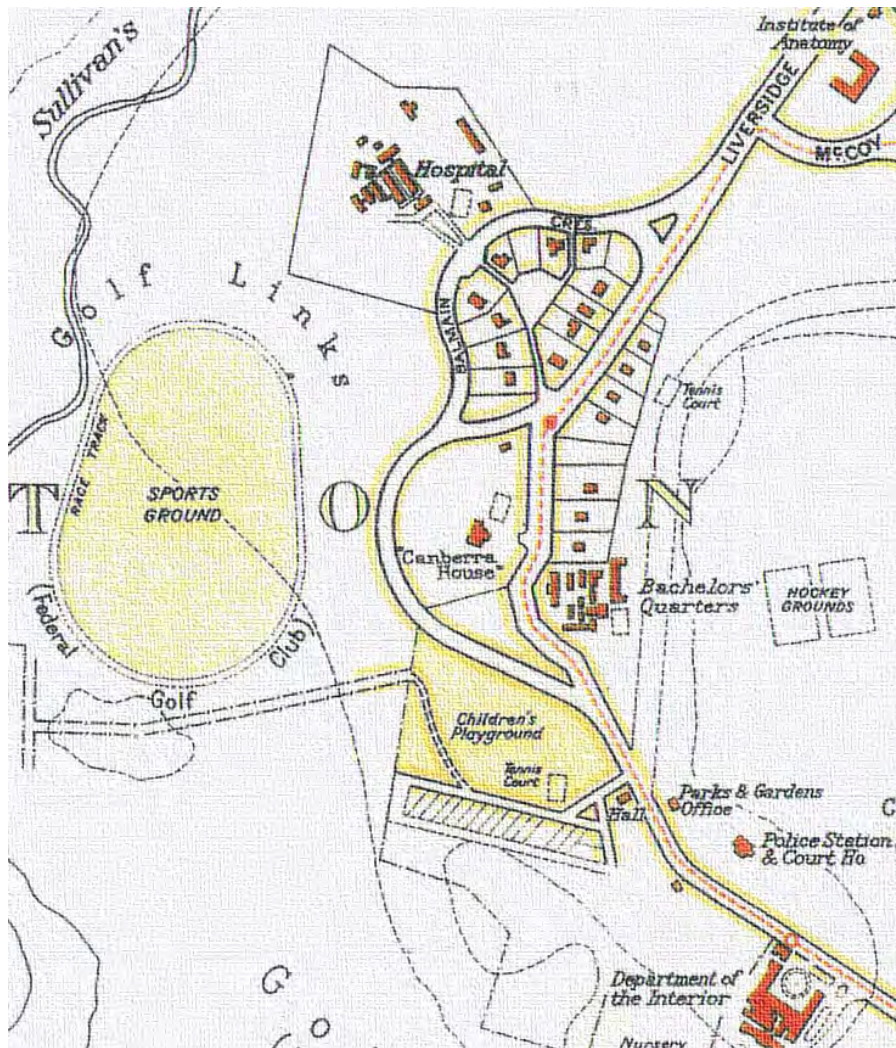


ACTON CONSERVATION AREA

Australian Capital Territory

Heritage Management Plan



March 2011

This Heritage Management Plan is to be recognised as a Management Plan under the *Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (s341S)

Executive Summary

This Heritage Management Plan (HMP) was prepared by the Australian National University (ANU) in 2009. The Acton Conservation Area is a listed item on the Commonwealth Heritage List (#105340) and most buildings have also been Nominated or Registered for the ACT Heritage Register. This Heritage Management Plan has been prepared as one of the guiding documents for the ongoing management of the site, including measures to conserve the heritage values and policies for future developments.

Acton represents an important link between the current city of Canberra and its early development. The area has close associations with the local Indigenous communities. Early exploration of the region led to the first permanent European settlement in the 1820s, before the land was purchased by the Commonwealth in 1911-12 to become part of the Federal Capital Territory. Acton was the first property resumed and became the administrative and social heart of Canberra until the 1930s. The area was absorbed into the campus of the Australian National University in the early 1950s.

The Acton Conservation Area consists of four separate site complexes: Lennox House, Old Canberra House, the Acton Cottages and the old Canberra Community Hospital (Old Hospital Buildings). Each zone is made up of a number of early Acton buildings, used for a range of purposes by the University or affiliated groups. The HMP examines the values of each of the distinct zones, as well as the Conservation Area as a whole and its relationship to the rest of the ANU campus.

The HMP strives to achieve a balance between conservation of the heritage values of the Acton Conservation Area and the requirements of the University, both now and into the future.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objective of the Plan

This Heritage Management Plan (HMP) was prepared by the Australian National University in 2011. The principal objective of the HMP is to guide management decisions and actions in order to identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit, to all generations, the Commonwealth Heritage values, and other values, of the Acton Conservation Area in the Australian Capital Territory.

Management actions under this plan, including planning and conservation works, will strive to ensure that the Acton Conservation Area is valued, protected and understood, particularly in the lead-up to the centenary of the founding of Canberra in 1913.

1.2 Plan Structure

This HMP determines significance assessments for the Acton Conservation Area and outlines site management principles. It provides detailed information on the condition of the heritage values found at the place and is designed to stand as a blueprint for management decisions affecting the entire site.

The focus of this plan is less on presentation than on addressing legal obligations, conservation policies and changes which have arisen since the initial years of development in the Capital Territory. Some excerpts and photographs from primary sources are included to illustrate key points.

The Heritage Management Plan is structured in accordance with legislative requirements:

1. Introduction
2. Location of the Acton Conservation Area
3. History of Acton – Historical development of the Acton area
4. Cultural Features of the Acton Conservation Area – Historical overview, description and condition of the different elements that constitute the Conservation Area
5. Heritage Values – Assessment of the Area and the identified Commonwealth, and other, Heritage values
6. Condition of the Commonwealth Heritage Values – Condition and integrity of the Commonwealth, and other, heritage values
7. Management Framework – Statutory legislative requirements, agency mechanisms and other policies governing management of the Area
8. Management Requirements, Opportunities and Constraints – Pressures, risks and logistical constraints to the heritage values of Acton
9. Management Policies – Specific policies and protocols to guide management of the Acton Conservation Area

1.3 Study Area

The Acton Conservation Area is located in the Australian Capital Territory, about 2km from the GPO and the Canberra CBD. The site is situated on the southern end of the ANU's Acton campus and covers approximately 20 hectares. The National Museum of Australia is located to the south, on the tip of Acton peninsula. The Acton peninsula is surrounded by Lake Burley Griffin to the south, east and west. Figure 2.1 details the Acton Conservation Area in Canberra. Figures 2.2 and 2.3 illustrate the planning arrangement of the site.

1.4 Limitations

No Heritage Management Plans have previously been prepared for the Acton Conservation Area. Conservation Management Plans have been prepared for the Lennox House complex (CHL 105307) (1996; revised 2007) and Number 16 Lennox Crossing (1993; revised 2007). The ANU Heritage Study (Ratcliffe & Armes 1993-95) provides a general overview of the heritage values of the ANU's Acton campus.

1.5 Documentation

Documentary evidence researched during the preparation of this HMP is cited in the bibliography. All photographs were taken by the ANU Heritage Officer, unless otherwise stated.

1.6 Definitions

Definitions are reproduced from the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter 1999, as follows:

<i>Place</i>	A site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works. May include components, contents, spaces and views.
<i>Cultural Significance</i>	The aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations.
<i>Fabric</i>	The physical material of the place, including components, fixtures, contents and objects.
<i>Conservation</i>	The processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.
<i>Maintenance</i>	The continuous protective care of the fabric and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction.
<i>Preservation</i>	Maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.
<i>Restoration</i>	Returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

<i>Reconstruction</i>	Returning a place to a known earlier state. Reconstruction is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of materials [new or old] into the fabric.
<i>Adaptation</i>	Modifying a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.
<i>Use</i>	The functions of a place, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the place.
<i>Compatible Use</i>	A use which respects the cultural significance of the place. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.
<i>Setting</i>	The area around a place, which may include the visual catchment.
<i>Related Place</i>	A place that contributes to the cultural significance of another place.
<i>Related object</i>	An object that contributes to the cultural significance of a place but is not at the place.
<i>Associations</i>	The special connections that exist between people and a place.
<i>Meanings</i>	What a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses.
<i>Interpretation</i>	All the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place.

1.7 Author Identification

This Heritage Management Plan was prepared and written by James Collet, Heritage Project Officer, ANU. Ms Diana Osborne contributed to the historical research and assessment component of the document.

1.8 Acknowledgements

This Heritage Management Plan has been prepared in close consultation with the occupants of the Acton Conservation Area, departments of the Australian National University and the Department of the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population & Communities (DSEWPC).

The ANU Heritage Office gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following people in the preparation of this HMP:

- Facilities & Services Division, ANU
- The Noel Butlin Archives Centre, ANU
- National Archives of Australia, Canberra
- National Library of Australia, Canberra
- Ms Ann Gugler, Canberra
- Dr Peter Dowling, and members of the National Trust, ACT Chapter
- Occupants of the Acton Conservation Area

2 LOCATION

The Acton Conservation Area forms most of the south-eastern corner of the Australian National University campus. It is located less than 2km from the GPO and Civic Centre, the commercial heart of Canberra's CBD (Figure 2.1). The Conservation Area includes four major site complexes associated with the earliest development of the Federal Capital Territory: Lennox House, Old Canberra House, Acton cottages and the old Canberra Community Hospital Buildings. Altogether, the Area encompasses 38 buildings and two tennis courts set amongst remnant indigenous vegetation and notable later plantings.

The study area for this assessment has been defined by DSEWPC, as based on the boundaries described by the Commonwealth Heritage List entry for the Acton Conservation Area (Appendix 2). Adjacent sites that are also examined include the cottage at No. 8 Liversidge Street, the old Women's Ward (B Block) of the Canberra Community Hospital and the landscape to the southwest of the Old Canberra House zone (Figures 2.2-2.3).

Adjacent areas of interest, notably the Vice-Chancellor's Residence, University House, eastern side of Liversidge Street and the Research School of Earth Sciences, are noted only for their relationship to the Conservation Area. These locations are examined in separate studies or plans.



Figure 2.1: Site location of the Acton Conservation Area in the ACT (shaded)

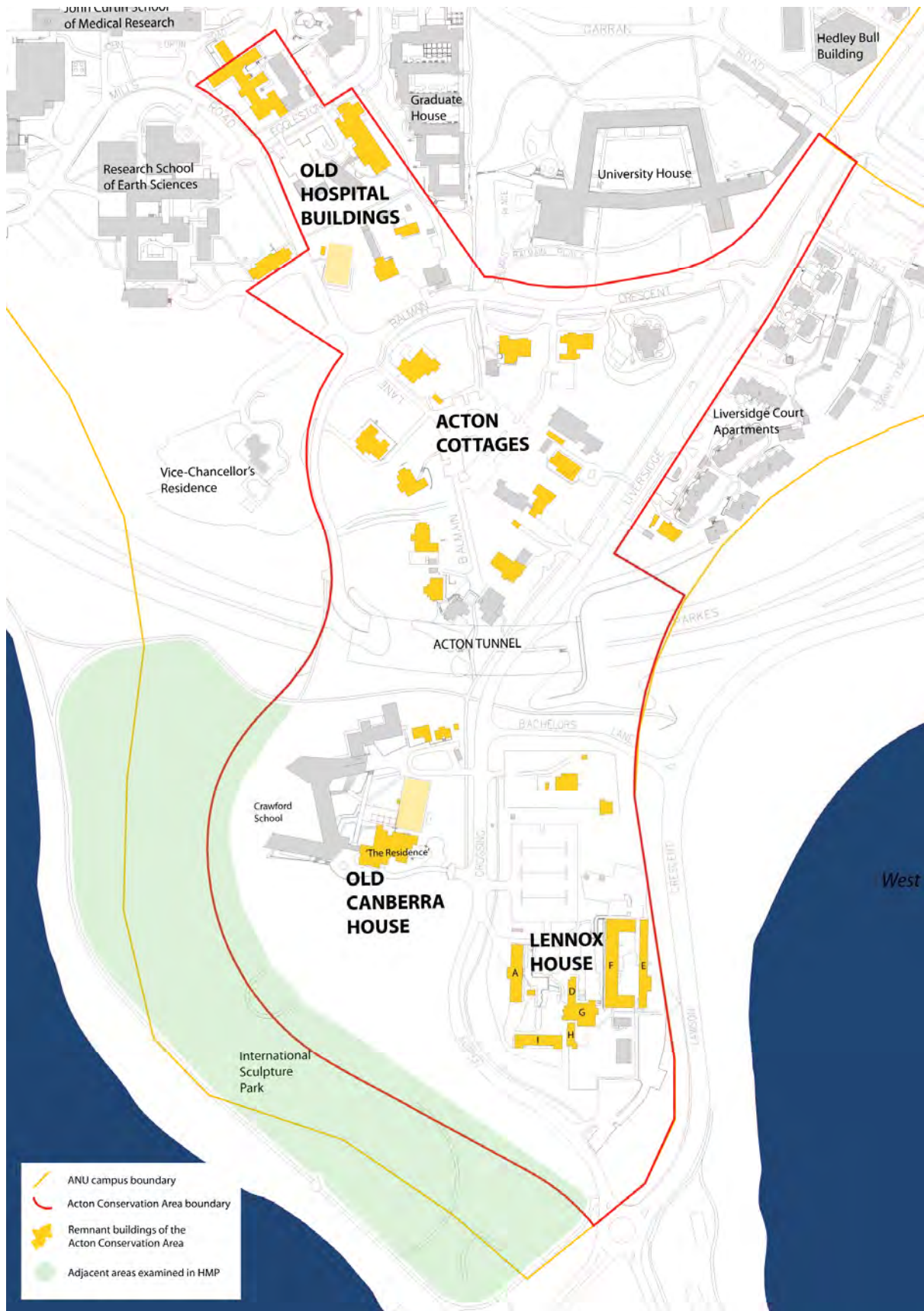


Figure 2.2: Site features of the Acton Conservation Area (ANU Heritage Office).

Note: Numbers 8 Liversidge Street and A Block of the Old Hospital Buildings are included as elements of the site, though are not included in the official Acton Conservation Area boundary on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

The original Acton buildings are identified in the following list of Site Survey Features.

Site Survey Features

LOCATION	ALSO KNOWN AS
<p>Lennox House zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A Block ➤ D Block ➤ E Block ➤ F Block ➤ G Block ➤ H Block ➤ I Block ➤ Laundry A 	<p>Lennox House zone</p> <p>Professional Officers' Mess: 1911-1912 Bachelor's Quarters/Single Men's Quarters: 1912-1935 "Rabbiters Arms": 1930s Acton Guest House: 1935-1960 Lennox House: 1960-2010</p>
<p>Old Canberra House zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Old Canberra House ➤ Gardener's Cottage ➤ Chauffeur's Cottage ➤ Garden Shed ➤ Tennis court and court shed 	<p>Old Canberra House</p> <p>The Administrator's Residence ('the Residency'): 1912-1925 Canberra House: 1925-1953 Old Canberra House: 1953-2010</p>
<p>Acton Cottages zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 16 Lennox Crossing (& laundry/WC, stables/garage, loose-box) ➤ 3 Liversidge Street (& garage) ➤ 5 Liversidge Street ➤ 7 Liversidge Street (& stables/garage) ➤ 8 Liversidge Street (& laundry/WC) ➤ 14 Balmain Lane ➤ 16 Balmain Lane ➤ 18 Balmain Lane ➤ 20 Balmain Cres. ➤ 22 Balmain Cres. (& garage) ➤ 26 Balmain Cres. ➤ 28 Balmain Cres. 	<p>16 Lennox Crossing</p> <p>Cottage No. 3: 1912-1932 Constable's Cottage: 1932-1960 16 Lennox Crossing: 1960-2010</p>
<p>Canberra Community Hospital zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A Block (Administration Block) ➤ N Block (Isolation Ward) ➤ M Block (Nurses Quarters) ➤ Gardener's Depot (Animal Laboratory and Animal House) ➤ Auxiliary Canteen and tennis court 	<p>Canberra Community Hospital zone</p> <p>Canberra Hospital: 1914-1930 Canberra Govt. Hospital: 1930-1935 Canberra Community Hospital: 1935-1968 (Canberra Hospital: 1968-1979) (Royal Canberra Hospital: 1979-1990) ANU Old Hospital Buildings (1960s-2011)</p>



Figure 2.3: The Acton Conservation Area, Canberra (courtesy DSEWPC).

3 HISTORY OF ACTON

The survey of physical fabric and research of the existing documentation has contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the development of the Acton Conservation Area. The following overview has been designed to provide a background to the overall significance of Acton; it is not considered a complete history of the area.

3.1 Indigenous History¹

Historical evidence indicates that Black Mountain and its spur (now the Acton peninsula) were areas that were used for intermittent occupation by the Indigenous peoples of the region.

Based on linguistic evidence collected by anthropologists such as Curr, Howitt and Mathews, Tindale placed the Canberra/Queanbeyan region within Ngunnawal, extending from Queanbeyan to Yass, east to beyond Goulburn and on highlands west of the Shoalhaven River. The southern Canberra region was situated close to the boundaries of the Ngunnawal and Walgalu peoples². It must be emphasised that boundaries, estates and ranges were likely fluid and varied over time and, as a consequence, the patterns recorded in the recent past may only represent the situation at the time of European contact.

Given its proximity to different tribal boundaries, the name 'Canberra' has been said to mean the 'Meeting Place'. Despite the exact meaning of the word, it is clear that both the quantity of Aboriginal artefacts found in Canberra and the accounts of early settlers testify to its importance in prehistoric times³. William Bluett states that one of the largest groups camped on what is now the ANU campus⁴:

One group camped at Pialligo and were known to the early settlers as the Pialligo Blacks; another, of a larger number of families, set up their mia-mias at the foot of Black's Mountain close to Canburry Creek. These were called the Canburry or Nganbra Blacks.

At each of these camps the Aborigines put on their one great form of entertainment – the Corroboree. On the Canburry Creek the big nearly whole-tribe pageants were staged, while Pialligo was the scene of their local social gatherings. A Corroboree was the Aborigine's one great expression of community entertainment and tribal display.

...the night would be lit up with the cooking fires at a hundred and more mia-mias spread along the Creek; the four or six blazing bonfires lighting up the big cleared dancing ground; the painted and decorated athletic performers, their greased bodies glistening in the firelight; the dancing and miming and singing and shouting; the piccaninnies goggle-eyed with excitement; the old men chanting and tapping their feet, the lubras clapping their hands and slapping buttocks to the rhythm of the dance...

Additionally, gifts may have been "brought to the king by visiting monarchs" at the Corroboree⁵ and the site used as part of the initiation ceremony of youth into adulthood⁶:

A tribal custom strictly observed was that of sealing, as it were, a male and female child as future husband and wife. From that time they were termed each other's snake, and were supposed not to look at one another...

This lasted until the tribal man-making ceremony came off, that is, when the boys were about seventeen to twenty years of age, and a sufficient number of them available, say five or six. Then all men together left with the boys for Jedbenbilla (Tidbinbilla) Mountain, the sacred place, so to speak, sanctified for that purpose. It was a very solemn affair and great secrecy

observed. I never heard what the actual rites were, but the boys returned fully made men, with one tooth knocked out, then all proceeded to Kamberra for the great feast.

Many campsites have been found within the Canberra region. They have been discovered on the lower slopes of Black Mountain, Mount Ainslie and Mount Pleasant and also at Pialligo, Kingston, Barton, Parkes, Duntroon, Yarralumla and Deakin⁷. They usually consist of no more than a scatter of worked stone. Excavations at rock shelters in the region indicate that Indigenous occupation extends back several thousand years⁸.

The heavily timbered areas at the base of Black Mountain would have provided ample stocks of possum, kangaroo and wallaby, while the Molonglo River was rich in Murray Cod. Access to a permanent water supply, as well as protection from the prevailing winds, would also have made the peninsula attractive for Aboriginal occupation. Material culture remains recovered in the region are extensive and include stone artefacts, spears and possum and kangaroo skin cloaks⁹.

The arrival of European settlers and diseases alien to the country took a heavy toll on the local populations, with only five or six 'survivors' recorded in the area by 1872¹⁰. Others were displaced or relocated to reserves elsewhere.

Surveys undertaken by HP Moss in the 1930s located upwards of 50 artefacts in the area bounded by the Institute of Anatomy (National Film and Sound Archives), Sullivans Creek and the Canberra Hospital. These included numerous finely-worked chips, a large grinding-stone and two pounding stones¹¹.

It is clear that the area on and surrounding the Acton campus of the ANU was once one of major importance to the local Aboriginal communities, both economically and ceremonially. Historical and archaeological evidence has shown that extensive use was made of the area. Further evidence of their occupation may be recovered in the future, although the likelihood of artefacts being found in-situ is doubtful.

3.2 Early European Occupation (1824-1911)

Europeans appear to have first glimpsed the Limestone Plains in October 1820¹². After almost certainly traversing what would later become the Australian National University campus, the constable James Vaughan and landowner Charles Throsby Smith ascended Black Mountain on the morning of 8 October 1820. Three years later Captain Currie and Major Owens passed close to the site when exploring the Molonglo River and in 1824 botanist Allan Cunningham explored nearby; the last to do so before permanent European settlement in the region¹³.

Acton Estate

Canberry was the first land that was officially settled in the Molonglo. The Waterloo veteran Joshua John Moore purchased 1,000 acres in 1826 and set about building the first pastoral homestead. It was sited at the end of Acton Ridge and constructed of rendered stone with plaster ceilings under a shingle roof. In 1843 the property was sold to Lieutenant Arthur Jeffreys RN, who renamed the land after his home in Acton, Wales.

Acton Estate served as the residence of the first three rectors of St John's Church of England from the 1850s to 1870s, before the construction of the new rectory, Glebe

House, in 1873. It was leased to Arthur Brassey and his wife Salome in the 1880s, who lived in the buildings until the land was resumed by the Commonwealth to become part of the Territory in 1911¹⁴.

The first occupant of Acton House in an official Government capacity was Charles R. Scrivener, Director of Commonwealth Surveys, until his retirement in 1915¹⁵. The homestead became the local Court House and Police Station of the fledgling Capital from 1929 until the 1940s, when the buildings were demolished to make way for the Royal Canberra Hospital.



Figure 3.1: The original Acton (right) and Springbank properties, to the north of the Molonglo River (Hoddle 1832) (NLA 1632926).

Springbank Estate

The neighbouring property, Springbank, was located between the Molonglo River and eastern side of Black Mountain. It was formally purchased in 1831 by John McPherson, who had lived there since 1829¹⁶. The McPherson family had moved to Port Philip (Melbourne) in 1842, even though they had tripled the size of their holdings in 1836 by acquiring the majority of Black Mountain. By the 1840s eleven people had taken up residence at Springbank, two of whom were convict workers.

By the 1880s Springbank had seen numerous tenants who had divided the property into four separate leaseings, each occupied by a different family. In 1889 the ownership rights of the original property was taken up by William Sullivan, who had gradually purchased all four allotments¹⁷.

The land was resumed by the Commonwealth in 1912 before being leased to Charles Kaye in 1924 to operate a dairy business on the property. His sons continued to farm the land until the house was demolished in 1961 and the land inundated to create Lake Burley Griffin.

Springbank originally comprised three timber-slab buildings: the homestead, a semi-detached hut and a kitchen block. An additional weatherboard homestead was built in 1908-09 near the original slab buildings. Close to the house was a timber stable for three horses, three slab sheds, a pise dairy and another slab house constructed for farm hands. In addition to dairy cattle, Sullivan also ran sheep and grew wheat, maize, barley, oats and potatoes¹⁸.

Acton peninsula constitutes land that was once part of both Acton and Springbank properties. These pastoral properties were the beginnings of a permanent European presence in the area.

3.3 Acton Village (1911-1920)

After Australia became a Federated Nation on 1 January 1901, the selection of a Federal Capital site became paramount. The Constitution prescribed an area of no less than 1000 square miles (2590 square kilometres) to accommodate the Federal Territory¹⁹. Initially recommended by surveyor CR Scrivener, the 1015 square miles of the Yass-Canberra region was officially adopted in 1908 as the result of a series of ballots²⁰.

Acton was the first property to be resumed by the Commonwealth on 25 February 1911. Work began on the foundations of Canberra shortly after, with government employees and workmen accommodated in a number of temporary workers' camps. They consisted of little more than a collection of tents and humpies, though by the 1920s married and single quarters were kept separate, with sections allocated to different 'classes' of workers. The lowest were the labourers, followed by pug (horse and dray), tradesmen, engineers, surveyors and other such officials. Most camps also had a mess and mess caterer²¹.

The first Lands and Survey Camp, which had been pitched near Capital Hill in March 1909, was transferred to the eastern side of Acton Ridge in June 1911. By the end of 1912 a mess hall and more 'temporary' accommodation had been constructed in a number of weatherboard buildings above the slope to the west of the camp. Together referred to as the Professional Officers' Mess (today Lennox House), these

buildings became the hub of social activities, including the first organised sporting groups: the Acton Cricket Club (1912), the Canberra Lawn Tennis Club (1913) and the Canberra Rifle Club (1914). The first amateur theatre group (the Canberra Community Players) and the first chess contest in the Capital were also organised at the Bachelor's Quarters in the mid-1920s²².



Figure 3.2: Acton area, 1912. Acton Homestead and the Springbank complex are illustrated, along with the Commonwealth Offices, Bachelors Quarters and the first five cottages for married administrative staff (Lands & Surveys Branch, Dept. of Home Affairs) (NLA 117433).

The first building of the Commonwealth Office complex was completed on 22 August 1912 to the south of the Ridge. The Offices were shortly followed by the construction of five weatherboard cottages for married staff, situated above the Bachelor's Quarters to the north (today part of the Acton Cottages zone). Administrative staff soon arrived, including the Administrator of the Federal Territory, who was to oversee the early development of the city. His Residence (today Old Canberra House), the first double storey brick house built in the new Territory, was constructed

at the end of Acton Ridge by December 1913²³. Like most of the early Acton buildings, the Residence was sited to overlook the Molonglo River below, taking full advantage of the existing track along the Ridge (Acton Road/Lennox Crossing). The socio-economic segregation that had begun in Acton Camp was continued in the construction and location of the workers' accommodation at Acton. The Bachelor's Quarters, providing barracks-style accommodation for low-level single employees, was located on the lowest reaches of Acton Ridge. The cottages for married administrative staff sat slightly uphill to the northwest and the Residence at the top of the ridge.



Figure 3.3: The Acton Administration Offices, seen here in the early 1920s, were the first supplied to Commonwealth employees in the Capital (NAA A3560, 314; A3560, 268).

To the northwest of the residential area a series of buildings had been constructed by May 1913 to serve as Canberra's first hospital complex. They were in similar style to those of the Bachelors Quarters and Administration Offices: elongated weatherboard structures joined via covered walkways, some with verandahs. The complex was connected by a newly-established track, crossing Acton Road, with the Bachelors Quarters below (today Balmain Lane). Recreational facilities were soon developed in the form of Canberra's first golf course, a cricket ground and tennis courts at the Bachelor's Quarters and the Residence.

In May 1913 Thomas 'Charles' Weston was appointed Chief Afforestation Officer of the Territory and established a nursery at Acton, below the Government Offices. Weston was to develop Acton Nursery over the next few years, adding an experimental pine plantation and decorative, fruit and hedge species²⁴. He became a key advisor on horticultural matters in the region, supplying trees and shrubs to schools, showgrounds, hospitals and churches²⁵. Many of his experimental species were propagated at the Acton or Yarralumla Nurseries and the majority of the gardens and tree species found in early Acton were chosen or planted under the direct supervision of Weston.

By the beginning of 1914 the temporary camp at Acton had become the 'Village of Canberra', its boundaries defined by fences to the north and south.

Colonel David Miller and Walter Burley Griffin

Colonel David Miller had entered the Federal Service upon his return from the South African War of 1901. He was described as a vigorous individual, whose strict and

decisive dealings quickly elevated him to the position of the first Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs in Melbourne²⁶. After diplomatically dealing with a succession of Ministers, he was placed under the command of King O'Malley, the Minister for Home Affairs, in 1910. Miller's departmental policies were varied, though of primary importance was the search for a Federal Territory and the formidable task of establishing the new city.



Figure 3.4: Colonel David Miller (left) and Walter Burley Griffin, c1912 (nla.pic-an23323268; nla.pic-vn3944215).

Soon after his appointment an international competition was held to determine the most appropriate design of the Capital. Miller was installed as the head of a board formed to report on the competition submissions, eventually awarding first prize to Chicago architect Walter Burley Griffin, on 23 May 1912²⁷. Though Griffin's designs set the overarching principles of development for the new city, the departmental board was also to produce a plan of its own. The government officially adopted the board's revised plan in January 1913; a widely criticised act inciting much condemnation²⁸.

Miller was deeply committed to the creation of the Federal Capital in line with the departmental plan and was determined the see the design realised. He arranged to be seconded as Administrator of the Federal Territory and transferred to Canberra on 3 October 1912²⁹. The Administrator was in charge of the development of the city and Territory and was solely responsible to the Minister for Home Affairs³⁰.

Shortly after his arrival, Miller oversaw the construction of his Residence (Old Canberra House), located up-slope to the west of the married officers' quarters³¹. The gardens were initially designed and landscaped by Charles Weston, who also set about forming the tennis court at the Residence in January 1914³².

A change of government in mid-1913 resulted in the appointment of Griffin as Federal Director of Design and Construction³³. Administrative and cultural events were to impact on the implementation of Griffin's plan and resulted in Acton becoming, by default, the social and cultural centre of the city; it was the only site adjacent to the future civic centre with a full view of the city area. It was above flood-level, had established tree cover, existing accommodation, tracks and a plentiful

supply of water available from rainwater tanks or direct from the Molonglo River. Telephones had been installed by 1914³⁴ and electricity connected by August 1915³⁵.

A Royal Commission was set up in June 1916 to inquire into the administration and development of the Capital Territory. The seven-month investigation led to the resignation of King O'Malley on 14 November, leaving Parliament before the formation of the second Hughes National Labor Ministry³⁶.

The new government made the Works Branch of the Department of Home Affairs a separate Department of Works and Railways, with W.D Bingle acting for Miller as its permanent head³⁷. The Inquest focused on inconsistencies in the development of the Capital, including the recorded expenditures for the construction of the Residence, workmens' cottages and the hospital complex³⁸. Miller's credibility suffered under six days of examination before the Royal Commission in September and October 1916 and led to his departure in February 1917³⁹.

The outbreak of the First World War curtailed development in the Canberra region indefinitely and instigated a dramatic decline of the population. Acton remained the administrative centre, although the Residence and some of the cottages were vacant. Works were generally limited to maintenance of existing buildings and the surrounding gardens.

3.4 The FCAC and FCC (1920-1930)

After the suspension of construction during the First World War the government believed that the time had come for a registered authority to oversee the development of Canberra from the Territory itself. This authority was to "develop and maintain a proper system of local government in the Territory, deal with the lands question, the construction of the Capital City, take over the existing assets and liabilities and so manage the Territory that full economic advantage may be obtained and the ordinary funds relieved of the burden"⁴⁰.

Thus was formed the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC). As their title suggests, the functions of the Committee were primarily of an advisory nature. Actual works were still undertaken by the executive officers of the Departments of Home & Territories and Works & Railways⁴¹.

The FCAC was formed at the end of 1920 and consisted of experts in architecture, engineering, town planning and departmental administration. It included Sir John Sulman, consulting architect; EM DeBurgh, Chief Engineer for Water Supply of the Public Works Department of NSW; HE Ross, architect; Colonel PT Owen, Commonwealth Director-General of Works; JTH Goodwin, Commonwealth Surveyor-General and CS Daley, Secretary. The Committee was to examine the general administration of the Territory in light of the changed economic conditions as a result of the War and draw up a scheme for the ongoing construction of the city. Of primary importance was the "establishment of the seat of government as economically and rapidly as possible"⁴².

By March 1921 the FCAC were occupying the old Administrator's Residence in Acton⁴³, both as permanent accommodation and as an occasional meeting place. From 1921 to 1924 the Committee investigated or developed a number of works in the Capital. These included extensions to the water supply and sewerage reticulation system, the formation and grading of roads and bridges as per the Griffin plan, and

extensions to the electricity supply. Developments in the Acton area itself, however, were kept to a minimum. The Bachelor's Quarters and Hospital complex saw extensions and two or three cottages were constructed for middle-level public servants on the west side of Balmain Crescent⁴⁴. For other parts of the Territory, proposals to establish more accommodation, commercial premises and a permanent building for the Houses of Parliament were also put forth, to be carried out by their successors, the Federal Capital Commission⁴⁵.

The Federal Capital Commission (FCC) was formed in January 1925 and was to oversee the first period of sustained growth in Canberra. The Officers embraced the 1918 Griffin plan, continuing the ordered subdivision of cadastral units and the established future Lake boundary. They arranged for construction of hundreds of temporary and permanent houses in the Capital and were responsible for a number of important public buildings, including the Institute of Anatomy (National Film and Sound Archives) and Canberra High School (School of Art) at Acton and the Provisional Houses of Parliament south of the River⁴⁶.



Figure 3.5: The staff of the Federal Capital Commission outside the Acton Offices, 1928 (NAA A3560, 4931).

In 1927 the shopping centre in Civic was opened about two kilometres to the northeast, followed by the transfer of more than 650 public servants from Melbourne⁴⁷. Acton was to retain its administrative functions, albeit in an expanded form. A series of houses for middle and upper-income earners were constructed to the north of the Residence between 1925 and 1929. Generally, they were larger than the earlier married workmens' cottages and were formed of a red-brick base supporting weatherboard walls and "Marseilles-pattern" tiled roof. A few houses were also constructed of 'Canberra' red-bricks. Together, the Liversidge Street (Acton Road) cottages (1912-16) and the Balmain Crescent Houses (1925-29) formed an early collection of residences established in a convenient location unencumbered by future planning of the Capital as proposed by Griffin. Minor alterations were also carried out at Old Canberra House, including the (possible) construction of the gardener's cottage and garden shed and improvements to the landscape.

The main thoroughfare, Acton Road, was lined with alternating English Elm and white poplar trees⁴⁸. The cottages were set among the naturally established local

eucalypts, with numerous exotic species selected from nursery stock. Prior to the opening of the shops in Civic, the residents were largely self-sufficient, nurturing domestic vegetable gardens and tending poultry. Many also had a dairy cow in the nearby agistment paddocks. The houses were equipped with wood-fire stoves and two or three galvanised-iron rainwater tanks⁴⁹.

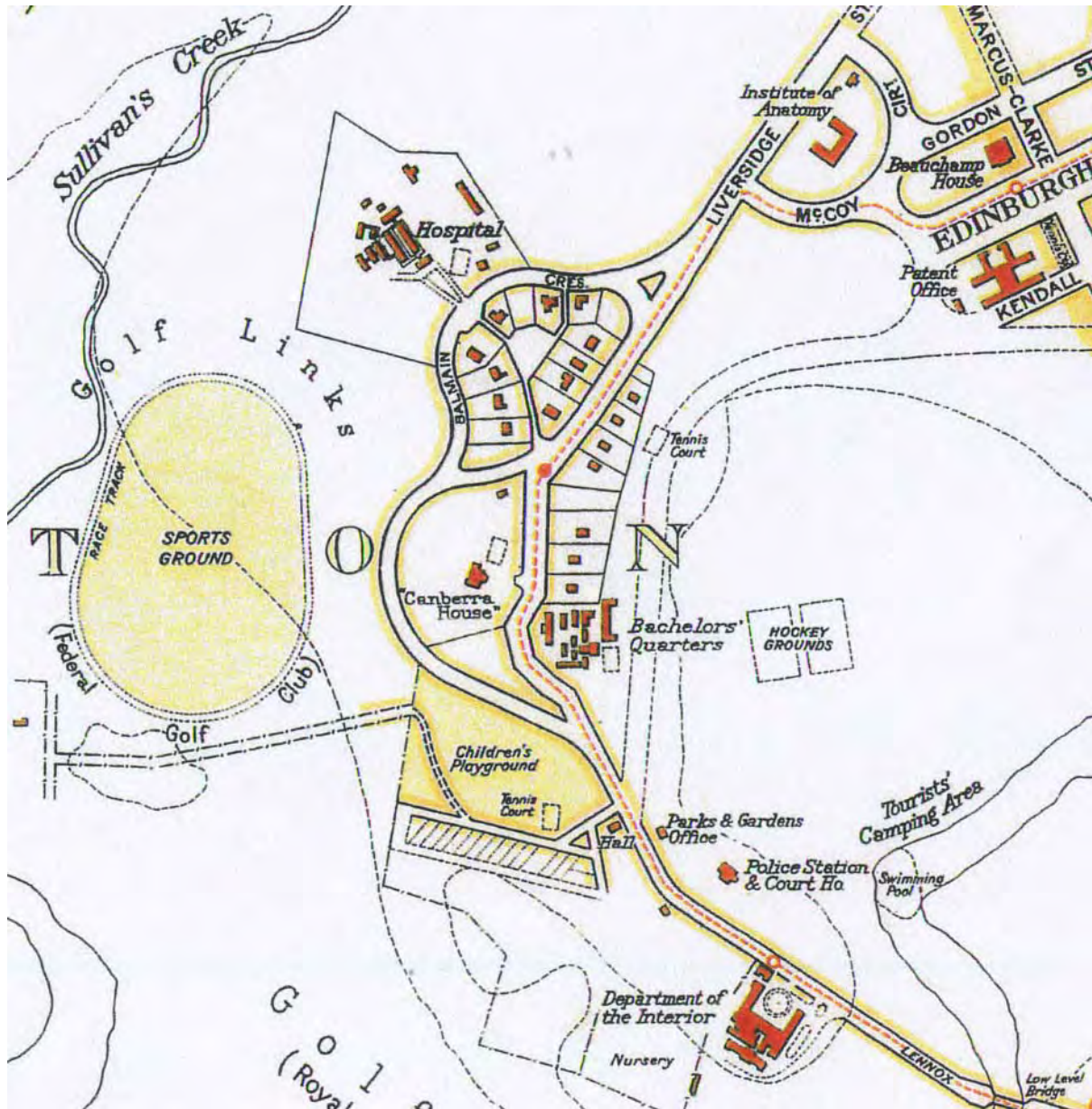


Figure 3.6: Acton, 1933. By the early 1930s the Acton 'village' had been formed, with workers' cottages kept separate from lower level accommodation (Bachelors Quarters) and upper level accommodation (Canberra House). The Hospital was extended in 1928 to the north of the residential area (NLA 2931052).

The original Hospital complex had become largely inadequate for the growing population by the mid-1920s and by the end of 1927 plans had been developed to increase hospital bedding from 28 to 76 patients. Work began in 1928 and the next few years saw the construction of a new Administration Block, general wards, a separate Isolation Ward and, likely in the early 1930s, a large Nurses Quarters. A tennis court was formed for the nurses in 1930, followed by a small hut for the

Hospital Auxiliary in 1938. In 1928 the FCC constructed an experimental Animal Laboratory and Animal House for the Commonwealth Department of Health near the hospital. The Department of Health was one of the first Commonwealth departments transferred to the Capital, where they conducted some of the earliest public health campaigns⁵⁰.

The growth of suburbs other than Acton presaged a decline in the social importance of the area by the late 1920s. The relatively rapid development of Canberra was to lead to speculation in the sale and auction of leases which reached a crisis point in 1927, coinciding with the onset of the Depression. During the 1927-28 financial year most major projects had to be cancelled due to severe budget cutbacks. As a result, the FCC had been abolished by 1930; Canberra remained under the administration of the Department of Home Affairs until the end of the Depression in 1932⁵¹.

3.5 Decline of Acton (1930-1946)

The onset of war in 1939 curtailed development in the Canberra region indefinitely. This, coupled with the ensuing economic Depression, resulted in an atmosphere of stagnation, causing Canberra's society to turn within upon itself. Recreation activities and gardening were to become common denominators. Only necessary works were undertaken, including the connection of the sewers to the main treatment plant in 1943. Until this time Acton had been serviced by a separate septic system⁵².

Following the Second World War, economic and political changes assisted in the centralisation of Government from Canberra, with a resulting surge in population. Important decisions affecting development were only made from the post-War late 1940s. Amongst these was the decision to choose a site for the Australian National University.

3.6 The Australian National University (1947-1990)

Interest was expressed in founding a University in Canberra in the early 1920s. In 1929 the Canberra University College was established and offered the Acton site but, while the College was considering whether to accept, the offer was withdrawn. The Australian National University Act (#22) was passed by the Federal Government in 1946 and in September 1947 the Australian National University was formed to promote excellence in research on a national level. Significantly, the site was the location specified in Griffin's Gazetted plan of the Capital. It was formally vested in December 1952 and January 1953 by the University Council's approval of the agreement for a lease in perpetuity⁵³.

Of concern to the Interim Council were the question of existing tenancies, maintenance services and the racecourse below the site, besides Sullivans Creek. In a letter dated 1 August 1950, it was suggested that the rights of occupiers, which had been protected for five years from 1 February 1947, be respected, but that University staff be given first choice of available tenancies. The University also requested that the leasing of houses be handed over by 10 February 1952⁵⁴.

Between 1946 and 1960 a number of campus development plans were prepared. The first, undertaken by Professor Brian Lewis of Melbourne, was completed in March 1948. The plan detailed a classically symmetrical group of buildings around a

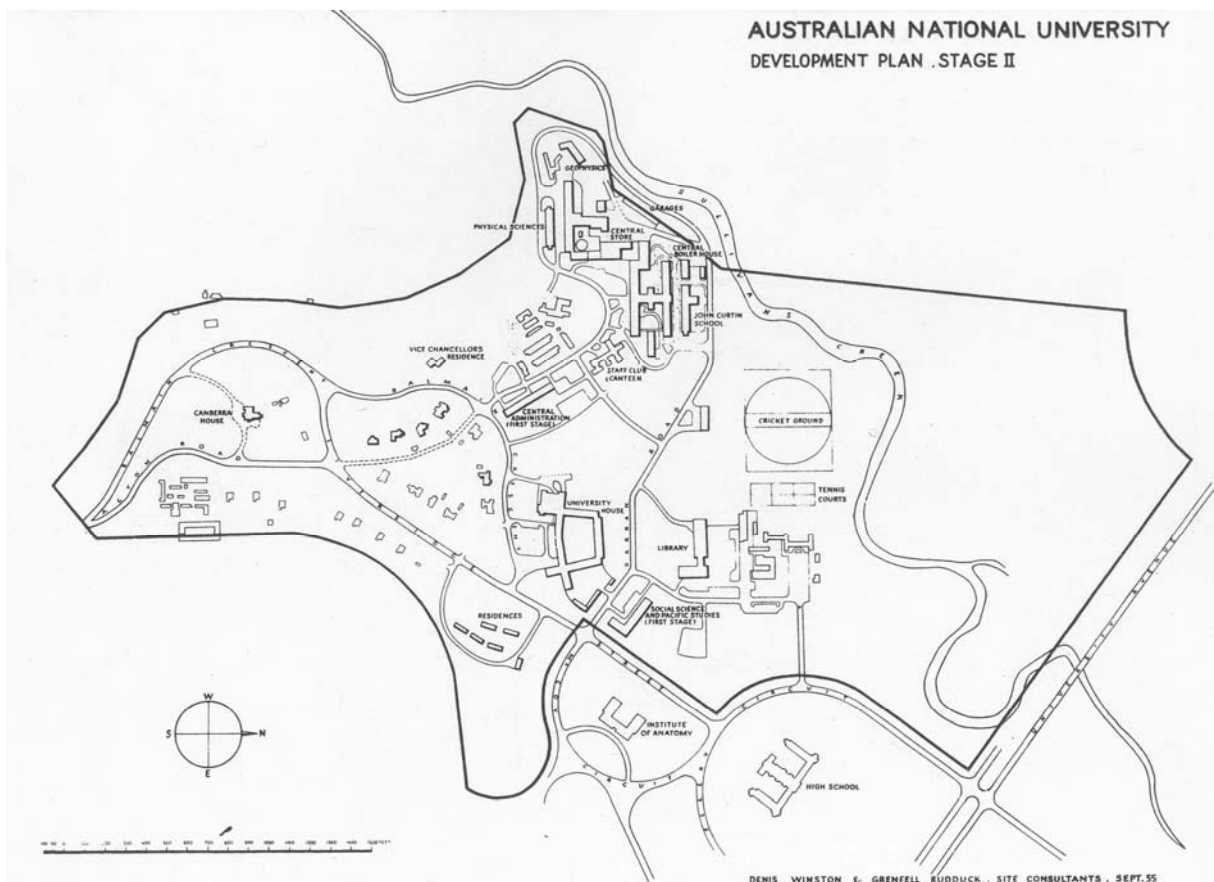
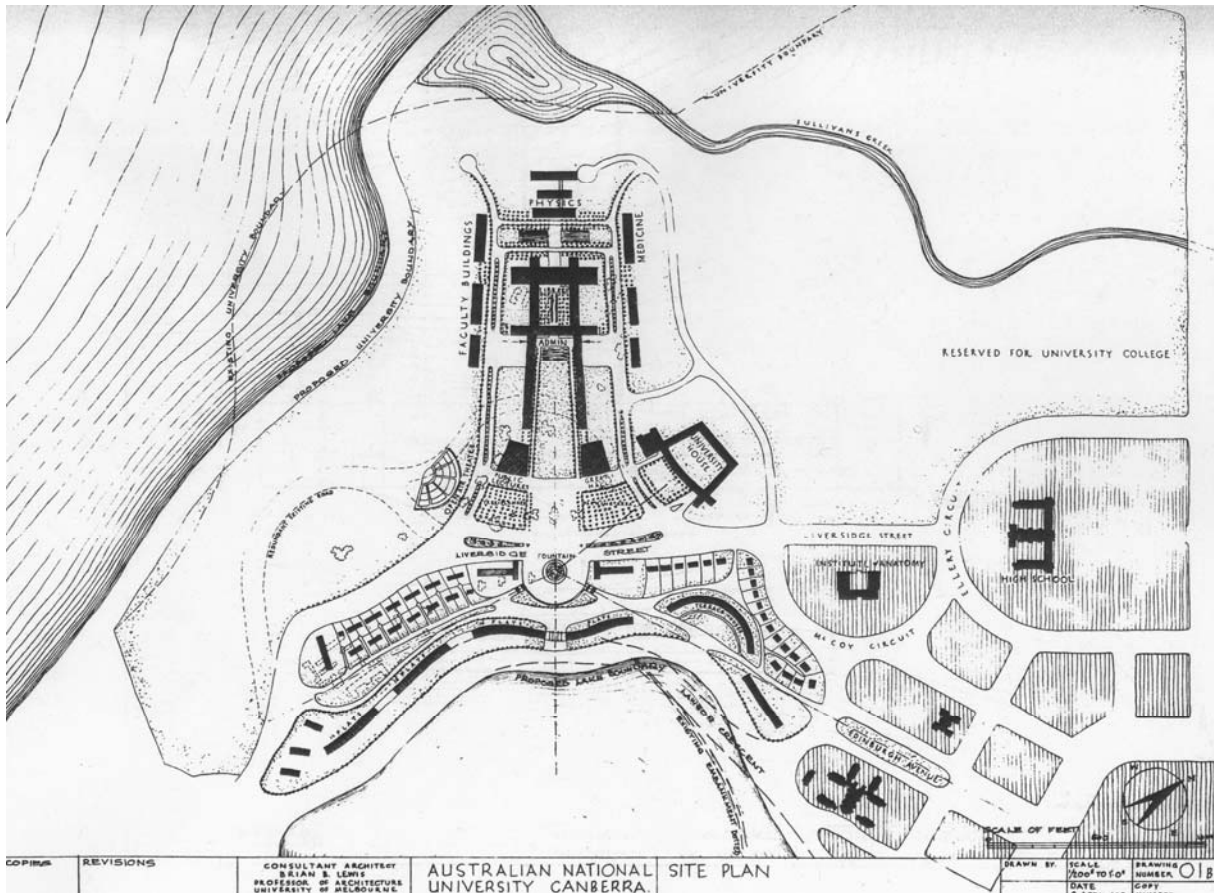


Figure 3.7: Professor Brian Lewis' first site plan (top) illustrated extensive developments in the Acton area, with only Old Canberra House remaining. The 2nd 1955 site plan detailed much less invasive works, with the retention of the early buildings (Dexter 1971: plates 8 & 15).

central axis (Griffin's water axis), forming an expansive courtyard fronting on to the future Lake. This open plan depended largely upon using land still occupied by the remaining Acton structures.

In 1955 a number of site development plans were prepared by Professor Denis Winston and Grenfell Ruddock. The first detailed extensive alterations to the Acton buildings; the Balmain Crescent cottages largely replaced by a University Tower/Theatre complex and the married mens' cottages and Bachelor's Quarters replaced by a new Residential College. The second plan, submitted in September 1955, detailed much less invasive developments; the early Acton cottages and the Old Canberra House complex were retained (Figure 3.7).

In 1958, following investigations into the planning of the Capital by Lord Holford, the Commonwealth decided to appoint a Commissioner for the development of Canberra. As a result, the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC), a planning authority, came into effect on 1 March⁵⁵. By June 1960 full control of the campus area had been vested to the University; a move largely facilitated by the formation of the NCDC⁵⁶.

Professor Winston, as advisor to the NCDC on site design, submitted his final plan of the ANU in October 1966. He again recommended replacing the Acton buildings with a Hall of Residence and a number of Faculty of Medicine buildings around the Old Canberra House area (Canberra House itself was to be retained).

By the mid-1970s the remnant buildings of the first Hospital complex (1913-14) had been demolished, and the other early Acton buildings were considered temporary or 'of an uncertain future'. The formation of the Acton 'Underhill' Tunnel in 1977 resulted in the demolition of a number of 1913 workers' cottages to the east of Liversidge Street, the formal implementation of Bachelor's Lane as a thoroughfare and considerable alterations to the landscape.

The 1992 Campus Development Policy Plan noted that the Acton area accommodated a range of University uses, including the child-care centre (Lennox House), the Information Centre, the Social Psychiatry Research Unit, the Australian Family Project and the International Population Dynamics Program. Recommendations for the precinct were that it be "developed for high-tech research and development activities and residential accommodation", with the relocation of the child care centre to another site and new buildings constructed.

3.7 Acton Conservation Area (1990-2009)

The child-care centre at Lennox House has recently celebrated its fortieth year in the buildings, an important part of the history of the complex. A Block is used for 'back-up' activities and I Block and the small laundry are vacant. Two 'temporary' modular units have been installed on the site of the Bachelor's Quarters tennis court; one is used by the Canberra Bike Co-op/Recyclery and the other used by the Canberra Environment Centre (Sustainable Learning Community) as their headquarters.

The surrounding land has been converted into a series of terraced organic vegetable gardens, supported by recycled telephone books. A large carpark and children's playground have been formed to the north of the Lennox House complex, atop the site of Cottage Numbers 1 and 2 (Cottage Number 3 survives to the north).

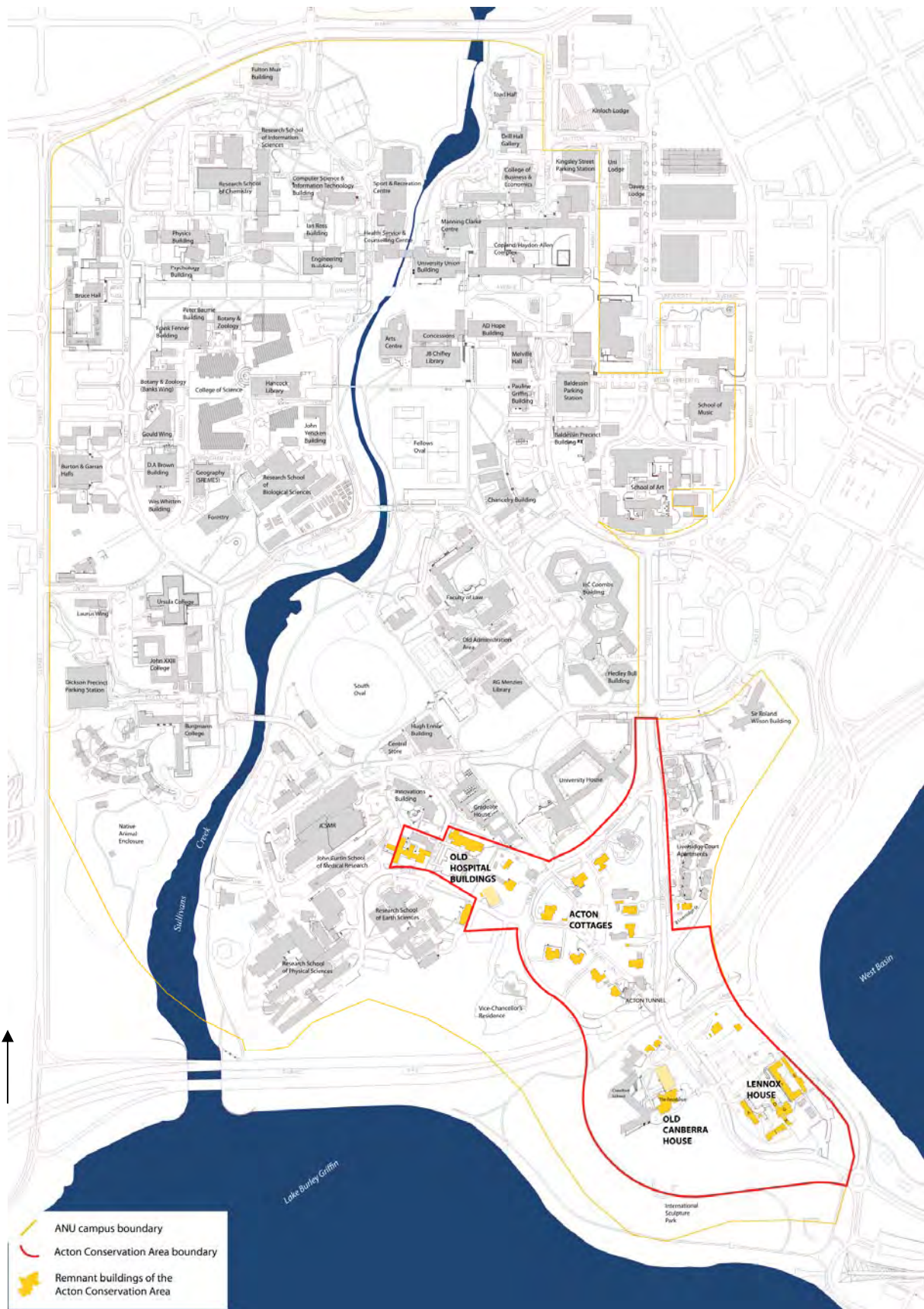


Figure 3.8: The remnant Acton buildings and the Acton Conservation Area as part of the modern ANU campus (ANU Heritage Office).

Old Canberra House has seen considerable alterations in recent years. In 2001 the garage was demolished and a central courtyard formed in line with the construction of the WEH Stanner Building to the north, along with restoration of the chauffeur's cottage and garden shed. In 2008-09 the chauffeur's cottage and garden shed were transferred to the east of the gardener's cottage and a number of significant trees removed to provide space for the Crawford School.

Only three of the original ten 1913 workers' cottages have survived (16 Lennox Crossing and 7 & 8 Liversidge Street), but all nine of the 1920s houses have been retained. They are now used mostly as office and research space, with two converted to child-care facilities. Number 8 Liversidge Street is the only cottage still used as a residence. A large modular unit was erected on the site of 9 Liversidge Street in 1990 and an additional 'cottage' erected for the Winston Churchill Trust at the northern tip of the zone in 2001. An additional two 'cottages' were also constructed to the south and west of 14 Balmain Lane for the National Europe Centre. A compound has been fenced to the rear of 7 Liversidge Street.

The old Canberra Community Hospital buildings have gradually been replaced with facilities for the Research School of Earth Sciences (RSES). Of the 1928 Hospital complex, A Block has been altered internally, the Isolation Ward and Nurses Quarters have both sustained major extensions and renovations, though the initial layout of rooms and some ephemeral evidence of hospital use has been retained. B Block (the old Women's Ward) was demolished late 2010 to make way for the new Jaeger 8 Building. The Animal Laboratory and Animal House are now used as the Gardener's Depot - the compound aligns well with the original site plan. The tennis court and Auxiliary Canteen have also survived and are used by the occupants of RSES and neighbouring buildings.

3.8 Chronology of Site Development

	Pre-European occupation
1826	Joshua John Moore constructs Canberry homestead at the end of Acton Ridge
1831	John McPherson constructs Springbank homestead (had lived on premises since 1829)
1843	Canberry Estate sold to Lieutenant Arthur Jeffreys RN, who renames the land Acton
1911	Acton becomes the first property resumed by the Commonwealth (25 Feb)
1912	Griffin Plan chosen to become the city of Canberra (23 May)
	Springbank resumed by Commonwealth (July)
	Commonwealth Offices constructed at south end of peninsula below Acton Ridge (12 Aug)
	Acton Camp Mess Hall (G Block) constructed (1st building of the Lennox House complex and 5 th ? building constructed in the new Capital Territory); D and H Blocks and the Wardsman's Flat (part of I Block) constructed
	Scrivener chooses site of future hospital at Acton
1912-13	Cottage #s 1-5 constructed for married men to east of Acton Road (Cottage #s 6-7 built by 1916). Cottage #s 8-9 constructed to west of Acton Road
	No. 6 Liversidge Street becomes first medical consulting room in Acton until Hospital built in 1914
	No. 9 Liversidge Street constructed as Commonwealth Bank Manager's Residence
1913	City of Canberra Commencement Ceremony (23 March)
	The Residence (Old Canberra House) constructed for Administrator; also garage and small gas plant (Dec)
	TC Weston begins work on the gardens and grounds of the Residence (Aug)
1914	Telephones connected at Acton
	Weston begins forming drives and grading tennis court at Residence with local gravel (Jan); tennis court shed constructed?
	First Hospital complex constructed northwest of residential area (27 May)
1915	Electricity connected from Kingston powerhouse (Aug)
1917	The Administrator, Colonel Miller, departs (28 Feb)
	No. 6 Liversidge Street becomes first 'maternity ward' in Acton (Hospital not suitable)
1920	Development of Territory handed to Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC)
1921	Water piped to Acton from Cotter (Apr)
1922	Street lighting installed (May)
	B & C Blocks transferred to Bachelors Quarters from Molonglo Internment Camp (originally constructed c1918)
	Exclusive use of Residence given to FCAC; Colonel Owen occupies
1923	Bachelors Quarters' Wardsman's Flat extended to form I Block
1925	Federal Capital Commission (FCC) takes over development of the FCT
	F, J, K & L Blocks constructed at the Bachelors Quarters
	(Sir) John Butters occupies the Residence, which is renamed Canberra House. Weston alters grounds of Residence (Gardener's Cottage & Garden Shed constructed?)
1925-29	Balmain Crescent houses constructed (#s 14, 16, 18, 20 likely planned by FCAC)
1926	FCC prepares plans to construct new Hospital at Acton (2 new wards of 20 beds, Maternity Ward of 8 beds, Administration Building) (Jun)
	Weston departs; succeeded by Alexander Bruce

1927	Shopping Centre in Civic constructed (Melbourne & Sydney Buildings)
	Provisional Houses of Parliament (Museum of Australian Democracy) constructed; John Butters knighted at opening
	A Block constructed at Bachelors Quarters (Aug)
	Work begins on new (Canberra Community) Hospital in Acton (Jan)
	Obstetric Ward (cJun-Jul) and Men's Ward constructed at the hospital
1928	Cottage stables converted into garages?
	Administration Block, Female Ward, Kitchen Block and lecture room for trainee nurses constructed at the hospital. Isolation Ward constructed, though not used until May 1929
	Dept. of Health Laboratory and Animal House constructed at the hospital (Sept)
1930	32-bed Isolation Ward completed (May); tennis court formed at the hospital; Nurses Quarters constructed?
1931	Canberra House gardens opened to public
	First Hospital Auxiliary formed (Jun); Dental clinic opens; vegetable garden established to the north of the Isolation Block; Admin. Block extended to west
1932	Canberra House begins as residence of British Representative to the Crown in Australia, ET Crutchley (Jun)
	Cottage #3 becomes Constable's Cottage
1935	Bachelors Quarters leased to Mrs M Marshall as a guest house
	Extensive alterations undertaken to Canberra House by British Govt.
1936	First British High Commissioner, Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, occupies Canberra House (Mar)
1937	Chauffeur's Hut constructed to north of garden shed and garage at Canberra House
	Leighton Irwin plans approved for new hospital at end of peninsula (Jul)
1938	Chauffeur's Cottage constructed (replaces chauffeur's hut) at Canberra House (Nov)
	(Second) Hospital Auxiliary formed; Auxiliary Canteen erected near tennis court (Oct?)
1939	Vegetable garden/fowlyard removed at Canberra House?
1941	Acton House demolished to make way for Royal Canberra Hospital
1943	Acton sewers connected to main treatment plant
	Royal Canberra Hospital constructed (patients transferred Feb)
	Isolation Ward converted into ACT's first Nursery School
1944	Nurses Quarters used as first YMCA hostel in ACT (for returned servicemen)
1944-45	US Army conducts radio training school in old Bachelors Quarters
1946	Australian National University Act passed (22 Aug)
	E Block transferred to Bachelors Quarters from Sydney (Narellan)
1948	Prof. Brian Lewis submits first site plan of ANU campus
1953	Area of 204 acres vested to University in perpetuity; majority of Acton buildings handed over
1955	Prof. Denis Winston & Grenfell Rudduck submit ANU campus development plans
	OCH lease signed to Commonwealth Club; conversion into commercial premises begins (pantry removed; billiard room constructed)
1960	Full control of campus vested to University
1961	Springbank demolished to make way for the inundation of Lake Burley Griffin
1963	No. 6 Liversidge Street badly damaged in fire and demolished (replaced with fibro cement building)
1966	ANU Staff Centre opens in Old Canberra House (Feb) (opens to entire campus)

	population in 1967)
1966-67	Cottages begin to be converted into University offices
1967	K Block (Old Hospital Kitchen Block) transferred to west of Law School to eventually become <i>Caterina's Cafe</i>
1970	No. 9 Liversidge Street destroyed in fire (replaced with temporary cottage)
1970s	Hospital buildings are gradually demolished or converted to make way for Research School of Earth Sciences
1972	B & C Blocks demolished at Lennox House
1973	Modular kitchen units installed to west of original kitchen at Staff Centre
1975	No. 16 Balmain Lane used as a 'distress house' for students
1976	No. 2 Liversidge Street demolished (damaged in fire 1968) No. 22 Balmain Crescent used as child-care facility
1977	Acton Tunnel & Parkes Way formed beneath site
1980	Dining room enlarged at Old Canberra House; first floor offered to Australian Teachers' Federation (ATF); dble storey extension added to east; Liversidge St entrance formed
1982	New BBQ room at Old Canberra House; upper storey modified for offices; external staircase added
1983	Federations of College Academics occupy first floor of Old Canberra House
1987	University House takes over management of Staff Centre (OCH ground floor)
1989	First floor of Old Canberra House leased to Communications Research Institute of Australia (CRIA); new gateway entrance and path formed; Outbound Travel opens in ground floor sitting room
1992	Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) occupies Old Canberra House; (Research School of Pacific Studies occupies 2 rooms) No. 16 Balmain Lane becomes crèche (to become Central Canberra Family Day Care)
1994	University House relinquishes control of bar services at the Staff Centre (OCH) No. 16 Lennox Crossing restored; works win Dulux Restoration Award
1997	Old Canberra House refurbished; Managing Business in Asia (MBA) Program begins in building
1999	Lennox House complex modified to suit compliance issues as a child-care facility Bar services cease at Old Canberra House; MBA Program departs; Humanities Research Centre (HRC) occupy OCH and No. 16 Lennox Crossing
2001	Old Canberra House garage demolished & courtyard formed; WEH Stanner Building constructed to north of courtyard; Chauffeur's cottage restored
2003	Old Canberra House main foyer refurbished
2009	Crawford School constructed to west of Old Canberra House; chauffeur's cottage and garden shed transferred to east of gardener's cottage
2010	Women's Ward (OHB B Block) demolished to make way for Jaeger 8 Earth Sciences research facility

3.9 Summary of Site Development

Phase 1: Early History (1910-1920)

By the 1830s the properties of Acton and Springbank had been formally purchased and developed as grazing land (Acton) and arable land (Springbank). Pastoral practices continued after they were purchased by the Commonwealth, with the main administration areas and agistment properties fenced off from the general grazing areas.

A number of tent camps were established in the Capital in the early twentieth century to house the surveyors and draftsmen; the Acton Camp was established in 1911, shortly followed by the construction of a mess hall (G Block) and other semi-permanent buildings to serve as sleeping quarters for single men (D, H and part of I Blocks of the Bachelors Quarters). The Administrator's Residence was constructed uphill to the west, with a garage, small gas plant and tennis court and shed. Cottage Numbers 1-7 were constructed to the east of Acton Road, shortly followed by Numbers 6 and 7 Liversidge Street across the road north of a large water tank. The first five buildings of the hospital complex were constructed to the north-west of the residential precinct.

Much of the planning layout was established in this phase, principally the class segregation dictated by the contours of the land and a separate hospital area. The gardens and landscapes of the early houses were formally planned by Weston's Afforestation Department.

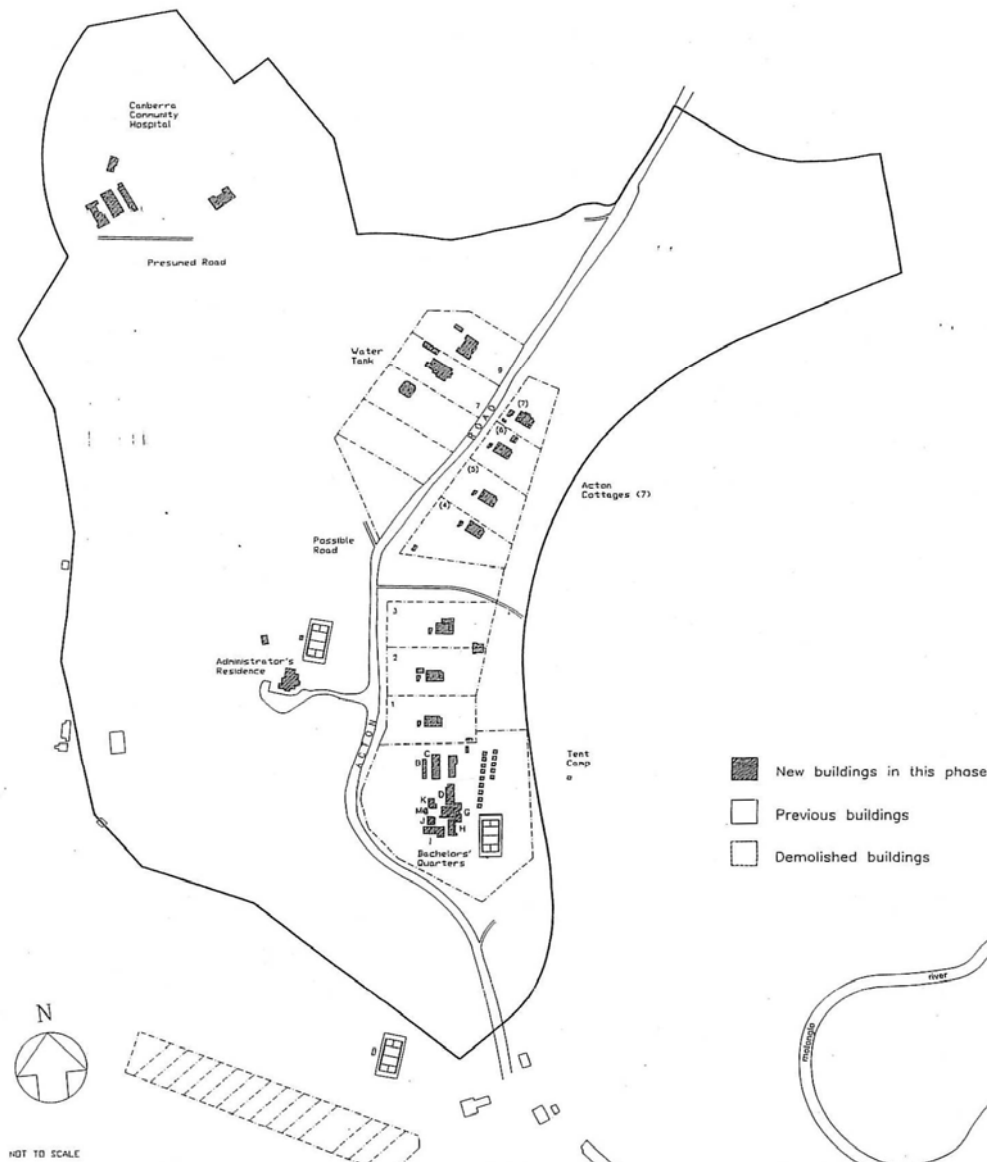


Figure 3.9: Acton development: 1910-1920 (Ratcliffe/Armes 1993)

Phase 2: Growth and Development (1920-1930)

This phase sees the first period of sustained development in the Capital, overseen by the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (1920-24) and the Federal Capital Commission (1925-30). Developments were planned around the pre-established workmen's accommodation and government offices at Acton.

Blocks B, C, F, J, K, L and M were added to the Bachelors Quarters and the Wardsman's Flat was extended to become I Block. The gardener's cottage and shed were likely constructed at the Residence (to become Canberra House in 1925) and to the north nine weatherboard and brick houses were constructed for middle and upper-income public servants (to become the Balmain Crescent residences). The original hospital complex was heavily extended to become the Canberra Community Hospital, including new Administration and Kitchen Blocks, larger Male and Female Wards, Obstetrics Block, Laundry, Isolation Ward and tennis court. The Animal Laboratory and Animal House were constructed for the Department of Health to the southeast of the hospital complex.

Other notable developments in the Territory included hundreds of brick houses and large public buildings, such as Old Parliament House, Albert Hall and Canberra High School (School of Art). By 1930 focus had shifted to other areas, due in large part to the economic Depression and the growth of areas other than Acton (e.g. Reid and Ainslie).

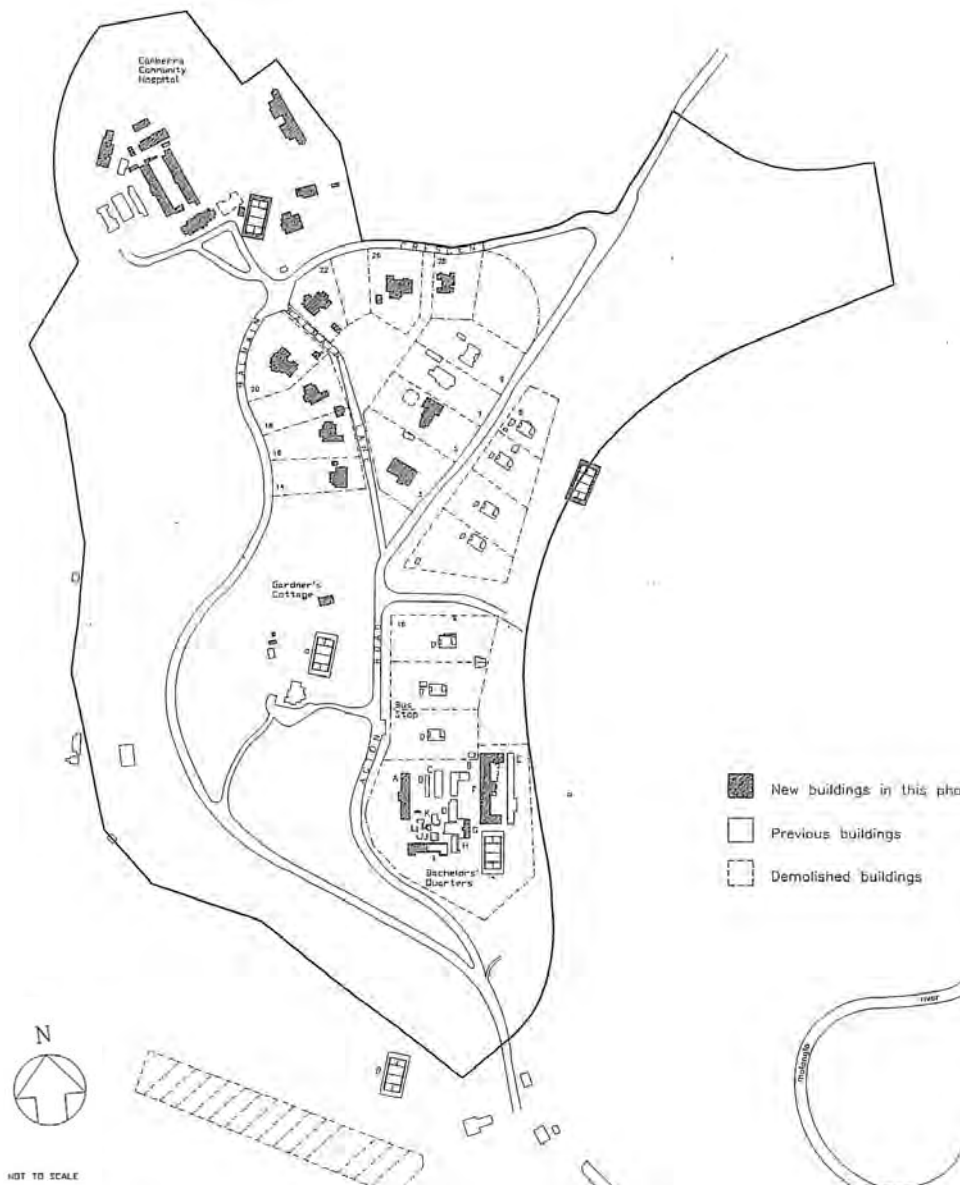


Figure 3.10: Acton development: 1920-1930 (Ratcliffe/Armes 1993)

Phase 3: Intermission (1930-1952)

Acton was in decline by the early 1930s, with little work undertaken until after the Second World War.

New buildings in this phase include E Block of the Lennox House complex. Canberra House (to become 'Old Canberra House' in 1952) was extended to accommodate the British High Commission and the chauffeur's cottage was constructed. The large Nurses Quarters appears to have been built in the early 1930s, in line with other modifications to the Community Hospital complex. The construction of the new (Royal) Canberra Hospital at the end of Acton peninsula in the early 1940s saw an end to public hospital facilities in the original complex.

The Acton buildings were handed over to the Department of the Interior, who gradually converted the hospital buildings into offices and the Bachelor's Quarters into the Acton Guest House. The cottages were to remain residential premises, providing accommodation for foreign diplomats and middle to upper-level public servants. The site was vested to the ANU in the early 1950s, with most buildings falling under their direct control in 1952-53.

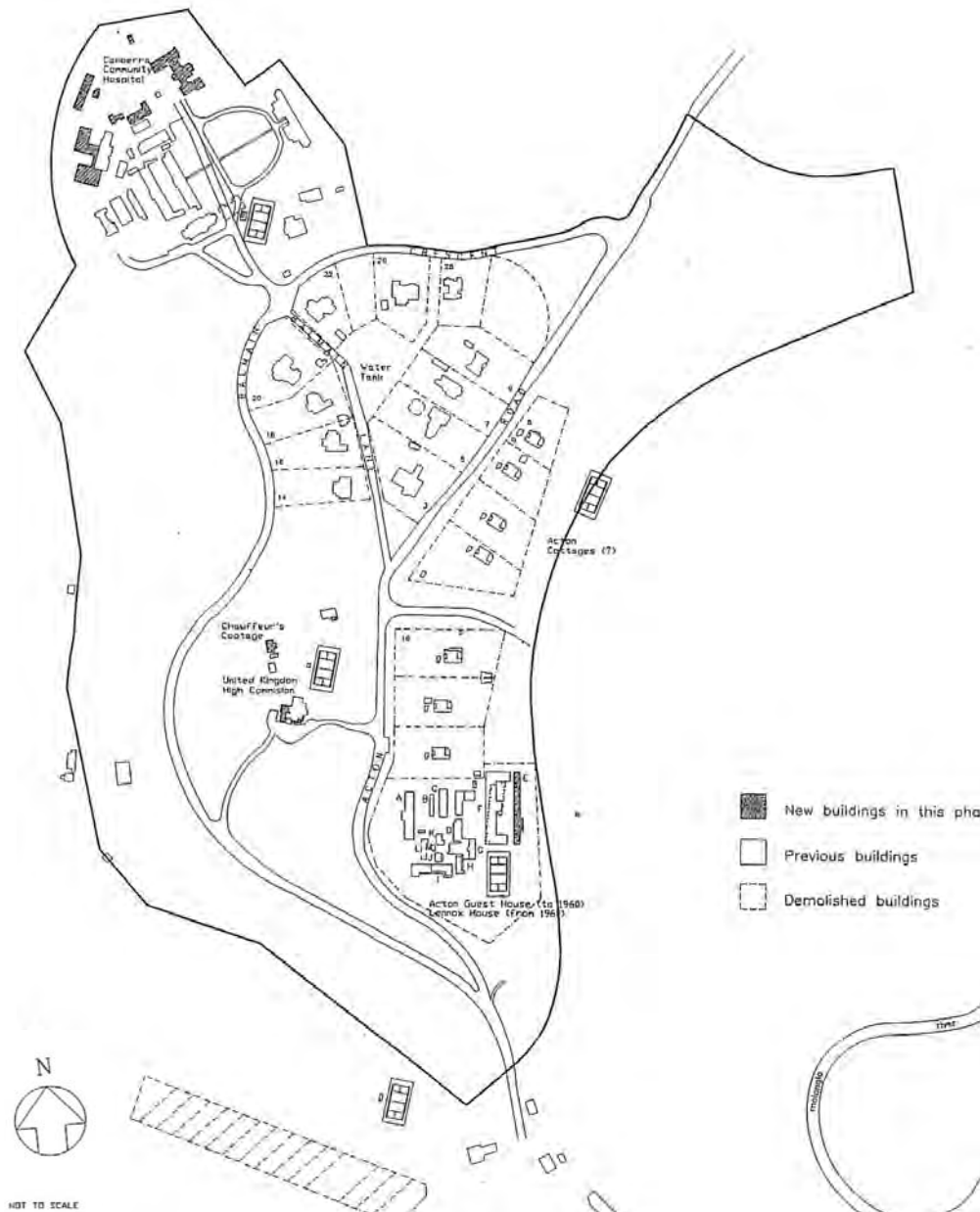


Figure 3.11: Acton development: 1930-1952 (Ratcliffe/Armes 1993)

Phase 4: The Australian National University (1952-1990)

This period sets the scene for the beginnings of the University, and sees the adaptation of the old administrative structures and houses for University purposes.

Old Canberra House was gradually extended and heavily modified in line with its conversion to commercial premises in 1955. A number of houses were burnt down and most of the original 1913 workers' cottages were demolished to make way for the Acton 'Underhill'/Parkes Way Tunnel in the 1960s-70s. The old Department of Health Laboratories were converted into the ANU Gardener's Depot and the Hospital complex was largely demolished or heavily extended to make way for the Research School of Earth Science buildings.

The John Curtin School of Medical Research and the Research School of Physical Sciences were built to the northwest of Acton in the mid-1950s, as well as University House to the north of Balmain Crescent. The Vice-Chancellor's Residence was constructed to the west of the Acton Cottages in 1958, set amongst large open gardens with sweeping views. The Brian Lewis Crescent houses, Liversidge Court Apartments and the Judith Wright Apartments were constructed to the northeast of the site, again designed to take full advantage of the views.

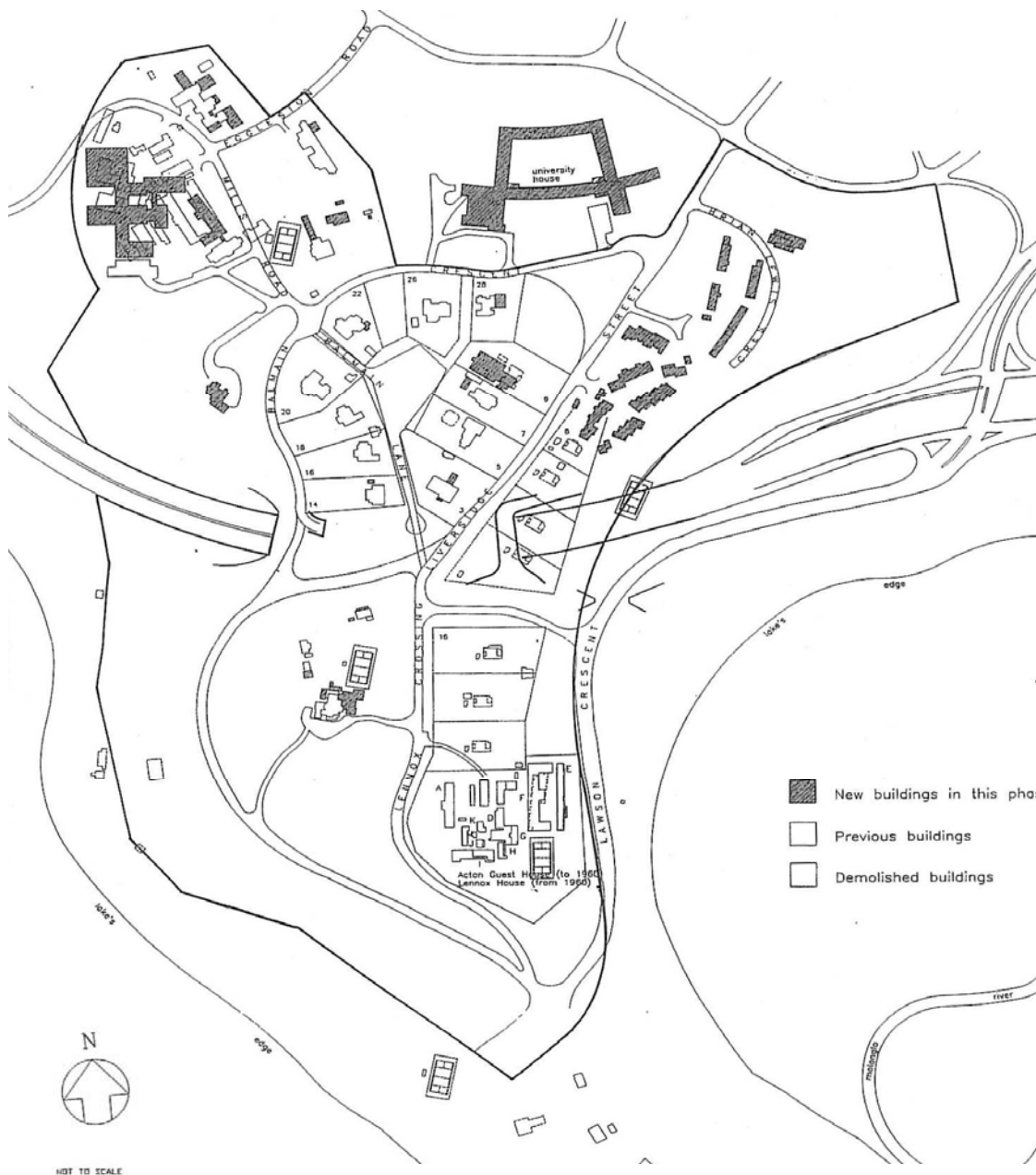


Figure 3.12: Acton development: 1952-1990 (Ratcliffe/Armes 1993)

Phase 5: The Acton Conservation Area (1990-2010)

Modern developments in the Acton Conservation Area have seen the demolition of a number of the Lennox House buildings and the addition of two modular units on the Bachelor's Quarters tennis court site. The W.E.H Stanner Building was constructed to the north of Old Canberra House in 2001 and was followed by the large Crawford School at the end of 2009, bridging both buildings. The chauffeur's cottage and garden shed were also transferred as part of the works.

A large demountable was installed on the vacant block of 9 Liversidge Street and the Acton cottages altered or extended to provide additional space for University offices or child-care facilities. A compound was formed to the rear of 7 Liversidge Street for storage of field equipment and the Winston Churchill Trust cottage was constructed at the northwest tip of Balmain Crescent. Two modern 'cottages' were also constructed at the southern end of the cottages zone for the National Europe Centre.

The old Community Hospital buildings have been impacted upon by University developments, including the demolition of the old Women's Ward (B Block) in 2010. Extensions have been added to the Nurses Quarters and Isolation Ward. The layout of the Health Laboratories has been retained and is an important element of the site. It is interesting to note that these buildings suffered relatively little alterations after they were converted into the Gardener's Depot.

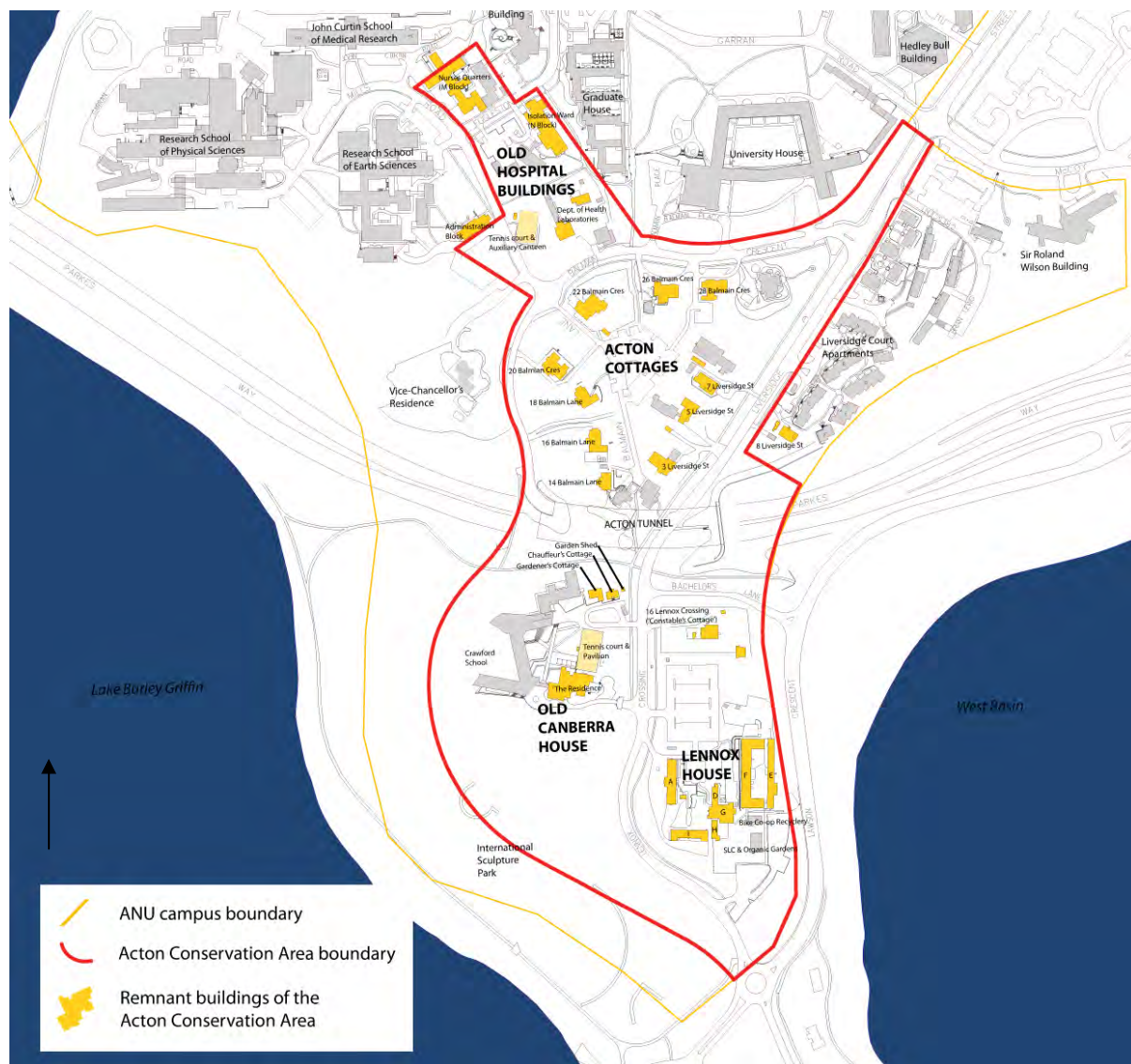


Figure 3.13: The Acton Conservation Area, 2009 (ANU Heritage office).

3.10 Planning Arrangement of the Site

Archival research and site analysis has informed this summary of the planning arrangement of the Acton Conservation Area.

After the initial settlement of the Acton Camp and the construction of the Camp mess hall (G Block), the buildings in Acton were deliberately positioned to take advantage of the topography, vegetation and pre-existing cultural features. The contours of the land were used as a visual mechanism to establish the socio-economic relationship of the occupants; lower-level public servants accommodated on the lower reaches of the Ridge. The Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia (1911)⁵⁷ describes the proposed planning of Acton:

At present the officers engaged in the surveying work under the direction of the Commonwealth Lands and Surveys are established in Camps. For the purpose of providing in a suitable position an area upon which these officers and other persons engaged in the establishment of the city will reside, the estate known as Acton, covering an area of 1780 acres on the north side of the Molonglo River has been acquired ... it is proposed to lay out the area referred to as a semi-permanent village. The streets will be formed and drained; cottages erected for married men and families, and accommodation supplied for single men.

Acton was originally fenced and used for grazing purposes (the soil too poor for large-scale wheat production), with separate agistment and quarantine paddocks⁵⁸. Health care at the Camps was a primary concern and played an important role in planning considerations. Indeed, the Director-General of Health insisted that horses be kept at least two and a half chains from the nearest tent to control outbreaks of typhoid and the summer diarrhoea of infants⁵⁹.

Rabbits were also a primary concern in the early years of the Territory and every effort was made to control them:

Outside the areas enclosed by rabbit-proof fences rabbits are very numerous upon the holdings within the Territory. Some are so badly infested that the return from the land is reduced to a minimum, and until concerted and well directed action is taken, no improvement can be expected⁶⁰.

The earliest buildings constructed by the Commonwealth at Acton were the mess hall and associated buildings that were to become the Bachelors Quarters (Lennox House). These were located to the west of the Acton Camp and were mainly sited for reasons of convenience⁶¹. These 'temporary' buildings had a specific purpose, and whilst the topography was considered in their design, little consideration was given to other factors, such as lighting requirements.

Shortly after, a number of small weatherboard huts were erected further up-slope. Along with a series of tents, these served as occasional quarters for officials in the region (the Administrator adopted some tents and a small hut to use as a kitchen and dining room during construction of his Residence). Seven cottages were built for married officers and their families, lining the east side of Acton Road. They had generous building setbacks with front access from the rear. Front verandahs faced the open area of what would become West Basin of Lake Burley Griffin.

The Residence of the Administrator was constructed immediately to the northwest of his temporary tents and small cottage at the top of the Ridge. This building addressed the contours of the land and, more than any of the others, was designed to take full advantage of the available views. The comfort of the occupants of the Residence was of primary importance, with exclusive use of a garage, a small external gas plant, a tennis court and professionally landscaped garden. It is

interesting to note that the Administrator does not appear to have had a separate vegetable garden, relying instead upon Afforestation deliveries. The landscape surrounding the Residence was an important 'buffer zone' to Lennox House to the east and the later cottages to the north.



Figure 3.14: The elongated weatherboard buildings of the Lennox House and Hospital complex (seen here in 1935) were connected via a series of covered walkways, with verandahs providing sweeping views of the Molonglo River (NAA A3560, 7290; NAA A3560, 7274).

The first Administration Buildings were constructed to the south of Acton, of the ubiquitous elongated weatherboard form that was to become the standard design for many of the Acton buildings. The hospital was constructed in similar fashion in a relatively isolated location to the northwest that took advantage of the views of the Molonglo River below (Figure 3.14).

The central residential area was gradually developed to provide accommodation for middle and upper level public servants, forming the Balmain Crescent residences. Again the views were planning considerations, as well as the available access roads

and pre-existing vegetation. A row of workers' cottages was also erected for lower-income earners down-slope to the south in 1924 (later to be inundated by Lake Burley Griffin).

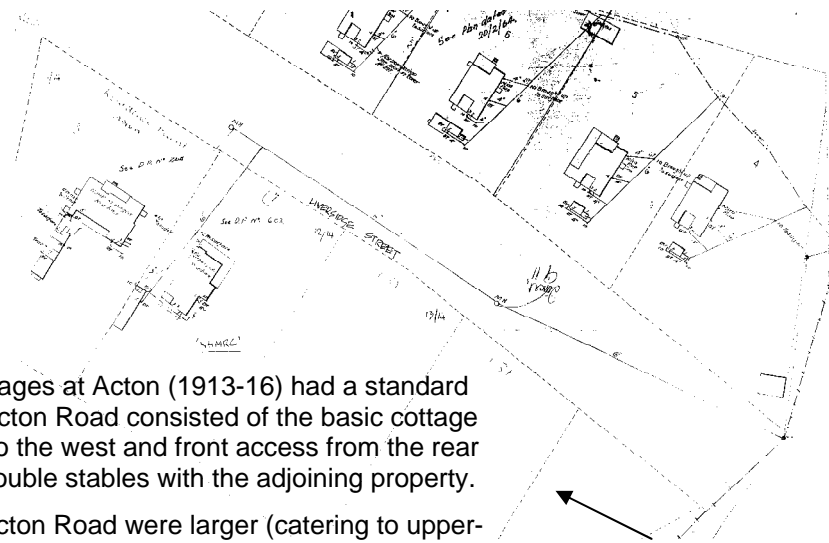


Figure 3.15: The earliest cottages at Acton (1913-16) had a standard layout. Those to the east of Acton Road consisted of the basic cottage plan, with a laundry building to the west and front access from the rear (east). Some also shared a double stables with the adjoining property.

The cottages to the west of Acton Road were larger (catering to upper-level govt. employees) with a separate laundry/garage structure for each house. All had generous building setbacks, separated by hedges or wire fencing and hedges lining the road (ANU Drawing Office).

Recreation facilities were an important part of life in the Territory. By the early 1930s five tennis courts had been formed in the Acton area, as well as hockey grounds to the east of the Bachelors Quarters. The Acton racecourse was established on the floodplains to the west and included a cricket pitch and sporting grounds. The racecourse was skirted by the Royal Canberra Golf Club (actually the second course in Canberra). A large children's playground was constructed to the south of the site in the 1920s and smaller playground facilities were located around the residences (refer Figure 3.6).

The inundation of Lake Burley Griffin in the 1960s isolated the Acton area from the south and saw the end of Acton Road as a thoroughfare. The racecourse, golf course, Nursery, Administration Offices, Springbank homestead, playground and row of workers' cottages were lost. Many of the original Acton buildings have since been demolished or altered to accommodate different purposes. The Lennox House complex has been outfitted as child-care facilities; it is located on the periphery of the main University campus and has ample room for outdoor play areas. A number of developments at Old Canberra House have permanently altered the site, resulting in the loss of the original building's façade, alterations to the site plan and the removal of a number of significant trees. All buildings of the first Acton hospital (1914) were demolished in the 1960s to make way for RSES facilities and the remnant Community Hospital complex (1928) buildings have been altered. Some garages and utilitarian structures of the cottages have been demolished (at 26 Balmain Crescent the old garage was replaced with a larger cottage annex) and the houses themselves converted into offices or child-care facilities.

3.11 Social Life at Acton

Acton has been the location of countless social activities in the Canberra region, from Indigenous gatherings to some of the first formal recreational and sporting societies. The following section provides an overview of the social significance of the site. The information has been gleaned from historical documentation, as well as discussions with local residents with close ties to early occupation of the area. Other relevant documents, such as the recent *Study of the Social Value of Lake Burley Griffin and its Setting*, prepared by The National Trust of Australia (ACT)⁶², are important references for properly establishing the social importance of the area.

Indigenous land-use*

It is clear that the Acton peninsula area, including land from Black Mountain to West Basin and along the southern reaches of Sullivan's Creek, was once of prime importance to the local communities. The location appears to have been used as a meeting place and trading zone and provided support for the use of nearby ceremonial areas. This use of the area was an important part of the local Indigenous cultural history.

The land itself is connected to the neighbouring peaks and other locations, clearly visible from Acton. These include the Brindabella Ranges, in particular Tidbinbilla Mountain, to the south. Acton and Black Mountain were also connected to Mount Rogers via Capital Hill.

Indigenous gatherings gradually ceased after the arrival of Europeans, with the primary 'meeting place' inundated by Lake Burley Griffin in the 1960s. Today the uninterrupted views of the distant Brindabella Ranges, as well as Capital Hill and Black Mountain, are arguably some of the last vestiges of Indigenous occupation, supported by the artefacts recovered in the past. It is clear that the landscape is considered significant to the local communities, however diluted this significance may have become by European presence.

European settlement and Acton as the first 'suburb' of Canberra

The people of early Acton possessed a silent strength and humility that contrasted deeply with other rural settlements. They were brought together (some reluctantly) for a specific purpose, yet grew into a close-knit community whose social ties were strengthened by the relative isolation of the area. The insular nature of development, coupled with the self-reliance of the occupants, resulted in close social groupings that led to some of the first sporting and recreational groups in the Territory. They shared some services, such as medical care, with the Duntroon Military College, though were considered a separate entity that relied upon each other for support, rather than outside interference beyond the Department of Home Affairs in Melbourne.

The buildings were initially constructed to accommodate the surveyors and draftsmen of the Department of Home Affairs, though were later extended to house public servants from all levels of society. The style and location of buildings can be seen as a reflection of the social history of the site. The buildings were comfortable,

* A recent assessment of the Indigenous values of the Acton peninsula can be found as Appendix 3.

but not grand; there was honesty in the designs that suggested a societal norm attracted to a financial mean. The gradual transformation of the buildings resulted in the loss of socio-economic separation of classes, though strengthened the social values of the area as a whole. This can be seen most clearly in the conversion of Lennox House into the first hostel, Old Canberra House and the cottages into occasional residences of public servants and the old Canberra Community Hospital buildings into the first YMCA hostel, Nursery School and other government uses.

The University, by its very nature, has fostered the social values of the Acton area. Lennox House continued to be used for intermittent accommodation for students and staff, before converted into child-care facilities. Old Canberra House became the Commonwealth Club and later the ANU Staff Centre; the first of such institutions in Australia to welcome the entire campus population. The cottage's residential tenancies were honoured, before being converted into office space for separate University departments or external agencies. The old Canberra Community Hospital buildings became highly sought after, used as government offices, storage for the first library collection and some of the first research offices on the campus.

- 1 Refer Appendix 3 for recent assessment of Indigenous Heritage values of the ACA
- 2 Tindale, N.B. 1974. *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia: Their Terrain, Environmental Controls, Distribution, Limits and Proper Names* (198-99)
- 3 Kabaila, P.R. 1997. *Belconnen's Aboriginal Past: A glimpse into the Archaeology of the Australian Capital Territory* (47)
- 4 Bluett, W.P. 1954. *The Aborigines of the Canberra District at the Arrival of the White Man* (1)
- 5 Bluett 1954 (4)
- 6 Wright, W. 1923. *Canberra* (60-62)
- 7 Flood, J. 1980. *The Moth Hunters*
- 8 Fraser, S. 2001. *Harvest Dreaming* (25)
- 9 See Gillespie, L. 1979 (21), Moss, H.P. 1939 (163-64) and Flood 1980 (160-75, 217-19)
- 10 Goulburn Herald: 9 Nov 1872
- 11 Moss, H.P. 1939. *Evidences of Stone-Age Occupation of the Australian Capital Territory* (164)
- 12 Watson, F. 1927. *A Brief History of Canberra, the Capital City of Australia* (5-9)
- 13 Dexter, D. 1991. *The ANU Campus* (18)
- 14 Young, L. 2007. *Lost Houses of the Molonglo Valley: Canberra Before the Federal Capital City* (32-35)
- 15 Gibbney, J 1988. *Canberra 1913-1953* (5)
- 16 Gugler, A. 1999. *True Tales from Canberra's Vanished Suburbs of Westlake, Westridge and Acton* (313)
- 17 Young 2007 (37)
- 18 Young 2007 (38-39)
- 19 Linge, G.J.R. 1975. *Canberra: Site and City* (3)
- 20 Reid, P. 2002. *Canberra Following Griffin: A Design History of Australia's National Capital* (13)
- 21 Gugler, A. 2001. *Canberra's Construction Camps, Early Houses and Selected Documents* (2)
- 22 Armes, J. 2007. *Lennox House: Conservation Management Plan* (draft)
- 23 Gibbney 1988 (7)
- 24 NAA CP209, 12 2-3 (1913-14)
- 25 Gray, J.E. 1999. *T.C.G Weston (1866-1935): Horticulturist and Arboriculturist*
- 26 Harrison, P. 1986. *Miller, David (1857-1934)*. Australian Dictionary of Biography. Vol 10 (505-506)
- 27 Gibbney 1988 (29)
- 28 Fischer, K.F. 1984. *Canberra: Myths and Models – Forces at Work in the Formation of the Australian Capital* (20)
- 29 Gibbney 1988 (7)
- 30 Watson 1927 (164)
- 31 NAA A540 13/763
- 32 NAA CP 209, 12 1-2 (1913-14)
- 33 Gibbney 1988 (15-16)
- 34 Gibbney 1988 (16)
- 35 Brackenreg, J.R. 1985. *Brackenreg Lives and Times* (4)
- 36 Harrison 1986 (505-506)
- 37 Gibbney 1988 (38)
- 38 NAA A3832, RC16 ITEM 9
- 39 NAA A361, DSG23/2117
- 40 NAA CP487/6, 10 (Seat of Government (Administration) Bill – 2nd Reading)
- 41 NAA CP487/6, 10 (Seat of Government (Administration) Bill – 2nd Reading)
- 42 NAA CP487/6, 10 (Seat of Government (Administration) Bill – 2nd Reading)
- 43 NAA A361, DSG23/2117
- 44 NAA A199, FCL926/215 (FCAC Annual Reports)
- 45 NAA A199, FC1926/215 (FCAC Annual Reports)
- 46 Fischer 1984 (42)
- 47 Fischer 1984 (38)
- 48 Gugler 1999 (321)
- 49 ANUA 53 978
- 50 [http://www.healthactive.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-history.htm/\\$FILE/fact2.pdf](http://www.healthactive.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-history.htm/$FILE/fact2.pdf)
- 51 Fischer 1984 (49); Gibbney 1988 (159-61)
- 52 Canberra Times: 22 April 1943 (3)
- 53 Wilkinson, G. 1992. *ANU Development Policy Plan*
- 54 Dexter, D. 1991 (337-339)
- 55 Fischer 1984 (66)
- 56 Foster & Varghese 1996 (168)
- 57 *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*. 1911 (#6) (1145)
- 58 NAA A3612001, DSG18/1417 (1917)
- 59 NAA A3612001, DSG18/1417 (1915)

60 Scrivener, C.R. 1914. *Annual Report of the Lands and Surveys Branch* (18)

61 Scrivener 1914 (2)

62 Pipitone, S. 2009. *Study of the Social Value of Lake Burley Griffin and its Setting: Report to The National Trust of Australia (ACT)*.
(<http://www.nationaltrustact.org.au/>)

3.12 Visual Analysis

This section concentrates on identification and assessment of significant views from, into and within the Acton Conservation Area. It is important to understand the roles the views have played in the formation of Acton and how they have changed with adjacent developments, the inundation of Lake Burley Griffin and the maturing vegetation. The objective is to evaluate the significant visual qualities of the landscape and their relation to the different site complexes of the Conservation Area. The significant views have been identified based upon original planning documents and the relationship of sites in the historical record.

A recent survey of social values of Lake Burley Griffin, organised by The National Trust of Australia (ACT), found that the quality of views associated with the Lake was of primary significance. No significant views, however, were directly related to the Acton Conservation Area. The ANU Sculpture Park was considered a 'hidden area', with relatively little significance given to the artworks.

Characteristics of the views and vistas

The Acton Conservation Area is located along Acton Ridge. Lennox House, Old Canberra House and the Acton Cottages are positioned along Liversidge Street/Lennox Crossing and Balmain Crescent and the Old Hospital Buildings are located to the west on Mills and Garran Roads. Views of the surrounding University landscape can be seen from each complex, as well as some horizon vistas.

The original views from Lennox House have largely been obscured. West Basin and the City beyond (the Archbishop's House is a notable element across the Basin) are visible from the east of E Block (actually original views form the obscured F Block). Maturing vegetation, including the hedge, has obscured much of the view to the south from I Block, although tantalising glimpses of the Lake and Museum can be seen. Maturing hedge species lining the western side of Lennox House mar the view to Old Canberra House, of which little can now be seen.

Commanding views from Old Canberra House have been retained, although those to the west have now been obscured by the new Crawford School. The pleasant views of the south garden from the first floor balconies provide a unique perspective of the landscape, Lennox House complex and Lake beyond. These are strongly reminiscent of the views from the original verandahs, which have since been consumed in later alterations. From the south garden the rise of the ridge and the maturing vegetation largely obscures the view of the Lake.

Views from the landscape to the south and west of Old Canberra House (the International Sculpture Park) take in the National Library, Parliament House and Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, much of the Lake and Springbank/Spinnaker Islands and views through the valley to the west. An important component of the landscape are the views of the distant Brindabella Ranges to the south, in particular Mount Tidbinbilla. Coupled with the views of Black Mountain, these serve as important reminders of Indigenous land-use.

Isolated views can be gleaned from some of the Acton Cottages, although once again, the maturing vegetation has blocked most. Vestiges of the original vistas from both 16 Lennox Crossing and 8 Liversidge Street have been retained through the trees to West Basin and parts of the City beyond. The view from the front of 3 and 5

Liversidge Street are similar. Views from the front (now the rear) of 14, 16 and 18 Balmain Crescent include West Lake of Lake Burley Griffin, but again are clouded by the maturing eucalypt and conifer species. Views north from Balmain Crescent (26 and 28 Balmain Crescent) take in the open grassy areas south of University House, along with the building itself. Views of the new Balmain Supermarket, erected in 2008, are not sympathetic to the designs of University House to the east and the old Hospital Health Laboratory (Gardener's Depot) to the west.

The Hospital complex originally took advantage of views of the large open area to the west of Acton (once the site of the racecourse), although the view is now enjoyed from the Jaeger Buildings of the Research School of Earth Sciences. Views of Black Mountain Tower, however, are impressive along Mills Road, and serve as an interesting contrast to the wide, flat vistas seen from the cottages and Lennox House.

Views along the roads and paths are important considerations of planning at ANU. Liversidge Street/Lennox Crossing display towering examples of plane trees and eucalypts, with mature cedars lining the northern extent; all appear to be early Weston plantings. Large examples of pines are also found along Mills Road, and mature eucalypts and conifer hedges serve to separate the Balmain Crescent cottages. The view from the northern end of Balmain Lane provides a pleasant scene, with maturing eucalypts flanking the old Hospital Administration Building and tennis court.



Figure 3.16: The view from the old Hospital to Yarralumla, seen here in 1935, have since been obscured by later University developments (NAA A3560, 7277).

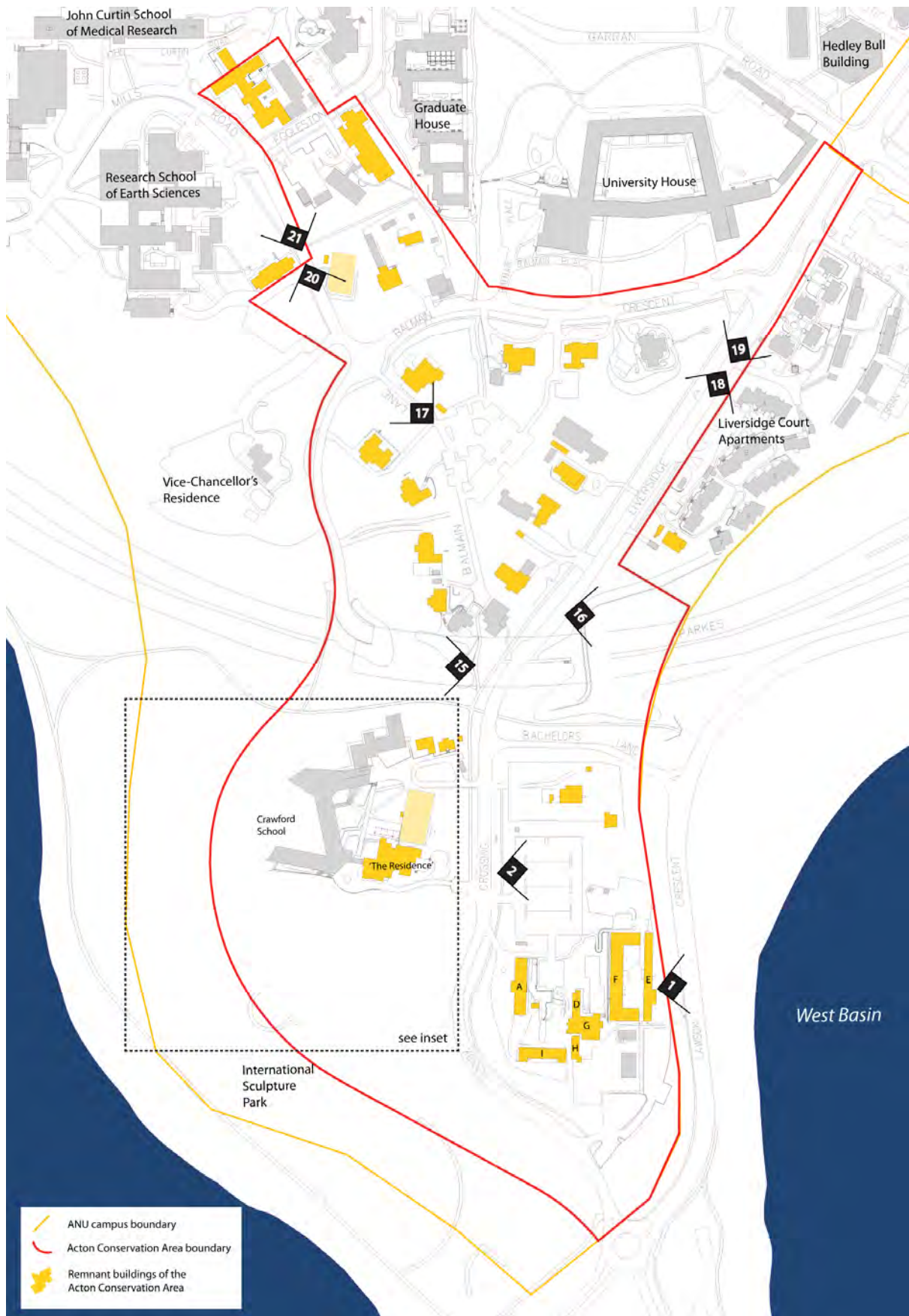


Figure 3.17: Significant views within the Conservation Area (refer to table below).

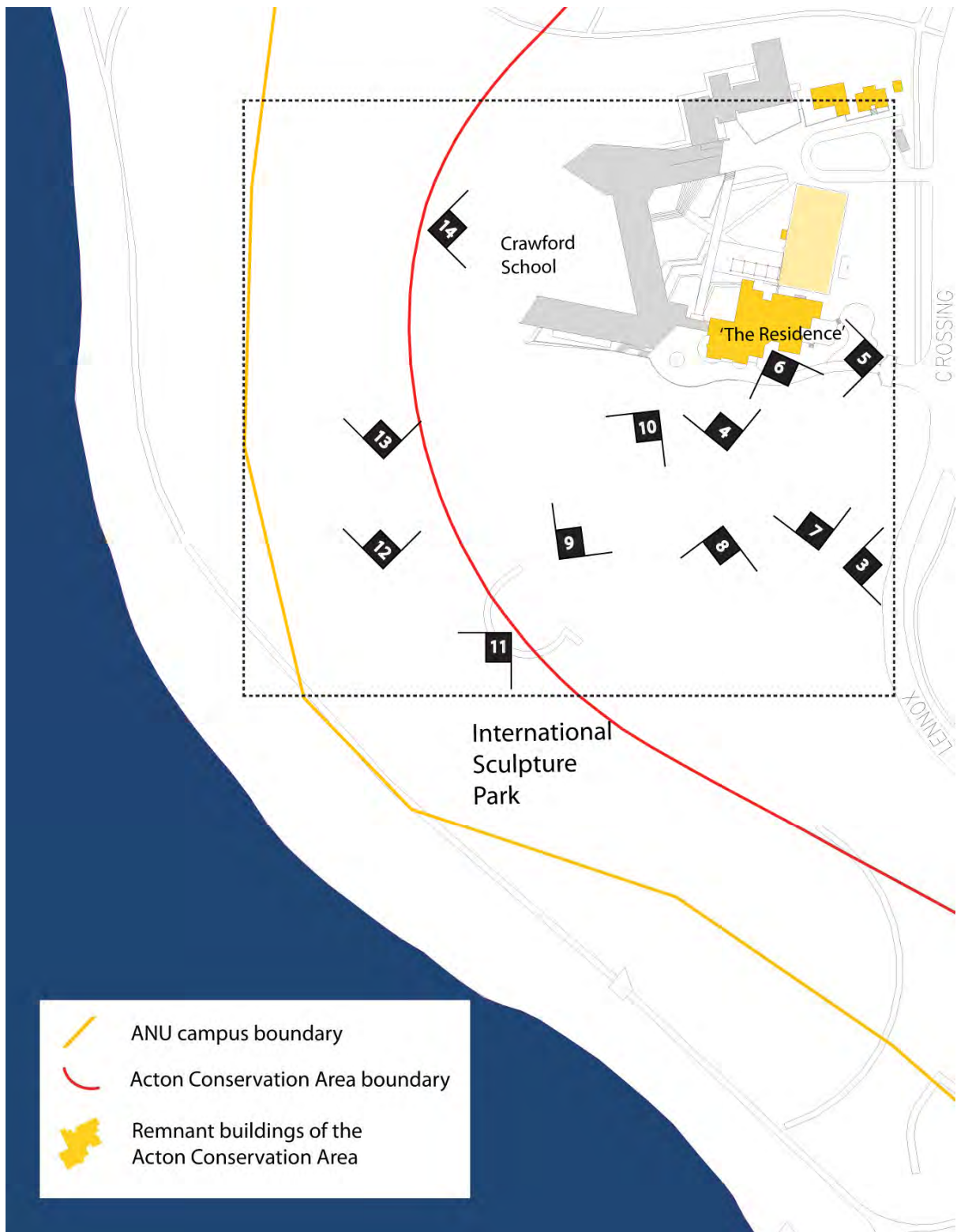















Figure 3.18: (insert) Significant views of the Old Canberra House zone (refer to table below).


View Character	View Connection	Significance	Image	
LENNOX HOUSE ZONE				
1	View east of Lake Burley Griffin (West Basin) from E Block	The original views (from F Block) were of the open floodplains, with the Molonglo River arcing into the Basin. Current views connect the landscape around West Basin with the City Centre beyond and Mount Ainslie in the background.	The views provide a link between the Bachelors Quarters and the Canberra City Centre.	
2	View east from Lennox House carpark	The carpark was formed on the site of Cottage #s 1 and 2. Similar views were visible from these cottages (see also view #16).	This view is similar to View #1, though is more confined. A break in the vegetation provides a good reflection of the original views from the first workers' cottages. The Lake, Russell Offices, Aust-American War Memorial, City Centre and distant ranges can be seen.	
3	View east of Lennox House from Old Canberra House south gardens	The eastern side of Lennox Crossing (Lennox House) was originally fenced, whilst those of the west (Old Canberra House) were lightly obscured by hedges.	The hedges and fences are an important visual break, separating the lower-level Lennox House with upper-level Old Canberra House.	




View Character	View Connection	Significance	Image	
OLD CANBERRA HOUSE ZONE				
4	View north of the front of Old Canberra House and south gardens	The view of the Residence is marred by mature vegetation, though retains the grand mystique of the large building set amongst the landscape	Though Old Canberra House has been considerably altered, the front façade remains visually impressive and is complemented by the maturing tree species	
5	View west of the east wing, patio and gardens of Old Canberra House	The maturing vegetation helps to firmly establish the building within the parkland setting	Though a modern addition, the east gardens are an important feature of the grounds and complement the building well	
6	View south from the first floor east balcony of the front gardens	Views of Lake Burley Griffin and Lennox House are visible through the trees above the south gardens	The views were likely a prime consideration in the original design, with open verandahs providing views east and west	


7	View north of Old Canberra House through south gardens	Though the species showcased in the grounds have gradually diminished, the south gardens are an important feature of the place	The south gardens were designed by Charles Weston. Though now altered, they contain significant introduced and native species	
8	View south of south gardens from Old Canberra House	The vegetation and end of the Ridge hides most of the Lake view, though this opens out towards the west	The views of the south gardens from Old Canberra House provide a pleasant contrast to the scattered native vegetation and grassland below the site	
9	View north from the end of the old High Commissioner's drive to Canberra House	The old drive leading to the building is the most direct route from the Sculpture Park. It is lined with the formal gardens to the right and natural vegetation to the left	The drive is the most direct route from the Sculpture Park to Canberra House and serves to separate the formal south gardens from the remnant native vegetation. It also has significance as the drive established for the British High Commissioner in the 1930s	


10	View south from Old Canberra House along the old High Commissioner's drive to the International Sculpture Park	The old drive leading from Old Canberra House is the most direct route to the Sculpture Park. It is lined with the formal gardens to the left and natural vegetation to the right	As the vegetation thins out and the tree canopy opens, the Lake becomes a significant landmark feature, with the distant hills providing focus to the image	
11	View south of the Lake, Yarralumla and Brindabella Ranges from the International Sculpture Park	The view provides an important link to the early European pastoral practices in the region	The uninterrupted views of the Lake and Springbank Island are a heady reminder of the European presence at Acton. This is reinforced by the original boundary between Acton and Springbank, which runs beneath the site	
12	View northwest of Black Mountain	Black Mountain and the Tower are overwhelming landmarks	Black Mountain and Telstra Tower are important aspects of the landscape for both Indigenous and European land-use	

13	View northwest of the old Balmain Crescent	A line of eucalypts were planted along the old Balmain Crescent ring-road, which connects the International Sculpture Park to the Acton Cottages zone	The line of eucalypts are an important reminder of past practices, planted in the 1930s to demarcate the old Balmain Crescent ring-road	
14	View east of the cypress shelter belt Note: some of the trees have now been removed for the Crawford School development on the site	The line of <i>cupressus</i> trees were planted as a wind break for either the vegetable garden or chauffeur's cottage	The row of <i>cupressus</i> trees are an important part of the landscape. They were either planted under direction by Charles Weston or are a continuation of his landscaping methods in the Territory	

View Character	View Connection	Significance	Image	
ACTON COTTAGES ZONE				
15	View west from Tunnel	The view is a rare glimpse west from Liverside Street at the high point above the Tunnel	This is one of the few places along Liverside Street with an almost uninterrupted view of the Lake and Black Mountain to the west. This view is similar to that seen from 14 Balmain Lane	

16	View east from 5 Liversidge Street	View of the Lake and City to the east	One of the last open views to the east from the Liversidge cottages	
17	View northwest from Balmain Lane	View of the Hospital Administration Block from Balmain Lane	The façade of the Hospital Admin. Block is an important element that connects the hospital complex with the residential zone and firmly establishes building in the surrounding landscape	
18	View south of Liversidge Street	The original thoroughfare to the south	The generous building setback and mature tree species are reminiscent of the original form. Liversidge Street itself (of uncertain origins) is a significant part of Acton and was one of the only pre-existing roads Griffin included in his final plan of the Capital	

19	View north of Liversidge Street	The road through to School of Art	The northern end of Liversidge Street is lined with mature conifers and notable buildings, terminating at the School of Art	
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View Character	View Connection	Significance	Image	
CANBERRA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL ZONE				
20	View south to 22 Balmain Crescent from A Block/Mills Road	View of the Acton Cottages from hospital complex	Though the road has been built up, and flanked with maturing vegetation, the view of 20 and 22 Balmain Crescent from the old Hospital is significant for the inter-relationship of the two sites	
21	View north along Mills Road	View connects Administration Block to Nurses Quarters and Isolation Ward	The remnant tree species lining Mills Road are some of the last vestiges of Weston's planting scheme at the hospital	