

Australian Capital Territory

Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration) Notice 2006 (No 1)*

Notifiable instrument NI2006–183

made under the

Heritage Act 2004, Section 34 Notice of decision about Provisional Registration

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration) Notice 2006 (No 1)*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after notification

3 Notice of Decision

Pursuant to Section 34 of the *Heritage Act 2004* the ACT Heritage Council has decided not to provisionally register the Police Citizen's Youth Club (Block 4 Section 35) Turner.

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ACT Heritage Council
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23 May 2006

*Name amended under Legislation Act, s 60



ACT Heritage Council

DRAFT STATEMENT OF REASONS

DECISION REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF THE POLICE CITIZENS YOUTH CLUB (BLOCK 4, SECTION 35, TURNER) IN AN ACT HERITAGE REGISTER

Background

The Police Citizens Youth Club (Block 2, Section 35, Turner) was nominated for assessment pursuant to entry to the interim ACT Heritage Places Register on 28 February 2002 (see attached).

The nomination was considered by Council at its meeting on 21 March 2002. Council decided to accept the nomination and wrote to the lessees and the nominator advising acceptance of the nomination on 15 April 2002.

Council did not accord a priority to the assessment, and it has remained in the backlog of unassessed places. Recently the Club has contacted the Heritage Council seeking resolution of the nomination. The Club is currently in the midst of planning for anticipated changes to their use of the premises, including possible relocation of the Youth Club function to another suburb. The Club is therefore keen to clarify the significance of the place, if any, and the nature of constraint, if any, that its significance would place upon their future use of the building and block.

Council has considered the nomination, and has sought additional details about the place and the nature of the Club function. Council has concluded that the Police Citizens Youth Club building does not meet the criteria contained within Section 10 of the Heritage ACT 2004. Whilst not considering the place to warrant entry to the register, Council considers that the retention of an historical record of the club function and location is worthwhile. Such information will be retained in ACT Government files and within historical material held by the Club. Council encourages archiving of historical materials held by the Club and notes further, that the use of the location for the Police Citizen Youth Club premises may be worthy of commemoration and/or reference in any new development at that location. Items of potential commemorative value may include the foundation stone and the Club emblem floor inlay from the entry foyer.

Assessment

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

In assessing the nomination for the Police Citizens Youth Club, the Council considered:

- The original nomination form provided by the nominee.
- Plans held by ACTPLA on relevant property files.
- Materials held on file by Council on the Assessment File02/2272, including documents relating to the development, history and function of Police Citizens Youth Clubs in Australia generally.
- Materials held on Australian Archives files
- The physical evidence and surrounding context as ascertained from a tour of the areas by Council members on July 2004.

In relation to the place:

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

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

Comment: Agree-

The Police Citizens Youth Club is of simple and economical design reflecting the use of cheap and/or freely available materials. The building design reflects its function as a club/social venue with sporting, office and accommodation facilities.

The place is constructed of commonly available materials – face brick, concrete and concrete blocks with metal roof. It does not demonstrate any outstanding structural or design qualities, qualities of innovation or departure by virtue of design or structure, nor does it represent a new achievement of its time. At the time of its opening comments were made with regard to the quality of its soundproofing and ease of fire evacuation, via numerous exits, however these are not innovative or outstanding qualities.

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

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

Comment: Agree – No community or cultural groups have made representations to or provided evidence to Council to indicate that the place exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities that are highly valued by the

community. Since its initial construction the building has been extended and altered considerably.

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

The nominee has indicated that the place is considered to meet this criterion to a high degree and has provided the comment that: “The PCYCs since their establishment have become part of the cultural landscape in Australia.”

Comment: Disagree

The place is demonstrative of a standard club facility constructed in the 1960s in Canberra, to a limited budget and with reliance upon community input. Whilst its use could be considered to demonstrate a distinctive function, being that of a Club, and more specifically a Police Citizens Youth Club, that function is still practised, it is not in danger of being lost and is not considered to be of exceptional interest. There are numerous Police Citizens Youth clubs in Australia. This one is the ACT Club, however if not located in this building the function would be relocated to another site.

Whilst the use may be of some minor interest in terms of historical fact, the history and function of Police citizens Youth Clubs more generally, and the Canberra club specifically, is still practised, (and would continue to be practised at other locations)? The function is not in danger of being lost nor is it of exceptional interest.

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

The nominee has indicated that the place is considered to meet this criterion to a high degree and has provided the comment that: “The PCYC is part of Canberra’s history. It is of particular importance to persons such as myself who attended regularly since 1961.”

Comment: Disagree

No evidence has been provided to indicate that the place is highly valued by a community or cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations. Some evidence has been put forward by the nominee – in the nomination and in an article in the Canberra Times of 8 April 2002 – to the effect that the place has social significance, however this is an individual view and is related more to the Club function than the location. Development of the Club was instigated

via a public meeting held to raise funds and form a Club to combat juvenile delinquency. The original building was constructed with community input, including assistance from local businesses. Council concedes that the place may therefore have some social value, however that social value has not been expressed by the community or a cultural group. Council is also of the view that was social value to be identified; this value could be conserved via a range of actions, not necessitating conservation of the existing (altered) building. For instance the Club had a foundation stone laid which commemorated its establishment. Retention of the foundation stone, and commemorative floor inlay from the entrance foyer, in a new development could retain sufficient of that value for the community if desired.

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

Not applicable

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

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

Comment: Disagree

The place is not the only known or comparatively intact example of its type. The Police Citizens Youth Club is one of many Police Citizens Youth Clubs currently operating in Australia. Further, the clubs are an ongoing operation. From an ACT context the club is the ACT Club. The function and operation of the Club could relocate and retain its significance. In terms of the building fabric, the building is not intact – in terms of the original construction, and is a type of building common for the period in terms of design and composition.

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

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

Comment: Disagree

The applicable kind of place would be social clubs. The Police Citizens Youth Club is but one type of social club, for example others would include sports clubs, YMCA and YWCA, animal fanciers, Senior Citizens, Scouts and so on. The place is not a notable example of the class 'Club' or a notable example of the subset of that class, being Police Citizens Youth Clubs. It is not the earliest established Club, it is not the longest running Club, and its history is not distinguished by any particular events; it is not operated in a building of notable architectural merit, or in an urban setting of particular significance.

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

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

*Comment: Disagree -The Council has not been provided with any evidence to support the claim that the **place** has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase, which played a significant role or part in local or national history. Council has also undertaken its own research as to whether the claim could be substantiated.*

Council considers that the place has a strong association with the Police Citizens Youth Club. It has operated as the Club premises since 1960. Council considers that the Police Citizens Youth Club may qualify as a group and has therefore further explored this criterion by considering the role that this group has played with regard to local or national history.

To this end Council has consulted the following well known publications relating the history and development of Canberra as well as the Canberra and District Historical Society's Web site/catalogue.

*The publication **Canberra 1954 – 1980** (Eric Sparke 1988) that spans the period of the club's operation does not make any specific mention of the Police Citizens Youth Club (or Boys club as it may also have been termed). A search of its references to clubs, social and sporting organizations includes references to The Canberra Mothercraft Society, Repertory Theatre, Philharmonic Society, Orchestral Society, Choral Group, Recorded Music Society, Film Centre, Eisteddfod Society, Gymkhanas, Agricultural shows, the Commonwealth club, Canberra Club (formerly Canberra Returned Soldiers Club) and Canberra Workers Club and the existence of organisations for every sport from hockey to football to rifle shooting and mountaineering.*

The place is associated with police, youth and policing generally and is representative of a wider group of clubs but there is no evidence to indicate that this club has played a significant role in local or national history. Council would consider further evidence in this regard if provided.

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

The nominee has indicated this criterion as 'not applicable'.

Comment: Agree

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

The nominee has indicated a high value for this criterion – without supporting comment.

Comment: Disagree

The place does not demonstrate an overt likelihood of providing information valuable for research that would give a wider understanding of natural or cultural history. The cultural history of the building and the Police Citizens Youth Club generally, is already understood. The site does not figure in understandings of natural history. Council does not recognize any situations whereby the place would be used as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site. The building would not rate use as a demonstration or teaching site on the basis of its architecture or construction. Research into the function of the Police Citizens Youth Club would be unlikely to relate to the building itself, beyond the observation that the building form related to function and economy.

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

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

Comment: Agree

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.**

This criterion is not applicable

The nominee has provided additional comment:

‘Since I first came to Canberra in 1961 it remains one of the only buildings in the area, which remain. It is prime real estate and I fear that it will be sold for the value of the land for short term political gain. If it is to be sold I would not like to see the building altered inside or out and I would like to see it continued to be used for the purpose of physical culture.’

Conclusion

The ACT Heritage Council finds that the Police Citizens Youth Club at Turner is of insufficient heritage value to warrant provisional registration. Council also notes that the cited values of the Club do not warrant the retention of the existing building, and that a new facility on the same or different site would retain the social values recognized.

Dr Michael Pearson (Chair)
ACT Heritage Council

25 May 2006