



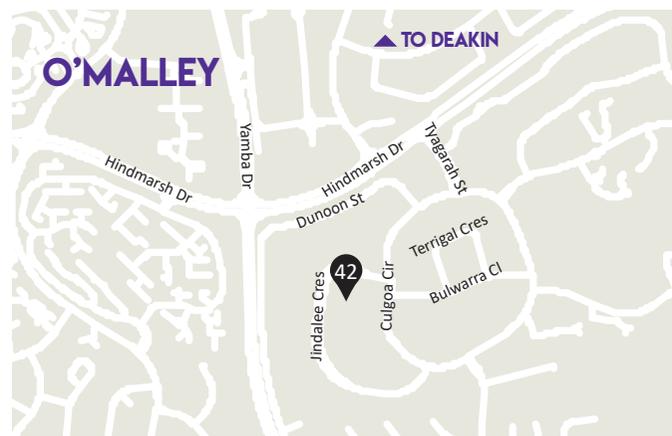
Australian Government
National Capital Authority



DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

SELF-GUIDED DRIVING TOUR

Time: 40 minutes | Distance: 20 kilometres



DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

A self-guided driving tour of the diplomatic missions around Canberra.

In its role as the national capital of Australia, Canberra hosts diplomatic missions from around the world, all with an official representative of that country in residence. These missions are called High Commissions, if the country is part of the British Commonwealth, or Embassies if they are not. There are 107 countries represented in Canberra, with buildings in three diplomatic estates – Yarralumla, West Deakin and O'Malley – and Red Hill. This drive explores those that reflect a national building style or have specific architectural interest.

Canberra did not have a diplomatic corps until the 1930s but once the first representatives arrived, it grew rapidly, reflecting Australia's expanding role in world affairs after World War II. A trend developed, initiated by the United States, to build diplomatic premises in an architectural style reminiscent of the country of origin.

Yarralumla



1 HIGH COMMISSION OF CANADA

150 Commonwealth Ave

Canadian timbers have been used throughout the building, including red cedar eaves, and two Canadian maples planted by the flagpole. The totem pole was carved by Haida artist Clarence Mills for the Canadian pavilion at the 1988 Expo in Brisbane. It represents members of his family.



2 NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSION

140 Commonwealth Ave

Whilst not built in any national style, the interior has been fitted out with New Zealand products and New Zealand plantings feature in the gardens. The Kowai tree (*Sophora tetraptera*) on the northern side of the building may be the only example of this frost-tender species in this part of Australia.



3 BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION

130 Commonwealth Ave

Canberra's diplomatic corps began in 1936 with the appointment of the first British High Commissioner.

The chancery and residence were built at the same time and cost a quarter of a million pounds – an enormous sum in those days.



4 EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

15 Coronation Dr

Immediately recognisable as a Chinese structure, the embassy

grounds contain traditional gardens, including an ornamental lake, waterside pavilion, zigzag bridge and rockeries. The roof tiles were imported from Yixing and craftsmen came from Shanghai to build the roof, rockeries, gardens and internal decoration.



5 HIGH COMMISSION OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

39 Forster Cres

The building is a Haus Tambaran or Spirit House from the Sepik River.

These were meeting places for tribal elders and storehouses for sacred objects. The stylised painted images of clan ancestors and the carved totem poles were created by students from the National Art School in Port Moresby.



6 HIGH COMMISSION OF SINGAPORE

17 Forster Cres

The sweeping shape of the first floor and roof edges form an arc,

suggesting the equatorial circle where Singapore is located. The adaptation of European building styles to Singapore's climate is suggested in the lattice sunshades, overhanging roofs, double posts and veranda.



7 EMBASSY OF FINLAND

12 Darwin Ave

The building is named 'Ilmarinen', after the armoured Finnish navy vessel sunk during World War II,

itself named for the blacksmith hero of Kalevala, the Finnish national epic. Offices sit like cabins lined up along the side of the building, connected by walkways overlooking the atrium spaces.



8 HIGH COMMISSION OF SAMOA

3 Darwin Ave

Based on a traditional 'Fale' or house this building reflects the

openness of Samoan life. Houses are usually lashed together with ropes called 'afa' in intricate designs. This is represented in the design of the front gates and on motifs on the pillars inside.



9 EMBASSY OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

1 Darwin Ave

The eclectic design of the Egyptian embassy reflects the diversity of

contemporary Egypt, rather than the monuments of the past. The exaggerated proportions of the public areas, including the large barrel vault which forms the entrance, allude to classic Egyptian architecture.



10 EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

8 Darwin Ave

The embassy's display pavilion, Wisma Wista Budaya, is built in the

style of a traditional Javanese pendopo. The hand-carved Balinese statues beside the steps represent characters from two ancient Hindu epics - the 'Ramayana' and the 'Mahabharata' – that have been adopted by the Indonesian people.



11 EMBASSY OF MEXICO

14 Perth Ave

At the centre of the building there is a model of Tenochtitlan, capital of the Aztec Empire and site of the

modern Mexico City. A massive image of the Mexican national emblem and an Aztec calendar by the main entrance gates on Perth Avenue are distinctive features of the embassy.



12 HIGH COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA

7 Perth Ave

The chancery and reception hall feature huge sweeping

'Minangkabau' roofs, typical of the Malaysian state of Negri Sembilan, and traditional 'bunga raya' flower motifs on the walls. The port cochere entrance of the chancery leads to a marble-tiled foyer containing displays of Malaysian craft and Selangor pewter.



13 EMBASSIES OF NORWAY AND DENMARK

15-17 Hunter St

Although not of architectural significance, this site is interesting

due to the dual occupancy. It is unusual for countries to do this but not unknown. Elsewhere in Canberra Cuba and Morocco share a single building and the government of Estonia is contactable through the Finnish Embassy.



14 EMBASSY OF FRANCE

6 Perth Ave

The chancery design echoes forts of the French Foreign Legion. The War Memorial in the grounds is a

token of gratitude to the Australian soldiers who fought and died in France. The pillar of a gilded bronze sculpture, 'Winged Victory', includes the names of battles involving Australian troops.



15 HIGH COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN

4 Perth Ave

This building is a modern interpretation of the Mughal

inspired building style typical of Pakistan, demonstrating the symmetry and balance of that architecture. A striking addition is the mural on the exterior wall by Shehzar Abro depicting two early leaders of Pakistan – Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal.



16 HIGH COMMISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA

2 Perth Ave

This is representative of the Cape Dutch style, with traditional

whitewashed walls and a roof gable inscribed with the date of construction. The small windows have teak shutters which can be closed against the heat of the sun. The gardens are extensive and include many plants native to South Africa.



17 EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

6 Moonah Pl

The elongated windows and pillars of the building recall the arrow

shoots and turrets of Ottoman castles or 'hisars'. The garden design drew its inspiration from traditional Ottoman garden design and combines 20 000 tulip bulbs with Australian indigenous plants and trees.



18 EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Moonah Pl

The lease for this first purpose-built embassy was signed the day of the attack on Pearl Harbour. The residence and chancery are built in colonial Georgian style, inspired by Christopher Wren's designs for Williamsburg, Virginia.



19 HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA

3 Moonah Pl

This design was inspired by classical elements of Mughal and Hindu architecture. The mathematical symmetry of the building and the ornate decoration are typical as is the use of a moat. This moat is the culmination of a water feature which flows from the entrance on Moonah Place.



20 EMBASSY OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

22 Arkana St

Steel columns surrounding the building support distinctive steel lattice work, reminiscent of the woven construction of lattice screening of traditional houses in Myanmar. Extensive use of glass is also a feature of the building.



21 ROYAL BELGIAN EMBASSY

19 Arkana St

Inspired by traditional Flemish architecture, the residence features shutters like those used to protect farmhouses against the bitter cold in winter and the sun in summer. All the furniture in the main rooms was specially designed in Belgium, including the crystal and bronze chandeliers.



22 EMBASSY OF IRELAND

20 Arkana St

Although it might not be obvious at first, this group of buildings is evocative of a cluster of low-lying buildings on an Irish farm. The white-washed walls and steep, thatched roofs of traditional Irish farmhouses have here been updated with the use of brick and tile.



23 EMBASSY OF SPAIN

15 Arkana St

The building incorporates these regional elements: two patios with svelte columns, typical in the south; a façade of glass-covered balconies, typical of the north; and a completely white exterior, like Andalusian buildings.



24 EMBASSY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

119 Empire Circ

The buildings reflect the functional style favoured in Germany in the 1950s and 1960s. The colours of the brightly painted exterior are similar to those of the national flag and contrast sharply with the greenery of the garden setting.



25 EMBASSY OF GREECE

9 Turrana St

A contemporary mix of classical and Hellenistic Greek architecture, featuring columns of Pentelikon marble from the same quarries used by the ancient Athenians. The design also includes an atrium, traditionally a central garden open to the sun around which the various rooms of a house were built.



26 EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

7 Turrana St

The embassy is built of concrete, with a brick building frame and terracotta roof tiles, giving it a solid appearance characteristic of brutalist architecture. Both it and the residence have timber-lined ceilings and timber accents (handrails, desks and doors).



27 ROYAL THAI EMBASSY

111 Empire Circ

Traditionally, the height of the steeply pitched rooves lets hot air escape to cool the house while the broad overhangs protect the interior from both sun and rain. The curved roof-ends are symbolic of 'Naga' that adorn Khmer temples. The Sala Thai pavilion, for public functions, was added in 1998.



28 EMBASSY OF JAPAN

112 Empire Circ

The overall design echoes a traditional wooden residence. There is a tea garden, with a tea house, stream, pond, lanterns and pagodas; and a Kare-sansui (waterless stream) garden with white gravel surfaces representing a pool, stream or ocean, and rocks representing islands.



29 HIGH COMMISSION OF SRI LANKA

61 Hampton Circ

The design of this building draws inspiration from a movement known as 'Tropical Modernism', where traditional elements are reimagined for modern life. The distinctive red tiled rooves are supported by decorated columns topped with abstract capitals, suggesting palm trees.



30 ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA

38 Guilfoyle St

The design of the embassy is based on the Qasr Al Morabaa Palace (the Square Palace) which was built for King Abdul Aziz Bin Saud, the first monarch and founder of Saudi Arabia. The embassy also includes a central domed roof traditional throughout the Muslim world.

Deakin



31 EMBASSY OF ITALY

12 Grey St

The design aims to reflect the ancient tradition of Italian architecture in the modern environment of Canberra. Whilst designing the building, the Italian architect fell in love with a city 'untouched by ugliness and history' and now lives in Canberra.



32 SOLOMON ISLANDS HIGH COMMISSION

1 Beale Cres

A contemporary design echoing both the construction and decoration of traditional wooden buildings. This includes the exposed roof trusses used for strength against cyclones and heavy storms. The various structures surround a central courtyard to give a village-like atmosphere. Timber totems represent each of the nine provinces.



33 HIGH COMMISSION OF MAURITIUS

2 Beale Cres

Traditional Mauritian building styles reflect a strong French influence, adapted for a tropical, humid climate. This building echoes that style in the deep, sheltering eaves. Being a single storey it also pays homage to family homes known as 'Case Creole' which are now rare in Mauritius.



34 EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

4 Beale Cres

The large, formal entrance suggests the city gates of Ninevah or Herat, including the brick decoration. This leads through to a central courtyard, the heart of an Afghani household. Not visible from the street, the rear of the building suggests a cluster of traditional mud homes, including a watchtower.



35 EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

5 Beale Cres

At first glance this seems to be a suburban home but the raised tower represents watchtowers typical of unwallled villages and remote castles. The colouring and mix of building materials honours coastal housing whilst the regularly spaced, small windows across the front are a traditional Bosnian style.



36 EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

7 Beale Cres

The construction is a simple design, to inspire affordable community housing in Timor Leste. The roof echoes the colours and patterns of traditional Tais cloth, an important, diverse part of Timorese heritage. Funds to build the embassy were raised by Australian organisations and several firms donated building products.



37 HIGH COMMISSION OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

10 Beale Cres

Built in the style of the traditional stilt houses of the Malay Peninsula, this recalls the origins of this island nation and their links to the ocean.



38 HIGH COMMISSION OF CYPRUS

30 Beale Cres

Cyprus is at a crossroads of cultures so buildings there have many influences. However, the pointed arch is a distinctive Cypriot initiative, dating from the Byzantine. The solarium and courtyards create shelter from the sun but allow breezes through, whilst shutters block the sun out of the building.



39 EMBASSY OF HUNGARY

17 Beale Cres

With a complex history of invasion and change, Hungarian building styles are varied. This design incorporates the arches, balconies and planters common across several eras of dwellings. Traditional red roofing tiles and a broad pitched roof also suggest a Hungarian home, as does the entrance extending towards the visitor.



40 HIGH COMMISSION OF FIJI

19 Beale Cres

The deeply pitched roof of this building is reminiscent of Fijian 'bure', or traditional wooden houses, usually thatched with pandanus leaves. The round timber posts supporting the portico further echo traditional houses, including the design on the upper and lower sections, suggesting typical tapa cloth coverings.



41 HIGH COMMISSION OF BOTSWANA

130 Denison St

Although not a traditionally inspired building, the vibrancy of the coloured tile pattern on the curved wall at the entrance is striking. The design recalls pattern making on traditional fabric, basketry and pottery.

O'Malley



42 EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

14 Jindalee Cres

The inclusion of a round tower - a modern interpretation of Croatian Renaissance castle buildings (such as the one at Varaždin) gives an indication of the history of the country. The vibrant roof tiles and soft colour of the walls recall buildings on the country's Adriatic coast.



DRIVING IS ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO EXPERIENCE YOUR NATIONAL CAPITAL

Enjoy and explore other self-guided tours:

- Anzac Parade Walking Tour
- Lake Burley Griffin Walking Tour
- Old Parliament House Gardens Walking Tour
- Reconciliation Place Walking Tour
- Military Memorials Driving Tour

Or book a free guided group walking tour

for Anzac Parade, Lake Burley Griffin, Old Parliament House Gardens and Reconciliation Place.

For bookings, contact the National Capital Exhibition on (02) 6272 2902 or visit our website.

www.nca.gov.au

[@nca_media](https://twitter.com/nca_media)

nca.gov

