

Australian Capital Territory

# Heritage (Decision about Registration for Weston Park, Yarralumla) Notice 2011

Notifiable Instrument NI 2011 - 498

made under the

***Heritage Act 2004* section 42 Notice of Decision about Registration**

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**1. Revocation**

This instrument replaces NI 2011-105

**2. Name of instrument**

This instrument is the Heritage (Decision about Registration for Weston Park, Yarralumla) Notice 2011 -

**3. Registration details of the place**

Registration details of the place are at Attachment A: Register entry for Weston Park, Yarralumla.


**4. Reason for decision**

The ACT Heritage Council has decided that Weston Park, Yarralumla meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria at s 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The register entry is at Attachment A.

**5. Date of Registration**

25 August 2011

Jennifer O'Connell  
Acting Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
25 August 2011

 <p>ACT Heritage Council</p>	<p><b>AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY</b></p> <p><b>HERITAGE REGISTER</b> <b>(Registration Details)</b></p> <p><b>Place No:</b></p>
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For the purposes of s. 41 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, an entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

Weston Park, Weston Park Road, Yarralumla

Blocks 2, 4, 5 and 6 Section 124, Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 Section 117,  
(Part) Block 4 Section 118 Yarralumla, Canberra Central

**DATE OF REGISTRATION**

Notified: 25 August 2011 Notifiable Instrument: 2011-498

Copies of the Register Entry are available for inspection at the ACT Heritage Unit. For further information please contact:

The Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
GPO Box 158, Canberra, ACT 2601

Telephone: 13 22 81 Facsimile: (02) 6207 2229

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## IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE

Weston Park, Weston Park Road, Yarralumla  
Blocks 2, 4, 5 and 6 Section 124, Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 Section 117,  
(Part) Block 4 Section 118 Yarralumla, Canberra Central

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## STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

This statement refers to the Heritage Significance of the place as required in s12(d) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

Weston Park, together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods (which form separate registrations to the ACT Heritage Register), is of heritage significance for its technical achievements demonstrating discovery, for its design and aesthetic qualities highly valued by the community, as important evidence of a distinctive function of exceptional interest, as a rare and notable example of its kind and demonstrating the main characteristics of that kind, for strong and special associations with persons and a cultural phase in local history of the ACT, and for its unusual diversity of flora.

Weston Park, together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods, is a designed landscape, established in 1914 as a permanent nursery and trial arboretum to test the suitability of plantings throughout Canberra as a garden city and from 1913 the area was identified as parkland and planting for the edge of the future lake commenced. The nursery and arboretum went on to prove vital in the selection of trees and plant species which have characterised the garden city, through government and domestic plantings. Considerable scientific and research work was undertaken at the nursery and arboretum, in determining the trees best suited to Canberra's harsh climatic conditions, for the planting of Canberra's streets, parks, gardens and lake.

It is as a direct result of the research undertaken at the original 'Yarralumla Nursery' that Canberra today has developed its unique character and identity as a garden city with lakeside public amenity.

The early planting of Canberra with species trialled here formed a crucial cultural phase in the early history of the ACT in attempts to beautify the nation's capital, and remains highly evident within the landscape today.

A number of people have a strong and special association with the permanent nursery and arboretum including Walter Burley Griffin, TCG Weston, AE Bruce, J.P Hobday and Professor Lindsay Pryor.

The design and aesthetic qualities of Weston Park as a designed landscape setting dating from 1914 including the pleasant parkland setting are highly valued by the community, evident in recreation opportunities.

Technical achievement is evident in the research, selection, trial and development of species suitable for the Canberra landscape.

The function of Weston Park, together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods is of exceptional interest for its role in the early planning and design of Canberra and as a key component in the development and beautification of Canberra as a city in the landscape.

Weston Park, together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods, is a unique and notable example of a nursery for purposes of experimentation and trial arboretum, being the only one of its type in

the ACT, and unique within the Australian context for its diversity of native and exotic species and grouped plantings. It is one of the oldest and largest collections of this type in Australia outside of traditional botanic gardens.

Weston Park, together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods also demonstrates an unusual diversity of flora within the context of a designed nursery and arboretum containing native and exotic species.

#### Other theme-related registrations

Weston Park was established as part of a larger permanent nursery and arboretum on the western edges of Lake Burley Griffin. Separate citations have been prepared for two other places which form part of this same history, as follows:

- The Yarralumla Nursery;
- Westbourne Woods.

In addition, the Yarralumla Nursery Records form an additional nomination to the ACT Heritage Register, and will be assessed separately.

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### **FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE**

The attributes listed below are assessed as features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place:

- The parkland setting, including the diversity of tree species and the open spaces between plantings, and planting patterns including regular formation;
  - The existing road layout
  - Lake edge plantings
  - Circular trial planting pots;
  - The individual tree plantings noting that the trees may require removal and replacement due to age and/or safety concerns;
  - The English Garden;
  - Weston Park Road central avenue planting of alternating Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*) and Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*);
  - Planting of endangered Hillgrove gum (*Eucalyptus michaeliana*)
  - Relationship to the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods;
  - Views and vistas to and from Lake Burley Griffin, Black Mountain, Red Hill, Civic, Mt Ainslie and Parliament House; and
  - Recreational areas.
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### **APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES**

The guiding conservation objective is that Weston Park, Yarralumla, shall be conserved and appropriately managed in a manner respecting its heritage significance and the features intrinsic to that heritage significance, and consistent with a sympathetic and viable use or uses. Any works that have a potential impact on significant fabric (and / or other heritage values) shall be guided by a professionally documented assessment and conservation policy relevant to that area or component (i.e. a Statement of Heritage Effects – SHE).

The Weston Park CMP prepared by Goddon Mackay Logan should be consulted as a guiding document.

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## REASON FOR PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

Weston Park, Yarralumla has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance when assessed against eight criteria under the ACT Heritage Act.

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## ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Pursuant to s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, a place or object has heritage significance if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria. Significance has been determined by research as accessed in the references below. Future research may alter the findings of this assessment.

- (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;**

Weston Park demonstrates a high degree of technical achievement by showing qualities of discovery.

The original Yarralumla Nursery and arboretum, comprising areas of today's Westbourne Woods together with Weston Park and the Yarralumla Nursery, demonstrates the technical expertise and efforts undertaken in discovering suitable species for the planting of Canberra as a garden city.

Developed as a nursery and arboretum in 1914, the trials and research undertaken for a wide range of native and exotic species informed the subsequent planting regime throughout early Canberra.

'These were part of the planned and systematic re-forestation of the ACT after Federation, and ornamental landscaping of the National Capital throughout most of the 20th century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a response to the development of Griffin's garden city concept for Canberra' (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 69).

Through the plantings established here, Charles Weston developed an excellent knowledge of the trees and plants best suited to Canberra's harsh climate. This then formed the basis for street tree, public park, forestry and domestic planting throughout Canberra. The use of government and domestic plantings from seedlings at the Yarralumla Nursery continues to the present day.

Weston Park also demonstrates a high degree of creative achievement by showing the application of forward planting principles in establishing lake-edge planting almost 50 years before Lake Burley Griffin was created

Weston Park meets this criterion.

- (b) it exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group;**

Weston Park exhibits outstanding design and aesthetic qualities valued by the community.

The outstanding design qualities of Weston Park are evident in the area's designed landscape setting, dating from 1914 as a nursery and orchard with group plantings. The initial design of the Weston Park area, which survives in the mature plantings and landscape today, was carefully

developed initially by Charles Weston, followed by Alexander Bruce, John Hobday and Lindsay Pryor, among others.

The outstanding aesthetic qualities of Weston Park are demonstrated in the pleasant parkland setting comprising the combined plantings of Australian species with deciduous and evergreen hardwood species from the northern hemisphere. Tree-framed views to and across Lake Burley Griffin enhance the setting's aesthetic qualities.

The broad ACT community values the outstanding design and aesthetic qualities of Weston Park, as a prominent and visible feature within the Yarralumla and Lake Burley Griffin foreshore area. This is evidenced through the high level of community use of the area including Yarralumla Nursery for recreation and other pursuits.

Located on Yarralumla Peninsula, the area has extensive views to the east, north and west across Lake Burley Griffin. When viewed from the Lake, the area is distinctive by the absence of any visual built structures, the integrity of plant massings and glimpses into open grassed parkland.

The English Gardens at Weston Park have outstanding design qualities as plantings dating from Weston's time as Superintendent of Parks and Gardens, and understory plantings by the Chief Propagator, Jack Moore in the 1950s.

The broad ACT community values the outstanding design and aesthetic qualities of Weston Park, as a prominent feature within the Yarralumla and Lake Burley Griffin foreshore area. This is evidenced through the popular use of the area by the community.

Weston Park meets this 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;**

Weston Park is important as evidence of a distinctive function of exceptional interest.

Together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods, Weston Park is important as evidence of the function of large-scale propagation, experimentation, trialling and recording of plant materials as a nursery and arboretum established in 1914 by Charles Weston, and the subsequent early tree planting throughout Canberra. This function is of exceptional interest for the role it played in the early beautification of Canberra, with species trialled at the nursery and arboretum, and then propagated for landscaping purposes for the city of Canberra.

Weston Park is important as evidence of a legacy of public park land use that was first identified in the Walter Burley Griffin plan in his winning design for the city, expanded in his 1915 plan supplementing his *Report Explanatory*, and implemented by the National Capital Development Commission. Together with Lake Burley Griffin, Weston Park is important evidence in the transition from a design concept to a lake-edge public parkland.

Weston Park meets this 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;**

Weston Park is highly valued by the community and a cultural group for reasons of strong cultural and social associations.

Weston Park has been a place of recreation for the community since the Federal Capital Commission's decision in 1929 to reduce the size of the Yarralumla Nursery by two thirds to provide parkland space. Recreation opportunities at Weston Park have been further enhanced from 1964 after the creation of the Lake, and the subsequent plan of the National Capital Development Committee at this time to develop the area as lakeside parkland.

The park is highly valued by the broad community as a recreational area, providing opportunity for leisure pursuits, enjoyment and relaxation with family and friends. This is strongly linked to the development of the park's amenities under the NCDC from the 1960s (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 71). 'Weston Park has also been used over many years for official gatherings, community events and private functions. As Canberra's population has grown Weston Park has assumed increased importance as a recreational destination' (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 71).

This value is demonstrated in the high levels of use of the area by groups of families and friends.

Weston Park meets this criterion.

**(e) it is significant to the ACT because of its importance as part of local Aboriginal tradition**

Not applicable

**(f) it is a rare or unique example of its kind, or is rare or unique in its comparative intactness**

Weston Park, together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods is a rare example of its kind, being a nursery and arboretum for trial and experimentation purposes, and part of an historic park plan.

Weston Park together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods is rare and is the only permanent nursery and arboretum established by the government in the ACT. The establishment of such an arboretum for the purpose of trialling species for planting throughout the new city is unique in the Australian context, and provides Canberra with much of its distinctive character as a garden city.

The area has survived as a relatively intact example of a nursery and arboretum for trial purposes since its establishment in 1914. Its pattern of roads reflects its period of planning and operation both as an experimental area and as parkland.

The area is one of very few arboreta in Australia where a large number of native and exotic tree species are grown in large, often replicated, groups.

Weston's use of group plantings to give some idea of their growth habits and form under forest conditions distinguishes the arboretum from older Australian botanic gardens where limitations on space meant that only one or two of each species were planted.

Weston Park includes plantings of the rare and endangered species, Hillgrove Gum (*Eucalyptus michaeliana*), eucalyptus hybrids resulting from manipulated pollination and an initial seed orchard. It also has the rare and threatened *Pinus torreyana* planted in one of the avenues.

Weston Park meets this criterion.

**(g) it is a notable example of a kind of place or object and demonstrates the main characteristics of that kind**

Weston Park, together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods, is a notable example of a nursery and arboretum developed for trial and experimentation, and demonstrates the main characteristics of that kind.

It is a notable example of this kind of place as it is one of the largest and oldest collections in Australia of a diversity of tree species outside of traditional botanic gardens. It is of further note for Weston's groups of plantings of the same species, imitating forest conditions to test the suitability of trees for planting in Canberra, and for the research and hybridisation work that has been carried out since the establishment of the Yarralumla Nursery in 1914.

The main characteristics of this kind of place are demonstrated in the diversity of plantings, and the mixture of Australian and exotic species.

Weston Park is also a notable example of the kind of place commonly known as a city park. The characteristics demonstrated at Weston Park include a 'wide horticultural range, formal and informal areas, wildlife interest, provision of recreational amenity and play equipment' (Goddon Mackay Logan, 2010: 74).

Weston Park meets this criterion.

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

Weston Park, together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods, has a strong and special association with a number of persons, and a cultural phase in local ACT history.

Strong and special associations with Weston Park include those of Walter Burley Griffin who envisaged well-treed parklands at the western end of the lake system which he incorporated into a larger 'Continental Arboretum' to the west; TCG Weston Superintendent of Parks and Gardens who established the nursery and was instrumental in its success and in determining species of plants appropriate to the landscaping of the National Capital; Weston's successor AE Bruce who trialled flowering trees and shrubs and species for special effects; Alexander Bruce who succeeded Weston and developed many of the flowering trees and shrubs still popular in Canberra, J.P Hobday who was chief nurseryman and later Superintendent of Parks and Gardens; and Professor Lindsay Pryor, who was Superintendent of Parks and Gardens from 1944 to 1958 and was responsible for major plantings during this time.

Each of these people have contributed significantly to local ACT history, through the landscape design and planting of Canberra as a garden city, aspects which provide Canberra with much of its unique history and character.

The association of the place with each of these people is special, because of the nature of the association as the place where they performed their work duties which had a prominent, lasting and direct impact on the character of Canberra and the ACT. The association with each person is strong, given their commitment and dedication to the landscape planning, nursery, trial species, and landscape planting of Canberra.

Weston Park, together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods, has a strong and special association with the cultural phase of the early beautification and landscape design of Canberra as a garden city. This phase is of importance in Federal Capital history as it has provided Canberra with much of its unique character and identity, distinguishing it from other Australian cities. The association is strong and special as much of the planting of inner Canberra has derived from the trials at Weston park and research and propagation conducted at Yarralumla Nursery.

Weston Park is named in honour of TCG Weston.



Weston Park meets this criterion.

- (i) it is significant for understanding the evolution of natural landscapes, including significant geological features, landforms, biota or natural processes**

not applicable.

- (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**

Weston Park does not meet this criterion.

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

Weston Park, together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods exhibits unusual diversity of flora and its elements within the context of a designed nursery and arboretum.

There is no other arboretum or nursery in the ACT which exhibits the same diversity of native and exotic species.

Further, Weston's use of group plantings to give some idea of their growth habits and form under forest conditions distinguishes the arboretum from older Australian botanic gardens where limitations on space meant that only one or two of each species were planted.

Weston Park, together with the Yarralumla Nursery and Westbourne Woods, is one of the largest and oldest collections in Australia of such a diversity of tree species outside of traditional botanic gardens.

Weston Park meets this 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.**

*The place is assessed as not being significant in relation to the following criteria: e, i, j and l.*

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## **SUMMARY OF THE PLACE HISTORY AND PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

### **HISTORY**

#### Early planning for an arboretum and nursery

The competition for the design of Canberra was won by Walter Burley Griffin in 1912. The lake and its environs were a major element, but little is known of Griffin's planting concepts for the area, except that the area to the west was designated parkland incorporating an arboretum. Griffin in his 1913 Preliminary Plan to accompany the *Report* Explanatory shows extensive parkland in the area of present day Weston

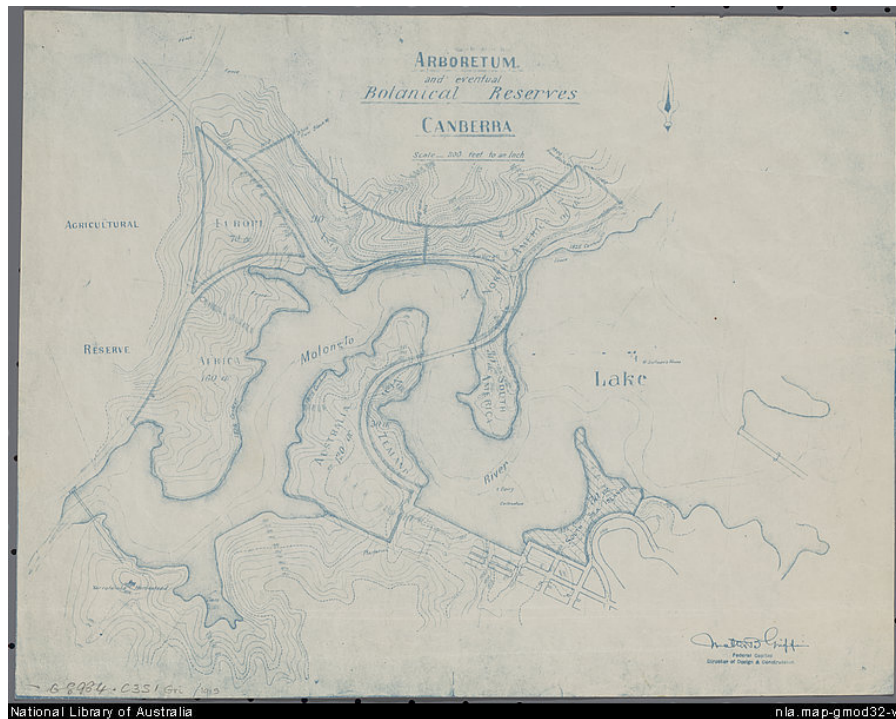
Park. [see figure below]. His 1915 plan illustrates his vision for the western lake area as an arboretum. His final plan of 1918 also shows a continental arboretum in the area containing plantations grouped to the continent of origin.

His last plan of 1918 illustrates his vision for the western lake area. His plan was for a continental arboretum containing plantations grouped to the continent of origin (National Library of Australia vn-3603884-s31).

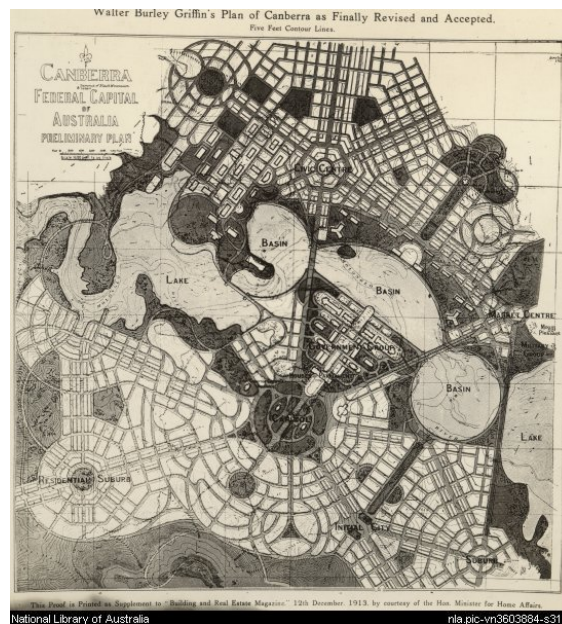


Walter Burley Griffin's Preliminary Plan of Canberra 1913, showing parklands in the area of today's Weston Park.

NLA MAP G8984.C3S1 Gri 1913



Arboretum and eventual botanical reserves, Canberra 1915  
NLA 1909771 MAP G8984.C3s1 Gri 1915



Walter Burley Griffin's Plan of Canberra as finally revised and accepted 1918.  
NLA vn-3603884-s31

### The first nursery

Prior to the finalisation of plans for the nation's capital, a nursery was established in 1911 to propagate seed for trees, an essential feature of the city proposal.

On the advice of Thomas Charles George Weston, who was then working as head gardener at Federal Government House, Sydney, and following his visit to the new Territory in 1911, the nursery was established at Acton.

In 1912 Weston again visited the nursery site 'to examine the ploughed site and irrigation provisions', and commence the process of ordering plants (GML, 2010: 9).

Later that year Weston was appointed officer-in-charge of the Campbelltown Nursery in New South Wales and C.R Scrivener, the Director of Commonwealth Lands and Surveys, reported his concern that Weston would not accept the position of 'Superintendent of Nurseries' at Canberra. However, in May 1913 Weston accepted the position and arrived to take charge of the Afforestation Branch.

After arriving in Canberra on 'a bitter cold day which gave me the shivers', Weston set out the objectives he was to pursue. These were:

- to establish a first-class forest and general nursery;
- to raise a large stock of all subjects likely to prove suitable for all purposes;
- to reserve at an early date mountains and hills such as Black Mountain, Mt Ainslie, Mt Stromlo etc. with a view to
  - a) allowing natural reafforestation
  - b) testing in these areas a variety of trees with a view to ascertaining the best to plant and
  - c) testing various methods of planting, from broadcast sowing to preparing of ground and planting out strong healthy nursery stock;
- and to continue procuring from all sources as opportunity offers, all seeds likely to prove useful or ornamental (Murphy, 1979).

Weston at this time considered the Acton nursery site to be relatively unsuitable for this purpose.

#### Establishing the Yarralumla Nursery and arboretum

During May 1913, Weston inspected several sites for a forest and general nursery and recommended that it be established on a site to the north-east of Yarralumla Homestead buildings. He suggested that the Yarralumla Nursery, of some 400 acres, be divided into four equal areas to be devoted to:

- nursery work proper,
- the permanent planting of Australian trees and shrubs,
- an arboretum and
- a pinetum (Murphy, 1979).

Rout and Eldridge (1983) record Weston's reasons for the choice of site:

*'In May 1913 he recommended an area for this purpose which he felt had generally good soil, a permanent water supply and was big enough to give scope for nursery extension so that all classes of trees etc could be planted, experimented with and tested with a view to being planted throughout the territory. Also being on the fringe of the future city it could 'be so planned to be an added ornament to the city'. He drew up a proposal for the 160 hectare area that contains the present Westbourne Woods and Yarralumla Nursery sites. The proposal divided the land into four parts of equal size – Division A for the nursery, Division B for Australian trees and shrubs, Division C for an arboretum and Division D for a pinetum'.*

Later Weston reported that: 'the site chosen for the experimental nursery was fully calculated to impose a very severe test upon the trees and shrubs planted there, as it was fully exposed to prevailing winds from the west, south-west and north-west' (Rout and Eldridge, 1983). Shelter belts and windbreaks were established to the north and west of the nursery and from the 1920s planting to edge the future lake commenced (Murphy, 1979).



The first plantings took place in 1914 and by 1918 the initial planting of Westbourne Woods was completed, including an experimental orchard where 17 species of fruit trees were trialled along with cereal crops and fodder grasses (Rout and Eldridge 1983).

In May 1914 Griffin arrived in Australia to take up his appointment as Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction in Canberra. By this time Weston had been in Canberra for a year, had established the Nursery at Yarralumla and had provided a report giving a list of trees recommended for use in Canberra. Griffin's plans for the landscaping of Canberra included particular types of plantings he wanted to establish, including a Redwood forest and a Cork Oak plantation. A plantation of Redwood was established by Weston at East Lake Park using seeds obtained by Griffin. However, the trees generally did not do well in Canberra's dry climate. By contrast, the Cork Oaks have grown well at Green Hills.

As a result of his experimentation, Weston had developed an excellent knowledge of the trees suited to Canberra's climate and there is evidence to suggest that Griffin's instructions to Weston in relation to the types of trees to be planted were not well received. J H Maiden, Director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens, commended Griffin for his desire to cultivate native trees, but stated that he believed Weston was able to make a better selection of tree species for planting in the National Capital. He also suggested that Weston not be given too many detailed instructions (Murphy, 1979).

### Early plantings

Weston used Yarralumla Nursery and adjacent Westbourne Woods and Weston Park as trial grounds for a wide range of native and exotic species. The nursery was very significant in the establishment of the garden capital. A very extensive list of tree species was tested for suitability to local conditions and propagation and distribution of successful species was undertaken in great quantity. Most of early inner Canberra was landscaped with plant material grown by the government nursery.

Trees and shrubs were used for ornamental purposes to 'provide shade, seasonal colour and mark out major avenues and public parks in the city. Trees were also used to clothe the bare or semi-bare hillsides, and provide a backdrop of bush setting to the city. Trees were also important to provide shelter from the strong and dusty winds of the district' (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 10). In addition, trees raised at the Yarralumla Nursery and trialled in Westbourne Woods were also planted to stabilise the water catchment for the new city dam at the Cotter and contributed to the water security of the city' (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 10). Fruit trees also played a part in food security for the new capital, by providing fruit and nut trees suitable for Canberra home gardeners and included apples, almonds, apricots, cherries, figs, currants, nectarines, nuts, olives, pears, peaches, persimmons, plums, quince and grapes. (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 10). Wheat and other food crops were also trialled at the Yarralumla Nursery.

Obtaining an interesting and successful range of plant species for the beautification of the new city was a major challenge. Weston obtained seed from suppliers and nurseries in Australia and overseas. Australian suppliers included the State Nursery in Campbelltown where he had worked before coming to Canberra, and long-standing suppliers in the nursery trade such as Yates & Co., Brunning and the Goulburn Nursery Company. He also collected both native and exotic seeds in the local area (Boden, 1996). Walter Burley Griffin was also active in obtaining seeds to be raised at the Yarralumla Nursery.

After trialling in Westbourne Woods, the Yarralumla Nursery was the primary source for suburban trees and shrubs, resulting in 'common' plantings. Species grown in Ainslie and Braddon were initially the same as those in Blandfordia and Red Hill. New residents were entitled to receive plants free on request from the Yarralumla Nursery, and Weston recorded in 1922 that 22,668 plants had been distributed between 1912 and 1922 (Boden, 1996). Godden Mackay Logan (2010: 11) state that 'by controlling the species available to homeowners, the planners wanted to create a link between private gardens and public landscapes'. The scheme provided for up to 10 trees, 40 shrubs and additional hedging plants.

The Nursery was also used to raise pine seedlings for plantation forestry in the Territory. Early hybridisation experiments were also carried out at the Yarralumla Nursery (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 11) and tested in Westbourne Woods.

The area now known as the English Garden was planted for shelter at the southern boundary of the Yarralumla Nursery in 1920 (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 11).

New residents were entitled to receive plants free on request from the Yarralumla Nursery, and Weston recorded in 1922 that 22,668 plants had been distributed between 1912 and 1922 (Boden, 1996). Godden Mackay Logan (2010: 11) state that 'by controlling the species available to homeowners, the planners wanted to create a link between private gardens and public landscapes'. The scheme provided for up to 10 trees, 40 shrubs and additional hedging plants.

The production Nursery initially occupied more than 28 hectares (70 acres). Until the early 1970s some of this area was used for the Parks and Gardens research department and the Department of Health plants quarantine. Another 130 hectares (330 acres) was to be used for various permanent plantings. All of this larger area became part of Westbourne Woods (now Royal Canberra Golf course) or Weston Park ([http://www.tams.act.gov.au/live/yarralumla\\_nursery/nursery\\_history](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/live/yarralumla_nursery/nursery_history), accessed 2/9/10).

#### The Weston period

Charles Weston worked as Officer in Charge of Afforestation until 1926. By this time the Yarralumla Nursery was well established and earning a reputation for being one of the finest research nurseries of the time. It was from this Nursery that trees, which now form the avenues of Canberra were tested and propagated. Weston's aims were to moderate the harsh local climate of 'summer heat, winter frosts and strong dusty winds; to provide seasonal effects to the aesthetics of the landscape with both regionally indigenous trees and exotic trees most likely to succeed, and to do so within the shortest possible time; and continue experimentation with trees likely to succeed in the locality' (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 12).

Special arrangements were made to retain Weston after his retirement in a consultative capacity up until the opening of Parliament House on 9 May by the Duke and Duchess of York. Weston was awarded the MBE which was invested by the Duke of York. Before leaving Canberra, Weston recorded the principle native trees and shrubs which had been tested in the nurseries at Canberra since 1913. Weston retired to Turramurra in Sydney, where he died in December 1935.

#### The Bruce period

After Weston's retirement, A.E. Bruce became Director of Parks and Gardens and continued in this position until 1937. In 1929, with the onset of the Great Depression, the Federal Capital Commission requested the reduction of the Yarralumla Nursery by two thirds as the land was required for park purposes (Ramsay, 1989).

#### The Hobday period

John Peace Hobday, who was appointed Chief Nurseryman in 1923, became Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in 1937, following Bruce's retirement, and occupied this position until 1944 (Murphy, 1979, Ramsay, 1989). He lived with his family in the Chief Nurseryman's Cottage within the Nursery grounds. Little expansion or changes in relation to planting and cultivation occurred during this time, due in part to the constraints applying during World War II.

#### The Pryor and Moore period

Following Hobday, Lindsay Pryor was appointed Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in 1944 and held the position until 1958. Considerable hybridisation and research work was undertaken during this period. Trial plots of trees, raised from seeds collected by Pryor from different parts of the world, were established in generic groups in the research area to the south of the Nursery. Pryor was also involved in Grevillea hybridisation trials and the well-known hybrid grevillea, Canberra Gem, was conceived at the Nursery

The Chief Nurseryman during this time was Percy Moore and under his direction general nursery work continued with horticultural trials for improving selection of street trees, garden shrubs, hedging plants and exotic grasses.

In the immediate post-war period and up to 1957 when the National Capital Development Commission took over the role of planning the city, Pryor was responsible for overseeing the landscaping of the rapidly growing city. He introduced many new species to Canberra's parks, streets and gardens.

#### Later periods

From the 1950s to the 1970s, the Yarralumla Nursery offered important employment opportunities for migrant workers, with the nature of work not requiring a high level of English language (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 17). Over time, the Yarralumla Nursery has also provided an important work opportunity for less advantaged sections of the Canberra community.

The Molonglo River was dammed in 1963 and by 1964 the lake had filled. A lakeshore landscape of inlets, small peninsulas and islands were created. Westbourne Woods, together with Weston Park now offered considerable lake edge recreation opportunities.

Together, the Yarralumla Nursery, Weston Park and Westbourne Woods played an important role in the early beautification of Canberra. Weston and his successors sought not only to monitor orchard and other species, but also to promote the Woods as a feature of the garden city landscape, with wonderful spring and autumn colours.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF WESTON PARK

*Unless stated otherwise, information in this section is taken from:*

[http://www.library.act.gov.au/find/history/frequentlyaskedquestions/Place\\_Stories/westonpark](http://www.library.act.gov.au/find/history/frequentlyaskedquestions/Place_Stories/westonpark), accessed 1/9/10.

Walter Burley Griffin's 1918 plan for a Continental Arboretum showed Yarralumla Peninsula allocated for trees from Australia and New Zealand. The central spur road was to lead to a bridge across the future lake to Black Mountain Peninsula.

The Continental Arboretum proposal was not pursued although Weston planted some eucalypts to the same pattern as used in Westbourne Woods, ie a single tree surrounded by six others in an evenly spaced circle. In some cases an additional outer circle was planted.

After moving the Government nursery from Acton, Weston was primarily concerned with the nursery and the experimental arboretum (later Westbourne Woods), but also planted parts of the future Weston Park. These plantings included the avenue of elms along the line of Garden Gate Drive, now Weston Park Road, shelter belts and circular landscape plantings

By 1927 the area north and east of the Yarralumla Nursery was earmarked for a zoo, but two years later was redesignated as a public park. Although planting began in the area as early as 1914, the park as a public recreation space dates from the 1960s when the NCDC developed a suite of public parklands around the newly formed Lake Burley Griffin. (Firth, 2000: 178)

The earliest planting was undertaken by Weston, including circular plots of eucalyptus, an avenue of English Elms, a conifer windbreak of pine and cypress species, and more than 200 different species of conifers, exotic hardwoods and native Australian trees (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 12-13).

Cattle grazed in the park until the 1950s. In the 1930s some planting was done above what would be the level of the lake, and during the 1940s and 1950s more circular plots of eucalypts were added. These circular plots give the illusion of randomness but in fact make simple and easily supervised planting layouts. In the 1960s, test plantings of water tolerant species were made along the lake shore.

During the 1960s the NCDC created several precincts or 'landscape rooms' within Weston Park, defined through the addition of picnic tables, play elements, amenities and other furniture (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 19).

The NCDC was also responsible for play equipment in the park from the 1960s.

Over the years, Weston Park increased in size as the nursery was reduced.

In 1929 two thirds of the nursery area was transferred to the public park. Many permanent plantings within the old nursery are now part of Weston Park, one of the major additions being the English Garden in 1993. It contains mature specimen trees planted during Weston's period.

The tip of Yarralumla Peninsula was named Kurrajong Point and after the Lake was filled a group of advanced Kurrajongs (*Brachychiton populneus*) was transplanted to the site. This was part of a project by the National Capital Development Commission to develop Weston Park as lakeside parkland.

Since 1970 about one third of the park has been developed for recreational use.

In 1989 a Weston Park Tree Survey was carried out including an oral history on site record with Professor Lindsay Pryor (Strine Design, 1989).

The English Garden was formally opened by Mr Brendan Smyth MLA on 24 May 1999. The plaque reads:

*The English Garden was planned and established in the grounds of the Government Nursery at Yarralumla in the 1960s by J.W. (Jack) Moore, the assistant manager. The garden contains many exotic trees and shrubs including plantings of azalea and rhododendron species and incorporated a group of existing mature trees, notably a California Redwood (Sequoia sempervirens) and a Western Yellow Pine (Pinus ponderosa).*

*The Yarralumla Nursery was established in 1914 by T.C.G. (Charles) Weston, Canberra's first Afforestation Officer, to provide trees and shrubs for the developing Canberra. The peninsula of land on Lake Burley Griffin adjoining the nursery was subsequently developed into Weston Park.*

*The unique landscape of Weston Park was strongly influenced by Lindsay Pryor, Superintendent (later Director) of Parks and Gardens, Department of the Interior (1944 to 1958). His skill in plant selection and horticultural design and his enthusiastic and dedicated search for improved species, performance and appearance resulted in the planting of a great variety of trees and shrubs both within the park and throughout the rest of Canberra.*

In 2007 a memorial for the Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel X (SIEV X) was constructed in Weston Park, as a memorial to the 353 asylum seekers, mainly women and children, who drowned when their Indonesian fishing vessel sank en route from Sumatra to Christmas Island on 19 October 2001.

## DESCRIPTION

Weston Park is located on Yarralumla Peninsula and adjoined by Westbourne Woods on the south. It includes within it the fenced area of the Yarralumla Nursery (though this is excluded from the boundary of this place and forms a separate entry to the ACT Heritage Register). It is reached via Banks Street,



Yarralumla. There is no formal access from Lake Burley Griffin. The central ridge road reflects early plans for a more extensive road network linking the peninsula with the northern side of the lake.

Weston Park presents as a mature cultural landscape of high visual quality. The area includes a variety of views including vistas to Government House and Black Mountain, lake views with foreshore fringe and open or framed tranquil water and vegetation views. It also includes a variety and contrast of vegetation, colour, form and spatial characteristics including open or enclosed, deeply shaded with filtered light and carpets of leaves, needles, mown grass and dense understorey.

Within Weston Park there are single and group plantings of a wide range of species both native and exotic. The earliest plantings date from 1913 and others were undertaken at different times, continuing to the 1970s. These include a plantation of hybridisation experiments, generic groups for horticultural trials, former nursery stock species, avenue plantings, landscape shelter plantings, landscape aesthetic plantings and lakeshore water tolerant plantings.

Some of the oldest tree plantings executed by T.C.G. Weston and still extant include the English elm (*Ulmus procera*), avenue on the eastern side of the present boundary to the Yarralumla Nursery, the central avenue of Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*), and Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) named Weston Park Road, and groups of eucalypts in the circular pattern typical of that used by Weston in Westbourne Woods.

There are plantings of Bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), willows (*Salix* spp.) and Alder (*Alnus* spp.) established when the lake foreshore was formed (Clough and Gray, 1964).

To the north of the Yarralumla Nursery, there are tree plantings initiated by Jack Moore, Chief Propagator Yarralumla Nursery. These are introductions of exotic species new to Canberra at the time.

Outside the current fenced area, to the south of the Nursery, is an area formally identified as the English Garden in 1999. It contains mature specimen trees underplanted with shade tolerant shrubs such as azaleas and rhododendrons. While the larger trees in the English Garden were planted by Weston, the understorey planting was largely established in the 1950s by Jack Moore.

Other significant plantings are the result of tree introduction and research programs carried out by Lindsay Pryor as Superintendent of Parks and Gardens (1944-1958) and Robert Boden as Research Arboriculturist (1956-1968).

These are predominantly in the area between the retail nursery and the boundary with Westbourne Woods and include the oldest grafted eucalypts in the world and early introductions of Oriental Plane (*Platanus orientalis*), and White cedar (*Melia azedarach*).

The area on the slope towards Nursery Bay is planted with specimens of a wide range of shrub and tree species established as stock plants to provide cuttings for propagation in the Nursery.

At the head of the Nursery there are several ponds constructed in the early 1960s to evaluate aquatic and groundcover plants suitable for foreshore planting on Lake Burley Griffin. Immediately to the west of the largest pond are eucalyptus hybrids and their parents produced as a result of hybridisation experiments.

A number of Hillgrove gum (*Eucalyptus michaeliana*), a rare and endangered species, was planted on the site in the late 1950s at the eastern end of Pescott Lane by Robert Boden, who, with Lindsay Pryor, collected the seeds from near Armidale NSW. This species has considerable potential for amenity planting in Canberra.

The eucalypts on the southern side of Pescott Lane were planted as an experiment in the late 1950s on part of the site identified for a zoological park.

The group of Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*) at the northern tip of Weston Park Road were transplanted as advanced specimens in the 1960s and serve as signature trees for Kurrajong Point.

Weston Park contains a range of recreation facilities constructed in the 1960s. These have an emphasis in design on the needs of young children and include a large wading pool, a maze and two timber tree houses. Four sandy beach areas were established in the 1960s along with a number of barbecue and picnic areas. A cycle track encompassing Lake Burley Griffin passes through the southern end of the Park. A miniature railway and café are operated privately beside Pescott Lane.

Weston Park also contains areas of recreation adjacent to Westbourne Woods and the lake shores, which were developed from the 1960s in conjunction with the broader recreational facilities of Weston Park.

### Roads

Today's Weston Park Road, following the central ridgeline within Weston Park follows the alignment originally planned by Griffin and shown on his 1918 plans, as a curved avenue leading to a bridge across the proposed lake to what would become the Black Mountain Peninsula. A track was established along this route as early as 1923 (GML, 2010: 9 and 34). Other roads in the Park follow the road access which was laid out in the NCDC period from 1958 and during the 1960s (GML, 2010: 35).

'The roads are constructed with narrow widths, and with little or no line marking, regulatory signage, or kerb and guttering. Some line marking is present along the entry road, but elsewhere is rare' (GML, 2010: 43). The roads can be described as rural in character.

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## MAPS AND SITE PLANS



Figure 1: Place Boundary as indicated by solid red line  
(n.b – boundary excludes the blue hatched area of the Yarralumla Nursery, which forms a separate entry to the ACT Heritage Register).

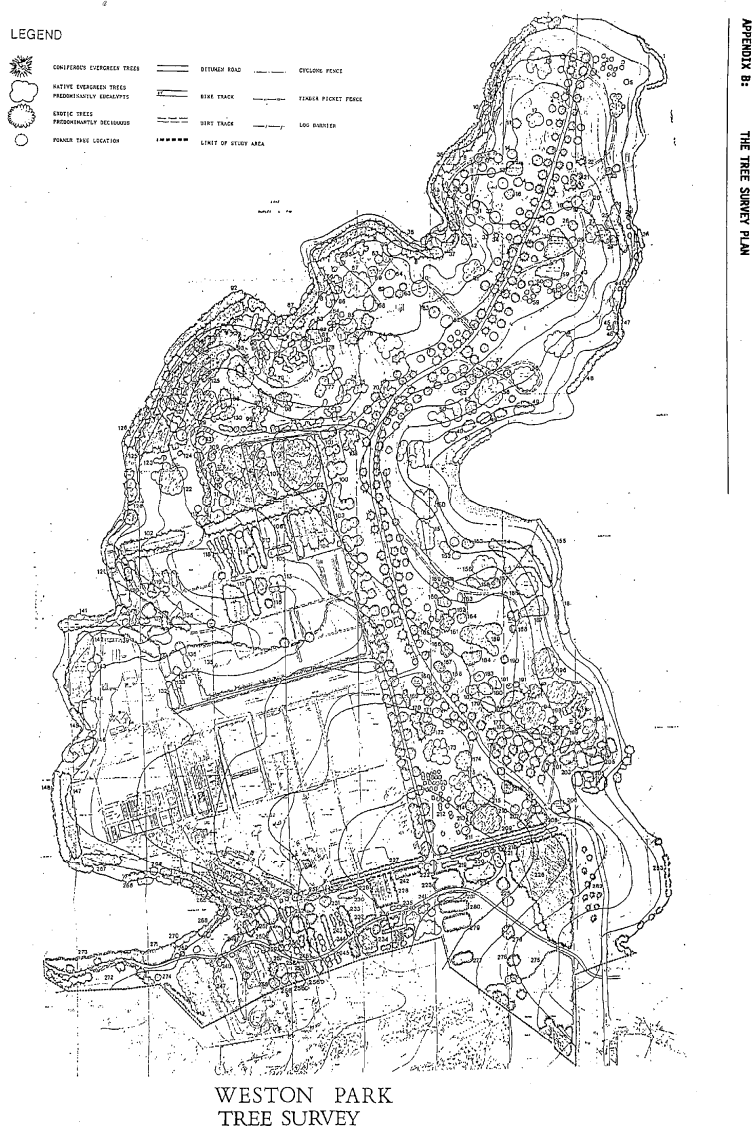
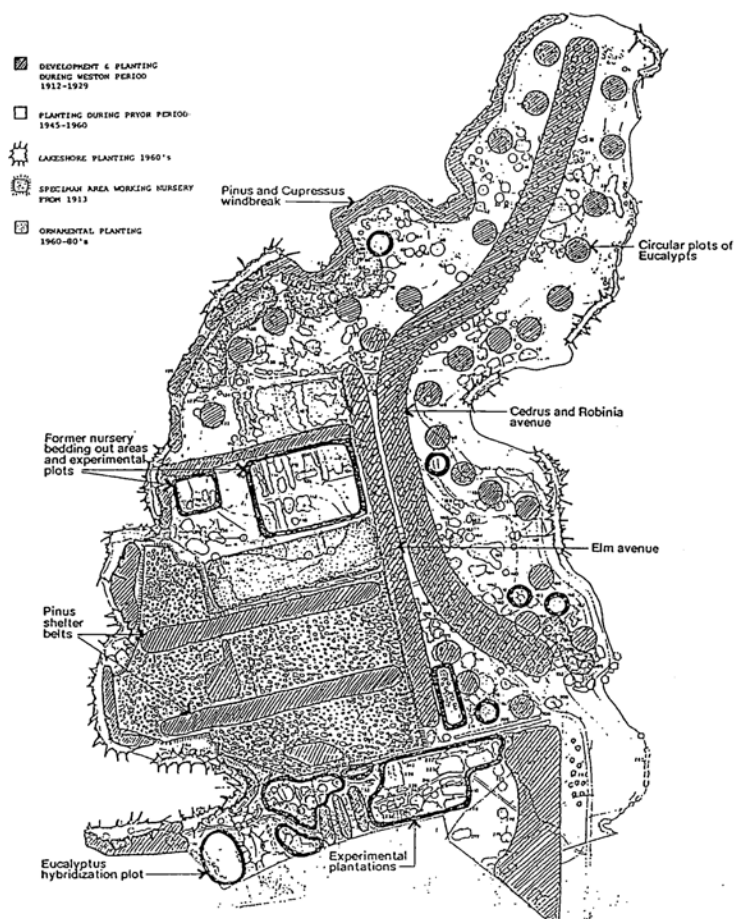


Figure 2: Weston Park Tree Survey



**FIGURE 3**  
Weston Park and Yarralumla Nursery  
illustrating the periods of development  
of the existing site features

Figure 3: Weston Park and Yarralumla illustrating the periods of development of existing site features.



**Images of Weston Park taken 17 December 2010:**

