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#### Parliament House Vista, Anzac Pde, Parkes, ACT

**Photographs:** None  
**List:** Commonwealth Heritage List  
**Class:** Historic  
**Legal Status:** [Listed place](#) (22/06/2004)  
**Place ID:** 105466  
**Place File No:** 8/01/000/0075  
**Summary Statement of Significance:**

#### Design Importance

The Parliament House Vista is the central designed landscape of Canberra, that expresses the core of the Walter Burley Griffin design vision for Canberra. It is highly significant for its symbolic representation of the democratic interchange between the people and their elected representatives and its use of the natural landforms to generate a strong planning geometry. It expresses a masterly synthesis and ordering of topographical features and administrative functions to meet the needs of a national capital. The vista landscape embraces the central land axis and part of the water axis and most of the Parliamentary Triangle including the area known as the Parliamentary Zone. The significance incorporates Walter Burley Griffin's vision for the area, as the focus of Commonwealth parliamentary and governmental activity as well as national cultural life. This vision has been partly realised and the place is the setting for major, government, judicial and cultural institutions. The northern extent of the vista of Anzac Parade and the Australian War Memorial, despite differing from the original plan, are significant for memorial purposes developed in response to the needs of the people. Despite being modified to a lesser degree to accommodate the impact of wars on Australians, the Vista now presents as a philosophical concept expressed in urban planning, landscape and architecture, to achieve a grand vision of a symbolic, unified and visually dramatic place (Criterion F.1)  
( Australian Historic Themes 7.4 Federating Australia, 8.10 , Pursuing excellence in the arts and sciences)

The Parliament House Vista incorporating the central national area, is the core of the most ambitious and most successful example of twentieth century urban planning in Australia. It is important for its design pattern with large landscape and waterscape spaces with their enframement by treed avenues and at the lake by bridges, the terminal vista features of the Australian War Memorial and Mount Ainslie at the northern end and Parliament House at the southern end, with the Carillon and Captain Cook Jet creating balanced vertical features in the water plane (Criterion F.1).

The spatial setting of the buildings as features in the landscape reflects Beaux Arts planning concepts and the building masses and their careful location complement the significance of the overall landscape pattern. Across the Parliamentary Triangle, the buildings of Old Parliament House, and East and West Blocks provide a distinctive

Stripped Classical architectural patterned horizontal band, that contributes to the symmetrical overall patterning of the landscape. At a higher elevation, Parliament House is a significant feature terminating the southern end of the land axis, culminating the classical landmark image of the triangle apex. The John Gorton Building (the former Administrative Building) and the Treasury Building balance the composition on King George Terrace while at the Lake edge the post-war architecture of the National Library of Australia and the High Court - National Gallery Precinct are prominent modern architectural forms and have a significant historical layering effect. The Portal Buildings provide balanced building massing at the southern end of Anzac Parade (Criterion F.1).

Avenues of trees along the terraces, roads and pathways of deciduous, pine, and eucalypt species provide colour, character, and contrast, emphasising the significance of the formal symmetrical design. Lombardy Poplars in groups of four, form sentinels at key locations. Water fountains, and statues also reinforce the significance of the total design pattern of the place. On the northern expanse of the vista the landscape pattern is the wide sweeping avenue space emphasised by red scoria gravel in the central strip and edged by large Blue Gums (Criterion F.1).

The vista landscape is significant for its richness of features. Many places in the Vista area have individual heritage significance for their architectural design and historic importance. These include Old Parliament House and Curtilage, East Block Government Offices, West Block and the Dugout, John Gorton Building, the National Library of Australia, the High Court of Australia, the National Gallery of Australia, Blundells Farmhouse, Slab Outbuildings and Surrounds, the Australian War Memorial, the Portal Buildings, The High Court - National Gallery Precinct, the Carillon, and King George V Memorial (Criteria F.1 and A3).

Within the area are important parklands and gardens enhancing the significance of the landscape setting. These include the Gardens of Old Parliament House (the former Senate and House of Representative Gardens), important for expressing their history in plantings, sports facilities, modest features and layout pattern. Also important is the Sculpture Garden of the National Gallery, a significant native style garden, and the National Rose Gardens. Commonwealth Park, the Peace Park, the Lakeshore Promenade and Kings Park are important landscapes for their design and popular use (Criteria F.1 and A3.)

Adding to the richness of the place is the manner in which Griffin's vision of democracy has also been emphasised, as places within the area have become identified with political protest actions by people, as exemplified in the significant Aboriginal Embassy site (Criteria F.1 and A3).

### Historic Importance

The central national area of Canberra is strongly associated with the history of politics and government in Australia and the development of Canberra as the Australian National Capital. It is significant as the home of the Commonwealth Parliament, the focus of the Federal Government since 1927, initially in the Old Parliament House and from 1988 in the new Parliament House. The various government buildings in the area reinforce the association with Australian government and political history, including East and West Blocks, the Administrative Building, the Treasury Building and the High Court. The latter, being set apart from Parliament House but facing it is symbolic of the judicial role of the High Court as a physical representation of the separation of powers (Criterion A.4, Australian Historic Themes: 7.2 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy).

The central national area has strong links with the planning and development of Canberra as the Australian Capital. The relocation of Parliament to Canberra and the central national area in 1927 was the focus of an intense period of development of the new city and gave purpose to Canberra as the Nation's Capital. Over time this association has been reinforced by the construction of major government buildings in the area, such as the Treasury Building, the Administration Building (now John Gorton Building), the Portal Buildings and latterly the new Parliament House, as well as the construction of major cultural institutions. The area as intended has become the focus of Commonwealth parliamentary and governmental activity as well as, to some extent, national cultural life. (Criterion A.4) (Australian Historic Themes: 4.1 Planning urban settlement, 7.2 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy, 7.3 Federating Australia).

The area has been associated since 1941 with the development of Australian cultural life and national identity through the presence of such institutions as the Australian War Memorial, the National Gallery of Australia, the National Science and Technology Centre and the National Library of Australia. The national cultural institutions reinforce the national character of the area and are an important symbolic group in Australia's national cultural life. The Australian War Memorial and Anzac Parade memorials and, to a lesser extent, the other memorials have and continue to play a very important role in fostering aspects of national identity, in particular the Australian War Memorial through its role as a National Shrine for all Australians (Criterion A.4, Australian Historic Themes 8.8 Remembering the Fallen).

### Social Importance

The area has strong and special associations with the broad Australian community because of its social values as a symbol of Australia and Federal Government. The values have developed over many years since Canberra's creation and the relocation of the Parliament in 1927 gave them a special focus. The special association is reflected in the use of the area as the location for national memorials, the number of tourists who have and continue to visit the area, the media portrayal of Canberra and federal politics and the continuing use of the area as the venue for occasional ceremonies and political protests by sections of the community. Memorial features include sculptures, plaques, commemorative trees, water features and gardens. The collection of sculptures, associated art and design which comprise the Anzac Parade Memorials, give expression to key aspects of the history of Australia's armed forces and Australia's war involvement, and possess high social value (Criterion G.1, Australian Historic Themes 8.8 Remembering the fallen, 8.9 Commemorating significant events and people).

The special association for the community is also the use of the area by people demonstrating against government decisions. The central national area, particularly Parkes Place in front of Old Parliament House, has been used for countless demonstrations (Criterion G.1).

The landscape spaces are important for social activities of visitors and Canberra residents and these include Canberra festivals, water events, national events and parades such as Anzac Day Parade and the Dawn Service, and other commemorative services (Criterion G.1).

### Aesthetic Value

The place has high aesthetic significance due to the visual impact of the extensive open sweeping vista along the land axis that can be experienced in two directions, the designed

axes set within natural features of forested hills, patterns and textures of architectural massing accentuated by planned open spaces, water planes and tree plantings that are arranged across the area. The vista is significant for its visual drama with its ability to engage viewers in the visual perspective of the sweeping vista to the terminal features. The aesthetic significance is also a result of the large scale qualities of the axes, including the open green spaces, combined with patterns and symmetrical characteristics of the road networks and numerous designed smaller attributes. These include the rose gardens, the Old Parliament House Gardens, Commonwealth Park, the street tree plantings, the lake-land interface and the Sculpture Garden of the National Gallery, and many intimate spaces rich in texture, colour, fragrance and in some cases, art works and water features (Criterion E1).

#### Associational Value

The central national area has a special association with its designer, Walter Burley Griffin. Griffin is an important figure in Australia's cultural history for his overall design of Canberra as the Nation's Capital. The special association between the central national area and Griffin results from the area being the centrepiece of the planning geometry for Canberra and perhaps the only part of his Canberra plan to survive relatively intact. The area has a strong association with Marion Mahoney Griffin who prepared the perspective drawings of the Vista. The Vista area has a strong association with numerous architects and planners, in particular John Smith Murdoch, Chief architect of the Commonwealth Government, and Thomas Charles Weston, Superintendent of Parks, Gardens and Afforestation in Canberra, and notable planners of the National Capital Development Commission such as Sir John Overall, Peter Harrison and Paul Reid (Criterion H.1).

#### Official Values:

##### Criteria

A Processes

##### Values

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The central national area has strong links with the planning and development of Canberra as the Australian Capital. The relocation of Parliament to Canberra and the central national area in 1927 was the focus of an intense period of development of the new city and gave purpose to Canberra as the Nation's Capital. Over time this association has been reinforced by the construction of major government buildings in the area, such as the Treasury Building, the Administration Building (now John Gorton Building), the Portal Buildings and latterly the new Parliament House, as well as the construction of major cultural institutions. The area as intended has become the focus of Commonwealth parliamentary and governmental activity as well as, to some

extent, national cultural life.

The area has been associated since 1941 with the development of Australian cultural life and national identity through the presence of such institutions as the Australian War Memorial, the National Gallery of Australia, the National Science and Technology Centre and the National Library of Australia. The national cultural institutions reinforce the national character of the area and are an important symbolic group in Australia's national cultural life. The Australian War Memorial and Anzac Parade memorials and, to a lesser extent, the other memorials have and continue to play a very important role in fostering aspects of national identity, in particular the Australian War Memorial through its role as a National Shrine for all Australians.

The vista landscape is significant for its richness of features. Many places in the Vista area have individual heritage significance for their architectural design and historic importance. These include Old Parliament House and Curtilage, East Block Government Offices, West Block and the Dugout, John Gorton Building, the National Library of Australia, the High Court of Australia, the National Gallery of Australia, Blundells Farmhouse, Slab Outbuildings and Surrounds, the Australian War Memorial, the Portal Buildings, The High Court - National Gallery Precinct, the Carillon, and King George V Memorial.

Within the area are important parklands and gardens enhancing the significance of the landscape setting. These include the Gardens of Old Parliament House (the former Senate and House of Representative Gardens) with their surviving layout, the Sculpture Garden of the National Gallery, the National Rose Gardens, Commonwealth Park, the Peace Park, the Lakeshore Promenade and Kings Park .

Adding to the richness of the place is the manner in which Griffin's vision of democracy has also been emphasised, as places within the area have become identified with political protest actions by people, as exemplified in the significant Aboriginal Embassy site.

#### Attributes

The concentration of buildings, parklands and gardens that support Commonwealth parliamentary and governmental activity as well as, to some extent, national cultural life. These include Old Parliament House and Curtilage, East Block Government Offices, West Block and the Dugout, John Gorton Building, the National Library of Australia, the High Court of Australia, the National Gallery of Australia, Blundells Farmhouse, Slab Outbuildings and Surrounds, the Australian War Memorial, the Portal Buildings, The High Court - National Gallery Precinct, the Carillon, King George V Memorial, Sculpture Garden of the National Gallery, the

National Rose Gardens, Commonwealth Park, the Peace Park, the Lakeshore Promenade and Kings Park and the Aboriginal Embassy site.

- E Aesthetic characteristics** The place has high aesthetic significance due to the visual impact of the extensive open sweeping vista along the land axis that can be experienced in two directions, the designed axes set within natural features of forested hills, patterns and textures of architectural massing accentuated by planned open spaces, water planes and tree plantings that are arranged across the area. The vista is significant for its visual drama with its ability to engage viewers in the visual perspective of the sweeping vista to the terminal features. The aesthetic significance is also a result of the large scale qualities of the axes, including the open green spaces, combined with patterns and symmetrical characteristics of the road networks and numerous designed smaller attributes. These include the rose gardens, the Old Parliament House Gardens, Commonwealth Park, the street tree plantings, the lake-land interface and the Sculpture Garden of the National Gallery, and many intimate spaces rich in texture, colour, fragrance and in some cases, art works and water features.

#### Attributes

The extensive vista along the land axis, the forested hills, patterns and textures of architectural massing accentuated by planned open spaces, water features and tree plantings, art works, the terminal features plus the interplay of scale and texture in the designed landscape.

- F Technical achievement** The Parliament House Vista is the central designed landscape of Canberra, that expresses the core of the Walter Burley Griffin design vision for Canberra. It is highly significant for its symbolic representation of the democratic interchange between the people and their elected representatives and its use of the natural landforms to generate a strong planning geometry. It expresses a masterly synthesis and ordering of topographical features and administrative functions to meet the needs of a national capital. The vista landscape embraces the central land axis and part of the water axis and most of the Parliamentary Triangle including the area known as the Parliamentary Zone. The significance incorporates Walter Burley Griffin's vision for the area, as the focus of Commonwealth parliamentary and governmental activity as well as national cultural life. This vision has been partly realised and the place is the setting for major, government, judicial and cultural institutions. The northern extent of the vista of Anzac Parade and the Australian War Memorial, despite differing from the original plan, are significant for memorial purposes developed in response to the needs of the people. Despite being modified to a lesser degree to accommodate the impact of wars on Australians, the Vista now presents as a philosophical concept expressed in urban planning, landscape and architecture, to achieve a grand vision of a

symbolic, unified and visually dramatic place.

The Parliament House Vista incorporating the central national area, is the core of the most ambitious and most successful example of twentieth century urban planning in Australia. It is important for its design pattern with large landscape and waterscape spaces with their enframement by treed avenues and at the lake by bridges, the terminal vista features of the Australian War Memorial and Mount Ainslie at the northern end and Parliament House at the southern end, with the Carillon and Captain Cook Jet creating balanced vertical features in the water plane.

The spatial setting of the buildings as features in the landscape reflects Beaux Arts planning concepts and the building masses and their careful location complement the significance of the overall landscape pattern. Across the Parliamentary Triangle, the buildings of Old Parliament House, and East and West Blocks provide a distinctive Stripped Classical architectural patterned horizontal band, that contributes to the symmetrical overall patterning of the landscape. At a higher elevation, Parliament House is a significant feature terminating the southern end of the land axis, culminating the classical landmark image of the triangle apex. The John Gorton Building (the former Administrative Building) and the Treasury Building balance the composition on King George Terrace while at the Lake edge the post-war architecture of the National Library of Australia and the High Court - National Gallery Precinct are prominent modern architectural forms and have a significant historical layering effect. The Portal Buildings provide balanced building massing at the southern end of Anzac Parade.

Avenues of trees along the terraces, roads and pathways of deciduous, pine, and eucalypt species provide colour, character, and contrast, emphasising the significance of the formal symmetrical design. Lombardy Poplars in groups of four, form sentinels at key locations. Water fountains, and statues also reinforce the significance of the total design pattern of the place. On the northern expanse of the vista the landscape pattern is the wide sweeping avenue space emphasised by red scoria gravel in the central strip and edged by large Blue Gums.

Many places in the Vista area have individual heritage significance for their architectural design and historic importance. These include Old Parliament House and Curtilage, East Block Government Offices, West Block and the Dugout, John Gorton Building, the National Library of Australia, the High Court of Australia, the National Gallery of Australia, Blundells Farmhouse, Slab Outbuildings and Surrounds, the Australian War Memorial, the Portal Buildings, The High Court - National Gallery Precinct, the Carillon, and King George V Memorial.

Within the area are important parklands and gardens enhancing the significance of the landscape setting that include the Sculpture Garden of the National Gallery, a significant native style garden, and the National Rose Gardens. Commonwealth Park, the Peace Park, the Lakeshore Promenade and Kings Park are important landscapes for their design and popular use.

Adding to the richness of the place is the manner in which Griffin's vision of democracy has also been emphasised, as places within the area have become identified with political protest actions by people, as exemplified in the significant Aboriginal Embassy site.

#### Attributes

The whole of the vista, including all elements and features contained within it, as well as the natural wooded hills beyond.

#### G Social value

The area has strong and special associations with the broad Australian community because of its social values as a symbol of Australia and Federal Government. The values have developed over many years since Canberra's creation and the relocation of the Parliament in 1927 gave them a special focus. The special association is reflected in the use of the area as the location for national memorials, the number of tourists who have and continue to visit the area, the media portrayal of Canberra and federal politics and the continuing use of the area as the venue for occasional ceremonies and political protests by sections of the community. Memorial features include sculptures, plaques, commemorative trees, water features and gardens. The collection of sculptures, associated art and design which comprise the Anzac Parade Memorials, give expression to key aspects of the history of Australia's armed forces and Australia's war involvement, and possess high social value.

The special association for the community is also the use of the area by people demonstrating against government decisions. The central national area, particularly Parkes Place in front of Old Parliament House, has been used for countless demonstrations.

The landscape spaces are important for social activities of visitors and Canberra residents and these include Canberra festivals, water events, national events and parades such as Anzac Day Parade and the Dawn Service, and other commemorative services.

#### Attributes

Memorial features including sculptures, plaques, commemorative trees, water features and gardens. Also, recreational landscape spaces and gathering spaces in which the community may demonstrate.

**H Significant people**

The central national area has a special association with its designer, Walter Burley Griffin. Griffin is an important figure in Australia's cultural history for his overall design of Canberra as the Nation's Capital. The special association between the central national area and Griffin results from the area being the centrepiece of the planning geometry for Canberra and perhaps the only part of his Canberra plan to survive relatively intact. The area has a strong association with Marion Mahoney Griffin who prepared the perspective drawings of the Vista. The Vista area has a strong association with numerous architects and planners, in particular John Smith Murdoch, Chief architect of the Commonwealth Government, and Thomas Charles Weston, Superintendent of Parks, Gardens and Afforestation in Canberra, and notable planners of the National Capital Development Commission such as Sir John Overall, Peter Harrison and Paul Reid.

**Attributes**

The whole of the vista, its planned layout, and the view from the top of Mount Ainslie which illustrates the realisation of Marion Mahoney Griffin's perspective drawing.

**Description:****HISTORY**

The Australian Constitution left the location of the Capital to be decided by the new Federal Parliament. It declared that Melbourne would be the temporary home for the Federal Parliament and public servants until a new city was built at least 100 miles from Sydney. An agreed territory of 903 square miles included the water catchment of the Cotter River and the river valley of the Molonglo for the setting for the city. The Department of Home Affairs commenced works for services and city planning. In 1910 the Secretary of the Federal Department of Home Affairs, David Miller requested permission of Minister O'Malley to conduct a design competition to elicit ideas for the city. At the time the Federal Capital area was proclaimed, the river flats of the Molonglo, Mount Ainslie, Camp Hill and Kurrajong Hill had been extensively denuded of vegetation from a long period of clearing and grazing. Some exotic trees were established in parts of the area, around structures such as Blundell's cottage and St Johns Church and graveyard.

**The Canberra Plan**

Walter Burley Griffin won the competition for the design of Canberra in 1912. The plan was expressed in beautifully rendered illustrations prepared by Griffin's wife Marion Mahoney Griffin as plans, elevations and sections painted on silk.

The order of the city was for a great triangle aligned with the mountains which rose above the site. The triangle was to be defined by tree-lined avenues and spanned the central basin of an impounded lake. The triangle would consist of a series of terraces arranged in the functions of government and representing democracy. It was a synthesis of function and design where the Order of the Site (the natural environment) and the Order of Functions (the needs of the people) are perfectly integrated by specific geometry (Reid 2002). The Capitol was a main feature of the design

In terms of vistas, the Griffin vision was represented in two renderings drawn by Marion Mahony Griffin. In the rendering looking from Mt Ainslie towards the Capitol, the drama of the vista focuses on the Capitol, the building representing the aspirational forces in Australian national life, with the final termination in the mountains beyond. Below the

Capitol, the Parliament House and the Government departments are terraced down to the Lake providing a symbol of a transparent democracy in action. The observer is standing at Mt Ainslie, a point representative of the power and influence of nature and the highest point of the vista. Griffin's plan for the ideal city, the philosophical triumvirate of humanity, democracy and nature is iconographed along the land axis which together with the water axis is the ordering geometry of the vista and the city. Griffin envisaged a dense city with a coming together of the population in a Casino (something akin to the recreational city gardens in pre war Berlin, Copenhagen, and Stockholm) and Plaisance descending from the foot of Mt Ainslie. Intersected by a busy commercial street, Constitution Avenue, the Plaisance unfolded to the area designated for cultural activity from which the people could look across the lake (or water axis) to the area of national government that was climaxed by the building symbolic of national achievement and aspiration, the Capitol.

Griffin's 1913 land use plan for the central National area indicates his intentions. Moving from north to south along the land axis, he proposed a park at the northern end of the land axis, public gardens on the north side of the lake, the lake itself (now Lake Burley Griffin), government buildings flanking a central terrace court to the south of the lake, Parliament House on Camp Hill, the Capitol building on Capital Hill flanked by the Governor General's residence to the west and the Prime Minister's residence to the east. The Capitol building was not intended to be the Parliament but rather to be for popular reception and ceremonial activities or for archives or otherwise to commemorate Australian achievements. Griffin's philosophical vision expressed in a remarkable urban planning form has been affected by the realities of Australian political and cultural life as well as by the circumstances and juxtapositions of historic events. Australian planners following Griffin have rearranged the icons to reflect the dominant realities and meanings of Australian life.

Griffin's various plans for the central National area of Canberra all included a basic planning framework, which has been constructed and survives to the present. This framework includes the land axis, joining Capital Hill and Mount Ainslie, the water axis, the radiating avenues from Capital Hill, Commonwealth and Kings Avenues, the arc of Parkes Way, the northern punctuation of the land axis by the Australian War Memorial, the roads encircling Capital Hill, State and Capital Circles and the southern punctuation of the land axis by the Parliament House of 1988. In addition to the alignment of axes and avenues which defined Griffin's city plan the triangle was a basic element on which the whole city was built. In his design Griffin had created three urban centres connected by main avenues. Capital Hill as the government centre, Mt Vernon as the municipal centre and Mt Pleasant as the market centre were integral to the plan. The northern avenue, Constitution Avenue, was the municipal axis.

Griffin prepared a preliminary plan in 1913 and a revised plan in 1918 following which the Official Plan was gazetted in 1925. Griffin left in 1920 leaving development under the control of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC) chaired by the planner, John Sulman. The Committee had been appointed to complete sufficient permanent buildings to enable Parliament to move from Melbourne to Canberra.

#### Development

Tree planting began in the early years of Canberra's development, and by 1921 some 17,000 trees were planted (Hendry). Within the Vista area tree planting commenced around 1923 in Prospect Parkway, now known as Anzac Parade. Early images show tree planting in a scalloped arrangement along the length of the avenue. For 3 years from 1925, trees were planted in association with the construction of the Provisional Parliament House. The formal structural planting around the House including Cedars, Cypresses and Lombardy Poplars was completed for the opening (Hendry). The

planting proposals were finalised by Charles Weston, Superintendent of Parks, Gardens and Afforestation, and from 1926, carried out by his successor Alexander Bruce. The planting design aimed to create through the use of a balanced mix of evergreen and deciduous trees, formally shaped grassed vistas and 'outdoor rooms' in scale with the Provisional Parliament House. The formally arranged groups of Lombardy Poplars to achieve 'sentinel' features at the entrances and the pedestrian reference points in the landscape, is attributed to the involvement of John Smith Murdoch, Chief Architect for the Commonwealth Government, in the design. Cedars were used at right angles to the Land Axis. Most of the trees planted in Parkes Place were exotics with the only eucalypts planted adjacent to the Senate and House of Representatives Gardens (Gray 1995). The first major structure to be placed within the area was the Old Parliament House, then called the Provisional Parliament House. In 1923 the Commonwealth Parliament agreed to the proposed building which was sited in front of Camp Hill, Griffin's intended location of the permanent Parliament House. At the time, Griffin protested recognising that if built, the provisional building would remove any possibility of a permanent Parliament House being built on Camp Hill. Nonetheless the Commonwealth proceeded. In 1925 the Federal Capital Commission (FCC) was established under Sir John Butters. The Commission replaced the FCAC. The FCC was responsible for moving the public service to Canberra and otherwise establishing the city in time for the opening of Parliament House. A number of other significant projects were undertaken at the same time as the construction of (Old) Parliament House, which was designed by John Smith Murdoch and completed in 1927. Either side of the Parliament House, private gardens were established for the use of Members of Parliament. On either side of Camp Hill, two government office buildings were constructed, known as East and West Blocks and these were also completed in 1927. East and West Blocks were also designed by Murdoch in a similar style to Old Parliament House.

In 1926 a delegation of the Empire Parliamentary Association visited the new Parliament House and planted an avenue of 12 commemorative trees, to mark the event of the first use of the House of Representatives. Ten Roman Cypresses (*CUPRESSUS SEMPERVIRENS* 'STRICTA') were planted at right angles to the House with each tree planted by a delegate and marked by a brass plaque. To commemorate the opening of Parliament House in 1927, the Duke of York planted a Bunya Pine (*ARUACARIA BIDWILLI*) near Kings Avenue. The Marquis of Salisbury and Mr Arthur Henderson planted the Lombardy poplars in the courtyards of the Provisional Parliament House (Pryor and Banks 1991, Gray 1995).

In 1927 the Canberra National Memorials Committee named the area in front of Parliament House - Parkes Place, to commemorate Sir Henry Parkes. King Edward, King George and Queen Victoria Terraces, and Langton and Walpole Crescents were named for links to the first 50 years of Federation (Gray 1995).

The Gardens designed and constructed as part of the Old Parliament House Complex was conceived by the Federal Capital Advisory Committee in the early 1920s and constructed by the Federal Capital Commission from the mid 1920s in time for the opening of Parliament in May 1927. Formal enclosed gardens were the style of the time and James Orwin of the Sydney office of the Director of Works for NSW prepared sketch plans that were finalised by Murdoch. Most of the trees for the Parliamentary gardens were planted by late 1925. Around the same time road patterns for the Parliamentary area following Griffin's concepts were prepared.

Formal rose gardens in front of the House were first proposed by Weston in 1924. The idea was finally realised when the National Rose Gardens were established in 1933 by the Canberra Horticultural Society in association with the Department of the Interior. The

design was developed by A. Bruce based on the plan of petals of an open bloom with colours arranged from deep red in the central area progressing through yellow, white pink and coppery shades. Rose gardens were also commenced around the same time in the Senate and House of Representatives Gardens. By 1938, these gardens were established with formal garden beds and recreation courts, and surrounded by young cypresses which were later clipped into hedges (Patrick and Wallace).

Following the opening of the Provisional Parliament House by the Duke of York on 9 May 1927, the area in front of the House was used for official ceremonies for Anzac and Remembrance Days with a temporary cenotaph, until the opening of the Australian War Memorial in 1941. Initially this area had simple landscaping treatment of lawns. Rose gardens were added in the 1950s, and the car parking area in the forecourt added in the 1960s.

Weston and Murdoch were both given British Empire Awards in 1927 for their contribution to the nation.

In 1946 a major tree thinning of the Parliamentary Zone was initiated by Lindsay Pryor, Superintendent, Parks and Gardens. All the golden cypresses, white poplars, pin oaks and Lawson's cypress on King George Terrace were removed (Gray 1995).

In order to accommodate other government departments, a competition was held in 1924 for the design of the Administrative building, flanking the land axis in Parkes, which was to house about eight departments. The building was to be the first in the Parliamentary Triangle and its design was considered important because it would influence future buildings in the central National area. In 1924, G Sydney Jones won the competition. Work started in 1927 and the foundations were completed in 1928. However, work was stopped at this point because of the Depression. There were then many delays. The design of the proposed building was modified in 1946, construction started again in 1947 and the new design required the demolition of the original foundations. The building was substantially completed in 1956. The building is claimed to have been the largest Australian office building when completed. It was renamed as the John Gorton Building in 1999.

The major development at the northern end of the land axis was the construction of the Australian War Memorial. The site was agreed in 1923 and in 1928 Griffin expressed the view that the proposed site was suitable for the memorial. Construction began in 1928 but was not completed until 1941.

Although a memorial to King George V was proposed in 1936 it was not until 1941 that the architectural part was constructed but the bronze figure was not developed until after World War II. It was unveiled in 1953 but attracted criticism for blocking the vista to the Australian War Memorial. In 1968 King George Terrace was realigned and the memorial was moved to its current location west of the land axis, on a corner of the western part of the National Rose Garden.

In 1955 a Select Senate Committee of Inquiry urged tree planting and landscape works to be undertaken in Canberra under the direction of the National Capital Development Commission. The Commission sought guidance from landscape designers including Lord William Holford and Dame Sylvia Crowe. Holford recommended that a predominantly Australian character be retained around Lake Burley Griffin with autumn coloured foliage trees used in a dramatic way. Parliament House was to be built on the lakeside with a great forecourt. In 1968 the lakeshore location was rejected in favour of Camp Hill or Capital Hill. During the 1960s, the landscaping of the Parliamentary Triangle was modified to create more formality in Parkes Place. This included realigning roads, installing the four fountains in the pools in the land axis, paving and the relocation King George V statue.

The National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) Act of 1957 set in motion a significant phase in the development of Canberra with the support of Robert Menzies Liberal government. The report of British Town Planner Sir William Holford stressed the need for 'unified design' for Canberra. This view was supported by the Senate Select Committee which propagated Holford's concept of a 'park like landscape...in the heart of Canberra, in which monumental buildings functioned both as symbols of government and of Australian unity'. The visual design of this landscape, the views along the main axial lines and avenues as well as the grouping of monumental buildings were considered to be the elements upon which the success of Canberra as a city of world standing depended. Holford's recommendations included siting the future houses of parliament on the lakeside and developing two monumental buildings on the municipal axis north of a new road connection, which became Parkes Way. The NCDC's acceptance of the Holford vision set the design context for the completion of Anzac Parade and the construction of the Portal Buildings under the direction of NCDC architects and planners. The Portal Buildings have heritage significance.

After a number of schemes for Canberra's lake, detailed planning of the Lake edges was begun in 1954. Lake Burley Griffin was created in 1964 by the damming of the Molonglo River by Scrivener Dam. It reached its predicted level of 556 metres in the same year. The northern shore of the lake between Commonwealth and Kings Avenues was landscaped from about this time to create Commonwealth and Kings Parks. In 1970, two vertical features were opened in the central basin of the lake. The Carillon, located on Aspen Island in the eastern part of the central basin, was a gift from the British Government to mark the fiftieth Jubilee of the founding of Canberra in 1963. In the western part of the central basin is the Captain Cook Memorial water jet commissioned by the National Capital Development Commission as part of the Cook Bicentenary year. In 1968 a small restaurant was built on a corner of the western part of the National Rose Garden. NCDC architect and landscape architect Gareth Roberts and architect and landscape architect Richard Clough collaborated on the design of Anzac Parade and its architectural elements at this time. The two Portal Buildings, Anzac Park East and Anzac Park West, were completed in 1965 and 1966 respectively. With the establishment of the Australian War Memorial in the 1940s, the surrounding landscape was imbued with an associated symbolic character. This included the creation of Anzac Park and Anzac Parade. Anzac Park became the setting for a series of memorials commemorating Australian involvement and sacrifice in war. Anzac Parade was opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on Anzac Day 1965, the fiftieth anniversary of the landing of the Anzacs at Gallipoli. It is the setting for a series of memorials commemorating Australian involvement and sacrifice in war and is the major national venue for the Anzac Day March and other ceremonies to commemorate those who served Australia in times of conflict. It has a deep symbolism for many Australians and its vista, linking the Memorial with Parliament House, adds aesthetic and emotional value to the place, which has become part of one of the major cultural landscapes of Australia. The notion of a ceremonial space of this grandeur is not found elsewhere in Australia.

Over time the spaces flanking the land axis to the south of the Lake have been filled with government buildings of varying character. These include the Treasury Building established 1967-70, the National Library in 1968, the High Court in 1980, National Gallery in 1982 and the National Science and Technology Centre in 1988. Associated with the Gallery is the extensive and significant Sculpture Garden established in 1982.

In 1972 an informal Aboriginal Embassy was established in front of Old Parliament House. The Embassy became the focus of a campaign for land and other rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 1992 the Embassy was re-established.

The most recent major change to the central National area was the construction of a new Parliament House on Capital Hill. In 1974, The site of Capital Hill for Parliament House, was chosen by a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament. An Act of Parliament extended Parliamentary jurisdiction over work in the Parliamentary Triangle, henceforth known as the Parliamentary Zone. Completed in 1988, the building has resulted in a number of significant changes to the area. The relocation of the Parliament to the new building left the Old Parliament House without its original use. The construction of the building also resulted in the levelling of Camp Hill, Griffin's intended location for a Parliament House and its incorporation into the broader formal landscape of the new Federation Mall. Finally, the new Parliament House involved the construction of a large complex of buildings and extensive new landscape areas. The changes affected most of Capital Hill. The winning design, by Mitchell, Giurgola and Thorp Architects, considered the land axis of Canberra as the fundamental gesture of the City, a line around which all other design has evolved in circular and radial directions (Reid 2002).

During 2001-2002 new designed features were constructed across the Land Axis of the Vista landscape. These are Commonwealth Place and Reconciliation Place. In addition, a rotunda with exhibition, called Magna Carta Place is located to the west of the former Senate Garden.

Following the construction of Parliament House, emphasis was placed on the landscape of the Parliament Zone. The development of Federation Mall with its trees and central space was to balance Anzac Parade and to complete the visual Land Axis from Capital Hill to the War Memorial.

#### Use

By the turn of the century (2000-2001), the area was used for countless public events. These include memorial services such as the Anzac Day March and the Dawn Service, public protest demonstrations, celebration events, sporting activities, water races, art displays, fireworks and large-scale concerts. In addition it is used by people informally for weddings, picnics, and fairs. The area is a popular destination for tourists and schoolchildren.

#### DESCRIPTION

The central National area of Canberra is an extensive cultural landscape comprising buildings, roads, parks, tree plantings and a lake. The area is designated for Parliamentary and National Capital uses. The major features of the area include: Parliament House with its gardens and paved areas, State Circle Cutting (geological feature), Old Parliament House and curtilage, East Block, West Block and the Dugout, the John Gorton Building, the National Gallery of Australia, the High Court of Australia, the High Court - National Gallery precinct, National Science and Technology Centre, the National Library of Australia, Treasury Building, National Rose Gardens, The Sculpture Garden of the National Gallery, King George V Memorial, Aboriginal Embassy, the Portal Buildings, Australian War Memorial and memorials along Anzac Parade, Aspen Island, the Carillon, Kings Park, HMAS Canberra Memorial, Merchant Navy Memorial, Blundell's Cottage, Commonwealth Park, Kings Park, the Peace Park, Regatta Point Exhibition Building and Restaurant, Captain Cook Memorial Water Jet, the Lakeshore Promenade, and extensive mature plantings and avenues of trees such as those along Anzac Parade. The area also includes fountains, roads, car parks, landscaped areas, a restaurant, kiosk and the residence of the Catholic Archbishop. The spaces, particularly the Land Axis, are a major feature.

The central National area has a strong sense of symmetry based on the land axis. The Parliament House, Old Parliament House and Australian War Memorial are located on the axis. In addition, the landscape features of Federation Mall, Parkes Place (the landscape

feature not the roads) and Anzac Parade are also located on the axis. Other major features in the area are generally balanced about the axis such as: East and West Blocks, the gardens of Old Parliament House, the Portal Buildings, the eastern and western parts of the National Rose Gardens, Administrative and Treasury Buildings, the National Gallery/High Court group and the National Library/National Science and Technology Centre group, as well as the Carillon and Captain Cook Memorial water jet. The road system also generally reflects the symmetrical planning of the area based on the land axis.

The Anzac Parade Memorials comprises two main components, Anzac Parade and Anzac Park. Either side of Anzac Parade is bounded by Anzac Park. Treed sloping grassy strips contain 10 symmetrically placed aprons prepared for national memorials. In 2002 there were 11 memorials on Anzac Parade, tributes to the men and women of the Australian military. These memorials are: (1) the Australian Hellenic Memorial, Limestone Avenue intersection, (2) the Australian Army Memorial, near Currong Street, (3) the Australian National Korean Memorial, near Currong Street, (4) the Australian Vietnam forces National Memorial, opposite Booroondara Street, (5) the Desert Mounted Corps Memorial, opposite Amaroo Street (commonly known as the Light Horse Memorial), (6) the New Zealand Memorial (7) the Rats of Tobruk Memorial, opposite (5), (8) Royal Australian Air Force Memorial, opposite Page Street, (9) the Australian Service Nurses Memorial, (10) the Royal Australian Navy Memorial, and (11) Kemal Ataturk Memorial, Fairbairn Avenue intersection.

The array of mature tree plantings are all regarded as important. Some are classified as notable by Pryor and Banks (1991) and these include *CALOCEDRUS DECURRENS* on King George Terrace planted in 1927, *CUPRESSUS ARIZONICA* planted in 1926 on King George Terrace, *EUCALYPTUS GLOBULUS* at the Australian War Memorial, *E. MAIDENII* group planted c 1927. Commemorative trees in the Parkes area, include the *CUPRESSUS SEMPERVIRENS* 'Stricta' planted in 1926 by nine members of the Empire Parliamentary Association, *ARAUCARIA Bidwilli* PLANTED BY THE duke of York in 1927 to commemorate his visit to Canberra to open the first Parliament House and *CUPRESSUS ARIZONICA*, planted by the wife of the then United States President, Mrs Lady Bird Johnson, at the time of their visit to Canberra in 1966. Within Commonwealth Park are a *QUERCUS ROBUR* planted by Princess Marina in 1964, and a *CURRESSUS GLABRA* planted by Mrs Lady Bird Johnson. Within the curtilage of the Australian War Memorial is a *PINUS HALPENSIS* planted by the Duke of Gloucester in 1934, believed to have been raised from seed from a cone collected from Lone Pine Ridge, Gallipoli in 1915. Also in curtilage is a *EUCALYPTUS NICHOLII* to replace the *E. PAUCOFORA* planted by Queen Elizabeth in 1954 to mark the beginning of the Remembrance Driveway to Sydney (Pryor and Banks 1991).

**History:** Not Available

**Condition and Integrity:**

The central National area is an extensive cultural landscape with a variety of landscape and building features. Individual elements vary in their condition and integrity. At a general level, the area is in fair to good condition. The values relating to the cultural landscape design and special association with Griffin are degraded by the changes made over time to Griffin's plan. The location of Old Parliament House, removal of Camp Hill, location of the new Parliament House and parts of the road layout as constructed are all variations from Griffin's plan. Given these changes, the area displays only a poor to medium level of integrity with regard to these values. In 1994 the National Capital Planning Authority released details of the Central National Area Design Study. This includes proposals for significant changes to the area.

**Location:**

About 260ha, comprising the whole of the area bounded by the northern alignment of

State Circle, the western alignment of Kings Avenue, the southern alignment of Parkes Way and the eastern alignment of Commonwealth Avenue, excluding the Archbishops Residence and grounds being Block 1 Section 2 Parkes; the whole of Anzac Parade and Anzac Park and the whole of Section 39, Campbell.

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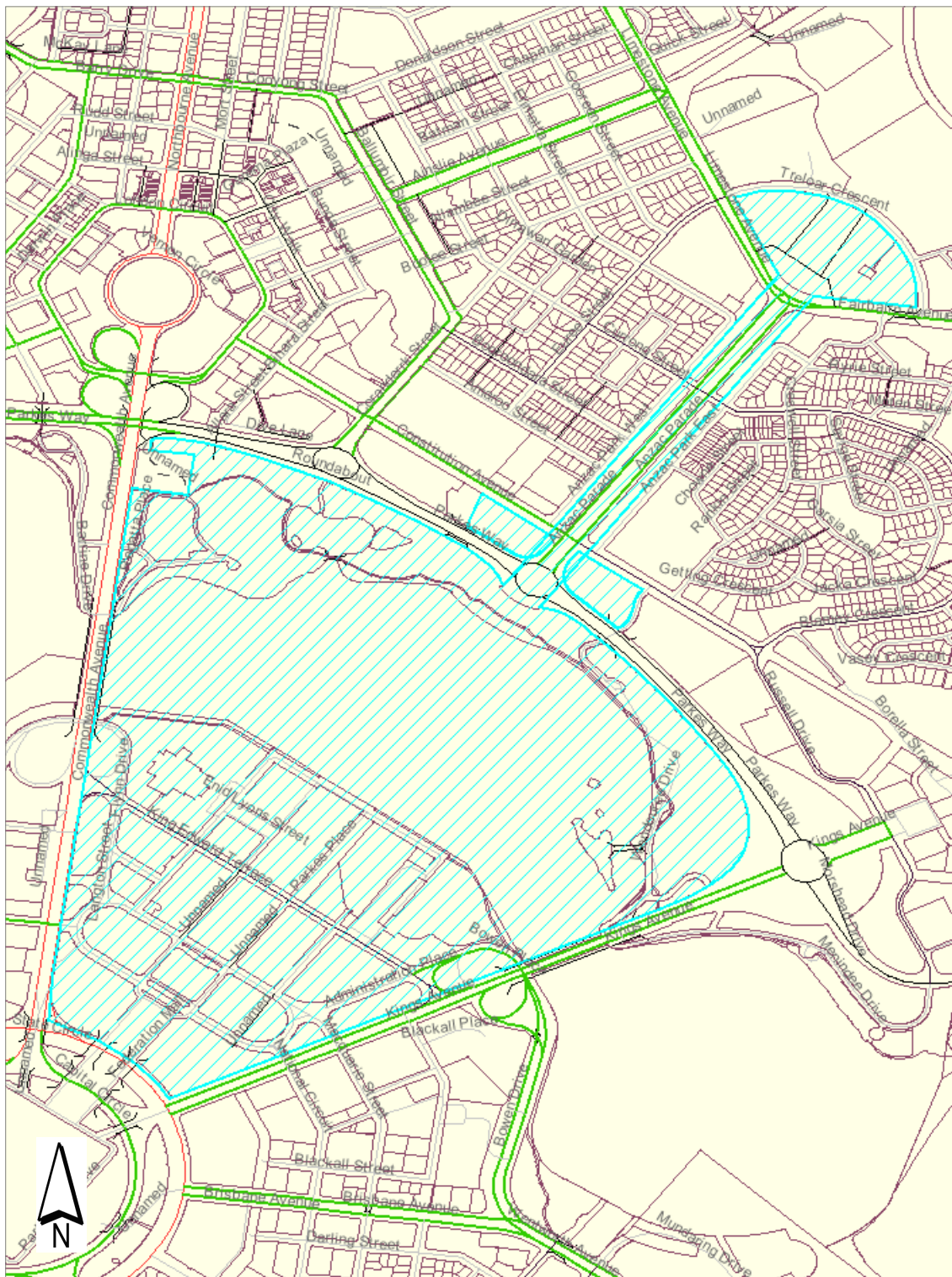
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Report Produced: Fri Aug 11 10:28:08 2006

# Parliament House Vista – CHL



Australian Government  
Department of the Environment and Heritage



- CadLite (Other Territories)
- CadLite (up to 1:100k)
- Aust Coastline/Borders 100K
- Road network**
- National or State Highway
- Freeway
- Main Road
- Secondary Road
- Sealed Road
- Unsealed Road
- Vehicular Track
- Bus Lane
- Restricted Road
- Other
- Bridges
- Railway Stations
- Rail - detailed
- Commonwealth Marine Areas
- Aust Terrestrial 100K

Scale 1:21103

**Comment:** Includes vista and vista extension (Portal Buildings)

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#### Lake Burley Griffin Conservation Area, Lady Denman Dr, Yarralumla, ACT

**Photographs:** None  
**List:** Commonwealth Heritage List  
**Class:** Historic  
**Legal Status:** [Indicative Place](#)  
**Place ID:** 105230  
**Place File No:** 8/01/000/0520  
**Summary Statement of Significance:** Not Available  
**Official Values:** Not Available  
**Description:**  
Planning History

Coinciding with the opening of Parliament in 1901 was the 1901 congress of Engineers, Architects, Surveyors and Others Interested in the Building of the Federal Capital of Australia. The congress advocated that the site for the Federal Capital should have an abundant water supply to furbish the creation of lakes, gardens and fountains.

The government surveyor Charles Scrivener investigated a number of possible sites for Australia's federal capital and recommended the Canberra site on the Molonglo River because of the ability to utilise waters of the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers for ornamental waters for the city. This site for the city was agreed by the Prime Minister and the Premier of New South Wales. The Commonwealth then negotiated rights over the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers. In order to incorporate a lake in the city planning, gauging weirs were established on the Molonglo near Yarralumla Dairy and on the Queanbeyan River near Bradley's Creek.

In 1911 a design competition for planning the federal capital city in the Molonglo Basin, was launched with requirements for ornamental water, parks and gardens. Locations for weirs and river gauging flow stations were included. A thousand copies of the conditions and design material were sent to 10 cities around the world and 137 design entries were received, including 42 Australian entries.

At the time of the competition, two major urban planning philosophies 'City Beautiful' and 'Garden City' coincided. The City Beautiful style consisted of a conceptualised city with integrated classical style urban buildings, public parks and tree lined streets building as a campaign against city ugliness. The style was a mix of natural beauty, formality, axes neo-classicism and the Beaux Arts in its combination of architecture, landscape, sculpture and water features. (Freestone p160-163). Garden City planning was initiated by Ebenezer Howard to combine the best features of town and country and interpretations of the style were implemented in Australia's early Twentieth Century suburbs. These styles set the concept for landscape and water being dominant in the design for the Federal Capital.

The engineer, JA Smith, was one of the majority of judges who awarded first prize to

Walter Burley Griffin in 1912 for his entry in the Federal Capital Design Competition. The other two judges (an architect and a surveyor) were divided about Griffin's entry, and Minister King O'Malley accepted the majority view.

The original design for the lake presented in Walter Burley Griffin's award winning plan for Australia's capital city, consisted of a formal central water bay of circular and curved edges with informal basins to the east and west. The water body formed part of Griffin's geometry for the Canberra Plan, forming an east west axis that crossed the major land axis of the plan. The east basin was at a higher level and was planned to be fluctuating so that the central basins levels could be maintained. Griffin's plan was superior to other competitors, blending the mountains and hills as features of the geometric layout, and incorporating his philosophy of equality, democracy and progress. The water feature of the lake cut across a grand triangle which linked the functions of the city and had three minor hills as its vertices (Firth, 2000).

The Department of Works commenced implementing the city plan but greatly modified Griffin's design. In 1913 Griffin was invited to Australia by Prime Minister Joseph Cook and appointed Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction. Investigation and planning for the lake commenced with Percy Owen, Director General of Works. In 1915 they recommended that the eastern lake be postponed. After World War I, the Federal Capital Advisory Committee was established chaired by Sir John Sulman. As an advocate of the Garden City principles, Sulman focused on the development of suburbs to accommodate public servants. Griffin left his position in Canberra in 1920.

From 1925 the Federal Capital Commission headed by Sir John Butters took control of development of Canberra with greater statutory powers. A proposal to construct a dam in 1926 was postponed. Extensive planting under the office of Parks and Afforestation was undertaken, and Griffin on a visit to Canberra in 1926 pleaded for more native flora planting. Issues regarding the development of the lake were managed by Owen, the first Director General of Works.

Engineering research and analyses over the next 50 years considered how to implement Griffin's concept of central unifying bodies of water in the Molonglo flood plain. The Depression delayed the development of Canberra.

In 1938 the Minister for the Interior announced in Parliament, the appointment of a board of architectural experts, the National Capital Development and Planning Commission (NCDPC) to monitor the development of Canberra. The development of the lake was suggested on a few occasions. The NCDPC removed the East Lake basin and the railway connection to North Canberra as designed by Griffin, from the plans for the Lake.

### Post World War II History

By the 1950s, Canberra had a generation of residents and consisted of well spaced suburbs that included extensive gardens and tree planting, with the north and south areas separated by the Molonglo river flats. A number of schemes for Canberra's lake were proposed such as the Ribbon of Water Scheme in 1953 and the Molonglo Lakes in 1953 as an alternative to West Lake with a dam at Acton (Hince p.183, 1994). The Senate Inquiry 1954 - 55 'to inquire into and report upon the development of Canberra in relation to the original plan and subsequent modification and matters incidental thereto' reversed the decision for a chain of lakes and West Lake was found to be desirable, and the racecourse and golf links in the flood plain were removed. The Inquiry Committee also recommended a single authority to control Canberra headed by a Commission with guaranteed funding, a central park to be developed, access to Canberra's vistas and look-

out points, and a body of experts to advise on aesthetic standards (Reid 2002, p.134).

Prime Minister Robert Menzies, during the 1950s, appointed Sir William Holford, a British planner to advise on how to proceed with the planning and building of Canberra. William Holford was invited by Menzies in 1957 to review the Griffin plan (Firth p.145 ). Holford proposed a slight reduction in the size and formality of Griffin's plan for the lake, in order to follow the natural contour. The National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) Act was passed in 1957 and John Overall was appointed the Commissioner in 1958 (Reid 2002, p.249).

With regard to civil engineering design, Australians were greatly influenced by American schemes for harnessing water to achieve soil conservation, irrigation, flood control and hydro power. The Snowy River Scheme had a significant effect on Canberra. It provided considerable technical expertise and the organisation of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Authority was used as a model for the statutory authority of the NCDC. The NCDC had full responsibility for the lake and the planning team consisted of Clive Price, Executive Engineer (Design), Bill Minty, Lakes Project Engineer, Peter Harrison, Chief Town Planner and Richard Clough, Landscape Design. During 1959 contracts were let for Scrivener Dam and work had commenced on the bridges. The main agencies for the design of the Lakes Scheme were William Holford and Associates, Guy Maunsell and Partners, the Department of Works, and Rankine and Hill.

The lake earthworks and dam were commenced in 1960 and works proceeded at great speed. By July 1962 the work on the dam was almost completed, the lake edge construction was nearly finished, top soiling and grassing of the parkland progressing, the ponds and footbridge in the Central Park, and the Rond Point Pool and jets completed (Altenburg 1993, pp 39). Cutting and filling in the West Lake area was used to form an island where Springbank homestead once stood. Another island was formed by cutting through a finger of land at Yarralumla, and an island in the Central Basin was formed near Kings Avenue Bridge. Extensive tree planting was undertaken with native and exotic species.

Kings Avenue Bridge was opened in 1962. Commonwealth Avenue Bridge incorporating stones from Waterloo Bridge, a gift from Britain, was opened in 1963. Despite encountering some difficulties in the dam foundations in 1962, Scrivener Dam was completed with the gates being officially closed on 20 September 1963 and the official impounding begun. The water reached the final level of 556 metres on 29 April 1964 and in April 1964, it was officially inaugurated by Prime Minister Menzies.

The lake was named to commemorate the original designer of the city, Walter Burley Griffin. By giving Griffin's name to the most visually prominent element in the city the Government confirmed its confidence in the NCDC to interpret Griffin's plan (Firth p183). The cost of lakes scheme was given as \$5,039,050 for the cost of the dam, the crest gates, control building and ancillary services, the relocations of power lines, tree removals for the lake floor, the formation of lake basins and edge construction.

After the lake filled, recreation developments including a tourist ferry terminal, picnic facilities were constructed. In 1966/67 the Water Police Headquarters building was completed. A report An Open Space System for Canberra in the 1970s resulted in increasing the recreational use of the of the lake. Two vertical memorials were installed in the lake a mile apart on either side of the land axis. The water jet is a memorial to James Cook (completed in 1969) and the Carillon (RNE 018373) completed in 1970, was a gift from the British Government to mark the 50th Jubilee of the founding of Canberra.

## Hydrology

Although it had been suggested 1908 that the Commonwealth secure the water catchment for Canberra's proposed water features that never occurred. The Lake Burley Griffin Catchment Protection Scheme was established in the early 1960s due to concerns that the new lake could be subject to high levels of sedimentation due to the degraded state of much of its rural catchment. A tripartite scheme between the Commonwealth and State governments was designed to reduce siltation and ran from 1965 - 1998 covering the Molonglo and Queanbeyan River catchments and tackled the degradation of rural land which began in the 1820s with the destruction of the 'chain of ponds' drainage networks and continued with tree clearing and overstocking.

Between and 1920's and 1950's, a number of reports to parliament were prepared on the form of future development of Canberra and hydrological data was collected about the Molonglo River flows with input from engineers. The NCDC recognized the importance of the lake, and was able to draw on the earlier studies and on the technical resources and hydrological data available through Commonwealth departments and authorities regarding the behaviour of the lake in terms of floods and droughts and of scour and siltation. Other studies provided information on water quality, effects of climate and health, hazards of unsightly margins, mosquitoes and midges and the possible disbenefits from changes in land uses.

Following the construction of and filling of the lake, work began to realign the Jerrabomberra Creek Waterway in 1968-69 to provide a bed load trap to minimise saltation into the Lake. In 1978 the Lake reached a critical condition of water quality with a major pollutant being Queanbeyan sewage effluent.

The regulation of flow into Lake Burely Griffin was improved with the construction of Googong Dam on the Queanbeyan River, inaugurated in 1979. However, the original proposal for a regulating Dam on the Molonglo river has never been implemented.

## Landscape Development

Although Griffin brought new ideas in terms of landscape design to Canberra. These were mostly in terms of broad concepts. The Molonglo River flats contained eucalypts, grasslands, exotic trees and pasture grasses. Specific lake edge planting commenced in Canberra by Charles Weston, Superintendent of Parks, Gardens and Afforestation (1913-16) with planting along the shores of the future lake. Weston was given power to choose the nature of the trees to be planted and the style of planting. From 1922, he established a framework of trees on the western ridge behind what is now known as Regatta Point, using exotic and indigenous confers. The Federal Capital Commission in 1923 recommended that tree planting should be in clumps to create the effect of copses (Gray, 1999 p 186), and Weston undertook informal tree plantings in other lakeshore areas, including clumps of trees and windbreaks in Weston Park above the 1825 ft contour. Tree plantings around the lake were continued by Lindsay Pryor and David Shoobridge. Planting done by Pryor included the Westlake area, now known as Yarramundi Reach where advanced stock of deciduous trees was planted on the extensive grassland (Hince 1994).

Harry Oakman was appointed the first Director of Landscape, with an aim to provide facilities and landscapes at the suburban level in playgrounds, open spaces street trees, sport centres and roads, and at the Capital City level in lookouts, Lake and Parliamentary surrounds. Oakman was succeeded by Richard Cough who regarded broad landscape issues such as relating urban edges to landforms and the natural landscape of great

importance (Altenburg 1993 pp.32-33).

The design of the central area was essentially a formal composition in which the lake basins, ridges, avenues and buildings are to be framed and embellished by a strong pattern of planting. The NCDC accepted that: the character of natural landscape should be maintained; the existing brown-grey colour of the landscape should predominate but light fresh green should be used around the lake margins and darker confers 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; and while preserving a sense of unity, the design should aim at creating recognizable character in specific areas (Altenburg 1993 p. 37).

The landscape around the lake was planned as a huge recreation park. Richard Clough using Holford's recommendation and his own studies produced an overall plan showing the extent and treatment of the lakeside parklands. It was the largest landscape project undertaken by the NCDC and implemented by the Parks and Gardens Section of the Department of the Interior. It was done in 2 stages, the first involved the establishment of major planting in more than 400 ha of lakeside parklands in conjunction with the engineering construction of the lake. Quantities of topsoil were removed from the river flats and spread on sports grounds, streets verges and stockpiled. The second stage involved the development of public and service facilities, landscape design around buildings, aquatic planting, installation of lawn irrigation and horticultural park development (Altenburg 1993 p. 37).

The western basin was most suitable for boating activities and recommended as an area that should be kept free of any non-conforming features. Activities proposed for the Lake included a triangular sailing course for West Lake, an Olympic rowing course, starting in East Basin near the Power house and finishing in the Central Basin, water skiing in East Basin and a boat harbour near Kingston. Lotus Bay and Yarralumla Bay were thought to offer the best facilities for yacht anchorage and related activities. In addition, boat hire, toilets, kiosks and restaurants, ramps, jetties and wharves were proposed.

Scientific aspects of aquatic plants and marine life were also investigated with the assistance of CSIRO. Water edge experimental plantings were commenced by Dr Betty Philips, who had been an ecologist with the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme in the 1950s and was appointed Botanist at the Canberra Botanic Gardens, in June 1960.

The concept of the Central Park (later renamed as Commonwealth Park) was set in the Holford report, including the shape of the shoreline and the Aquarium Pond. In 1964 Dame Sylvia Crowe advised the NCDC on Commonwealth Gardens and presented 'Recommendations on the Development of the Lakeside Landscape'. Within the park are 200 cherry trees donated by the Japanese Prime Minister Ohira in 1980. A spring floral event named Floriade was developed as a Bicentennial celebration in 1988 and was such an outstanding success it has been an annual festival since that occasion.

### Structural Engineering Works

The original concept of Burley Griffin's series of formal basins with informal bodies of water up-stream and down-stream, became one large lake (with surface level as suggested by Scrivener 50 years before), impounded and controlled by a single dam structure, and crossed by two major bridges.

Maunsell and partners in association with William Holford and Partners were the engineering consultants for the supervision of the Ponds area , all the central road works and the fountains at the rond point. Messrs. Rankine and Hill were the consultants on the West Lake and West Basin areas. The Department of Public Works were responsible for the lake dam and East Basin. The contract for the dam was awarded to Citra.

Faults in the foundation bed-rock of the river-bed at the dam site could have greatly delayed or increased the cost of the structure, but for post-tensioning techniques recently developed. The control of the water at the 556 metre level (1825 feet) determined by the model test, was only possible with the new "fish belly" crest gates built in Germany. These gates also freed the dam from an awkward superstructure treatment, and allowed a road to run over it.

Apart from the dam wall, Commonwealth and Kings Avenue bridges constructed to span the lake, were feats of engineering accomplishment. Both were constructed with an elevation of a single geometrical arc formed by a continuous prestressed concrete box girder having a uniform depth of nine feet. Commonwealth Avenue bridge as the major route to the Parliamentary Triangle, included design features of pillars in an Art Deco style. Kings Avenue Bridge was opened by Prime Minister RG Menzies ,10 March 1962. Commonwealth Avenue Bridge was opened to traffic in November 1963 and formally opened by Prime Minister RG Menzies, October 1964.

An artificial wall was needed on the south bank with splays at right angles to Kings and Commonwealth Avenue bridges to facilitate the flow of the river through the half -circle it made from Fyshwick to Acton.

The Aquarium Pond (later Nerang Pool) footbridge was constructed as a two span in-situ concrete beam continuous over central pier and

Despite the success of the lake, the design for East Lake by Griffin has never been implemented, and the flood plain at Jerrabomberra wetland has been difficult to control although a wetland with rich bird life has developed from the series of natural and artificial drainage channels when the creation of Lake Burley Griffin obstructed and regulated the flow of the Molonglo River and Jerrabomberra Creek. It was designated as a Nature Reserve in 1990. The causeway included in the Griffin Plan that separated the East and Central Basins has never been developed.

## Description

Lake Burley Griffin conservation area is a designed landscape that includes three formal water basins (Central, West and East Basins), islands, Scrivener Dam, Commonwealth Avenue and Kings Avenue Bridges, and the lakeshore parklands. Several RNE listed features are adjacent to or are included in this heritage area, these are Parliament House Vista (RNE 13371), Blundells Farmhouse (RNE 13324), the Carillon (RNE 18373), the High Court - National Gallery Precinct (RNE 102721), the National Library of Australia (RNE 13369), Weston Park (RNE 17934), Westbourne Woods (RNE 1337), Yarralumla and Surrounds (RNE 14304) and Stirling Ridge (RNE 13359).

Lake Burley Griffin covers an area of some 634 hectares and has a total volume of about 33,000 mega litres. It has a length of about 9 kilometres, an average depth of 4.5 metres and a maximum depth of 20 metres. Shore length is approximately 40.5 kilometres. The Lake surface is maintained at 556 metres (1825 feet) above sea level subject to temporary variations due to flood management requirements and other catchment inflow effects. The lake is also a sediment trap, that helps protect the Murrumbidgee River and

Burrunjuck Reservoir from excessive siltation. The flooding of Lake Burley Griffin has resulted in the creation of wetland habitats - the Jerrabaomberra Wetlands.

Lake management is a Commonwealth responsibility administered by the National Capital Authority, with day-to-day management undertaken by arrangements with various agencies within A.C.T. Territory Government. Catchment protection in NSW was undertaken until 1998 under a Commonwealth -State Agreement.

Scrivener Dam is a concrete gravity dam, 33 metres high and 235 metres long. Three sluice valves at the base of the dam are used to maintain the lake level. During low flow periods, water is released from Googong Dam to maintain the lake within .25 metres of the its normal level (NCPA 1995). Its spillway consists of 5 bays of free overflow crest, controlled by hydraulically operated "fish belly" flap gates, with capacity of 8,500 cubic metres per second (Smith and Coltheart, and C.J. Price)

The dam structure incorporates a roadway that provides one of three crossings of the lake. The others, at Commonwealth and Kings Avenues, are major bridges. Each is a twin structure, with separate parallel carriageways. Kings Avenue parallel structures use longitudinal precast prestressed concrete T beams forming separate carriageways, each of 7 spans totalling 270 metres. Underpass roads for exit and entry are provided at the south end only within the bridge spans. Kings Avenue Bridge was designed with wide piers to block out East Basin, viewed at the time as 'not so attractive'.

Commonwealth Avenue bridge structures are of 5 spans totalling 310 metres, of fully continuous prestressed design. It has a higher camber than Kings Avenue Bridge, a design feature to allow for yachts to sail beneath. The end pylons give added importance to the bridge as the main route to Parliament House. To provide an exit and entry clover leaf layout, separate structures are built on the main bridge's south approaches, totalling 49 metres each, in 4 approximately equal spans.

Original woodland trees and pre-Canberra plantings from pastoral properties remain in scattered locations in the lakes parklands. These include EUCALYPTUS BLAKELI, E. MELLIODORA(Yarralumla), E. BRIDGESIANNA (Acton Peninsula) PINUS RADIATA, SALIX (Duntroon), PINUS RADIATA, CEDRUS DEODARA (Yarralumla), CUPRESSUS MACROCARPA (Yarralumla and Lennox Gardens), POPULUS NIGRA 'Italica' ( near the Hyatt Hotel), SALIX BABYLONICA (near Blundells Cottage and at Molonglo Reach).

Several of the groups of trees planted for the lake edge have been recognised as notable trees (Pryor and Banks 1991) and include TAXODIUM DISTICHUM (Weston Park and Nerang Pool), SALIX FRAGILIS (Acton Park).

The Lake's foreshores contain extensive parklands that offer a range of passive and active recreation opportunities, some of which is developed as designed gardens and formal landscaping such as Commonwealth Park, Kings Park, the Sculpture Garden, the Peace Park, Parks Place foreshore area, Lennox Gardens, Yarralumla (the Governor General's Residence). Parklands and recreation areas with designed but more informal landscaping such as Aspen Island, Bowen Park, Weston Park, Yarramundi Reach, Acacia Inlet, Springbank Island , Spinnaker Island, Stirling Park, Gevillea Park , Molonglo Reach. Black Mountain Peninsula and Stirling park have native woodlands, and Canberra Nature Park - Jerrabomberra Wetlands is a created wetland for native fauna. The lake water is also used to irrigate some of the nearby parklands and the Royal Canberra Golf Course.

Natural Environment Values

In ecological terms, the lake has created valuable wetland habitats, offers some protection against excessive siltation downstream, and the Dam fills an important flood control function. However, Lake Burley Griffin does not provide the necessary environmental conditions for the successful breeding of many introduced and native fish species and as a result does not maintain viable fish populations without regular restocking (Environment ACT 2000). Although the 1995 Lake Burley Griffin Management Plan recognizes that despite being artificial in origin, the lake has become one of the most significant aquatic ecosystems in the ACT, many of its natural values are contained within the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve.

Despite the presence of exotic plants, the margins of the main waterbodies of Jerrabomberra Wetlands provide significant aquatic habitat with a mix of rushes and sedges growing in conjunction with mainly exotic tree species such as willows *Salix* spp. and poplars *Populus* spp. Some amenity plantings of native species have been undertaken around the public use areas. Key habitat features of the area include large parts of Dairy Flat (a depositional floodplain of the Molonglo River), as well as open water areas such as Jerrabomberra Pool, Jerrabomberra Reach, Kelly's Swamp, Shoveller Pool and Molonglo Reach. The wetlands also provide areas of reed beds, marshlands, mudflats, gravel beaches, grasslands and drowned trees, all of which add to the area's high level of habitat diversity.

Seventy seven species of waterbird have been recorded within the Nature Reserve. This represents most of the waterbird species that are found in south-eastern Australia. Sixteen of these species use the area to breed. Notable amongst the waterbirds to use the area are the Latham's snipe *GALLINAGO HARDWICKII*, the common greenshank *TRINGA NEBULARIA*, the red-necked stint *CALIDRIS RUFICOLLIS* and the sharp-tailed sandpiper *CALIDRIS ACUMINATA*, all of which are protected under the Japan Australia Migratory Bird Agreement and the China Australia Migratory Bird Agreement.

Ninety six species of terrestrial birds have also been recorded within the wetland area. They generally utilize the reed beds on the shores of the open waterbodies. In addition, platypus *ORNITHORINCUS ANATINUS*, eastern snake-necked tortoises *CHELODINA LONGICOLLIS* and eastern water-rats *HYDROMYS CHRYOGASTER* have also been recorded in the area.

### Social and Aesthetic Importance

The Lake unifies the central precincts and national areas of Canberra and gives central Canberra a high aesthetic quality. It successfully expresses the water axis- a major component of the Walter Burley Griffin design concept.

The Central Basin is the centrepiece of the National Area, in the immediate foreground of the Parliamentary Zone, and unites the wider city-scape and public spaces on its foreshores in which are set major national buildings. The completed project brings into focus the natural beauty of distant mountains and adjacent hillsides and visually unites them with a created setting for public institutions, complemented by low profile bridges.

The lake is a most admired component of the Canberra plan- providing a reflective setting for public buildings, a tranquil nucleus for Canberra City. It provides extensive ephemeral aesthetic qualities. It is a major feature of Canberra's viewpoints at Black Mountain, Mount Ainslie and Red Hill

Buildings enhanced by the lake setting include the National Library, Commonwealth Place, the High Court and the National Gallery. Cultural landscape features that enhance the lake's aesthetic qualities include Commonwealth and Kings Avenue bridges, Captain

Cook Jet, the Carillon, all the water edge plantings including the poplars at Yarramundi Reach, the Swamp Cypresses at Weston Park, the Cypresses at Acton Peninsula, Weeping Willows, and planted and existing eucalypts.

Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve continues to provide an important environmental education resource. Bird hides and paths have been constructed near Jerrabomberra Pool and Kelly's Swamp for community recreation and education. Dairy Road, the main access point for the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, was altered to prevent through-traffic. This has greatly reduced the amount of background noise in the immediate area and has enhanced the wildlife experience for visitors to the wetlands.

Within the Lake and on the foreshore parklands are numerous memorials. The National Carillon (RNE 18373) on Aspen Island was a gift from the British Government to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the National Capital of Australia.

The water surface and foreshores provide the city with many venues for recreation, social and public events and community gathering and present easy access to national buildings set in adjacent landscape. A great range of water sports is conducted on the lake and boat sheds or clubhouses are located at Yarralumla Bay, Orana Bay, Lotus Bay and Black Mountain Peninsula and there is a ferry terminal at Acton.

Commonwealth Park is used for events and festivals such as the Canberra Day, fun runs, the hugely successful Floriade, Australia Day citizenship ceremonies, and fireworks displays events and contains many arts works and memorials. A display centre has been developed at Regatta Point.

**History:** Not Available

**Condition and Integrity:**

The dam is in a reasonable condition, is well maintained and has not been modified during its lifetime. It is currently being subjected to a review due to criteria changes which may result in some modifications. It was originally built to impound a recreation lake and this has not changed.

The lake is in sound condition and carefully managed.

Most of the Jerrabomberra Wetland area is situated on the Dairy Flat floodplain, an area that has been used for grazing and cropping for decades. As a result, the terrestrial areas of the wetlands are mostly degraded pastures containing exotic species.

Cypress and pine plantations in the Yarramundi Reach area were extensively damaged by bushfires December 2001. (2003)

**Location:**

About 6640ha, comprising Scrivener Dam and the impounded waters of the Molonglo River, forming Lake Burley Griffin.

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#### Stirling Park Precinct, Yarralumla, ACT

**Photographs:** None

**List:** Commonwealth Heritage List

**Class:** Natural

**Legal Status:** [Indicative Place](#)

**Place ID:** 105301

**Place File No:** 8/01/000/0521

**Summary Statement of Significance:** Not Available

**Official Values:** Not Available

**Description:**

Geology & Geomorphology

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

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

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

Vegetation

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

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

#### Wildlife

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

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

**History:** Not Available

**Condition and Integrity:** Not Available

#### Location:

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

#### Bibliography:

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#### Stirling Ridge, Alexandrina Dr, Yarralumla, ACT

**Photographs:** None

**List:** Commonwealth Heritage List

**Class:** Natural

**Legal Status:** [Indicative Place](#)

**Place ID:** 105468

**Place File No:** 8/01/000/0065

**Summary Statement of Significance:** Not Available

**Official Values:** Not Available

#### **Description:**

A low ridge on the Deakin Fault, extending in a north-west/south-east direction, consisting of Ordovician and Silurian shales and sandstone of the Acton, pittman and Canberra groups, in altitude from the shore of Lake Burley Griffin (c 556m) to the summit of the ridge (c 600m). The vegetation on the main part of the ridge consists of an ecotone between EUCALYPTUS MACRORHYNCHA/EUCALYPTUS ROSSII dry sclerophyll forest and an EUCALYPTUS MELLIODORA/EUCALYPTUS BLAKELYI woodland.

**History:** Not Available

#### **Condition and Integrity:**

The native vegetation on the upper part of the ridge, where the main populations of RUTIDOSIS are to be found, has suffered some disturbance in the past, but is now regenerating well. Some weedy aliens have become established, especially around the margins of the upper slopes and in the gullies, but these could be eventually controlled and eliminated. The lower slopes, here regarded as buffer zone, are, for the most part, open parkland with some plantings of exotic trees.

#### **Location:**

About 40ha, comprising all that area of Block 4 Section 22 and Blocks 3 and 4 Section 128, Yarralumla, west of a line drawn from the eastern intersection of Alexandria Drive and Mariner Place and the intersection of Forster Crescent and Empire Circuit.

#### **Bibliography:**

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#### Sewer Vent No 1, Empire Crt, Yarralumla, ACT

**Photographs:** None

**List:** Commonwealth Heritage List

**Class:** Historic

**Legal Status:** [Indicative Place](#)

**Place ID:** 105471

**Place File No:** 8/01/000/0428

**Summary Statement of Significance:** Not Available

**Official Values:** Not Available

**Description:**

History:

The disposal of waste water and water borne waste was one of the early matters for resolution in the planning of Canberra. A variety of treatments was proposed and there is evidence of conflict in 1914 between W B Griffin, Federal Capital Director of design and construction and the Department of Home Affairs. Before a decision had been made on the method of treatment, the Department's engineers proceeded to design a main outfall sewer west bound from near the later Hotel Canberra, which was to be the point for intercepting sewers from the initial building development in the Federal Capital. The main outfall sewer was estimated to cost 75,000 pounds in 1914 and was designed to serve a population of 125,000. Along its 4.8km length the proposed sewer tunnel was to pass under what is now Stirling Park, Royal Canberra Golf Club, Lady Denman Drive and Cotter Road at depths varying between 1.5m and 24m. The outfall was to be sent to a treatment works at Weston Creek and the treated effluent finally discharged into the Molonglo River. The sewer tunnel was to be egg shaped in cross section, 1.68m high and 1.12m wide and constructed of concrete and brick. Ventilator shafts were proposed at 1,000ft (300m) intervals and were to be of galvanised iron vent pipe, as adopted in the sewerage systems of Sydney and Melbourne. Griffin alternatively proposed the installation of separate septic tanks in various parts of the developing city as the occasion required. This would have been an innovative approach for the time but the 1915 Parliamentary Works Committee report came down firmly in favour of the Department's proposal. Construction proceeded until April 1917 when it was held up following a report of the Royal Commission investigating Canberra's administration. Work recommenced in 1922 and the sewer tunnel was completed in 1924. At some time during construction, a change was made to the proposed ventilation, substituting brick shafts for the metal piping. No doubt this decision took into account the availability of bricks from the nearby Commonwealth brickworks and the Departmental workmen already on site and available for the construction work. Only three ventilator shafts were provided in contrast to the expectation of at least seventeen proposed in information given to the Parliamentary Works Committee in 1915. The main outfall sewer has been supplemented by other mains as the network of suburbs expanded and with the construction of new towns such as Woden and Tuggeranong. With the increased load, the Weston Creek treatment works became overloaded. In the early 1970s the Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre (LMWQCC) was designed with the capacity to treat all of Canberra's sewage and produce

an environmentally acceptable effluent for discharge into the Murrumbidgee River. Construction was completed in 1978 and the Weston Creek works were closed. All sewage previously treated at Weston Creek, including that supplied by the 1924 sewer, was diverted to the LMWQCC via a new interceptor sewer. The 1924 main outfall sewer is still in use and has become part of a very much expanded sewerage system for Canberra.

**Physical description:**

This is one of three brick shafts which ventilate the original main outfall sewer for Canberra. Each shaft or chimney is approximately 6.4m high and 1.4m square in plan, slightly enlarged at the base, with a rendered or cast concrete top which has four side openings and a concrete slab cap. There is an access opening adjacent.

**History:** Not Available

**Condition and Integrity:**

The sewer vent is in generally fair to good condition, being somewhat weathered and is intact. (August 1994)

**Location:**

Stirling Park, 150m west of the intersection of Empire Circuit and Forster Crescent, Yarralumla.

**Bibliography:**

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