

4. EVIDENCE OF OTHER VALUES

4.1 SOCIAL VALUE

Concept and Approach

Social value, or significance, refers to the associations between people and a place.

The regulations to the *Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act* defines social significance for the Commonwealth Heritage List under Criterion (g) as,

‘the place’s strong or special associations with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.’

For the National Heritage List, social significance is defined as,

‘the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s strong or special association with a particular community or social group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.’

Current Australian heritage practice considers that these associations should be contemporary (not just historic), that the community (or cultural group) should be identifiable, and that there should be continuity of association over a period of some years. A community or cultural group may be any group of people whose members share a locality, common interest, experience or tradition.

The criteria refer to ‘community or cultural group’. In this report we use ‘community’ as short hand to include ‘cultural group’. We have adopted a broad definition of communities and cultural groups as those that can be defined by shared culture, locality, beliefs, ethnicity, activity or experience.

Methods and Results

Assessing social significance involves understanding associations and meanings and the values attributed to the place through direct consultation with associated people.

In assessing social significance it is necessary to:

- identify and understand the communities with potential associations;
- discover the nature of the associations; and
- understand whether the associations give rise to social value.

Identifying associated communities

Potential associations and meanings arise primarily from direct experience of a place, in this case Parkes Place. Parkes Place comprises the National Rose Gardens, commemorative plantings, paths, interpretive signage, an avenue of trees on either side of both central and cross axes, large open lawns, its setting (including Old Parliament House), all of which is situated within the broader National triangle and Parliament House vista.

The first step taken was to identify those communities most likely to have associations with Parkes Place. Based on previous assessments of significance in the reports listed below, the

communities initially identified as being most likely to have associations are the local Canberra community, the Horticultural Society of Canberra, and the National Rose Society.

Using the type and potential frequency of use as a filter, more specific communities with potential associations with Parkes Place were identified. These were:

- Those people with associations with Parkes Place and the National Rose Gardens over a long period, through connections with the buildings surrounding the study area—former Parliamentarians and current and former staff of Old Parliament House, the Treasury and John Gorton Buildings, the Lobby Restaurant, past and present staff of the gardens, and regular visitors to Old Parliament House such as politicians, staff and journalists.
- Those individuals and organisations involved in local, state, or national events held in the study area, such as formal public assemblies, commemorative plantings, leisure and recreation activities, concerts, festivals, celebrations and political protests.
- People who have played a role in the management and conservation of the study area and/or its individually significant components, for example: former NCDC and current NCA staff; landscape architects and architects; academics; members of the Australian Heritage Council, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the ACT Heritage Council, Australian Garden History Society, National Rose Society of Australia, Horticulture Society of Canberra, Canberra and District Historical Society, National Trust (ACT) and Walter Burley Griffin Society.
- The broader Canberra and Australian community who have access to Parkes Place and the National Rose Gardens, either frequently because they live locally, or as visitors to Canberra.

This study has focussed on these communities, both through analysis of existing reports and studies, and undertaking interviews, surveys and a focus group workshop.

Assessing the social significance of Parkes Place, including the National Rose Gardens

In assessing the social significance of Parkes Place, the following actions were undertaken:

- Analysing existing documentary sources, primarily to determine potential associations but also to understand previous assessment of community-held and social significance:
 - Parkes Place, Canberra, Heritage Conservation Management Plan (Gray 1997);
 - Parliament House Vista Heritage Management Plan, draft (Marshall and others 2008);
 - King George V Memorial, King George Terrace, Parkes Place, ACT, Conservation Analysis (Freeman Collett & Partners Pty Ltd 1994);
 - Commonwealth Heritage List citation for the National Rose Gardens, King George Terrace, Parkes, ACT (Place ID: 105473); and
 - Register of the National Estate citation for National Rose Gardens, King George Terrace, Parkes, ACT (Place ID: 19119).
- Searching web-based questionnaire data which was collected for the assessment of social and aesthetic values of the Parliament House Vista (115 questionnaires) (Marshall and others 2008). The data was searched for any mention of the following: rose, rose garden, National Rose Garden, axis/axes/axial, George, Edward, terrace, Lobby, restaurant, embassy, Aboriginal, Parkes, and place. There were no positive matches.
- Gathering additional primary evidence (November and December 2008) via three methods:
 - *Interviews*—telephone interviews with a follow-up questionnaire were conducted in December 2008. Their aim was to gather specific evidence and views of selected individuals who either had direct associations with the study area or who, through their own research or work, may have perspectives to offer about the significance of

Parkes Place.

- *Surveys*—ten surveys were emailed to those Horticulture Volunteers (through the NCA as the central contact point) who expressed interest in participating in this study, to each of the Presidents of the State rose societies, and to the President of the National Rose Society.
- *Focus group*—a focus group was held with Canberra-based people on 9 December 2008. Its aim was to gather evidence from a range of potentially associated communities. Invited participants represented academics, landscape architects, heritage professionals, Canberra Horticulture, Australian Garden History Society, Horticulture Society of Canberra, Waler Burley Griffin Society, ACT Heritage Council, Old Parliament House Governing Council, and staff from the buildings surrounding Parkes Place (Old Parliament House, John Gorton Building and the Treasury Building).

Analysis of Existing Documentary Sources

The following section provides a summary of material relating to the community-held aesthetic and social values of Parkes Place from each of documents noted.

Parkes Place, Canberra—Heritage Conservation Management Plan

The Parkes Place, Canberra—Heritage Conservation Management Plan (Gray 1997) provides an assessment of social significance using the framework of the National Trust of Australian (NSW) guidelines for the preparation of conservation management plans, *The Conservation Plan* 3rd Edition 1990, by J S Kerr.

The evidence for Parkes Place having social value to the Canberra community, as presented in this plan are set out below.

- ‘It has been associated with pre 20th century and 20th century events either local or national in nature including aboriginal use, 19th century European settlement and, following establishment of the National Capital, formal public assemblies, unmarked commemorative plantings, the distribution of cremation ashes, leisure and recreation activities, and in more recent times concerts, festivals, celebrations and political protests;
- it displays evidence of past events or persons associated with events, of significance to the nation, including memorials, marked commemorative tree plantings, place name signs and aboriginal protest structures;
- it has the ability to inform and enlighten visitors on important social history and to promote a sense of place feeling and create links with the past.’ (Gray 1997, p. 24)

Based on the evidence contained in this conservation management plan:

- For Canberrans and visitors to the broader landscape of the Parliamentary Zone, there is potential for strong and special attachment to Parkes Place through its public accessibility, continuous and frequent use (either directly or indirectly), as a backdrop to their everyday lives, or for special events.
- There is expected to be strong and special attachment to the National Rose Gardens by the National Rose Society and the Horticulture Society of Canberra, members of which may be Canberrans or, for the National Rose Society, members of which may be drawn from within or beyond Canberra and the ACT. Both of these organisations have long and continuing connections to the National Rose Gardens since they were first laid out, donating large numbers of the original rose plants. The nature of these attachments needs to be tested.
- Events held within Parkes Place range from the local and everyday, to those events both small and large in significance to the nation, for a wide range of activities, memorials, and public purposes. Through those events that reflect important community meanings and

Australia's wider democratic system of Government (such as events defining Australia's social, cultural and political history), there is potential for Parkes Place to have importance to local Canberrans, the wider national community, and to the Aboriginal community—including as a landmark of national symbolic importance—through direct or indirect experience with the place. The nature and extent of these associations and meanings and what aspects of the place might embody such values need to be explored.

- Historical research undertaken on the commemorative tree plantings and National Rose Gardens may identify further individuals or organisations for whom particular plantings or the place as a whole may hold special associations and meanings. If identified, these associations and meanings should be tested.

Parliament House Vista Heritage Management Plan (draft)

The Parliament House Vista Heritage Management Plan (draft) (Marshall and others 2008) provides an assessment of social significance undertaken by Context Pty Ltd. The approach to assessing the social significance of the Parliament House Vista is based on a web-based questionnaire, a focus group, one-on-one interviews, and analysis of tourism literature. Parkes Place and the National Rose Gardens are part of the Parliament House Vista and, as such, contribute to, and potentially share the values of this wider landscape.

Analysis of web-based questionnaires and the focus group suggested a range of key themes of relevance to the social value of the Parliament House Vista. Key themes as they relate to the Canberra community were:

- *Symbolic*—the Parliament House Vista is viewed as at the heart of Australian national identity and what it is to be an Australian. It symbolises commemoration, democracy, national memory, national conscience and history, and it is an iconic representation of Canberra.
- *Iconic*—the Parliament House Vista is the central focus for Canberra marking the beginning of the capital as well as being an iconic landmark.
- *Design, beauty and a sense of history*—the Canberra community values the Parliament House Vista as a designed landscape which is beautiful and which links them to the history of the place and of Australia.
- *A place for the people*—for the Canberra community the Parliament House Vista represents a place where people from all walks of life can gather together for commemoration, festivals, events and for protest.
- *A place of order and monuments*—the Canberra community recognises the importance of the formal structure of the Parliament House Vista. The physical experience of the space is powerful and monuments generally intimidate (according to a focus group participant) but, for the Canberra community, it is also a space which they can relate to and enjoy on a human level.

Results suggest that it is the people of Canberra, and not those from elsewhere, who have strong attachment to, and appreciation of, the Parliament House Vista.

Aesthetic and social values in the statement of cultural significance for the Parliament House Vista, which relate to Parkes Place, are set out below:

- Socially, the Parliament House Vista is significant as the location for a large range of memorials and commemorative plantings dating back to the 1920s, and the area continues to be the focus of such activities, from local to minor and major national importance.
- The area is significantly associated with political protest, especially in the vicinity of Parkes Place.
- Aesthetically, the Parliament House Vista evokes an emotional response from the

community for whom it is a place of dramatic and powerful views, such as the large scale and sweeping views along the Land Axis to the terminal features.

- The aesthetic values specific to the design and setting of the Parliament House Vista are also recognised as important, along with the integration of the architectural elements into the Griffins' overall design.

The Canberra community has a very strong attachment to the Parliament House Vista and believes it holds this value in trust for the wider Australian community, which may or may not value the Parliament House Vista for the same reasons.

There is potential that the nation-defining aspects, iconic landmark, and symbolic values of the Vista might be held within the collective memory of the wider Australian community. However, sufficient evidence was not gathered in the Parliament House Vista study to test this possibility for more widely held social significance.

An important consideration when reviewing the values outlined in the Parliament House Vista plan, was that Parkes Place sits within this larger landscape with a complex range of values.

The aesthetic and social values of the Parliament House Vista identified as being held by the Canberra community can be summarised as relating to:

- its embodiment of Australian national values and identity;
- as a symbol which engenders in them a sense of their own place in Australian history – it is a place the Canberra community values as an important element in the continuum of both local and national history;
- its accessibility as a public space and meeting place for people from all walks of life for recreation, festivals and protest; and
- its place as an icon and landmark in the design vision for Canberra.

The first three points noted above have specific relevance to Parkes Place, which provides the physical space for and symbolic cue of events defining Australia's national identity, which have been and continue to be enacted in this space.

Attitudinal Research into the Parliamentary Zone

A summary of research carried out by Orima Research (July 2005) looking at perceptions of the Parliamentary Zone was reviewed in the context of how visitors/tourists would perceive Canberra.¹

The summary findings were reviewed for relevance to the current project. Key findings that reflect aspects of social significance that may relate to Parkes Place are:

- a pride taken in the area which they view as being of national significance;
- a belief that the area is of importance to Australians;
- tourism participants viewed the area as the foundation for explaining Canberra to tourists;
- the idea that the area represents the collective Australian personality;
- reasons for visiting included recreation and to attend events and exhibitions (although it is noted that a portion of the sample was drawn from workers in the zone);
- there are stories to be told; and
- it belongs to all of us.

¹ The boundaries of the zone are within, but not the same as, the Parliament House Vista. It is an area bounded by State Circle, Commonwealth and Kings Avenues, and the southern shore of Lake Burley Griffin. The sample of 32 participants was drawn from Canberra residents.

The following findings had specific bearing on participants' perceptions of Parkes Place:

- participants generally felt that there was a good balance of green space and buildings; and
- many participants described the gardens and green space as an attraction, particularly the National Rose Gardens.

No other elements within Parkes Place received specific mention. However, Old Parliament House was identified as the centre of the Parliamentary Zone and as a key building giving the area its character.

In the survey responses, the word 'Parkes' was used by participants only as a mailing address.

Parkes Place is an integral part of the wider landscape known as the Parliament House Vista, and the area within the Vista known as the Parliamentary Zone. As such it contributes to, and potentially shares, the values (including social) of the Parliament House Vista. In particular, the following values:

- a sense of history and pride;
- national identity;
- iconic representation of Canberra and a landmark;
- a place of beauty and with appreciated views;
- an accessible public place, a place of and for the people, with open spaces for meeting and formal and informal recreation, eg. festivals, events, commemoration, protest, picnics, walking, social sporting games and relaxation;
- a place which represents the layering of history (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal); and
- a place of order and monuments.

King George V Memorial, King George Terrace, Parkes Place, ACT, Conservation Analysis

The plan notes that the aesthetic qualities of the King George V Memorial contribute to, and share, the social value attached to the broader setting of the changing landscape of Canberra's Parliamentary Zone.

While some of the memorial's original design integrity, and careful and logical relationship to the original Griffin plan were lost in its 1968 move to its current (asymmetrical) location on King George Terrace, more dissatisfaction over the original siting is recorded in this report than over its relocation (Freeman 1994, pp. 8–9).

In terms of social history (ie. not the social value held by today's communities) this report identifies the completed memorial in its original pivotal location, and to a lesser extent within its relocated existing site, as 'evidence of the central place of the monarchy within the Australian system of Government in the early and mid-twentieth century' (Freeman 1994, p. 20).

An absence of community-held aesthetic values is identified for the memorial in its current location, as a memorial which once held, yet no longer does so, a direct association with early Canberra tourism. It functioned as a place where tourist buses stopped and photographs were taken. This has since been overshadowed by the Old Parliament House steps and terrace above the Aboriginal Tent Embassy which provide dramatic positions for photographs perfectly aligned along the central Land Axis of the Parliament House Vista.

Commonwealth Heritage List citation for the National Rose Gardens, King George Terrace, Parkes, ACT (Place ID: 105473)

The basis for the assessment of significance in this citation is the Commonwealth Heritage

criteria (the citation is reproduced at Appendix A). Aesthetic characteristics of the National Rose Gardens, presented in this citation in relation to criterion (e), are identified as significant for:

- enhancing the foreground setting to Old (then Provisional) Parliament House; and
- valued by the community for their aesthetic qualities.

Key attributes that demonstrate this value are identified as:

- the location of the gardens, especially in relationship to Old Parliament House;
- the beauty of individual plants; and
- the gardens' public accessibility.

In relation to criterion (e), aesthetic significance valued by the community, the citation notes that the National Rose Gardens are valued by visitors to Canberra as well as the local community. No evidence is given of this value.

No social values under criterion (g) are identified in this citation.

Values identified against criterion (e) in this citation relate both to Parkes Place's role in a larger design (as a setting for Old Parliament House) and community-held aesthetic values for the local Canberra community as well as for visitors. The term 'visitors' could be assumed to mean interstate or international visitors but the report does not make this specific distinction.

While no social values (criterion (g)) are identified, it is unclear from the citation whether or not this is because no social significance was identified or whether this was the result of no formal social values assessment being undertaken.

It is likely these values are the result of a professional report without a formal assessment process to test the presence, nature and extent of community-held aesthetic or social values.

National Trust of Australia (ACT)

The Parliamentary Zone, including the Commemorative Roman Cypress trees planted by the Empire Parliamentary Association in 1926, the Lobby Restaurant designed in 1968, Parkes Places and government and cultural institutions, the National Rose Gardens, and the King George V Memorial, is classified by the National Trust of Australia (ACT).

The National Rose Gardens are identified as having aesthetic value under criterion (e), valued by the local community as well as for the wider community visiting the national capital.

'The two sections of the National Rose Gardens were designed in the configuration of an open rose, exhibiting an outstanding design concept. The gardens and the roses are valued by both visitors to the National Capital and the local community for their aesthetic qualities.' (National Trust of Australia (ACT))

No social or community-held aesthetic values are identified in the citation for the King George V Memorial.

It is likely these values are the result of a professional report without a formal assessment process to test the presence, nature and extent of community-held aesthetic or social values.

ACT Heritage Register

The National Rose Gardens and King George V Memorial are included on the ACT Heritage Register. The statement of significance for the National Rose Gardens (Register Overlay H18) does not identify community-held aesthetic value nor social significance. It is likely this is the

result of a professional report without a formal social values assessment to test the presence, nature and extent of community-held aesthetic or social values.

The citation for the King George V Memorial was not reviewed.

Details of Social Values Evidence

The details of the social values research undertaken in the preparation of this report, and preliminary, method-by-method analysis (by interview, survey and focus group), are provided in Appendix C.

4.2 AESTHETICS

Expert Appraisal

Parkes Place is a large formal and symmetric public place designed in the City Beautiful style. It comprises a central open stepped terrace of grass and paving with ornamental pools and fountains affording dramatic views along Griffin's notional Land Axis to Mount Ainslie in the north and both the new and Old Parliament House to the south.

The central terrace is flanked by two tree enclosed terraces comprising rose gardens set amongst lawns and bordered by mature broad-leafed deciduous and evergreen trees. The National Rose Gardens possess the spatial qualities of large garden rooms with decorative and fragrant flower beds at their centre. The enclosing large, mature trees provide seasonal colour and thermal comfort as well as filtered views under their canopies to adjoining spaces. The linear repetition of well-formed tree trunks provides order and pattern, while the mix of deciduous and evergreen species provides variety through a range of leaf colour and texture. Apart from the mulched flower beds the ground surface is irrigated grass.

The northern open grassed section flanking the central terrace provides dramatic east-west views between significant government buildings and across the ornamental fountains of the central terrace. Shady north-south and east-west walkways provide pedestrian access across the place and columnar (fastigiata) species set in square planting beds that produce distinctive autumnal colour, define key entry points and pathway nodes across the site.

Community-based Values

Evidence of community-based aesthetic values is presented in Section 4.1 above, together with the discussion about social values.

4.3 CREATIVE ACHIEVEMENT

Much of the evidence of aesthetic and creative achievement is outlined in the landscape description at Section 2.2 above. Key evidence offered in that section is summarised below.

Key aspects of the creative achievement of Parkes Place are:

- the sympathetic adaptation of the Griffins' lozenge plan for the terrace (ie. Parkes Place);
- incorporation of a City Beautiful layout through symmetry and rectilinear geometry;
- dramatic enhancement of the Land Axis vista;
- creation of a range of spaces for different public uses;
- selection of suitable tree species for function, climate and beauty;
- implementation of exemplary design principles utilising mass plantings with trees; and
- implementation of a garden initiative to engage all Australians (ie. the National Rose Gardens).

4.4 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

There is no evidence of any scientific value within the study area.

It is noted elsewhere that there is a potential for sub-surface deposits of Aboriginal cultural material to be present within sand bodies, if sandy deposits underlie the study area. However, the existence of sandy deposits has not been ascertained, and the likelihood of such deposits has not been determined.