

Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration for an Amendment to the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct, Yarralumla) Notice 2010

Notifiable Instrument NI 2010—227

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 for an Amendment to the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct, Yarralumla) Notice 2010 -

2. Registration details of the place

Registration details of the place are at [Attachment A](#): Provisional Register entry for the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct, Yarralumla.

3. Reason for decision

The ACT Heritage Council has decided that the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct, Yarralumla meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria at s 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The provisional register entry is at [Attachment A](#).

The Albert Hall and its immediate surrounds were entered in the ACT Heritage Register in 2001.

In 2007 a Conservation Management and Landscape Plan (CM&LP) for the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct was prepared by Peter Freeman Pty Ltd Conservation Architects and Planners, identifying a larger Precinct boundary than that currently entered in the ACT Heritage Register.

The CL&MP Conservation Policy 3 states that the existing ACT Heritage Register entry for Albert Hall ‘should be reviewed in the light of this CM&LP. The entire Albert Hall Heritage Precinct should be entered in the Register, and the Special Requirements and the citation guidelines should be guided by this CM&LP’.

The CM&LP, including Conservation Policy 3, has been endorsed by the ACT Heritage Council.

This amended Register Entry incorporates the original Registration details and amends the description of the curtilage to incorporate the landscape setting of the Albert Hall.

This curtilage reflects the historical relationship between the building and its landscape setting.

It does not include all the land recommended by the CM&LP as the southernmost portion contained in the CM&LP is considered to have a historical relationship with the Hotel Canberra rather than the Albert Hall.

Additional amendments have been made to this Register entry to incorporate an assessment against each of the criteria of the *Heritage Act 2004*, and to update the Statement of Heritage Significance accordingly.

4. Date of Provisional Registration

6 May 2010

5. Indication of council's intention

The Council intends to decide whether to register the amended entry under Division 6.2.

6. Public consultation period

The Council invites public comment by Tuesday 8 June 2010 on the amendment forming provisional registration of the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct, Yarralumla to:

The Secretary
ACT Heritage Council
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

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Gerhard Zatschler
Secretary
ACT Heritage Council

7 May 2010



ACT Heritage Council

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HERITAGE REGISTER
(Registration Details)

Place No: 20070

The following is mandatory:

For the purposes of s. 33 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, a provisional entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

Albert Hall Heritage Precinct, 100 Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla, ACT
Block 1 Section 39, Yarralumla, Canberra Central

DATE OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

Notified: 6 May 2010 Notifiable Instrument: 2010/

PERIOD OF EFFECT OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

Start Date: 6 May 2010 End Date: 6 October 2010

Extended Period (if applicable) Start Date _____ End Date _____

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

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE

Albert Hall Heritage Precinct, 100 Commonwealth Avenue, Section 39 Block 1, Division of Yarralumla, District of Canberra Central.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

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

Albert Hall is recognised as a prime example of the public architecture of the foundational Federal Capital era, 1911 to 1939. As with Old Parliament House, Albert Hall expresses the aim for a distinctive architectural character for Canberra equal to its role as the national capital.

This aesthetic significance is embodied in the architecture, the landscape and the interior design of the place. The Albert Hall precinct is, in built form, the embodiment of the early life of the Federal Capital, a life characterised by community involvement in civic events, and in the national and community life of the early Capital. Albert Hall was the 'cultural hearth' of the early Federal Capital, and as such, remains highly valued for that quality.

The naming of Albert Hall, an intentional association with the centre of the performing arts in London, and the British Commonwealth, was a statement of the importance of the arts in national life and testimony to Prime Minister Stanley Melbourne Bruce's advocacy of Australian culture, an often-overlooked characteristic of his career as a statesman.

Albert Hall was a publicly constructed place of gathering for the Federal and local community of Canberra. It is notable as one of a number of halls constructed within the early Federal Capital [refer the Causeway, Ainslie, Acton and Kingston halls], but Albert Hall was intended to be the 'Assembly Hall' for the city and community. It represents the intent of the early government to provide a community, public and cultural focus for the infant city. Albert Hall also has a role in signifying key events in Australian political and constitutional history, and our national cultural and professional history, and hence has clear associations with major political and community figures involved in those events (Freeman, P., 2007).

Albert Hall continues to have social and cultural value as a venue for a range of different purposes attracting large gatherings, and aesthetic value in its lakeside setting. The Hall is a landmark adjacent to the Parliamentary Triangle and the thoroughfare from City Hill to Parliament House.

FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE

The place comprises the features listed below:

- a) the Albert Hall, including original exterior elements;
- b) the early interior fabric including furnishings and fittings, projection facilities and associated equipment, suspended light fittings and parquet floor;
- c) two Atlantic Cedars (*Cedrus atlantica*) to the east of the Hall;
- d) the remaining elements of the former rose garden;
- e) the sun dial and pedestal to the east of the Hall;
- f) the three *Pinus* sp. and three London plane trees (*Platanus x acerifolia*) to the south of the Hall;
- g) the remaining historical curtilage of the Albert Hall as shown on the attached Site Plan;
- h) the adjacent landscape and its historical setting, including views and vistas to the former Hotel Canberra and Commonwealth Avenue;

- h) the road verges and plantings contained therein to the east, west and south of Block 1 Section 39 Yarralumla, and
 - i) the original entrance loop road from Commonwealth Avenue.
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APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES

The Heritage Guidelines adopted under s27 of the *Heritage Act 2004* are applicable to the conservation of the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct.

The guiding conservation objective is that the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct, 100 Commonwealth Avenue, 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).

Any future works and development must adhere to the Conservation Policy and Strategy outlined in Freeman, P., Pty Ltd Conservation Architects and Planners, 2007, 'The Albert Hall Precinct, Canberra Conservation Management and Landscape Plan', report prepared for Environment ACT and the ACT Department of Economic Development, Canberra, or any subsequent update.

REASON FOR PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

Albert Hall, 100 Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance when assessed against five criteria under the ACT Heritage Act.

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;**
Not applicable.

- (b) it exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group;**
Albert Hall is recognised as a prime example of the public architecture of the foundational Federal Capital era, 1911 to 1939. As with Old Parliament House, Albert Hall expresses the aim for a distinctive architectural character for Canberra equal to its role as the national capital. This aesthetic significance is embodied in the architecture, the landscape and setting, and the interior design of the place.

This distinctive architectural and landscape character can be seen in other extant buildings of the founding period [eg Beauchamp House, Hotel Canberra, and Hotel Acton, now Acton House], but because of its unique public purpose, Albert Hall is considered the civic and cultural equivalent of Old Parliament House.

Its prominent placement on a major Canberra avenue, its intended vistas and placement in relation to the parliament, and its association with the civic design principles on which the national capital was planned, all speak of its intended role in a community charged with founding the capital city of a young nation.

Albert Hall has an iconic aesthetic significance highly valued by Canberra's resident community and by those among the community of visitors who have the opportunity to learn of its history and purpose. The architecture, landscape and civic planning of the Albert Hall precinct are nationally significant as the embodiment of community and national aspirations for the national capital (Freeman, P., 2007).

In addition, the views and vistas to and from the Albert Hall from the major axis route of Canberra Avenue and the former Hotel Canberra comprise a crucial element to the historical and landscape setting and context of the Albert Hall.

(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 Albert Hall within its Heritage Precinct is the embodiment of the importance of kindling and nurturing civic and cultural engagement in the founding years of the federal capital. The Precinct was the hearth for the civic and cultural life of the city and its region, with the sense expressed at the opening of the Hall by Stanley Melbourne Bruce of radiating these essential values throughout the nation.

Its extant architectural, landscape and interior design elements provide unusually rich evidence of that purpose and how it was realised. Its setting in the Precinct provides the complementary evidence of a landscape design aesthetic deploying elements of plant type, planting layout and setting to express that purpose.

As a gracious assembly hall in a designed garden city landscape setting, Albert Hall played a unique role in shaping the life of the young city, evident in the civic and cultural occasions held there. It was the base for the Society for Arts and Literature, formed by Robert Garran, Harold White and Robert Broinowski, and for Lewis Nott's breakaway Canberra Repertory Society. For Canberra's first forty years, Albert Hall was the only venue dedicated to the performing arts, and influenced the shaping of musical, operatic and dramatic societies. As well, for many Canberrans, the association of the Hall with dances, socials, exhibitions and shows imbues the place with special community affection, which in turn, reflects a time when these events were central to community life (Freeman, P., 2007).

(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;

Albert Hall was the 'cultural hearth' of the early Federal Capital, and remains highly valued for that quality, even though major cultural events now have their own dedicated buildings such as the Canberra Theatre, Llewellyn Hall, the National Gallery of Australia etc. The naming of Albert Hall, an intentional association with London's renowned venue, asserted the importance of the arts in national life, attaching a responsibility to the new city to realise this vision. The Albert Hall Heritage Precinct expresses a spiritual ideal recognised by many as a treasured legacy difficult to define but readily recognised when expression is found.

Albert Hall has important associations with national cultural institutions and national and international artists, and with education through the lectures and events held there and through its association with the founding of the Australian National University. It is still much loved for these associations, as is evident in the strong community demand for its protection and sustainable future despite the neglect and mismanagement that have interrupted its long tradition of civic, cultural, educational and social uses (Freeman, P., 2007).

(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
Not applicable.

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

Albert Hall was a publicly constructed place of gathering, its style and Precinct setting it apart from other Canberra halls of the period such as the Causeway, Ainslie, Acton and Kingston halls. Albert Hall was intended to be the 'Assembly Hall' for national and regional events, a place to nourish a civic and cultural life for the capital that would signify a vibrant national life of participation. Albert Hall fulfilled the unique role it was assigned. It was for the nation in the 20th century, what town halls, schools of arts and mechanics Institutes were for young Australian cities and towns in the 19th century (Freeman, P., 2007).

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

The Albert Hall Heritage Precinct has strong associations with key events in Australian political, constitutional, civic and cultural history, with regional history before and after the establishment of the national capital, and with notable national and local figures. There are associations with Royal visits, from the naming of the hall after the Duke of York opened Parliament House in 1927 to the visit of Queen Elizabeth and of the Queen Mother in the 1950s. There are associations with Governors-General and with prime ministers, including WM Hughes, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, Joseph Lyons, John Curtin, Ben Chifley, RG Menzies, Harold Holt and EG Whitlam. Some associations point to a greater understanding of our political history, such as Prime Minister Stanley Melbourne Bruce's advocacy of Australian culture, an often-overlooked characteristic of his career as a statesman.

Many international and national artists have special associations with the Albert Hall, including vocalists Lotte Lehmann, Rita Streich, Joan Sutherland, musicians Eileen Joyce; dancers Robert Helpmann, Alan Alder, Ross Stretton.

There are special associations with the ANZAC tradition, with the 1939-45 war, the declaration of peace and postwar reconstruction; there are strong associations with postwar immigration, with the creation of an Australian citizenship and with the Cold War and anti-Communism to Australia. There are also special associations with the federating and creation of early institutions, in the form of national conferences held at the Hall [eg Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Rotary, Forestry, etc.]. (Freeman, P., 2007).

(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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

(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.**

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF THE PLACE HISTORY AND PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Please refer: Freeman, P., Pty Ltd Conservation Architects and Planners, 2007, 'The Albert Hall Precinct, Canberra Conservation Management and Landscape Plan', report prepared for Environment ACT and the ACT Department of Economic Development, Canberra, for a detailed history and physical description for the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct.

In addition:

Historical plantings within the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct occurred in two main periods – the first occurred during the Hall's initial construction phase in the 1920s; and the second occurred more recently with the National Capital Development Committee's (NCDC) adjacent road construction work in the late 1960s.

The earliest landscaping was planned by Charles Weston and carried out by Alexander Bruce. Information relating to this period of planting has been obtained from historical photographs and other sources, and is provided in Peter Freeman's 2007 Conservation Management and Landscape Plan.

The planting by the NCDC involved vegetation screening from the new road construction of Flynn Drive and the loop road to the north of the Albert Hall.

Both these periods of planting are reflected within the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct today.

The planning and development of Albert Hall was strongly based on the context of its surrounds, including its proximity to the former Hotel Canberra and to Commonwealth Avenue. The views and vistas to and from the Albert Hall formed a crucial element in its design and construction. The Albert Hall today retains strong connections to both the former Hotel Canberra and to Commonwealth Avenue. As such, these adjacent places form part of the setting and significance of the Albert Hall. These adjacent places include:

- the road verges and plantings and driveway entry therein, to the east, west and south of Block 1 Section 39 Yarralumla;
- the former Hotel Canberra Block 1 Section 40 Yarralumla; and
- the former Rose Gardens, bowling green and tennis courts Block 4 Section 40 Yarralumla.

SITE PLAN



Albert Hall Heritage precinct - aerial image
Block 1, Section 39; as defined by the solid white line