

Australian Capital Territory

Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of Kanangra Court, Reid) Notice 2015

Notifiable Instrument NI2015–157

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 Kanangra Court, Reid) Notice 2015*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after notification.

3 Notice of Decision

Pursuant to Section 32 of the *Heritage Act 2004* the ACT Heritage Council has decided not to provisionally register Kanangra Court, Reid to the ACT Heritage Register.

Jennifer O'Connell
Secretary (as delegate for)
ACT Heritage Council
9 April 2015



ACT Heritage Council

STATEMENT OF REASONS

DECISION NOT TO PROVISIONALLY REGISTER

KANANGRA COURT

(Block 1 Section 11, REID)

IN THE ACT HERITAGE REGISTER

In accordance with Section 32 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, the ACT Heritage Council has decided not to provisionally register Kanangra Court, Reid. This Statement of Reasons provides an assessment of Kanangra Court, Reid and finds that the place does not meet any of the criteria under s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

Background

Kanangra Court was nominated to the ACT Heritage Register by the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) for its architectural and planning merits and association with the location of the original Ainslie Post Office.

Kanangra Court is included on the Institute's Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture (RSTCA), Item Number R045.

Kanangra Court is included in the 2011 draft report by Philip Leeson Architects Pty Ltd titled *Heritage Assessments of Housing ACT Properties*. The Report considers that Kanangra Court does not meet the threshold for registration under the *Heritage Act 2004*.

Kanangra Court was designed for the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) in 1962 by the Sydney-based firm of Collard Clarke and Jackson and construction was completed in 1964- 1965. The buildings incorporate some attributes of the Late Twentieth Century Sydney Regional Style (1960-) with its asymmetrical massing and roof following the slope of the land.

Kanangra Court is medium density public housing constructed post-war to accommodate the ongoing influx of public servants to the capital. It continues to be used as public housing.

Kanangra Court was externally inspected by ACT Heritage on 8 January 2015.

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 Kanangra Court, Reid the Council considered:

- the original nomination and documentary evidence supplied by the nominator;
- information provided by a site inspection on 8 January 2015 by ACT Heritage; and
- the report by ACT Heritage titled, *Background Information Kanangra Court*, January 2015, containing photographs and information on history, description, condition and integrity.

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. Future research may alter the findings of this assessment.

(a) importance to the course or pattern of the ACT's cultural or natural history;

Kanangra Court, Reid, does not meet this criterion.

The provision of public housing is an important and distinct historical theme within the context of the ACT. Within the wide variety of residential buildings erected in Canberra by the Commonwealth Government in the inter-war and post-war decades, Kanangra Court, completed in 1965, makes a contribution to an understanding of the Government's development and provision of medium density public housing to accommodate the final and major move of the public service workforce to the capital during the 1950s and '60s. In particular it demonstrates the development of bedsitter type accommodation as a response to the accommodation needs of the large number of young single people and couples without children coming to Canberra to work in the public service.

In the context of a large number of flat developments from the first flats to be built in Canberra in 1948 (Griffith Flats, extant, not registered on the ACT Heritage Register) to the later mid-1960s developments which included several groups in more suburbs such as Hughes and Hackett, Kanangra Court is architecturally distinctive as a development in its application of Sydney Regional style to medium density housing. Publicity of the time hailed its efficient use of space and 'up to date' qualities

Places may fit into a context of evolving design, development or provision that is represented by other examples (as in the case of the provision of public housing in the ACT). In applying the criteria the Council has to determine which, if any, of the places in that evolving context merit registration. Nearly every building in the ACT could be said to fit into a story of a particular design or planning context, or historical trend, but this does not mean that every place meets the threshold imposed by the criteria. An entry on the Heritage Register is valid to the extent that it establishes a level of significance that is strong and special that is therefore above the ordinary.

(b) has uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the ACT's cultural or natural history;

Kanangra Court, Reid, does not meet this criterion.

In the broader context of medium-density public housing constructed in the post-war period, Kanangra Court is not considered to be uncommon, rare or endangered. Examples of flat developments in the post-war period include the first groups of flats built in Canberra (currently extant but not registered) in Griffith (1948), Braddon and Reid (1951) and Ainslie (1952); the Northbourne Flats (1959, not registered), Stuart Flats (1959, not registered) and Gowrie Court (1959, not registered).

It is noted that there are few examples of flat development for the later NCDC period when the need for medium density housing decreased and that there are limited other examples of bedsitter accommodation. The only other dedicated development built by the NCDC, McPherson Court, was demolished c. 2000. It also is noted that within the mixed typology group housing of the Northbourne Housing Precinct (registered), the Dickson Flats also provided bedsit only accommodation in tower blocks.

(c) potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT's cultural or natural history;

Kanangra Court, Reid, does not meet this criterion.

There is insufficient evidence before the Council to demonstrate that Kanangra Court has the potential to yield important information that will contribute to a wider understanding of the ACT's cultural or natural history.

Whilst it exhibits influences of the Late Twentieth-Century Sydney Regional Style (1960 -), also known colloquially as the 'Sydney School', its ability to strongly represent the style has been

diminished, as outlined under criterion (d). Other places better represent this style in the ACT such as the Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter Headquarters in Red Hill and 145 Mugga Way, Red Hill (also known as Cater House). What ability the place does have to provide information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT's cultural history is adequately represented by documentary evidence and the physical material of the buildings is unlikely to contribute further to a wider understanding.

Kanangra Court is also an example of medium-density public housing constructed to house the influx of public servants in the post-war period. Other comparable examples exist such as the Griffith Flats (1948, not registered), Braddon and Reid Flats (1951, not registered), Ainslie Flats (1952, not registered), Allawah and Bega Courts (1956/57, not registered), Northbourne Flats (1959, not registered), Stuart Flats (1959, not registered), Red Hill Public Housing Precinct (1961, not registered) and the Northbourne Housing Precinct (1959-1962, registered). Moreover, there is adequate documentary evidence of its design, construction and history and the physical material of the buildings is unlikely to contribute further to a wider understanding of the ACT's cultural history.

(d) importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or objects;

Kanangra Court, Reid, does not meet this criterion.

Public housing is distinctly and strongly represented in Canberra's history because a large program of public housing operating from the 1920s -1970s was established to provide housing for people of all classes of society coming to work in the national capital. Kanangra Court is an example of medium-density public housing constructed to house the post-war influx of public servants in the 1950s, particularly to meet the needs of the large demographic of single people. The other flat developments were predominantly of the multi-unit type. The only other dedicated bedsitter accommodation was provided by MacPherson Court (demolished) and the Dickson Flats within Northbourne Housing Precinct (1959-62, registered). In the broad context of flat developments of the period however there are several extant but not registered examples: Griffith Flats (1948), Braddon and Reid Flats (1951), Ainslie Flats (1952), Allawah and Bega Courts (1956/57), Northbourne Flats (1959), Stuart Flats (1959).

The Council acknowledges that Kanangra Court demonstrates some aspects of the Late Twentieth Century Sydney Regional Style (1960 -), also known colloquially as the 'Sydney School'.

The attributes of the style it demonstrates include:

- asymmetrical massing;
- tiled skillion roof; and
- exposed rafters.

However, its ability to fully demonstrate the style is diminished by:

- the domestic scale and pitch of the roof, restricting its ability to strongly reflect the slope of the land;
- the presence of pitched roofs, rather than primarily skillion roofs;
- absence of any flat roofed areas;
- absence of clerestory window;
- absence of any timber post-and-beam elements;
- absence of exposed roof beams, Philip Leeson Architects (2011) report the ceilings to be painted sheet plaster;
- absence of timber decks;
- absence of 'clinker' brick walling;
- absence of painted brick, the external walls have been bagged and painted;

- absence of boarded stud walls, Philip Leeson Architects (2011) report the interior walls to be brickwork, rendered and painted;
- absence of stained or oiled timber, original stained timber elements, such as doors and windows have been replaced with powder coated aluminium doors and window frames;
- absence of timber awning sash; and the
- absence of timber screens.

Although Kanangra Court is an example of the Late Twentieth Century Sydney Regional Style (1960-), the Council considers that stronger examples of the style exist in the ACT such as the Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter Headquarters in Red Hill and 145 Mugga Way, Red Hill (also known as Cater House). Kanangra Court is therefore not considered to be an important example sufficient to meet threshold for listing under this criterion.

(e) importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT;

Kanangra Court, Reid, does not meet this criterion.

Kanangra Court demonstrates some aspects of the Late Twentieth Century Sydney Regional Style (1960 -), also known colloquially as the 'Sydney School', which is valued by the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) as evidenced by its inclusion on its Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture (Item No. 045).

While valued by the Institute, the Council's *Heritage Assessment Policy* interprets a cultural group as a 'group of people within a society with a shared ethnic or cultural background' or 'a group of people connected through the same way of living, which has been transmitted from one generation to another'. The Council therefore does not consider the Institute to be a cultural group for the purposes of the criterion.

Furthermore, there is insufficient evidence before the Council to demonstrate that Kanangra Court exhibits other aesthetic characteristics which are valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT.

(f) importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement for a particular period;

Kanangra Court, Reid, does not meet this criterion.

Kanangra Court exhibits a degree of creative achievement, for its time, through its site planning and architectural style.

The blocks are staggered across the site, following the natural slope of the land, forming internal private landscaped spaces and achieving optimal northern orientation. The site planning is a departure from blocks of flats prior which were positioned around the perimeter of blocks, irrespective of solar orientation. However, the creativity of the site planning is not considered to be to a high degree, sufficient to meet threshold for listing under this criterion.

Whilst it exhibits influences of the Late Twentieth-Century Sydney Regional Style (1960 -), also known colloquially as the 'Sydney School', its ability to strongly represent the style has been diminished, as outlined under criterion (d). Other places better represent this style in the ACT such as the Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter Headquarters in Red Hill and 145 Mugga Way, Red Hill (also known as Cater House).

(g) has a strong or special association with the ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;

Kanangra Court, Reid, does not meet this criterion.

There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that Kanangra Court has strong or special associations with the ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

The Council acknowledges that Kanangra Court is included on the Australian Institute of Architects' (the Institute) Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture. The Council's *Heritage Assessment Policy* interprets a cultural group as a 'group of people connected through the same way of living, which has been transmitted from one generation to another'. The Council therefore does not consider the Institute to be a cultural group for the purposes of the criterion.

(h) has a special association with the life or work of a person, or people, important to the history of the ACT.

Kanangra Court, Reid, does not meet this criterion.

Kanangra Court has an association with its architects, Collard Clarke and Jackson, and its original, past and present residents, however, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that any of these persons have a special association with it and are important to the history of the ACT.

Conclusion

The provision of public housing is an important and distinct historical theme within the context of the ACT. Within the wide variety of residential buildings erected in Canberra by the Commonwealth Government in the inter-war and post-war decades, Kanangra Court makes a contribution to an understanding of the Government's development and provision of public housing in response to the need to accommodate the expanding public sector workforce.

Kanangra Court makes a contribution to the theme by demonstrating the provision of medium-density public housing in the post-war period, particularly of the bedsitter type.

In the broader context of medium-density public housing constructed in the post-war period, Kanangra Court is not considered to be uncommon, rare or endangered. In its design as a bedsitter complex it demonstrates the evolution of approaches to flat developments in response to the Canberra demographic. But it is not considered to provide a significant or greater contribution over other extant but unlisted examples such as the Griffith Flats (1948), Braddon and Reid Flats (1951), Ainslie Flats (1952), Allawah and Bega Courts (1956/57), Northbourne Flats (1959), Stuart Flats (1959) and the Dickson Flats within the Northbourne Housing Precinct (1959-1962).

Kanangra Court exhibits influences of the Late Twentieth-Century Sydney Regional Style (1960 -), also known colloquially as the 'Sydney School'. However, its ability to strongly represent the style has been diminished and in comparison to other places that better represent this style in the ACT such as the Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter Headquarters in Red Hill and 145 Mugga Way, Red Hill (also known as Cater House), its integrity is not considered high enough to meet threshold for listing. What ability the place does have to provide information about the architectural style is adequately represented by documentary evidence.

This Statement of Reasons provides an assessment of Kanangra Court, Reid and finds that it does not meet any of the criteria specified in s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

The ACT Heritage Council recognise that the provision of public housing is a distinctive theme in the context of the ACT and would encourage future publications capturing this unique story.

SITE PLAN



Image 1 Kanangra Court, Reid, nominated boundary (Source: ACT Heritage, 2014)