perimeter roads are reconfigured to replace curve intersections with rectangular intersections.
A tourist restaurant (the Lobby) is constructed on reclaimed space on south western corner of Parkes Place.
A paved and grassed terrace with retaining wall is constructed on the northern edge of King George Terrace
Four large fountains in two pools flanking a larger square central reflective pool are completed.
- 1969 Central reflective pool is completed on land axis.
- 1972 Aboriginal tent 'embassy' protest on the terrace and open lawn in front of Old Parliament House
- 1979 King Edward Terrace is straightened providing additional space for Parkes Place
- 1982 The Parliamentary Zone Development Plan (NCDC June 1982, p.62) proposes that, in order to create a powerful axial vista, the Land Axis between the Provisional Parliament House and the lake continue the strong eucalypt planting in the form of regular lines.
- From 1986 Parkes Place paths are reconstructed
Tree replacement of ageing trees commences

- 1987 Additional tree plantings develop on the land axis edge and within the Rose Gardens
All of the following places were entered in the Register of the National Estate –
Parliament House Vista, National Rose Gardens, King George V Memorial and John Gorton Building.
- 1988 Parliament moves to Parliament House on Capital Hill
- 1993 60th Anniversary celebration of National Rose Gardens
- 1994 The National Rose Gardens of Parkes Place are entered on the Australian Capital Territory Heritage Places Register (27 April) and the Register of the National Estate (15 December)
- 1997 National Capital Planning Authority commissions a Heritage Conservation Management Plan for Parkes Place by John Gray



Figure 60. 'Canberra, visit your national capital' by J T Gray – 1950s tourism poster showing the Parliamentary Zone
Source: National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an7900786

3.3 ABORIGINAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Early Aboriginal History of the Canberra Region

Three Aboriginal cultural groups are recorded as having been associated with the ACT region (Tindale 1974), these are the *Walgalu*, *Ngarigo*, and *Ngunnawal*.

The fragmentary nature of the available ethnohistoric and linguistic data available makes it difficult to determine precisely which of these groups called the Canberra area home. It is generally accepted to have been the *Ngunnawal* people possibly speaking the *Gundungurra* language (Eades 1976). (This section is based upon previous work undertaken for the Parliament House Vista (Marshall and others 2008) and Central Parklands (Marshall and other 2009). No new research has been undertaken.)

Evidence suggests Aboriginal people were living in the region over a long period of time, though not necessarily continuously, perhaps as early as 23,000 BP (Flood 1980, p. 18).

Ethnographic and Historic Sources for the Canberra Region

For the more recent past in the Canberra region, the ethnographic records are sparse. The area was bypassed by the early and classic ethnographers such as Mitchell and Sturt and by the time actual settlement began the local Aboriginal groups had sustained significant demographic impacts associated with introduced diseases which we now know spread far in advance of actual physical contact with the first colonial settlers in the region (see for example Bell 1972, thesis). The early pastoralists and explorers tended to exhibit little interest in detailing any observations they made of the Aboriginal people they encountered. The following phase of settlement, with small selectors desperately striving to make a living under adverse conditions showed, in general, even less interest.

There are a number of what could best be referred to as incidental references to Aboriginal people in the Canberra region taken from the time of early European occupation until the 1870s and 80s when a view was formed by settlers and colonial government officials that the local Aboriginal people were succumbing to introduced disease.

The surveyor, Throsby, in a letter to Governor Macquarie in 1820, wrote:

‘...both the quantity of Aboriginal artefacts found in Canberra and the ethnographic record testify equally to its importance as a meeting place in prehistoric times.’

Bluett (1954) states that early European settlers on the Limestone plains referred to the Aboriginal people who camped at Pialligo as the ‘Pialligo Blacks’, and that a larger group that were often seen near Black Mountain were referred to as the *Canburry* or *Nganbra Blacks*. Gillespie (1984 p. 12) provides an account of Aboriginal people gathering for corroborees at the foot of Black Mountain – along the banks of Sullivan’s Creek and at what is now Black Mountain Peninsula.

MacPherson in 1935 (p. 102) refers to a ‘...primary, ceremonial ground...’ near the old Acton Racecourse (now beneath the waters of Lake Burley Griffin) which appears to have been commonly known but never properly documented or described.

Aboriginal people were also known to camp at the site of what is now the new Parliament House, and the use of this site continued into the recent past (Don Bell [deceased], Ngunnawal Elder,

personal communication).

The relative paucity of historical references to traditional Aboriginal people on the Limestone Plains has been interpreted by Officer (2002, p. 17) to be a rapid Aboriginal depopulation of the region following European settlement possibly associated with a smallpox epidemic in 1830 and influenza and a measles epidemics in the 1860s (Flood 1980 and Butlin 1983).

The overall impression of the traditional Aboriginal society in the Canberra region from the early to late nineteenth century was of dramatic depopulation and rapid alienation of traditional land-based resources. Yet there was also a demonstration of a considerable ability for adaptation to European colonial society and technologies, whilst at the same time effectively managing the continuation of some of the important social institutions. These included corroborees and intertribal gatherings into the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Nineteenth century notions of race and culture meant that only 'full blooded' individuals were considered as 'true' Aborigines, thus making possible assertions of local tribal 'extinctions'. In reality, the local Aboriginal cultural identity remained strong amongst the descendants of the nineteenth century *Ngunnawal* people, many of whom retained social links with the region despite enforced movement into missions and reserve. In some cases, local Aboriginal people remained resident on local stations well into the twentieth century, such as Jack Ross who lived at Dog Trap Ford, Jeir Station, on the Murrumbidgee River (Officer and Navin 1992). Descendants of the traditional *Ngunnawal* people continue to live in Canberra and the surrounding region.

Contemporary associations

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy, a protest site dating originally from 1972 and re-established in the 1990s, is one focus for continuing and broader Indigenous association within Parkes Place. Reconciliation Place, dedicated in 2002, is another nearby focus.

Indigenous associations with the study area continue in a variety of ways for both Ngunnawal people and other Australian Indigenous peoples.

Consideration of Previous Archaeological Assessments in the Molonglo Basin

Early searches for Aboriginal sites along the Canberra stretch of the Molonglo River found a number of sites (Kinsella 1934, pp. 204-5). Kinsella also located a number of what are described as large stratified artefact scatters on sand bodies along the banks of the Molonglo south of Anzac Parade and across the river near the site of Old Parliament House. Later research found other sites in the Molonglo basin (Bindon 1973, Flood 1980, Barz 1984 and 1985, Winston-Gregson 1985).

Aboriginal artefacts were collected from locations near the Old Parliament House and Hyatt Hotel Canberra. A stone axe was collected around 1915 by Charles Kaye behind the Hotel Canberra and another during landscaping works at Old Parliament House (Gillespie 1984). Kelvin Officer (GML 2006, p. 50) notes that in 1925, H P Moss identified numerous Aboriginal stone artefacts on a sandy ridge between Parliament House and the Molonglo River and that W P Kinsella also collected stone artefacts from the sandpits near Old Parliament House. Officer (GML 2006, p. 50) states that significant portions of this sandy ridge were removed during early construction works within the Parliament House Vista area as the natural feature interfered with the line of sight from Old Parliament House to the Australian War Memorial.

An archaeological assessment of Lake Burley Griffin and its foreshores (GML 2006) recorded

an area of potential archaeological deposit at Acacia Inlet on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin, however, no other Aboriginal sites were identified.

The overall picture of Aboriginal site locations in the vicinity is one of larger, possibly more permanent camp sites occurring in association with the level to gently sloping sandy terraces and spur terminations above the banks of the Molonglo River. Officer (1995, p. 6) suggests that on the basis of observations made during the early development of the capital and prior to the damming of the Molonglo River, the larger Aboriginal camp sites in the central Canberra area were associated with sand bodies situated within and adjacent to the fluvial corridor of the Molonglo River (Robinson 1927, Binns 1938, Moss 1939, Bluett 1954, Schumack 1967 and Bindon 1973, in Officer 1995).

Investigations undertaken by Kelvin Officer conclude that,

‘The wider regional pattern of Aboriginal occupation site occurrence within the ACT is one of higher site size and frequency in areas proximate to major permanent water bodies, with a reduction in site size and frequency around less permanent water sources. While sites have been found to occur throughout topographic and vegetation zones, there is a tendency for more of the larger sites to be located in proximity to creeks, wetlands and proximate parts of valley floors.’ (GML 2006)

In the contemporary context, many of the landforms likely to have been used by Aboriginal people in or near the study area have been inundated by the damming of the Molonglo River to form Lake Burley Griffin.

If sandy deposits underlie the study area there is potential for sub-surface deposits of Aboriginal cultural material to be present within such sand bodies.

3.4 SOCIAL, PLANNING AND POLITICAL HISTORY CONTEXT AFTER COLONISATION

Canberra before the National Capital

European colonisation of the area that became Canberra commenced in the 1820s. The landscape of the Molonglo River floodplain at the onset of pastoral settlement was of treeless flats, with the river forming a chain of ponds in dry seasons and flooding after rains. Farming and grazing properties were established from this time, and this activity characterised the area until the early part of the 20th century. There were sheep stations with small supporting mixed farms. There were both small properties and large estates, the latter including Duntroon owned by the Campbell family. Initially large numbers of shepherds tended flocks in the unfenced country.

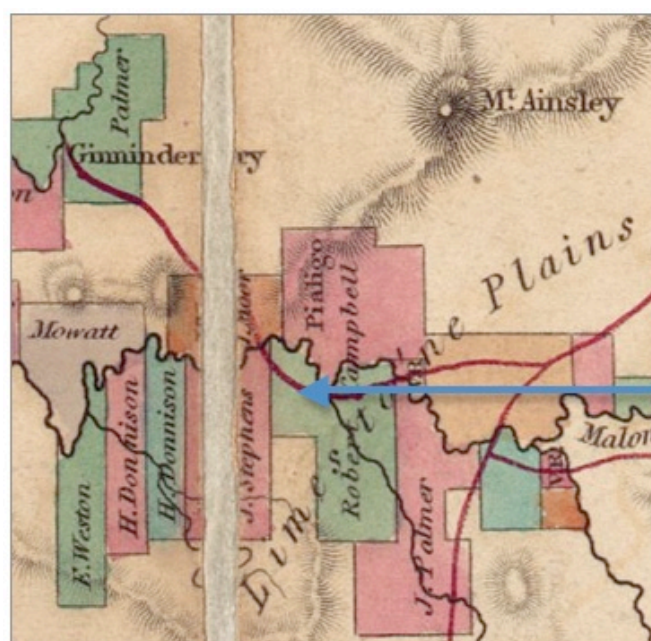


Figure 61. Detail of Surveyor Robert Dixon's map of 1835

Source: NLA: Barron Field (ed.) *Geographical Memoirs of New South Wales*, 1837

Apart from the rural properties, there were few other developments – some churches, stores and hotels. Nearby was the township of Queanbeyan.

The area that is now Parkes Place was farming/grazing land. The study area apparently falling within Robert Campbell's Duntroon estate, which straddled both sides of the Molonglo River.

Based on very limited research, it does not appear that any structures existed on the study area in this period, although roads or tracks, and fencing may have been present.

Creating a New Capital for Australia 1901-13

At the Federation of the Australian colonies in January 1901, the Constitution stipulated that a site for the new nation's capital would be selected in NSW outside a radius of 100 miles from Sydney. After much activity to find a suitable site, in December 1908, the Commonwealth government settled on the general Yass-Canberra area as the location for the federal capital. After detailed survey work, in October 1909, the Commonwealth and NSW governments reached agreement on the precise boundaries of a federal territory that would embrace Canberra as the seat of the national government. The Commonwealth formally acquired the federal territory on 1 January 1911.

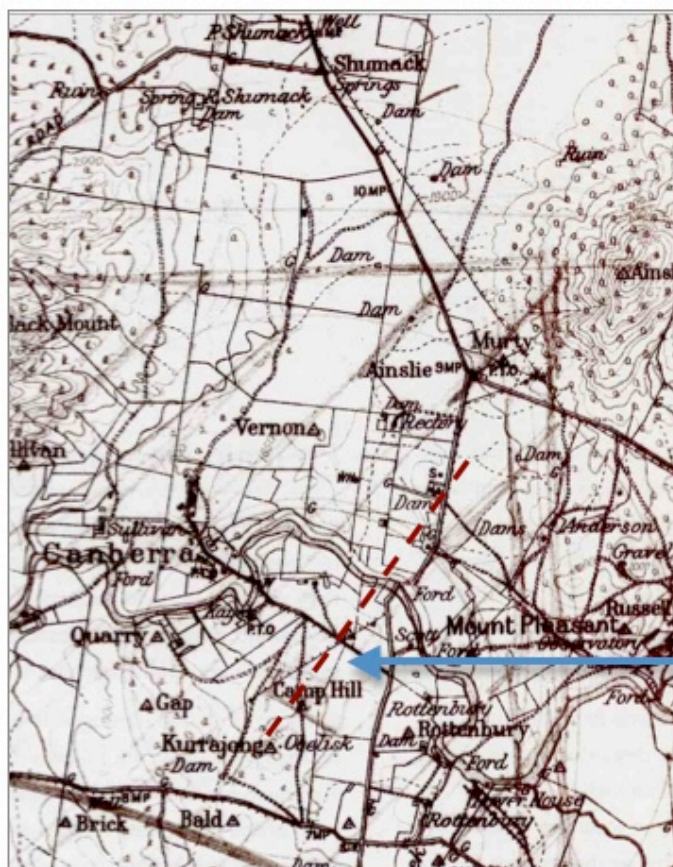


Figure 62. Map of Canberra region, 1916

Source: NAA, CP277/1, part, reproduced in Reid 2002, p. 19

Land Axis shown dotted — — — — —

Vicinity of Parkes Place



The Commonwealth government in April 1911 launched an international competition to find the best design for the federal capital. The competition closed on 28 February 1912 and entries were judged by a panel of three experts appointed by the new Minister for Home Affairs, King O'Malley. Unable to achieve a unanimous verdict on the 126 eligible designs submitted, the panel produced a shortlist of six. O'Malley sided with the majority, awarding first prize to Walter Burley Griffin's design (actually Walter and Marion Griffin's design). The decision was announced in May 1912.

The design of Canberra happened at a time when modern town planning thought had appeared and was developing (City Futures Research Centre 2007, vol. 1, p. 19). In particular,

'By the 1910s, the new science of town planning in parallel with overseas developments was established in professional and popular parlance as a means for the salvation of urban health, efficiency and beauty.' (City Futures Research Centre 2007, vol. 1, p. 24)

In the case of the Canberra competition,

'[The] entries brilliantly captured the state of early 20th century planning styles and produced a remarkable winning landscape composition by Chicago [based] designers Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin.' (City Futures Research Centre 2007, vol. 1, p. 25)

Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin

Walter Burley Griffin was a Chicago architect and landscape architect who had worked for the great and influential architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. Griffin ran his own practice from 1906. Marion Mahony Griffin was also an architect and also worked for Wright until 1909. Walter and Marion met in Wright's office and married a few months after the design competition for

Canberra was announced in 1911. (Reid 2002, p. 354; Curl 1999, p. 290; Harrison 1983, pp. 107-110)

Walter decided to enter the competition and a team of people assisted with the entry. Notably, Marion was responsible for the elegant set of drawings of the design. Interestingly, in 1913 Griffin is reported as saying,

‘that he has always contended that the ideas of his plan for the building of the new city at Canberra are much more than half due to his wife, and that she ought to have much more than half the credit for winning the competition.’ (*The Book Lover*, September 1913, p. 99)



Figure 63. Detail of the Griffins' 1911 Winning Design

Source: NCA 2004, p. 15

None the less, the design is historically and commonly ascribed to Walter alone, there has been some recent reconsideration of the extent to which Marion also contributed. Reid makes this assessment,

‘Walter Burley Griffin was an organiser who loved putting things in categories; his approach has been described as Cartesian. He worked with the mind. In this project he created an Order of the Site and an Order of Functions. But he was not a natural designer. Marion Mahony Griffin was the geometer. She worked with the eye, creating a geometry that integrated the two orders. From its two authors the design receives intelligence and beauty.’ (Reid 2002, p. 48)

The *Griffin Legacy* supports the contention that the design was a collaborative, shared effort by Walter and Marion (National Capital Authority 2004, see also Vernon 2005). This is not necessarily to downplay the central design role played by Walter but, rather, to recognise the substantial design contribution of Marion.

Accordingly, this report adopts the convention of attributing authorship for the city design to both Walter and Marion Griffin. As Walter was the prominent and public advocate for the design, at a number of points in the following text, it is the views of Walter which are recorded. In other cases, Walter’s specific role is interpolated based on available evidence and previous analyses.

Reaction to the Griffins' Plan

The Griffins' design soon attracted much criticism. The plan was attacked as being too extravagant and too expensive to implement. In the face of the criticism, O'Malley referred the plan and the other three purchased designs to a departmental board for its consideration. In November 1912, the board, chaired by departmental secretary Miller, reported that it could not recommend any of the four designs and produced instead a plan of its own.



Figure 64. Detail of the Griffins' 1911 Plan overlaid on a Contour Plan

Source: Reid 2002, p. 86

Despite trenchant objections that he was abandoning the Griffins' plan, O'Malley accepted the departmental plan and pressed ahead with the development of Canberra on that basis. (Reid 2002, pp. 89-93, 101-4; Gillespie 1991, pp. 278, 280)

Griffins' Plans

After the government of which O'Malley was a part lost office in May 1913, his successor as minister responsible for the development of the national capital, William Kelly, invited Walter Burley Griffin to Australia in the hope that he could reach a compromise agreement with the departmental board on a development plan. Their respective plans were too dissimilar, however, to permit compromise. But while Griffin steadfastly refused to co-operate in implementing the board's plan, to placate the board he made some significant alterations to his own plan. (Reid 2002, pp. 107-110)

As Griffin and the departmental board were unable to reach agreement, Minister Kelly disbanded the board in October 1913 and appointed Griffin to the new position of Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction. At the same time, Kelly revoked the approval of the board's plan for Canberra and, in December, he gave official sanction to the Griffins' revised plan. This plan now became the basic planning document, informing all of the Griffins' later revisions, including the final version of the design prepared in 1918. This final version served, in turn, as the model for the official gazetted plan of 1925 which was to have a longlasting effect.

At the time the first revised plan of 1913 was produced, Walter Burley Griffin accompanied it with a detailed textual explanation of the design. This ‘Report Explanatory’ is vital for understanding the design intentions for the city, including particularly the Parliament House Vista. Griffin was struck by the natural features that surrounded and formed the area selected for the national capital, and he made ingenious use of them for the design.

Figure 65. Perspective view from Mount Ainslie of the Griffins’ Design

Source: Reid 2002



The landforms in question were Mount Ainslie, Black Mountain, Mount Pleasant, Camp Hill, Capital Hill (formerly Kurrajong Hill), City Hill (formerly Mount Vernon), Russell Hill, the river flats lying between these various eminences, and the more distant mountain peaks. Griffin himself likened the whole site to,

‘an irregular amphitheatre – with Ainslie at the north-east in the rear, flanked on either side by Black Mountain and Pleasant Hill, all forming the top galleries; with the slopes to the water, the auditorium; with the waterway and flood basin, the arena; with the southern slopes reflected in basin, the terraced stage and setting of monumental Government structures sharply defined rising tier on tier to the culminating highest internal forested hill of the Capitol; and with Mugga Mugga, Red Hill, and the blue distant mountain ranges, sun reflecting, forming the back scene of the forested whole.’ (Griffin 1913, p. 3)

Griffin used the eminences within and surrounding what is now the Parliament House Vista to project axial lines that provided the fundamental form for the centre of the city. Foremost among these axes, and the one of most importance to the vista, was the Land Axis running from Mount Ainslie through Camp Hill to Capital Hill, and then nearly fifty kilometres further on to Mount Bimberi. Griffin regarded the alignment of these peaks as a fortuitous circumstance that determined the city’s prime axis virtually without the need for any artifice in the form of human intervention. (Griffin 1955, pp. 95-7)

Contributing to the shape of the vista were two further axes that Griffin laid out across the Land Axis at right angles, the Water Axis and the Municipal Axis. Both axes run in a northwest-southeast direction parallel to one another. The Water Axis takes as its starting point Black Mountain and runs in a southeasterly direction from that landmark. Within the Parliament House Vista, the Water Axis determines the orientation of the main section of the southern shoreline of the Central Basin. Lying parallel to the Water Axis is the Municipal Axis which

runs from City Hill to a hollow between Mount Pleasant and Russell Hill. Constitution Avenue follows the line of this axis. (King 1954a, pp. 209-10)

The Municipal Axis also delineates the northern arm of what became the National Triangle. The western arm of the Triangle is formed by a secondary axis running from Capital Hill to City Hill, and its eastern arm by another secondary axis running from Capital Hill towards Mount Pleasant where it intersects the Municipal Axis. Commonwealth Avenue and its bridge now follow the western arm, while Kings Avenue and bridge follow the eastern arm. All of the Griffins' axial lines are important in defining the Parliament House Vista.

It is most important to note that Walter Burley Griffin did not intend that the principal axes should primarily be thoroughfares or roadways. Rather, they were to form 'a connected park or garden frontage for all the important structures.' (Griffin 1913, p. 5) In other words, the axes were meant to be landscape vistas which, as Richard Gray pointed out in 1967, were 'not even continuous on the ground but are dependent for their definition on buildings placed parallel to them.' Gray described this as 'Griffin's most startling innovation in civic design.' (Gray 1967, p. 3) In that section of the Land Axis that lay on the southern side of the Molonglo River, there was no central roadway to mark the axis at all. Griffin arrayed the Government Group of buildings about the axis in this area. Radiating out from a parliament house that sat astride the axis as it ran through Camp Hill, these buildings formed symmetrical halves either side of the axial line, thus defining the Land Axis from the hill down to the southern shoreline of the future lake. The axial line itself was only marked physically by three terrace courts at different levels. Griffin believed it essential that the 'open axial view through the extent' of the Government Group of buildings be maintained. (Commonwealth of Australia 1914, p. 5)

The Land Axis both north and south of the lake thus depended on correctly-orientated buildings and plantings to give it definition.

Orientation and Height of Buildings in the Griffins' Design

Although Griffin based his principal axis on the coincidental alignment of Mount Ainslie, Camp Hill, Capital Hill and Mount Bimberi, he also articulated another reason or perhaps rationalisation for the orientation of the Land Axis. Referring to both the Land Axis and the Water Axis, he drew attention to the fact that he had not aligned them with either the cardinal points of the compass or with the diagonal points. Rather, the orientation of the axes lay midway between these extremes. His reason for doing this, he said, was to ensure that no part of the frontage of buildings was left without exposure to 'beneficial sunlight' for some part of the day, while simultaneously guaranteeing that building frontages also received relieving shade at some point (Griffin 1955, p. 97). Given the power of Canberra's sun in summer and the region's chill in winter, these were sensible aims.

Walter Burley Griffin in fact was concerned about the healthful as well as the aesthetic aspects of the planned city. Deprecating the congestion of American cities, he proposed for Canberra 'a horizontal distribution of the large masses for more and better air, sunlight, verdure [lush green vegetation] and beauty.' (Griffin 1955, p. 96) Although this did not apply specifically to what is now known as the Parliament House Vista, it is an indication that he envisaged the city, including the vista, as occupied by horizontal rather than tall structures, with these structures standing in an uncluttered landscape.

The reference to horizontal structures is relevant to another more speculative feature of the Griffins' design for the national capital. In his Walter Burley Griffin Memorial Lecture in 1976, National Capital Development Commission architect Peter Muller expounded on what he called

the esoteric nature of the Griffins' design. Muller's argument in part was that Griffin did not intend that his three main axes – the Land, Water and Municipal Axes – should be seen as existing in a simple two-dimensional plane. Rather, Muller argued that Griffin conceived the axes as occupying three dimensions. Muller concluded that in 'one grand sweep' Griffin 'had set the basis for an overall building height design intention for the whole of the central area.' (Muller 1976)

Even if Muller is wrong, Walter Burley Griffin did provide some guidance for the heights of buildings and terraces in the government triangle south of the lake. Clearly, he had in mind a series of height restrictions for the buildings such that, on the one hand, they did not impede the vista from the structure on the summit of Capital Hill or from the parliament house lower down, while on the other hand the heights of the buildings contributed to the envisioned stepped pinnacle treatment of the hill.

Functionally-distinct Centres

There is another distinctive feature of the Griffins' design for Canberra that has significant implications for the Parliament House Vista. This is what the geographer H W King referred to as the polynucleated character of the design for the city (King 1954b, p. 105). Many older cities had just one centre in which administrative, commercial and other major community functions co-exist. The Griffins', however, deliberately planned Canberra so that separate urban functions or activities were conducted in different centres. Thus, they placed the functions of the federal government in the triangular area south of the Molonglo River. As Canberra was to be the home of the federal government, the national area and its buildings naturally took precedence over all other functional centres. Walter Burley Griffin thought that the operations of the national government had to be 'properly quartered... in an accessible but still quiet area.' (Griffin 1955, pp. 95, 97; Griffin 1913, pp. 4-5)

Many of the functional divisions did not of course materialise in the Canberra that came to be. The centre whose function has least changed from the Griffins' intentions is that for the location of the national government, south of the lake.

Federal Capital Advisory Committee 1921-24

Griffin's appointment as Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction ended in 1920. In his place, the government established the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC) to inquire into and give recommendations on the plans for and the building of the city. The new committee consisted of five members under the chairmanship of the prominent architect, John Sulman, and included Commonwealth Director-General of Works, Colonel Percy Owen.

Soon after taking office, the FCAC through Sulman sought to make amendments to the Griffins' plan. The government, however, firmly rejected the proposal, thus ensuring once and for all that the Griffins' plan remained the blueprint for the development of Canberra. The FCAC's powers were limited to making recommendations on amendments to the Griffins' plan and then not for any amendments that would have resulted in large or radical departures from that plan.

Despite the limitations on the FCAC's role, the committee still had sufficient latitude to initiate alterations that, among other things, exerted significant effects on the yet-to-be Parliament House Vista.

One of the most important effects of the FCAC on the Griffins' plans for the centre of Canberra and for the Parliament House Vista was the committee's designation of the northern slope of

Camp Hill as the site for a provisional parliament house. Construction of the Provisional Parliament House (now Old Parliament House) commenced in August 1923 and was completed in time for the official opening of the building by the Duke of York on 9 May 1927.

It is difficult to see that the erection of the building bears out Griffin's fear that it would ruin his Government Group. Although this group of course failed to materialise in anything like the form the Griffins' planned, the placement of the Provisional Parliament House on the slope of the hill affirmed the paramountcy of parliament relative to the other arms of government, as represented by the buildings laid out in the triangle spreading out below it. In other words, it stands in much the same relationship to the subordinate buildings as would a permanent parliament house on the summit of Camp Hill, had it been built there. The location of the provisional structure, moreover, was not the reason for the rest of the Griffins' Government Group failing to develop according to his scheme.

A separate recommendation of the FCAC had led to work commencing on the construction of the first permanent building in the Parliamentary Zone, the Administration Building (also known as the Administrative Building, now known as the John Gorton Building). In response to the FCAC's proposal for two temporary secretariat buildings, the Public Works Committee had originally proposed instead that two permanent Public Service office buildings be built in the Triangle. The government endorsed both projects in August 1923, but subsequently decided to proceed with only one of the permanent buildings after Sulman's committee persuaded it that one building would meet its office requirements for ten to fifteen years. On the FCAC's recommendation, too, the site for the building was moved slightly northeast of its original location where a deep gully necessitated considerable filling with material excavated from the Provisional Parliament House site. The foundations of the building were completed by April 1928, but the government then decided to defer the project for financial reasons. Work on the building did not resume until after World War 2, and it was only completed to a much modified design in 1956.

Federal Capital Commission 1925-30

After several years of development under the FCAC, the government clearly decided that a more concerted effort was needed, and that an advisory committee mechanism was not adequate to the task at hand. Accordingly, the FCAC was replaced on 1 January 1925 by the Federal Capital Commission (FCC) under the chairmanship of (Sir) John Butters. The Commission was given a mandate backed by wide-ranging powers to press forward with the development of Canberra and, in the six years of its existence, it produced more on the ground than had been achieved hitherto or would be achieved for almost three decades afterwards.

One of the earliest and most important developments during the FCC's period, though the Commission itself was not responsible for it, was the gazettal in November 1925 of a plan, based on the Griffins' last plan for Canberra, including modifications that had been approved to that point. Under the *Seat of Government (Administration) Act* of the previous year, any proposal to vary the plan would henceforth require approval by both houses of Parliament. The most distinctive feature of the plan was that it consisted of a road pattern for Canberra, but included almost no buildings and indicated no functions or zonings for any part of the city. It thus allowed, at least in theory, the construction of buildings of any type and purpose anywhere in the Parliament House Vista or, for that matter, anywhere else in Canberra.

Key projects completed in the Parliament House Vista during this period included:

- Provisional Parliament House (Old Parliament House);
- East and West Blocks;

- road layout and tree planting in the Governmental Group (or the Parliamentary Zone, being that part of the National Triangle south of the proposed lake); and
- layout and plantings associated with Anzac Park (Anzac Parade).



Figure 66. Detail of the Griffins' 1918 Plan as Gazetted in 1925

Source: Reid 2002, p. 179

The FCC was abolished in 1930 for several reasons. Firstly, it had completed its core objectives of establishing the Parliament and supporting facilities in Canberra, and enough of the city to create a real sense of the national capital. The second reason was the economic difficulties facing Australia with the onset of the Great Depression.

In a broader sense, the focus of town planning in Australia also changed around this time,

‘The emphasis on metropolitan expansion in the 1920s changed with the Great Depression... In the 1930s social concerns of affordable housing and slum clearance came to the fore... [and] through the 1930s planning struggled for public recognition and the ear of key decision-makers.’ (City Futures Research Centre 2007, vol. 1, pp. 27-8)

Quiescence 1930-55

With the demise of the FCC, design and development of the national capital reverted to departmental control. There was, however, little progress. The departments lacked the authority, will and expertise of the FCC to guide development and, above all, the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 severely restricted the government's spending power. Money could not be spared to press on with Canberra's development. In 1938, following a controversy, the government established the National Capital Planning and Development Committee (NCPDC) to ‘consider and advise’ on the planning and development of the city. Whatever new impetus the new committee and a return to more prosperous times may have given to the city's development, it was thwarted a year later when World War 2 broke out. Work on the capital again languished and did not really pick up until the second half of the 1950s. (Daley 1954, pp. 42, 50-2)

A small project undertaken in this period was the establishment of the National Rose Gardens

adjacent to the Provisional Parliament House.

Another development in the vista in the 1940s and 1950s was the construction of the King George V Memorial. The foundations and base for the monument were prepared in 1940-41, but the war saw the casting and erection of the bronze figures delayed until the early 1950s. When officially unveiled in 1953, the memorial stood on the Land Axis fifty metres in front of the Provisional Parliament House. The site had allegedly been chosen to accord with the Griffins' plans. It is difficult to see, however, how a memorial which on its original base stood 7.5 metres high could not have constituted a dominating intrusive element into the vista. The memorial was in fact removed to its current site west of the Land Axis and mounted on a lower base in 1968. (Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities 2009, King George V Memorial)



Figure 67. Parliamentary Zone south of the lake (not yet constructed) in c1938, viewed from East over Barton

Source: National Library of Australia, PIC6132/14



Figure 68. Vista looking North in c1939 from above Capital Hill, demonstrating the importance of evergreen trees in giving structure to the space

Source: Parliament House..., National Library of Australia nla.pic-an23548162

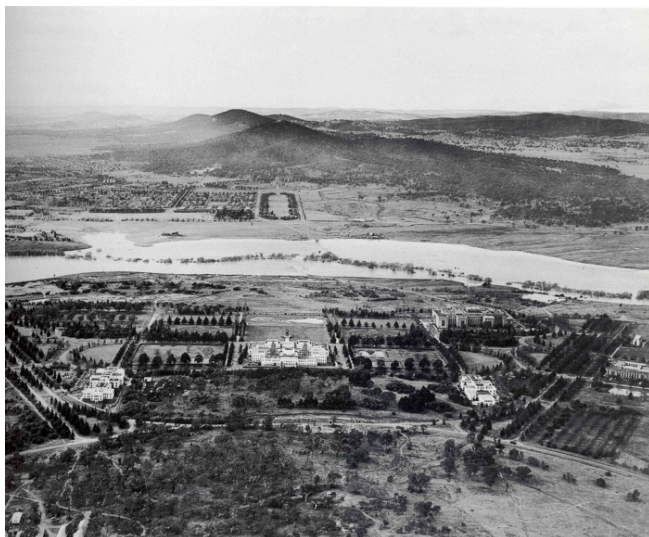


Figure 69. Aerial view of the Vista looking North in 1956 during a flood

Source: National Capital Authority

Senate Select Committee of 1955

In January 1954, Canberra hosted the 30th meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science. In the foreword to a book on Canberra published to coincide with the meeting, Sir Robert Garran wrote that,

‘largely because of two world wars and an economic depression in between, the City Beautiful of splendid architecture is for the most part not even on the drawing board. The ground plan has been laid out, but the domes and spires must be imagined.’ (Garran 1954, p. v)

The lack of progress in the building of Canberra led to the appointment of a select committee of the Senate in 1955 to inquire into and report on the city’s development. After taking evidence from a mass of interested parties, the committee produced a scathing report in which it found that the city ‘had failed to develop as the administrative centre of the Commonwealth’ and that little had been done ‘to develop the main features of the Griffin plan.’ In a now famous summing-up of the condition at which the city had arrived to that point, the committee declared that,

‘After 40 years of city development, the important planned areas stand out, not as monumental regions symbolizing the character of a national capital, but more as graveyards where departed spirits await a resurrection of national pride.’ (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Senate 1955, pp. 23, 54)

The committee specified the important planned areas that resembled ‘graveyards’ as the Parliamentary Triangle, Capital Hill and the area of the proposed lake. It bemoaned the fact that little thought had been or was being given as to how these areas would be developed. The committee referred to the creation of a lake as ‘the most important single aspect of the Griffin plan’ and it urged the government to appoint a panel of engineers as soon as possible to investigate and report on the matter. In regard to the Parliamentary Triangle, the lack of thought as to what buildings were to be sited within it led nervous officials, for fear of making a mistake, to place the Patent Office (now part of the Robert Garran Offices) outside the Triangle on Kings Avenue (see Figure 67). The Senate committee believed on the contrary that it should have been built inside it. (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Senate 1955, pp. 53, 54, 55)

The Griffins’ grand vistas also remained undeveloped. The committee thought that with little effort and expense the vistas could be made much more discernible so that locals and visitors alike could more readily see and appreciate the scale and elegance of the Griffins’ design. The most important of the vistas, in the committee’s view, was the central one following the Griffins’ Land Axis – that is, the Parliament House Vista. The committee criticised the landscape

development of the vista at that time as doing little justice to it, and stated that the vista ‘could be made more effective immediately by a more distinctive landscape treatment of the Anzac Park area.’ (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Senate 1955, pp. 56-7)

The Holford Report - 1957

In its report, the Senate committee described the Griffins’ scheme for Canberra as ‘a splendidly conceived plan’ and one that did not require ‘any drastic revision’. Nevertheless, the committee felt that the plan needed to be modified from time to time to take account of modern trends and developments in town planning, trends it said that Walter Burley Griffin could never have foreseen. While the committee in making this judgement was not advocating a major review of the Griffins’ plan, it opened the way for the leading British architect and town planner, Sir William Holford, to be invited to Canberra to undertake just such a review and to put forward his own plan for the future development of the city. (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Senate 1955, pp. 57, 58, 59; Reid 2002, p. 237)

Holford arrived in Canberra in mid-1957, having previously visited the city in 1951 for a town planning conference. In carrying out his 1957 review, Holford set forth what he saw as the ‘main choice’ confronting authorities in the future development of the city. The question was whether Canberra would remain as ‘a divided city’, its two halves separated by the floodplain of the Molonglo, or whether it would become a unified metropolitan entity. Holford strongly favoured the latter alternative. As the factor that would most of all act to unify the two halves of the city, he urged the construction of the Griffins’ lake and basins (Holford 1957, pp. 6-7, 10-11). That Holford, the government’s appointee and a town planner of pre-eminent status, so strongly advocated the lakes scheme ensured that the government would seriously consider his view, and it was in no small measure as a result of his advocacy that work commenced on the scheme soon afterwards.

In his review, Holford also came to fasten on to what he called ‘necessary amendments’ to the Griffins’ plan arising from defects that he saw with the plan or its realisation to that point. All of his proposed amendments impacted to some degree on the future development of Canberra. The problems for which he believed amendments were needed fell into four categories:

- The Griffins’ road system was not designed to cope with the speed and volume of modern traffic, especially at peak-hour. He implied, too, that the scale of the Griffins’ plan and the spread-out nature of the city made automobiles indispensable for intra-city travel.
- The Land Axis was so large and lacking in definition that it was only ‘visually effective’ from a few vantage points. While Holford described the openness as ‘exhilarating’, he found that the visual impact of the vista was weaker than more famous but much less extensive vistas in other cities.
- On the northern side of the Land Axis, the building of the Australian War Memorial and residences mostly of small size had pre-empted the development of the public and recreational buildings that the Griffins’ had intended for the area. Holford recognised that the Australian War Memorial in particular had set a precedent for the kind and scale of development that would occur along the northern half of the Axis.
- The weakness of the Griffins’ proposed Market Centre *vis-à-vis* City Hill, the secondary nature of Kings Avenue as a traffic artery in comparison to Commonwealth Avenue, and the long straight bank of the southern shore of the Central Basin of the lake made the ‘absolute symmetry’ of the Parliamentary Triangle, in Holford’s view, ‘no longer feasible.’

He believed it was necessary to ‘amend’ – in plain terms, abandon – the formal symmetry of the Griffins’ plan. In its place, he advocated a balanced treatment on either side of the Land Axis and on either side of the proposed lake, or, in effect, the Water Axis. (Holford 1957, pp. 5-6)

The amendments that Holford felt were needed had several implications for the Parliament House Vista. At an overarching level, his rejection of a strict symmetrical design for the central area in favour of a balanced development led to the replacement of the Griffins’ original planning principle with one that was much freer or looser in character. Holford’s recommendation thus marked the definitive point of departure from the Griffins’ strict formal geometry. (Reid 2002, pp. 252, 265, 284)

The problem that Holford had with the scale and lack of definition of the Land Axis was one of the reasons behind the most important change he recommended for the Parliament House Vista. This was his proposal that the permanent parliament house should be erected right on the lakeshore on the southern side of the lake. He believed that a parliament house built in this location would overcome the problem, as he saw it, of the Land Axis being ‘too long and too uneventful to register any marked impression on the beholder’. In his view, a lakeshore parliament house would make the centre of the Land Axis its climax rather than one end or the other. As for the site then favoured for the permanent parliament house – the summit of Capital Hill – Holford felt that here, at one end of the Land Axis, it would be both ‘symbolically and actually out of place.’ He believed that Parliament, as a democratic institution, should not be placed on top of a hill, but should be located down in the forum among the people. Capital Hill, in his vision, was more properly reserved as a site for a Royal Pavilion. (Holford 1957, p. 13, and attached plan)

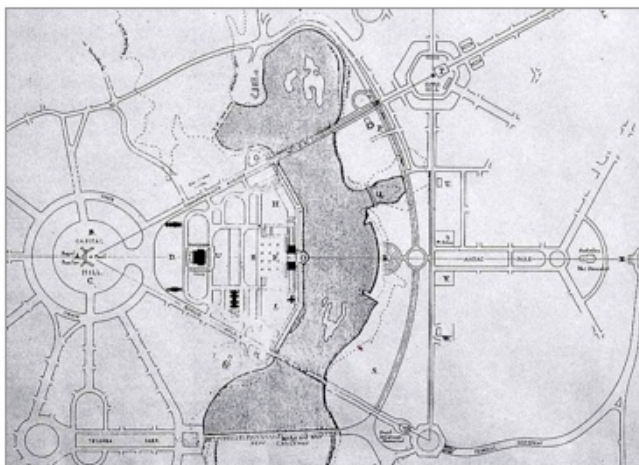


Figure 70. Holford's Plan of 1957

Source: Reid 2002, p. 240



Figure 71. Parliamentary Zone South of the lake (not yet constructed) in 1958

Source: National Archives of Australia, A1200, L25022

Holford and the NCDC

Under its chairman John Overall, the newly-established National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) warmly embraced the bulk of Holford's recommendations. It was particularly keen for the government to move ahead with the lakes scheme and strongly endorsed the proposed lakeside siting of the permanent parliament house.

By 1959 the NCDC had identified uses for the two government buildings that it had proposed on the flanks of the lakeshore parliament house. The building on the western side was to be the National Library of Australia and that on the eastern side, more provisionally, the High Court of Australia. They were of course eventually erected in approximately these locations, though not according to the mirror-image designs that the NCDC first envisaged. (NCDC 1959, pp. 5, 11, and map of Central Area)

In May 1959, Federal Cabinet gave approval for the lake scheme to proceed. (NCDC, *Annual Report* 1959, pp. 13, 14; NCDC *Annual Report* 1960, p. 12; William Holford & Partners 1961, p. 8, and map 'The Central Basin and its surroundings: proposed landscape treatment')

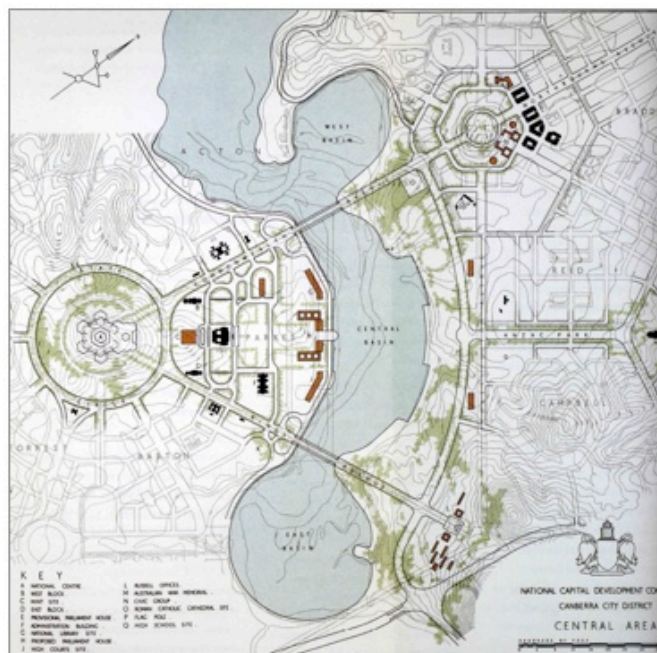


Figure 72. NCDC Plan of 1959

Source: Reid 2002, p. 264



Figure 73. Parliamentary Zone South of the lake (not yet constructed) in 1960, looking towards Capital Hill

Source: National Archives of Australia, A1200, L36013

On the southern side of the lake, the NCDC had now conceived of a building, called at various times the new Secretariat Building or the Commonwealth Avenue Offices, to be built in the Parliamentary Triangle to balance the Administration Building. Intended at the outset to house Treasury's Bureau of Census and Statistics, it was eventually erected as the Treasury Building. (NCDC *Annual Report* 1959, p. 7; NCDC *Annual Report* 1960, p. 20; NCDC 1961, p. 15)

Development under the NCDC

The lakes scheme came to fruition in the early 1960s. On 10 March 1962, the Prime Minister officially opened Kings Avenue Bridge and, on 20 September the following year, the valves of the just-finished Scrivener Dam were closed to enable the lake to fill. Two months later, in November 1963, Commonwealth Avenue Bridge was completed. Lake Burley Griffin filled to its maximum extent on 29 April 1964. The completion of the lake was officially commemorated by Prime Minister Menzies in a ceremony held on 17 October 1964. (NCDC *Annual Report* 1962, p. 19; Linge 1975, p. 30; NCDC *Annual Report* 1964, pp. 19, 21; NCDC *Annual Report* 1965, p. 21)

After work commenced on the Treasury Building in April 1963, the first and second stages were completed by 1967 and the third and final stage by June 1970. In its location, style, colour and mass, the building was intended to balance the Administration Building on the other side of the Zone. The Stripped Classical style of the structure was also meant to harmonise with a projected National Library of Australia. A contract for this building was let in April 1964 and it was eventually opened in 1968, the first of the buildings that was supposed to accompany Holford's lakeshore parliament house. (NCDC *Annual Report* 1962, p. 19; NCDC *Annual Report* 1964, p. 23; NCDC *Annual* 1965, p. 25; NCDC *Annual Report* 1967, p. 11; Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities 2009, Parliament House Vista Extension – Portal Buildings, and National Library of Australia and Surrounds)

The site of the permanent parliament house was, however, under review. In a free vote in October 1968, federal Parliament rejected the proposed lakeside location. Seven months later, the House of Representatives voted in favour of erecting the permanent building on Camp Hill, as Walter Burley Griffin had originally intended. Despite the Senate's preference for Capital Hill, Prime Minister Gorton directed that Camp Hill was to be the site of the building. With the abandonment of the lakeside site, the planning basis for the National Triangle on which the NCDC had operated for the previous decade was removed.

A new plan was needed. Now presented with a large gap where the lakeside parliament house was to be erected, the Chief Architect of the NCDC, Roger Johnson, drew up plans for a vast plaza to be called 'National Place' stretching from the permanent Parliament House on Camp Hill to the southern shore of the lake. In Johnson's scheme, the plaza was to be flanked by a series of national buildings, including the just-completed National Library of Australia and such other edifices as the High Court of Australia, National Archives of Australia, National Gallery of Australia and various museums. It was proposed that the National Library of Australia would form a strong axial link with the High Court of Australia and National Gallery of Australia to the east. There was of course no place for the Provisional (Old) Parliament House in this scheme. It would be demolished. (Reid 2002, pp. 290-3; Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities 2009, National Gallery of Australia)

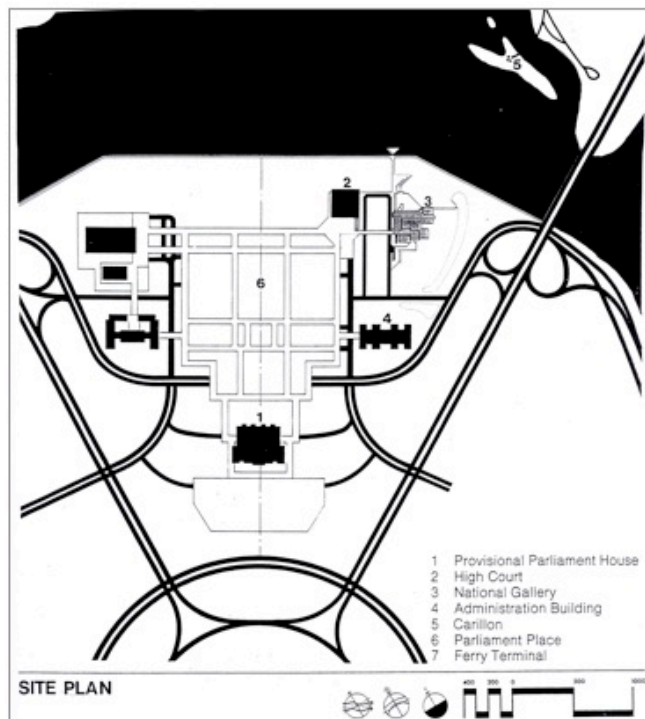


Figure 74. Parliamentary Zone plan showing proposed National Place, 1971

Source: National Capital Development Commission and others 1971

Federal Cabinet rejected Johnson's plan for a series of buildings flanking the National Place, preferring a more open vista less cluttered with buildings. In response, Johnson reduced the number of structures to just two, the National Gallery of Australia and the High Court of Australia. By this time, proposals for the National Gallery of Australia to be erected in the Parliamentary Triangle had been under consideration for seven years. After Holford in his 1957 review reserved Camp Hill between East and West Block as the site for archives, libraries and office buildings, the NCDC decided in 1963-64 that it would instead be the site for the National Gallery of Australia. A design competition for the Gallery to be built in this location was held in 1968 but, after the rejection of the lakeside site for Parliament House, the uncertainty over the development of the Parliamentary Zone prevented any start being made on the building. Once the lakeshore site for the Gallery was confirmed in 1970, work commenced in 1973 and the building was officially opened in October 1982. In its irregular, asymmetric Late 20th Century Brutalist style, the building represented – along with the High Court of Australia – a radical new element in the Parliamentary Zone. (NCDC *Annual Report* 1964, p. 8; Reid 2002, pp. 294-7; Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities 2009, National Gallery of Australia)

As early as 1959, the NCDC had proposed that the building to flank the lakeside parliament house on its eastern side would be the High Court of Australia. In this position, it bore some resemblance to the Griffins' original plans for the 'Courts of Justice' to occupy a lakeside position on the Land Axis, though in the NCDC's proposal it stood in a completely different relationship to the parliament house. By the late 1960s, it was thought that the High Court of Australia would be a relatively small structure, and it was for this reason that the National Gallery of Australia had been sited next to it. The larger mass of the Gallery was intended to support the modest court building. Designed by the same architects as the National Gallery of Australia and opened in May 1980, the High Court of Australia complimented the National Gallery of Australia in its irregular Brutalist style, though the style did not really accord with other buildings in the Parliamentary Zone. The buildings in the zone up till this time displayed a conservative style. The High Court of Australia and National Gallery of Australia were a marked stylistic departure. The High Court of Australia was also a much larger structure than originally envisaged and, in conjunction with the National Gallery of Australia, contributed to a

less balanced effect with the National Library of Australia on the other side of the Land Axis. (NCDC 1959, map of Central Area; Reid 2002, pp. 294-9; Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities 2009, High Court of Australia)

In the meantime, a more deliberately and uncompromisingly discordant element was introduced into the area in 1972. This was the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, a protest site located in front of Old Parliament House. While the Embassy could in some sense be regarded like nineteenth century relics of Blundells' Cottage and St John's Church on the north side of the lake as an unofficial intrusion in the formal Parliament House Vista, it contrasts sharply with them and with everything else in or near the vista by refusing to be absorbed into the planned landscape. It was meant to be a political and physical statement in the area, contrasting with the character of the rest of the area.

Searching for Balance and Harmony

The design assumptions on which Johnson and the NCDC had proceeded in the Parliamentary Triangle unravelled in the mid-1970s. First, in August 1974, a joint sitting of federal Parliament voted in favour of Capital Hill as the site for the permanent Parliament House in preference to Camp Hill. The decision left Johnson's great National plaza in limbo and, in the following year, the NCDC abandoned the whole scheme. One of the consequences of this policy reversal was that the NCDC now had a vast open space on the southern side of the lake's Central Basin that could never have as close a relationship with the Parliament House as was intended for the National Place. The NCDC already had under construction two of the buildings – the National Gallery of Australia and High Court of Australia – that were supposed to flank the now-defunct plaza, and their relationship with the plaza was now lost. The diagonal relationship, moreover, that the High Court of Australia was meant to demonstrate with the permanent Parliament House atop Camp Hill was now unrealisable. (O'Keefe 2004; Reid 2002, pp. 299, 302-3; Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities 2009, High Court of Australia)

In an attempt to fill the void left by the decision to build new Parliament House on Capital Hill, the NCDC tried to persuade the government to erect a building for the National Archives of Australia in the Parliamentary Triangle. The NCDC's intention was that the building, in occupying a lakeshore site near the National Library of Australia, would help to restore the balance with the High Court of Australia and National Gallery of Australia on the opposite side of the Land Axis. Owing to a lack of funds, it was never built.

One further major building, however, was erected in the Parliamentary Zone. This was Questacon, or the National Science & Technology Centre. Part funded by the Japanese government as a Bicentennial gift to Australia, the building was to be sited on the western side of the Land Axis. Work on the Centre commenced in 1986 and it was officially opened in November 1988. Although it was dignified with the name of a national institution, the Centre as a museum for children was a far cry from the government departments that the Griffins' had intended for the Parliamentary Zone, as well as from the visions that Holford and the NCDC had entertained for the area in the preceding decades. The building owed its existence to the NCDC's latest concern to try to enliven the Parliamentary Zone. (Reid 2002, pp. 316, 318; National Science and Technology Centre 2006)

As it had developed over the years, the Parliament House Vista exhibited many changes of plan and many changes of taste. From the early 1980s onward, the NCDC and its successors made efforts to try to harmonise and draw together into a whole the diverse elements that had grown up in the area. At the same time, there was a renewed interest in trying to put in place as yet

unrealised features of the Griffins' original design intentions. Dotted as the area was with various buildings of widely divergent styles, the only factor that could unify it was a landscape treatment that gave strong definition to the Land Axis. On the southern side of the lake the NCDC wanted to give greater definition to the Axis and enhance its connection with the Axis on the northern side by landscaping and planting the area between Old Parliament House and the lakeshore. In the event, it did not occur. Instead, in the period 2002-05, a Watergate reinterpreting the Griffins' original conception was established on the southern shore of the lake. This comprised the creation of Commonwealth Place. (Reid 2002, pp. 304-6, 316, 332)

Other activities in and uses of the Parliament House Vista

The story presented above focuses on the development of the Parliament House Vista with its many buildings, extensive plantings, road network and the like. Mention is made of some of the activities which have accompanied this development, such as commemorative events related to memorials. In contrast to official activities, the creation of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy is noted as a major protest site within the area.

In addition to these activities, there are at least two other categories of longstanding activity which deserve mention – tourism/recreation and protests generally.

The Parliament House Vista has been the venue for tourism and recreation activities over a long period of time. Initially this focussed on Old Parliament House after 1927 when the Parliament first moved to Canberra, and as other institutions were created these too became attractions. This included the Australian War Memorial from 1941, the National Library of Australia from 1968, the High Court of Australia from 1980, the Nation Gallery from 1982 and so on. The maturing gardens and treescape of the area also became attractions in their own right following initial plantings in the 1920s. It is not clear when they became attractions but it is suggested that this was the case at least by the 1950s. Similarly, it is not known when recreational uses of the area began, although it seems likely this happened at much the same time as tourism uses evolved. The gardens and trees of the Parliament House Vista continue to be tourism attractions and the area also continues to be used for recreational purposes.

While Old Parliament House was the home for Parliament until 1988 it was periodically the focus of large scale political protests. These protests spilled out into the landscape around Parliament House, especially into Parkes Place. The Aboriginal Tent Embassy initially from 1972 is a particular and enduring example. Other notable protests included those related to the 1974 dismissal of the Whitlam Government, the Ride against Uranium protest in 1976, and the Farmers' protest in 1985.

With the relocation of Parliament to its new building on Capital Hill, so protests have followed the Parliament and these now tend to take place in Federation Mall. None the less, parts of the Parliament House Vista may also be used as gathering points or as part of a processional route on the way to the mall.



Figure 75. Comparison of Griffins' 1918 plan (red linework) with the city layout at 2004 (grey linework)

Source: National Capital Authority 2004, p. 111



3.5 LANDSCAPE HISTORY CONTEXT

This part of the history is intended to identify a chronological series of significant phases or periods in the evolution of the landscape of the study area, together with a brief description of the landscape character or major changes of each period.

Throughout this part of the history there are brief references to the social and political history as context for the landscape history. However, the intention is not to repeat in detail the social and political history provided above.

Aboriginal Occupation

By the end of this long period, there was a predominance of sclerophyllous vegetation such as Eucalyptus open woodland and grassland. In particular, there were large stretches of open grassland on the plains with limited areas of treed vegetation, except above the winter frost line.

Colonial Occupation 1825–1900

The pastoral nature of the landscape of the area during the nineteenth century built upon the open woodland character and further clearing to establish grazing land. There was an open character of the valley floor and indigenous tree cover on the hills.

The rural landscape in this period consisted of a patch work of introduced and indigenous grasses, fenced paddocks in different states of cultivation according to the seasons (wheat fields), dirt roads, homestead complexes with both indigenous trees and largely exotic plantations, and individual buildings such as shepherd's huts and the conspicuous St John's Church north of the Molonglo River.

Federal Capital of Australia 1901 – 1921

Thomas Charles Weston was appointed as Officer-in-Charge, Afforestation Branch, Federal Capital Territory and began service on 1 May 1913. By 1921 Weston had planted 17,327 trees and shrubs in the Federal City Area and many hundreds of thousand *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pine) trees at Mount Stromlo and the hills to the west of the city. However, all of this work did not directly affect the Parliamentary Zone.

Establishment: Committees & Commissions 1921 – 1956

Weston was made Director of City Planting and the focus of planting was the National Triangle, with planting of the alignment of Commonwealth Avenue and the projected foreshore planting of the future lake at the centre of the Water Axis. This was an attempt to mark out the axial elements of the Griffins' concept.

During 1925 the Parliamentary Zone gardens were initiated and in the following year the plantings associated with the building of the Provisional Parliament House were initiated.

In November 1926 Weston retired. His planting within the National Triangle was concerned with symmetrical compositions, mostly using coniferous tree species with some contrasting deciduous species and Eucalyptus, shrubbery, lawns and flower gardens. He employed row plantations often with alternating species and a pattern of circles for formal statements for flower gardens, usually roses or tulips. The density of planting was related to the sense of immediate effect and the perceived need for creating windbreaks in an otherwise open and exposed

landscape.

The layout of the Parliamentary/Government Group in the Griffins' vision was for a series of terraced courts set out along and around the Land Axis in a progression from the heights of the Capitol on Capital Hill, Parliament House on Camp Hill, a long terrace with reservoir and fountain in the middle ground containing a complex of departmental buildings, to the Watergate element on the southern shore of the Central Basin of the lake. Within the proposed complex the whole composition addressed the Central Basin, the northern shore of public gardens and a 'plaisance' focussing on Mount Ainslie.

The Federal Capital Commission decided on a Provisional Parliament House at the foot of Camp Hill and the Griffins' reservoir was replaced by ornamental grounds, the Parliamentary gardens, and much later (1969) three ponds with fountains. The formal layout emerged in 1925 and was influenced by the architect John Murdoch. It contained the Provisional Parliament House, temporary administrative offices, hostel, roads, paths and ornamental grounds. The scheme was an adaptation of part of the Griffins' road layout with substantial changes to the Land Axis and siting of built elements. Murdoch had been part of the earlier Departmental Board plan indicating the use of fastigate tree forms as formal statements in the landscape. These appeared in the 1925 plantings of Lombardy Poplars at strategic corner locations within the layout of the Parliament House gardens. Not only was their vertical form distinctive, their brilliant yellow autumn colour and fresh green spring growth provided seasonal variety. They were used as sentinel elements at road junctions and to mark out the Land Axis corridor relative to Parliament House, as well as future administrative buildings.

These were possibly the first trees planted in the Parliamentary complex and according to Weston, these plantings made it difficult to give an 'Australian atmosphere' to the gardens (Gray 1997, p. 6). Weston had in 1924 proposed a central rose garden within the Land Axis, which was rejected by the Federal Capital Commission and put forward the idea of using a balance of Australian trees and mainly deciduous trees. Weston prepared a tree planting plan indicating the use of fifty different species with an emphasis on evergreen coniferous and deciduous plants generally, following paths and roadways to create suitable seasonal microclimatic outdoor rooms. Not all have survived due to both deaths and removal, as well as local changes to the layout.

Some of the early plantings during 1926 and 1927 were commemorative utilising Roman Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) located on the western side of the Land Axis corridor to the north of Provisional Parliament House. Lombardy Poplars were planted within the courtyards of the Provisional Parliament House, some of which commemorated the visit of the Empire Parliamentary Association to the nearly completed building in 1926.

Weston was replaced as Director of Parks and Gardens by Alexander Bruce (1926-1938), then John Hobday (1938-1944) and Lindsay Pryor (1944-1958).

Bruce continued to implement Weston's planting yet added seasonal flowering plants such as Prunus trees and roses. However Pryor altered the Weston tradition by the creation of parkland spaces for people and the integration of Eucalyptus species into the city garden that Canberra had become.

The central place in front of the Provisional Parliament House was named Parkes Place in 1928 and the spaces to the east and west were developed as the National Rose Gardens in 1933 to a plan by Rex Hazelwood. Originating as an idea of the National Rose Society of New South Wales in 1926, the gardens were opened as a national project in 1933. Although they formed no

part of the Griffins' original plan, their development enhanced the aesthetic qualities of the vista, as well as contributing their own meaning to it. Specifically, as the gardens were made up of roses presented by each of the Australian states, they were intended to be representative of co-operation between the Commonwealth and states, and of the states' interest in developing and beautifying the national capital. In the years after their establishment, the physical presence of the extensive rose gardens and of the meaning that attached to them undoubtedly gave the provisional building a more established air and may eventually have contributed to its permanence. (Wigmore 1963, pp. 140-1; Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities 2009, National Rose Gardens)

Rose gardens had also been incorporated into areas set aside to the east and west of Provisional Parliament House within the Senate Garden area and the House of Representatives Garden area. These areas contained facilities such as tennis and lawn bowls in the House of Representatives Garden and tennis and cricket in the Senate Garden. However, their use was restricted to those associated with the Parliament. The Senate Garden rose garden was designed by Rex Hazelwood in 1931.

In the late 1930s further flower gardens were added to Parkes Place in the form of four rows of staggered rectilinear planting beds with rounded ends. These were used for tulip display. Over time their vigour diminished and they were removed. The bulbs were a gift of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. (Gray 1997, p. 14)

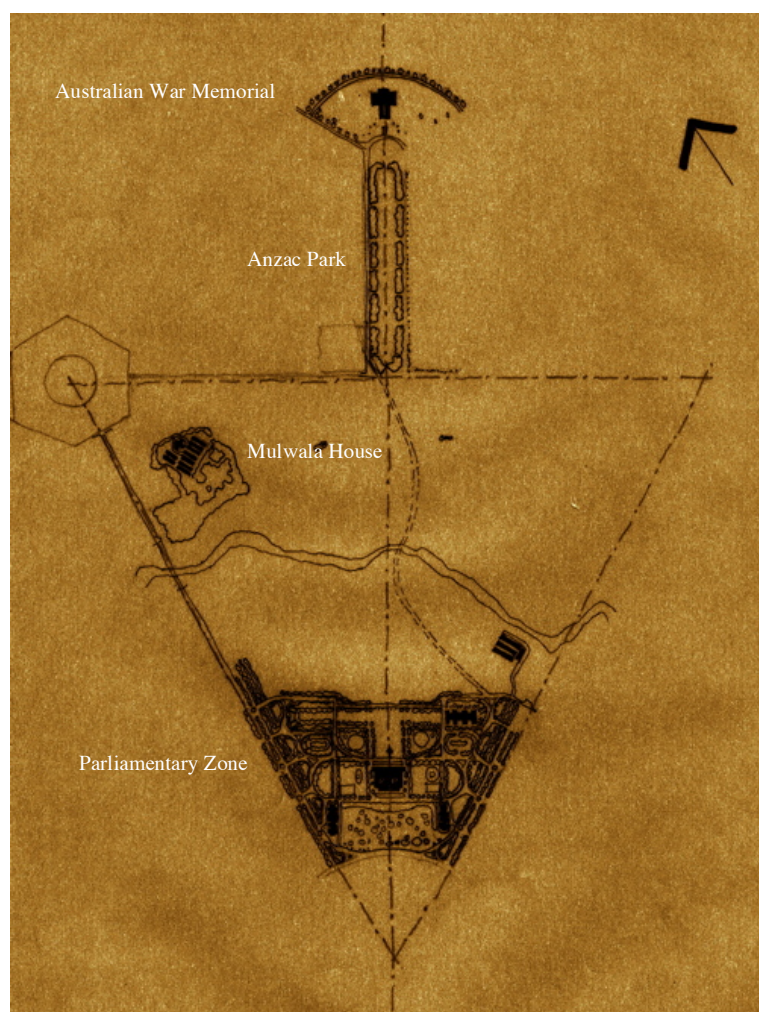


Figure 76. Parliament House Vista area 1910-1956

Source: Craig Burton

Notes: Major component plantings from this period include:

- boundary plantings behind the Australian War Memorial;
- formal planting beds in Anzac Park;
- plantings in the vicinity of Mulwala House; and
- extensive plantings in the Parliamentary Zone south of the Molonglo River.

In 1941 the architectural work on a memorial to King George V was completed on a site on the Land Axis and to the north of Provisional Parliament House. It was not opened until 1953 due to

the intervention of World War 2. The King George V Memorial successfully blocked the vista of the new Australian War Memorial and parts of Mount Ainslie from the Parliament House and it was eventually relocated to its current site off the axis in 1968.

Lindsay Pryor, as Director of Parks & Gardens represented a departure from the Weston lineage in that he shifted the emphasis from exotic to indigenous species and tended to build on existing planting and frequently used circular groupings of trees.

Within the Parliamentary gardens zone he removed some of Weston's former planting as a process of thinning out during 1946 and further balanced the planting along King George Terrace by adding Arizona Cypress to match the existing.

National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) 1957—1989

This period was one of great physical change in Canberra through the latter half of the twentieth century. It was marked by the creation and activities of the powerful National Capital Development Commission. Amongst its many achievements was the realisation of Lake Burley Griffin in 1963.

William Holford & Partners were engaged to make recommendations for the landscape treatment of the Central Basin of the lake, and this report was published by the NCDC in February 1961. The southern shore of the Central Basin was recommended as a formal margin with a site for the permanent Parliament House to be located on the lakeside composed symmetrically around the Land Axis with informal planting either side between the bridge promontories and the proposed Parliament House complex.

The dominant trees eventually selected were in sections according to use, landform and soil conditions, and included:

- Kings and Commonwealth Avenues: formal avenue planting of English Elm; and
- Land Axis: formal planting of various Eucalyptus species.

A summary of the landscape approach adopted in this period is provided in the following text drawn from the NCDC *Annual Report* for 1962-63 (p. 17).

‘In 1961, the Commission accepted that—

- The character of the natural landscape should be maintained.
- The existing grey-brown colour of the landscape should predominate but light fresh green should be used round the lake margins and darker conifers for boundaries and backgrounds.
- Autumn colours should be fully exploited for the formal and dramatic parts of the landscape.
- Flowering trees and shrubs should be massed in small enclosures.
- The Central Axis and Kings and Commonwealth Avenues should be planted formally.
- The scale of the planting of open spaces should be related to the expected use.
- While preserving a sense of unity the design should aim at creating recognizable character in specific areas.

...at the central axis, the Parliamentary triangle and Kings and Commonwealth Avenues, formal patterns of planting have been adopted. Elsewhere informal groupings have been used in sympathy with the topography, lake edge treatment and adjacent planning.

In an area of over 1,000 acres and along a shore of 22 1/4 miles, areas of recognizable individual character will be created by selecting different ranges of species of trees for different areas. The choice has been influenced by the presence of existing trees, the type of trees likely to grow well, the scale of the area and the use it will receive. Unity will be created by grouping willows and poplars along the entire lake shore. The dominant tree species to each area are listed below: —

- (1) Central Land Axis between Mount Ainslie and Capital Hill—formal planting of various eucalypt species.
- (2) The shore of the Parliamentary Triangle—formal planting of red oak. [Did not occur]
- (3) Kings and Commonwealth Avenue—formal avenue planting of English elms...'

In 1963 the Landscape Division of the NCDC was established with Harry Oakman as Director. He was followed by Richard Clough in 1972 and John Gray in 1980.

In 1968 a Parliamentary Zone planting plan was prepared with the completion of further administrative buildings and the invasion of carparks occupying several of Weston's former open areas bounded by trees, or outdoor rooms. The carpark areas were planted with either deciduous trees (mostly Plane or Oak trees) or Eucalypts and included hedge plantings on the periphery. The planting character generally continued the formal character in complete contrast to the north bank of the Central Basin and the recommendations of Holford. Eucalyptus species were used around the Land Axis and on the lakeside site for the permanent parliament house. Along both Commonwealth and Kings Avenues some of Weston's conifers were removed as part of a thinning process, and English Elm trees were added to increase the deciduous mix of planting.

The King George V Memorial was moved to the western edge of the Land Axis corridor and a paved terrace constructed on the north side of King George Terrace in front of the Provisional Parliament House. The landscape setting for the National Library of Australia was completed in 1969 as were the central pools and fountains in each of the outside pools, on the Land Axis and opposite the Treasury Building. The works for these water bodies were implemented in the 1930s yet the final completed form was not realised until 1969. All were fitted with ornamental fountains in the form of water jets.



Figure 77. Parliamentary Zone South of the lake in 1967

Source: National Archives of Australia, A1200, L65055

At a broader scale, a Metropolitan Parks System was developed by the NCDC from about 1969-70 to connect an integrated open space system, principally associated with the natural drainage system, and extending beyond the then limits of both urban and suburban Canberra (Altenburg 1993, pp. 155-6). On the southern shore it included a foreshore zone running around the lakeshore edge. It was intended that the parks system should be of a distinctly Australian character.

The permanent parliament house site was relocated to Capital Hill (formerly Kurrajong Hill) and the Australian National Gallery (now the National Gallery of Australia) was relocated to the Library Annex site at the lakeside, leaving the former permanent parliament house site to

become part of the proposed vast National Place – an area that remained essentially just a large empty grassed site until the development of Reconciliation Place and Commonwealth Place.

In 1979 King Edward Terrace was straightened as part of works to facilitate the access and approach roads to the High Court of Australia and National Gallery of Australia.

The tree planting around the National Library of Australia appears to define the position of buildings planned but not yet realised.

The High Court of Australia and National Gallery of Australia were implemented together and have benefited from an integrated approach to architecture and landscape. The distinctiveness of the partially completed Sculpture Garden with its informal structure of vegetation interpreting the indigenous ecology of the Canberra Region also encompasses the High Court of Australia so as to provide a setting for both developments. (See <http://www.aila.org.au/significance/sites/nga.html>; Richard Clough, personal communication, 2002; and Hobbs 2006, p. 51)

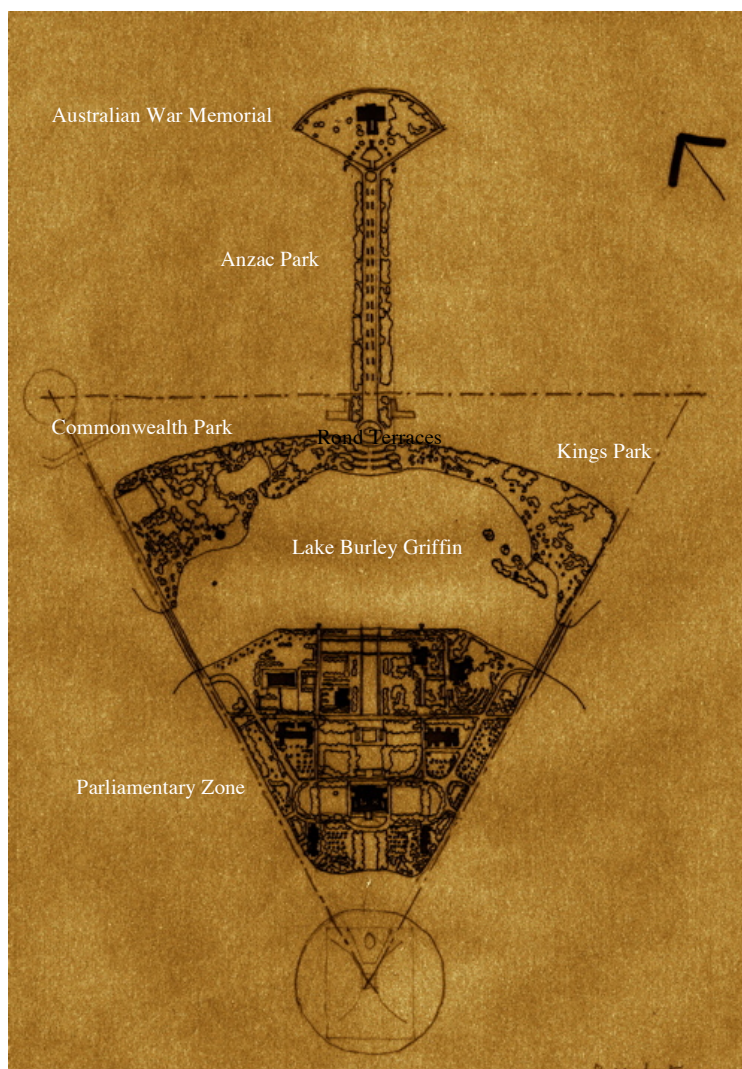


Figure 78. Parliament House Vista area 1957-1989

Source: Craig Burton

Notes: Major component plantings and landscape developments from this period include:

- informal plantings east of the Australian War Memorial;
- development of the AWM forecourt;
- redevelopment of Anzac Park;
- development of Commonwealth and Kings Parks and the Rond Terraces;
- completion of the lake and islands;
- development of the southern lakeshore;
- strengthening of the Land Axis in the Parliamentary Zone;
- landscape development around the National Library of Australia, High Court of Australia and National Gallery of Australia;
- development of the landscape south of Old Parliament House including Federation Mall and carparks; and
- redevelopment in other parts of the Parliamentary Zone including road changes and carparks.

Issues of entry, location of the surface car park, and incompleteness are also related to the abandonment of the intended National Place. This left both the High Court of Australia and National Gallery of Australia, completed in 1980 and 1982 respectively, hovering and shrouded in informality. The informal approach picks up on Holford's earlier recommendations for the lakeside landscape character either side of the Land Axis, although the designers were

responding more to the nature of the architectural expression and the influences of the time than Holford's 1961 report. The NCDC had a more formal landscape setting in mind however the approach of the consultant designers, Harry Howard and Associates, was eventually supported. (Pearson, Burton & Marshall 2006; Richard Clough, personal communication, 2002)

The relocation of the permanent parliament house and its anticipated completion by 1988 was the impetus for the NCDC's planning and design study of 1980 for the Parliamentary Zone. This study revisited the principles of the Griffins' Plan for the Parliamentary Zone and for the Land Axis to be treated as a more active space, framed by a symmetrical composition of buildings.

Development plans were produced in 1980, 1983 and 1986. The last identified sites for two future buildings – Questacon (National Science & Technology Centre) and the National Archive Building. It also identified the possibility of creating roads associated with *Eucalyptus* row plantings to further define the Land Axis corridor at its edges as well as give access to the future buildings. Part of these proposals were carried out in 1988. Questacon (National Science & Technology Centre) was implemented and a road access from King Edward Terrace was completed along with two rows of *Eucalyptus elata* planted incorporating the existing *Casuarina* trees. Oriental Planes and Pin oak tree planting was carried out adjacent to the National Rose Gardens in anticipation of a future road. These plantings encroached onto the Rose Gardens.

National Capital Planning Authority (NCPA) 1989—1997

This period represents a change in responsibility for areas within the National Capital. The National Capital Planning Authority was established in early 1989 to focus on the national areas of the capital. The significant core was the defined Central National Area cultural landscape and the aim was to enhance the character of Canberra as the national capital.

As such, the planning process was a continuation of the NCDC approach. Projects to enhance Canberra's character fell within the Parliamentary Zone. Implemented projects were:

- 1990 Peace Park. This is a series of landscape spaces enclosed with plantings between the National Library of Australia and Lake Burley Griffin, with integrated artworks as focal points;
- 1991 landscape management and maintenance study for the Parliamentary Zone;
- 1992 adaptation of Old Parliament House; and
- 1994 masterplan for the Old Parliament House Gardens.

National Capital Authority (NCA) 1997—present day

This period is represented by a name change with the dropping of 'planning' from the NCA's title, a greater focus on the Parliamentary Zone, and a determination to make it a place for people relative to the theme of national identity.

The NCA has undertaken a series of studies, conservation management plans, publications and works, including:

- 1999 International Flag display, next to and parallel with the southern lakeshore either side of the Land Axis;
- 2000 Parliamentary Zone Review;
- 2001 Magna Carta Place, west of the Senate Gardens;
- 2002 Commonwealth Place, near the southern lakeshore on the Land Axis;
- 2002 Reconciliation Place, further away from the lake behind Commonwealth Place, also on the Land Axis;

- 2004 The Griffin Legacy;
- 2004 Old Parliament House Gardens works, either side of Old Parliament House;
- 2005 Commonwealth Place forecourt works, between Commonwealth Place and the lake;
- 2006 National Portrait Gallery design competition, on King Edward Terrace near the High Court of Australia; and
- 2006 Humanities & Science Campus design, in the vicinity of the National Library of Australia and Questacon (National Science & Technology Centre).