

Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of Early Canberra Workers Settlements, Yarralumla) Notice 2022

Notifiable instrument NI2022–71

made under the

Heritage Act 2004, s 34 (Notice of decision about provisional registration)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of Early Canberra Workers Settlements, Yarralumla) Notice 2022*.

2 Decision about provisional registration

On 10 February 2022, the ACT Heritage Council (the *Heritage Council*) decided not to provisionally register Early Canberra Workers Settlements, block 2, section 128, Yarralumla (the *Place*).

3 Description of the Place

The description of the Place is in the schedule.

4 Reasons for the decision

The Heritage Council is not satisfied on reasonable grounds that the Place is likely to have heritage significance as defined by section 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*. A detailed statement of reasons, including an assessment against the heritage significance criteria, is provided in the schedule.

5 Date decision takes effect

The decision not to provisionally register the Place takes effect on 11 February 2022 (being the day after the Heritage Council made its decision in writing as set out in the schedule).

Edwina Jans
A/g Secretary (as delegate for)
ACT Heritage Council
10 February 2022



ACT Heritage Council

STATEMENT OF REASONS DECISION NOT TO PROVISIONALLY REGISTER EARLY CANBERRA WORKERS SETTLEMENTS (BLOCK 2 SECTION 128, YARRALUMLA) IN THE ACT HERITAGE REGISTER

In accordance with s32 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, the ACT Heritage Council has decided not to provisionally register Early Canberra Workers Settlements, Yarralumla. This Statement of Reasons provides an assessment of Early Canberra Workers Settlements, Yarralumla, and finds that the place does not meet any of the criteria under s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

This statement refers to the location of the place as required in s34(5)(b)(ii) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

LOCATION OF THE PLACE

Early Canberra Workers Settlements, Block 2 Section 128, Yarralumla.

This section refers to the description of the place as required in s34(5)(b)(iii) of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The boundary of the place and extent of features listed below is illustrated at Image 1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE

Any remaining physical evidence pertaining to the Early Canberra Workers Settlements located within Block 2 Section 128, Yarralumla.

This statement refers to the Council's reasons for its decision as required in s34(5)(b)(iv) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Council is not satisfied on reasonable grounds that the place is likely to have heritage significance as defined by s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

This statement refers to the Council's assessment of the place against the heritage significance criteria as a part of its reasons for its decision as required in s34(5)(b)(iv) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The Council's assessment against the criteria specified in s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* is as follows.

In assessing the heritage significance of Early Canberra Workers Settlements, Yarralumla, the Council considered:

- the original nomination and documentary evidence supplied by the nominator;
- the Council's *Heritage Assessment Policy* (March 2018);
- information provided by a site inspection on 13 July 2021 by representatives of the ACT Heritage Council and ACT Heritage; and
- the report by ACT Heritage titled, *Background Information Early Canberra Workers Settlements*, February 2022, containing photographs and information on history, description, condition and integrity.

Pursuant to s10 of the Heritage Act, 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 Council has assessed Early Canberra Workers Settlements against criterion (a) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

The Early Canberra Workers Settlements are historically related to the construction of early infrastructure in the nascent Federal Capital Territory. Knowledge of the history of the workers camps contributes to understanding the course and pattern of the ACT's cultural history. However, the camps were temporary in nature consisting primarily of canvas tents, along with some boarded structures, such as the mess rooms. Records indicate that the camps were dismantled and moved not abandoned. This limits the possibility of finding any significant heritage remains on the site. Although there would have been clear evidence of the camps in the aftermath of the removal of the camp, in the form of trenches, earthworks and refuse left in the area, the evidence of this has been greatly disturbed or further removed in the intervening years. Regardless, it is not clear that any early camps were located on Block 2 Section 128 Yarralumla. The lack of any clear association between extant physical evidence and the Early Canberra Workers Settlements on Block 2 Section 128 Yarralumla means that this place cannot provide evidence that would show it is important to the course or pattern of the ACT's cultural history.

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

The Council has assessed Early Canberra Workers Settlements against criterion (b) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

The history of the Early Canberra Workers Settlements is representative of a distinct phase in the development of the ACT's cultural history. However, due to the lack of substantive physical evidence on Block 2 Section 128 Yarralumla this location lacks the intactness necessary to meet the threshold for inclusion on the Heritage Register.

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

The Council has assessed Early Canberra Workers Settlements against criterion (c) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

There is some limited potential for as yet unidentified physical traces of the Early Canberra Workers Settlements to exist on Block 2 Section 128 Yarralumla. However, due to the fact that no camp was clearly associated with this block, the fact that all camps were intentionally removed and the disturbance to any remaining evidence in the intervening years, it is unlikely that any such discovery would contribute important information to an understanding of the ACT's cultural history that is not available through the historical sources. Therefore, the place does not meet the threshold for this criterion, as it lacks potential to yield new information relating to its cultural history.

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

The Council has assessed Early Canberra Workers Settlements against criterion (d) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

Had physical remains relating to the Early Canberra Workers Settlements been evident within the boundaries of Block 2 Section 128 Yarralumla, this potentially could have demonstrated characteristics relating to the workers settlements and their contribution to construction in the nascent Federal Capital Territory. However, the lack of evident physical remains means the place cannot satisfy the

need for high integrity or good condition needed to meet the threshold of this criterion for inclusion of the place on the Heritage Register.

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

The Council has assessed Early Canberra Workers Settlements against criterion (e) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

There is no indication of that Block 2 Section 128 Yarralumla has any particular aesthetic characteristics relating to Early Canberra Workers Settlements. Neither is there any evidence to suggest that a community or cultural group in the ACT values the place on the basis of its aesthetic qualities relating to relating to the Early Canberra Workers Settlements.

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

The Council has assessed Early Canberra Workers Settlements against criterion (f) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

The Early Canberra Workers Settlements were temporary camps intended to provide living quarters for single men working on the early construction of Canberra. The accommodation was primarily in canvas tents with some camp amenities located in boarded buildings. These camps were functional and not intended to be creative nor incorporate technical achievements. Furthermore, even had the original camps possessed these attributes, the lack of substantive physical remains on Block 2 Section 128 Yarralumla means that this place cannot meet the thresholds for this criterion.

(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 Council has assessed Early Canberra Workers Settlements against criterion (g) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

Although the history of the Early Canberra Workers Settlements is of known interest to local residents and historians, there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that the broader ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT, has a strong or special association for social, cultural or spiritual reasons with Block 2 Section 128 Yarralumla. Furthermore, for the purposes of this criterion, professional and special interest groups do not constitute the community or a cultural group.

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

The Council has assessed Early Canberra Workers Settlements against criterion (h) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

The Early Canberra Workers Settlements were related to the workers involved in the construction of early infrastructure in the nascent Federal Capital Territory. Some of these workers are known by name. However, particularly given the transient nature of the camps, association of the men to these locations was not enduring. Moreover, Block 2 Section 128 Yarralumla lacks the physical and landscape features which would otherwise demonstrate an association between the people associated with the early camps and the location.

SITE PLAN



Image 1: EARLY CANBERRA WORKERS SETTLEMENTS (BLOCK 2 SECTION 128 YARRALUMLA) site boundary