

Australian Capital Territory

Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of Rankin Street, Campbell) Notice 2007 (No 1)*

Notifiable Instrument NI2007—120

made under the

Heritage Act 2004 s34 Notice of decision about Provisional Registration

1. Name of instrument

This instrument is the Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of Rankin Street, Campbell) Notice 2007 (No 1).

2. Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after notification.

3. Notice of Decision

Pursuant to Section 34 of the *Heritage Act 2004* the ACT Heritage Council has decided not to provisionally register Rankin Street, Campbell

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Gerhard Zatschler
Secretary ACT Heritage Council
GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2602

23 April 2007

*Name amended under Legislation Act, s 60

STATEMENT OF REASONS

DECISION REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF THE RANKIN STREET HOUSING PRECINCT AT RANKIN STREET CAMPBELL IN AN ACT HERITAGE REGISTER

Background

The Rankin Street Housing Precinct at Rankin Street, Campbell (Section 6, Block 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19; and Section 7, Blocks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 Campbell) was nominated for assessment pursuant to entry to the interim ACT Heritage Places Register on 14 February 2005.

The nomination was considered by the ACT Heritage Council and initially rejected, as it did not provide sufficient information. Later on 16th March 2005 the nominator provided additional information and on 13th June 2006 the Heritage Council commissioned Eric Martin and Associates to prepare a Heritage Assessment of the place. The report excluded Block 13 Section 6 from the area to be considered

At its meeting number 8 on 29 June 2006 the ACT Heritage Council decided to accept the nomination and wrote to the lessees and the nominator advising acceptance of the nomination on 30 October 2006.

Between June 2006 and the present the ACT Heritage Council has sought additional context information and has undertaken a full assessment of the precinct's significance against ACT heritage criteria (Section 10 ACT *Heritage Act 2004*). Consideration was also given to listing the individual house of the nominator but this approach was quickly seen to lack merit. At meeting number 12 held on 1st March 2007 the ACT Heritage Council concluded that the Rankin Street Housing Precinct did not meet the criteria contained within Section 10 of the *Heritage ACT 2004*. At meeting 13 held on 19th March 2007 the ACT Heritage Council endorsed a Statement of Reasons to reject the nomination of the Rankin Street Housing.

In particular the precinct lacks integrity with several of the houses having been altered or replaced. Detailed reasoning of why the precinct does not meet the threshold for listing under the heritage criteria is included below.

In addition with the provision of further information from the nominator Council is now of the opinion that the nomination was misconceived having been made specifically to try to deter suburban redevelopment rather than to preserve intrinsic heritage values.

Whilst not considering the place to warrant entry in the Register, Council considers that the retention of an historical record of the building of Rankin Street and the use of masonry veneer tile construction is worthwhile. Information accumulated during the assessment process will be retained in ACT Government files.

Assessment

The Council's assessment against the criteria specified in s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* is as follows.

In assessing the nomination for the Rankin Street Housing Precinct, the Council considered:

- The original nomination form provided by the nominator.
- Materials held on file by Council on the Assessment File 05/3185.
- The report "Heritage Assessment, Rankin Street, Campbell ACT" by

Eric Martin and Associates, June 2006.

- The physical evidence and surrounding context as ascertained from a tour of the areas by Council members individually during the assessment period.

In relation to the place:

Criterion (a) "it demonstrates a high degree of technical or creative achievement (or both), by showing qualities of innovation, discovery, invention or an exceptionally fine level of application of existing techniques or approaches";

The nominator has indicated this criterion as 'high'.

Heritage Council assessment:

The Rankin Street Housing Precinct masonry veneer houses demonstrate a degree of technical innovation in the provision of cheap, quick to build residences, but although meeting those particular needs the technique did not prove suitable in other terms of aesthetics, comfort or popularity. The technical /creative production of the masonry veneer construction cannot be considered important as an achievement given its lack of success as a building material which was quickly discontinued.

The Rankin Street Housing Precinct does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

Criterion (b) ‘it exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group’;

The nominator has indicated this criterion as ‘medium.

Heritage Council assessment:

No community or cultural groups have made representations to or provided evidence to Council to indicate that the place exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities that are highly valued by the community. Since their initial construction several of the buildings on Rankin Street have been extended and altered considerably, which diminishes their ability to demonstrate design qualities.

As there is no evidence of the community valuing the design or aesthetic qualities of the Rankin Street Housing Precinct the Rankin Street Housing Precinct does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

Criterion (c) ‘it is important as evidence of a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function that is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost or is of exceptional interest’;

The nominator has indicated this criterion as ‘high’.

Heritage Council assessment:

The use of masonry veneer construction in the Rankin Street Housing Precinct has links with the rapid development of housing and spread of Canberra suburbs to accommodate the growing public service function of the city in the 1950s and the use of the innovative, if ultimately rejected building practice of masonry tiled houses. However the Rankin Street housing is not individually important as evidence of this phase of Canberra’s history that is amply reflected at other sites in the city and is not in danger of being lost.

The Rankin Street Housing Precinct does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

Criterion (d) ‘it is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations’;

The nominator has indicated this criterion as ‘medium’.

Heritage Council assessment:

There is no evidence that the Rankin Street Housing Precinct is highly valued by a community or cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations.

The Rankin Street Housing Precinct does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

Criterion (e) “it is significant to the ACT because of its importance as part of local Aboriginal tradition”;

Heritage Council assessment:

The nominator did not address this criterion. There is no evidence that the Rankin Street Housing Precinct is significant to the Aboriginal community. The Rankin Street Housing Precinct does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

Criterion (f) “it is a rare or unique example of its kind, or is rare or unique in its comparative intactness”;

The nominator has indicated that the place is considered to meet this criterion to a high degree.

Heritage Council assessment:

While masonry veneer construction is rare in Australia having been found to be generally unacceptable as a building technique, the building type occurs in several parts of Canberra and elsewhere in Australia, and the houses in Rankin Street appear to have undergone some alteration and the precinct as a whole lacks both intactness and integrity.

Rankin Street Housing Precinct is therefore not assessed as a particularly good demonstration of this criterion, and does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

Criterion (g) “it is a notable example of a kind of place or object and demonstrates the main characteristics of that kind”;

The nominator has indicated that the place is considered to meet this criterion to a high degree.

Heritage Council assessment:

While Rankin Street was initially conceived as a relatively homogenous group of houses built using innovative building approaches (masonry veneer and monocrete), since their construction all the houses of the Rankin Street Housing Precinct have been altered to some degree and some of the blocks along the street totally redeveloped with new houses. The precinct no longer exhibits notable characteristics of a particular kind of place.

The Rankin Street Housing Precinct does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

Criterion (h) “it has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase in local or national history”;

The nominator has indicated that the place is considered to meet this criterion to a high degree.

Heritage Council assessment:

The establishment of the Rankin Street Housing Precinct in the late 1950s is associated with the early days of town planning by the National Capital Planning Authority and the influx of public servants, mainly working for the Department of Defence, to the new suburb of Campbell. However, the place is just one on many development of the period, and this is not assessed as being a strong and special association in local or national history.

The houses with their use of masonry veneer construction method have an association with AV Jennings, a leading and innovative home builder of the period, but many thousands of houses built by that company exist in Australia and the Rankin Street houses do not have associations with AV Jennings which are considered strong or special enough to meet the threshold under this criterion.

The Rankin Street Housing Precinct does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

Criterion (i) “it is significant for understanding the evolution of natural landscapes, including significant geological features, landforms, biota or natural processes”;

The nominator has indicated this criterion as ‘not applicable’.

Heritage Council assessment:

Not applicable

Criterion (j) “it has provided, or is likely to provide, information that will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of the natural or cultural history of the ACT because of its use or potential use as a research site or object, teaching site or object, type locality or benchmark site”;

The nominator has not provided supporting comment.

Heritage Council assessment:

The place does not demonstrate an overt likelihood of providing information valuable for research that would give a wider understanding of natural or cultural history.

Criterion (k) “for a place—it exhibits unusual richness, diversity or significant transitions of flora, fauna or natural landscapes and their elements”;

The nominator has indicated this criterion as ‘not applicable’.

Heritage Council assessment:

Not applicable.

Criterion (l) “for a place—it is a significant ecological community, habitat or locality for any of the following:

- (i) *the life cycle of native species;***
- (ii) *rare, threatened or uncommon species;***
- (iii) *species at the limits of their natural range;***
- (iv) *distinct occurrences of species”***

Heritage Council assessment:

This criterion is not applicable.

Conclusion

The ACT Heritage Council finds that the Rankin Street Housing Precinct at Campbell is of insufficient heritage value to warrant provisional registration in the ACT Heritage Register.

Dr Michael Pearson (Chair)

ACT Heritage Council

19th April 2007