

# Heritage (Decision about Registration of the City Railway Remnants, Kingston and Reid) Notice 2017

Notifiable Instrument NI2017—281

made under the

**Heritage Act 2004, s40 (Decision about registration)**

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## 1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Heritage (Decision about Registration of the City Railway Remnants, Kingston and Reid) Notice 2017*.

## 2 Decision about registration

On 1 June 2017, the ACT Heritage Council (the **Heritage Council**) decided to register the City Railway Remnants, The Causeway, Kingston and part Block 12 Section 33, Reid (the **Place**).

## 3 Registration details of the Place

The registration details of the Place are in the schedule.

## 4 Reasons for the decision

The Heritage Council decided to register the Place because it has heritage significance as it meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria in section 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, as set out in the schedule.

## 5 Date registration takes effect

The registration of the Place takes effect on the day after this notice is notified.

## **6 Revocation**

The *Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of the City Railway Remnants, Kingston and Reid) Notice 2017 NI2017—64* is revoked.

Fiona Moore  
A/g Secretary (as delegate for)  
ACT Heritage Council  
1 June 2017

**Schedule**  
**(See sections 3 and 4)**

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ACT Heritage Council

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**  
**HERITAGE REGISTER**  
**(Registration)**

For the purposes of s. 40 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, an entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

**City Railway Remnants**

**The Causeway, Kingston; and part Block 12 Section 33, Reid.**

**DATE OF REGISTRATION**

1 June 2017 Notifiable Instrument: 2017–

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

The Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
GPO Box 158  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
Telephone 13 22 81

This statement refers to the location of the place as required in s. 12 (b) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

#### **LOCATION OF THE PLACE**

The Causeway, Kingston; and

part Block 12 Section 33, Reid.

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This section refers to the description of the place as required in s.12(c) of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The attributes described in this section form part of the heritage significance of the place. For the purposes of s. 12(c) of the *Heritage Act 2004*, the boundary of the place is at Image 1.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE**

The City Railway Remnants, consisting of the following:

The Reid Railway Easement, consisting of the following attributes:

- the landscaped ~290mx48m long strip of land at Reid that remains undeveloped within the former railway easement; and

The Kingston Railway Easement, consisting of the following attributes:

- the landscaped ~27m wide median between the two roads that form The Causeway.
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This statement refers to the heritage significance of the place as required in s.12(d) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

#### **STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The City Railway Remnants are evidence of the main railway system planned for Canberra. In 1911, the Department of Home Affairs included a rail system as a requirement in the competition for the design of the city. The winning design of Walter Burley Griffin located the railway to the east of the Parliamentary area offset from the main avenues that would then connect with a tram system to move people around the city. Following a Parliamentary Standing Committee inquiry in 1916 into its construction, it was decided that there was no reason to construct other than temporary lines until the development of the city warranted the construction of the permanent line. The route for the permanent line was included in the 1925 gazetted plan of the City of Canberra. It remained as an easement on the ground and on the Canberra plan under legislation until 1950 when it was determined that a rail link to Yass was no longer required and the railway route was removed from the plan. After 1950 the former easement land was quickly taken up and built over. Today there are only two sections of the easement that retain evidence of their reserved status that affected surrounding development, one in Reid along Amaroo Street and one in The Causeway in Kingston. The registration boundary consists of these sections of the easement that can be shown to have had a significant influence on the development of Canberra.

## CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE

The guiding conservation objective is that the City Railway Remnants shall be conserved and appropriately managed in a manner respecting its heritage significance.

The ACT Heritage Council may adopt heritage guidelines applicable to the place under s25 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

For further information on guidelines applicable to the place, or for advice on proposed works or development, please contact ACT Heritage on 13 22 81.

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## REASON FOR PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

The City Railway Remnants has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance when assessed against two criteria [(a) and (b)] under s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

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## ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

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

In assessing the heritage significance of City Railway Remnants, Reid and Kingston, the Council considered:

- the nomination and documentary evidence supplied by the National Trust (ACT);
- the Council's *Heritage Assessment Policy* (February 2015);
- information provided by a site inspections on 20 July 2011, 19 April 2016, 9 December 2016 and 29 March 2017 by ACT Heritage;
- the report by ACT Heritage titled, *Background Information City Railway Remnants*, June 2017, containing photographs and information on history, description, condition and integrity; and
- submissions from public consultation conducted under s37 of the Act:
  - the Council initially provisionally registered the City Railway Remnants as two small sections of remnant temporary construction railway track in Kingston and two sections of the 1925 railway easement, one in Kingston and one in Reid. The Council then considered the submissions received during public consultation and took the following actions:
    - re-examined the entire length of the temporary railway alignment for any significant evidence of the temporary construction railway, however only minor ground disturbances remain in some areas and were not considered to be significant evidence of the railway;
    - removed the temporary rail tracks from the listing as the extant tracks were actually from the earlier Kingston Powerhouse line (a portion of which is already incorporated into the Powerhouse listing); Griffin's temporary railway being added to this line at a point ~80m further north along the track; and
    - examined the entire length of the 1925 easement for evidence of its effect on the planning and development of the city and updated the assessment as necessary.

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;**

The City Railway Remnants, Reid and Kingston, meets this criterion.

The City Railway Remnants are evidence of the implementation of the planning for the main railway that was a significant part of Walter Burley Griffin's design for the city of Canberra. Their importance to the course and pattern of the ACT's cultural history can be demonstrated in the effect they have had on the subsequent development of the city.

Griffin's design for Canberra always included a railway that was designed to operate alongside a city-wide tram network. This was a requirement of the 1911 competition from the Department of Home Affairs. Griffin's railway alignment was significantly different to the alignment suggested by the Department of Home Affairs and was incorporated into the design and intended use of the city. The location of the railway was formalised in the 1925 gazetted plan of the Layout-out of the City of Canberra and Its Environs. In the 1940s the planned railway easement was landscaped with trees and shrubs to help identify the route as well as help control wind and reduce dust from adjacent city development. The railway route was removed from the gazetted plan in 1950 and development quickly resumed most of the easement. In 2016, a small section along Amaroo Street in Reid and the Causeway in Kingston are the only parts of the easement that can be seen to have had a significant impact on the way the city has developed and, as such, can be determined to be important to the course and pattern of the ACT's planning and development history.

The Amaroo Street remnant easement is a ~290m long stretch of land that until 1950 had been reserved for the railway. The remnant part is the southern half of the original easement with the other half contained in the Amaroo Street road easement and the southern half of Section 2 Reid, now built over by housing. Griffin's original stated design for the railway was for tracks in a 12 foot deep cutting with embankments on both sides through the city area between City Hill and Mount Ainslie and running offset from main avenues to separate it from the main public spaces. The tree planting pattern of an avenue that still exists today would have been located on the southern half of the railway easement but the spacing between the trees would likely have been insufficient for Griffin's sunken railway and embankments, however it does assist in interpreting the cultural landscape.

The Kingston section of the remnant easement remains as the wide strip of land, 350m long, between the two parallel roads that form The Causeway road easement. This section of the planned railway, in Griffin's design statement accompanying his award winning entry, was designed to run at ground level in the open (later detailed plans necessarily had it on a raised embankment for the approach to and crossing what is now the Jerrabomberra Wetlands) as it was on the outskirts of the planned city and would allow for grand views and vistas for passengers arriving in Canberra, particularly where it changed direction at intersections of Griffin's axial lines and the planned embankment across what is now the Jerrabomberra Wetlands. This section of the remnant easement had landscaping similar to the section in Reid, but the trees failed to thrive and there is little suggestion of a formal avenue of trees, however the relationship of the place to the existing railway to the south, as well as the planning intention of the wide median to accommodate the railway, can still be discerned.

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

The City Railway Remnants, Reid and Kingston, meets this criterion.

The City Railway Remnants are considered uncommon and endangered aspects of the ACT's cultural history. Very little rail was built in the ACT and planning history notes the changes in mass transportation away from rail to motorised travel. This has resulted in what little physical evidence there was of the easements reserved for the railway being built over so that only a small portion of that land remains. The land remaining in Reid has survived as it acted a barrier between a large educational institution and a low density residential area. The land remaining in Kingston has survived as the avenue had been constructed before 1950. It was one of the few sections of Griffin's plan where the railway would be above ground and run down the median of the avenue.

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

The City Railway Remnants, Reid and Kingston, does not meet this criterion.

As an easement for a planned railway that was not constructed there is little potential for the City Railway Remnants to yield important information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT's cultural history as the planning history of the easements is better represented by the planning documents and designs for the ACT.

The Council notes that there was a temporary construction railway but considers that there is not enough evidence remaining to be considered to have the potential to yield important information as all that remains is ground disturbance to indicate where it was.

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

The City Railway Remnants, Reid and Kingston, does not meet this criterion.

The City Railway Remnants are not important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a railway easement. As land that has been reserved for a possible future use, the only defining feature is that it has not been built over; and as this is a very common feature of many areas across the ACT, it cannot be considered important for demonstrating the type of place. While the plantings may add to the ability of the place to be interpreted, they are necessarily of a temporary nature considering the extensive earthworks involved with Griffin's plan for sunken tracks with embankments and the plantings would have needed to be removed if the railway was built. Griffin's plans did incorporate screening plantings, but the current planting patterns are unlikely to have been suitable for this purpose. As such, the plantings in themselves cannot be considered to be an important characteristic of the type of place.

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

The City Railway Remnants, Reid and Kingston, does not meet this criterion.

The City Railway Remnants may be valued by rail, engineering and Griffin planning enthusiasts, but they are not considered to be representative of the ACT community as a whole, nor are they

considered to be cultural groups. Additionally, the Council could find no existing evidence that would suggest it is valued for exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

There is anecdotal evidence that the trees in the Reid Railway Easement may be valued by the residents of Reid, however they are a part of the ACT community and cannot be said to be representative of the ACT community as a whole as required by this criterion.

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

The City Railway Remnants, Reid and Kingston, does not meet this criterion.

While Griffin's design of Canberra is an important creative achievement of urban design at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the land reserved for one part of that design which was not built cannot be said to be important in demonstrating this.

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

The City Railway Remnants, Reid and Kingston, does not meet this criterion.

While the City Railway Remnants may be held in high regard and be visited by some community groups, such as those associated with engineering and railways or Walter Burley Griffin, there is no evidence that the place has a strong or special association with the ACT community as a whole, or a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

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

The City Railway Remnants, Reid and Kingston, does not meet this criterion.

The City Railway Remnants are associated with Walter Burley Griffin, a person important to the history of the ACT, who designed the railway route which existed in every version of his design of the City. Even though railway routes were a requirement for the design as private automobiles were not then considered likely to become the main mode of automated travel, Griffin considered they would become a major factor in the growth and success of the city. The easements that were created for Griffin's railway resulted in the current pattern of development that has left the recognisable open parcels of land and road alignments that form the registration boundaries of the City Railway Remnants. The easements were formalised by the 1925 gazetted plan several years after Griffin had left Canberra however, and while they were based on his designs, many others were involved in the refinement of the design. Regardless, the railway easement is but one part of the overall plan and Griffin's special association is with the important work of the design of the city. This is not considered to be a special association as required by this criterion.



SITE PLAN



Image 1 City Railway Remnants boundaries