

Australian Capital Territory

# Heritage (Decision about Registration for the Yarralumla Nursery, Yarralumla) Notice 2011

Notifiable Instrument NI 2011 -499

made under the

***Heritage Act 2004* section 42 Notice of Decision about Registration**

---

**1. Revocation**

This instrument replaces NI 2011-104

**2. Name of instrument**

This instrument is the Heritage (Decision about Registration for the Yarralumla Nursery, Yarralumla) Notice 2011 -

**3. Registration details of the place**

Registration details of the place are at Attachment A: Register entry for the Yarralumla Nursery, Yarralumla.


**4. Reason for decision**

The ACT Heritage Council has decided that the Yarralumla Nursery, Yarralumla meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria at s 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The register entry is at Attachment A.

**5. Date of Registration**

25 August 2011

Jennifer O'Connell  
Acting Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
25 August 2011

 <p>ACT Heritage Council</p>	<p><b>AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY</b></p> <p><b>HERITAGE REGISTER</b> <b>(Registration Details)</b></p> <p><b>Place No:</b></p>
---	--

For the purposes of s. 41 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, an entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

The Yarralumla Nursery, Weston Park Road, Yarralumla

Block 2 Section 123 Yarralumla, Canberra Central

**DATE OF REGISTRATION**

Notified: 25 August 2011 Notifiable Instrument: 2011-499

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

The Yarralumla Nursery, Weston Park Road, Yarralumla  
Block 2 Section 123 Yarralumla, 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*.

The Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods (which form separate registrations to the ACT Heritage Register), is of heritage significance for its technical achievements demonstrating discovery, for its design and aesthetic qualities highly valued by the community, as important evidence of a distinctive function of exceptional interest, as rare and a notable example of its kind and demonstrating the main characteristics of that kind, for strong and special associations with persons and a cultural phase in local history of the ACT, and for its unusual diversity of flora.

The Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods, is a designed landscape, established in 1914 as a permanent nursery and trial arboretum to test the suitability of plantings throughout Canberra as a garden city and from 1913 the area was identified as parkland and planting for the edge of the future lake commenced. The nursery and arboretum went on to prove vital in the selection of trees and plant species which have characterised the garden city, through government and domestic plantings. Considerable scientific and research work was undertaken at the nursery and arboretum, in determining the trees best suited to Canberra's harsh climatic conditions, for the planting of Canberra's streets, parks and gardens.

It is as a direct result of the research undertaken at the original 'Yarralumla Nursery' that Canberra today has developed its unique character and identity as a garden city with lakeside public amenity.

The early planting of Canberra with species trialled here formed a crucial cultural phase in the early history of the ACT in attempts to beautify the nation's capital, and remains highly evident within the landscape today.

A number of people have a strong and special association with the permanent nursery and arboretum including Walter Burley Griffin, TCG Weston, AE Bruce J.P Hobday and Professor Lindsay Pryor.

The design and aesthetic qualities of the Yarralumla Nursery as a designed landscape setting dating from 1914 including the pleasant parkland setting are highly valued by the community, evident in recreation opportunities.

Technical achievement is evident in the research, selection, trial and development of species suitable for the Canberra landscape.

The function of the Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods is of exceptional interest for its role in the early planning and design of Canberra and as a key component in the development and beautification of Canberra as a city in the landscape.

The Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods, is a unique and notable example of a nursery for purposes of experimentation and trial arboretum, being the only one of its type in the ACT, and unique within the Australian context for its diversity of native and exotic species and grouped plantings. It is one of the oldest and largest collections of this type in Australia outside of traditional botanic gardens.

The Yarralumla Nursery has further significance in the built structure of the nurseryman's cottage, demonstrating job-tied housing. It is also significant for its continuing function as a working nursery, supplying plants for both government and private purposes.

The Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods also demonstrates an unusual diversity of flora within the context of a designed nursery and arboretum containing native and exotic species.

#### Other theme-related registrations

Yarralumla Nursery was established as part of a larger nursery and arboretum on the western edges of Lake Burley Griffin. Separate citations have been prepared for two other places which form part of this same history, as follows:

- Weston Park;
- Westbourne Woods.

In addition, the Yarralumla Nursery Records form an additional nomination to the ACT Heritage Register, and will be assessed separately.

---

### **FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE**

The attributes listed below are assessed as features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place:

- Operating commercial nursery facility with various buildings, sheds and yards including:
    - Hobday's Cottage, detached brick garage and immediate surrounds
    - Original research office building
    - Original cutting and potting shed
    - Seed store and equipment supply office;
    - Glasshouses
    - Shade house
    - Old boiler house and adjoining water tower.
  - The seed store collection;
  - The parkland setting, including the diversity of tree species and the open spaces between plantings, and planting patterns including regular formation;
  - The individual tree plantings noting that the trees may require removal and replacement due to age and/or safety concerns;
  - The main avenues of Deodar, (*Cedrus deodara*), Pin oak, (*Quercus palustris*), Torrey pine, (*Pinus torreyana*) and mixed pine species;
  - Relationship to Westbourne Woods and Weston Park.
- 

### **APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES**

The Heritage Guidelines adopted under s27 of the *Heritage Act* 2004 are applicable to the conservation of the built elements at the Yarralumla Nursery, Yarralumla.

The guiding conservation objective is that the Yarralumla Nursery, 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).

The Weston Park CMP prepared by Godden Mackay Logan should be consulted as a guiding document.

---

## REASON FOR PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

The Yarralumla Nursery, Yarralumla has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance when assessed against eight 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;**

The Yarralumla Nursery demonstrates a high degree of technical achievement by showing qualities of discovery.

The original Yarralumla Nursery and arboretum, comprising areas of today's Westbourne Woods together with Weston Park and the Yarralumla Nursery, demonstrates the technical expertise and efforts undertaken in discovering suitable species for the planting of Canberra as a garden city.

Developed as a permanent arboretum in 1914, the trials and research undertaken for a wide range of native and exotic species informed the subsequent planting regime throughout early Canberra.

'These were part of the planned and systematic re-forestation of the ACT after Federation, and ornamental landscaping of the National Capital throughout most of the 20th century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a response to the development of Griffin's garden city concept for Canberra' (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 69).

Through the plantings established here, Charles Weston developed an excellent knowledge of the trees and plants best suited to Canberra's harsh climate. This then formed the basis for street tree, public park, forestry and domestic planting throughout Canberra. The use of government and domestic plantings from seedlings and advanced plants at the Yarralumla Nursery continues to the present day.

Yarralumla Nursery meets this criterion.

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

The Yarralumla Nursery exhibits outstanding design and aesthetic qualities valued by the community.

The outstanding design qualities of the Yarralumla Nursery are evident in the area's designed landscape setting, dating from 1914 as a permanent nursery. The initial design of the Yarralumla Nursery, which survives in the built fabric, mature plantings and landscape today, was carefully developed initially by Charles Weston, followed by Alexander Bruce, John Hobday and Lindsay Pryor, among others.

Together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods, the outstanding aesthetic qualities of the Yarralumla Nursery are demonstrated in the pleasant parkland setting comprising the combined plantings of Australian species with deciduous and evergreen hardwood species from the northern hemisphere.

The broad ACT community values the outstanding design and aesthetic qualities of the Yarralumla Nursery, as a prominent feature within the Yarralumla and Lake Burley Griffin foreshore area. This is evidenced through the high level of community use of the area including Yarralumla Nursery for recreation and other pursuits.

The commercial nursery and pleasant settings of the Oaks Brasserie Café at Hobday's Cottage allow the community a place for recreation and peaceful enjoyment.

The Yarralumla Nursery meets this 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 Yarralumla Nursery is important as evidence of a distinctive function of exceptional interest, and of a distinctive way of life that is no longer practised.

Together with Westbourne Woods and Weston Park, the Yarralumla Nursery is important as evidence of the function of large-scale propagation, experimentation, trialling and recording of plant materials as a permanent nursery and arboretum established in 1914 by Charles Weston, and the subsequent early tree planting throughout Canberra. This function is of exceptional interest for the role it played in the early beautification of Canberra, with species trialled at the nursery and arboretum, and then propagated for landscaping purposes for the city of Canberra.

Hobday's Cottage provides important evidence of a distinctive way of life in danger of being lost. It is evidence of job-tied housing dating from 1923 to house the nurseryman, initially John Hobday. Job-tied housing is rare today.

The Yarralumla Nursery meets this 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 Yarralumla Nursery is highly valued by the community and a cultural group for reasons of strong cultural and social associations.

In addition, 'the Yarralumla Nursery has a special place in Canberra community consciousness for its provision of plant material through many decades' (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 72). This is a special association, as a landmark place for the provision of plant materials, particularly Australian natives.

The Yarralumla Nursery and Weston Park together are valued by the ACT community and visitors for social associations as a place for recreation, enjoyment and relaxation. This value is demonstrated in the high levels of use of the area by groups of families and friends.

The Yarralumla Nursery meets this criterion.

**(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**

The Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods is a rare example of its kind, being a nursery and arboretum for purposes of trial and experimentation, and part of an historic park plan.

The Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods is rare and is the only permanent nursery and arboretum established by the government in the ACT. The establishment of such a nursery for the purpose of trialling species for planting throughout the new city is unique in the Australian context, and provides Canberra with much of its distinctive character as a garden city.

The area has survived as a relatively intact example of a permanent nursery and arboretum since its establishment in 1914.

The area is one of very few arboreta in Australia where a large number of native and exotic tree species are grown in large, often replicated, groups.

Weston's use of group plantings to give some idea of their growth habits and form under forest conditions distinguishes the arboretum from older Australian botanic gardens where limitations on space meant that only one or two of each species were planted.

Within the ACT, the Yarralumla Nursery is the largest wholesale production nursery and is rare in the length of continuous use as a nursery since 1914.

The Yarralumla Nursery meets this criterion.

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

The Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods, is a notable example of a nursery and arboretum developed for trial and experimentation, and demonstrates the main characteristics of that kind.

It is a notable example of this kind of place as it is one of the largest and oldest collections in Australia of a diversity of tree species outside of traditional botanic gardens. It is of further note for Weston's groups of plantings of the same species, imitating forest conditions to test the suitability of trees for planting in Canberra, and for the research and hybridisation work that has been carried out since the establishment of the Yarralumla Nursery in 1914.

The main characteristics of this kind of place are demonstrated in the diversity of plantings, and the mixture of Australian and exotic species.

The Yarralumla Nursery further demonstrates characteristics of an experimental and propagation facility through the original cutting and potting sheds, seed stores, office and stores, glasshouses, pocket gardens, trial plots, shelter belts, planting out areas and plant issue building (Goddon Mackay Logan, 2010: 74).

The Yarralumla Nursery meets this criterion.

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

The Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods, has a strong and special association with a number of persons, and a cultural phase in local ACT history.

Strong and special associations with Yarralumla Nursery include those of Walter Burley Griffin who envisaged a large 'Continental Arboretum' at the western reaches of Lake Burley Griffin; TCG Weston, Superintendant of Parks and Gardens who established the nursery and was instrumental in its success and in determining species of plants appropriate to the landscaping of the National Capital; Weston's successor AE Bruce who trialled flowering trees and shrubs and species for seasonal effects, J.P Hobday who was chief nurseryman and later Superintendent of Parks and Gardens who lived in the cottage from 1923 till his retirement in 1944; and Professor Lindsay Pryor, who was Superintendent of Parks and Gardens from 1944 to 1958 and was responsible for major plantings during this time.

Each of these people have contributed significantly to local ACT history, through the landscape design and planting of Canberra as a garden city, aspects which provide Canberra with much of its unique history and character.

The association of the place with each of these people is special, because of the nature of the association as the place where they performed their work duties which had a prominent, lasting and direct impact on the character of Canberra and the ACT. The association with each person is strong, given their commitment and dedication to the landscape planning, nursery, trial species, and landscape planting of Canberra.

The Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods, has a strong and special association with the cultural phase of the early beautification and landscape design of Canberra as a garden city. This phase is of importance in Federal Capital history as it has provided Canberra with much of its unique character and identity, distinguishing it from other Australian cities. The association is strong and special as much of the planting of inner Canberra has derived from the trials and research and propagation conducted at Yarralumla Nursery.

The Yarralumla Nursery meets this criterion.

- (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**

The Yarralumla Nursery does not meet this criterion.

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

The Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods exhibits unusual diversity of flora and its elements within the context of a designed nursery and arboretum.

There is no other arboretum or nursery in the ACT which exhibits the same diversity of native and exotic species.

Further, Weston's use of group plantings to give some idea of their growth habits and form under forest conditions distinguishes the arboretum from older Australian botanic gardens where limitations on space meant that only one or two of each species were planted.



The Yarralumla Nursery, together with Weston Park and Westbourne Woods, is one of the largest and oldest collections in Australia of such a diversity of tree species outside of traditional botanic gardens.

The Yarralumla Nursery meets this 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.

Not applicable

*The place is assessed as not being significant in relation to the following criteria: e, i, j, and l.*

---

## SUMMARY OF THE PLACE HISTORY AND PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

### HISTORY

#### Early planning for an arboretum and nursery

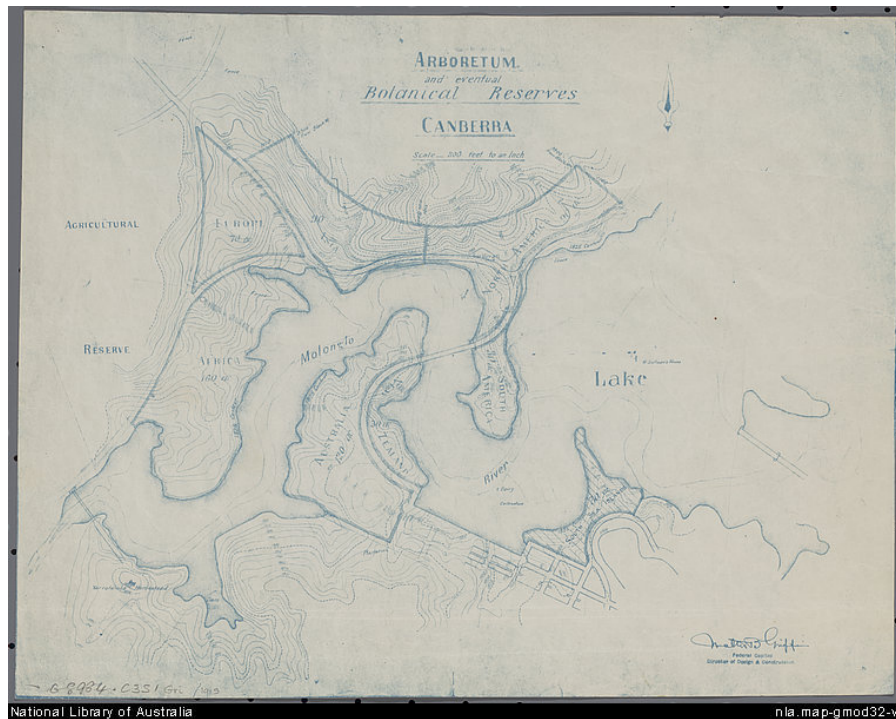
The competition for the design of Canberra was won by Walter Burley Griffin in 1912. The lake and its environs were a major element, but little is known of Griffins planting concepts for the area, except that the area to the west was designated parkland incorporating an arboretum. Griffin in his 1913 Preliminary Plan to accompany the *Report Explanatory* shows extensive parkland in the area of present day Weston Park. [see figure below]. His 1915 plan illustrates his vision for the western lake area as an arboretum. His final plan of 1918 also shows a continental arboretum in the area containing plantations grouped to the continent of origin.

His last plan of 1918 illustrates his vision for the western lake area. His plan was for a continental arboretum containing plantations grouped to the continent of origin (National Library of Australia vn-3603884-s31).

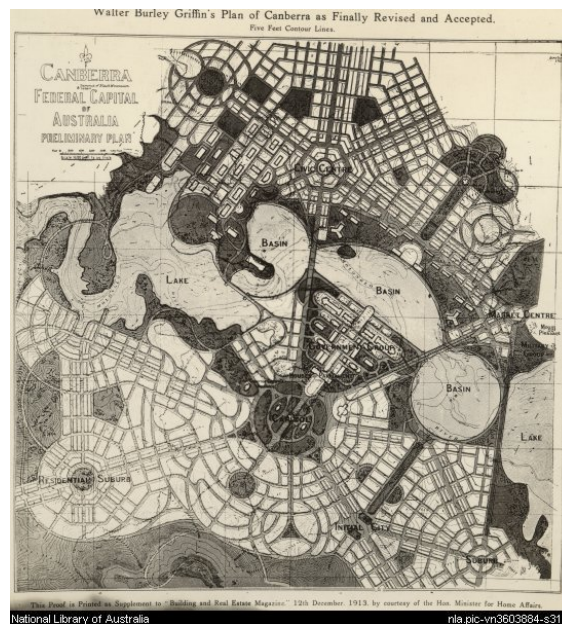


Walter Burley Griffin's Preliminary Plan of Canberra 1913, showing parklands in the area of today's Weston Park.

NLA MAP G8984.C3S1 Gri 1913



Arboretum and eventual botanical reserves, Canberra 1915  
NLA 1909771 MAP G8984.C3s1 Gri 1915



Walter Burley Griffin's Plan of Canberra as finally revised and accepted 1918.  
NLA vn-3603884-s31

### The first nursery

Prior to the finalisation of plans for the nation's capital, a nursery was established in 1911 to propagate seed for trees, an essential feature of the city proposal.

On the advice of Thomas Charles George Weston, who was then working as head gardener at Federal Government House, Sydney, and following his visit to the new Territory in 1911, the nursery was established at Acton.

In 1912 Weston again visited the nursery site 'to examine the ploughed site and irrigation provisions', and commence the process of ordering plants (GML, 2010: 9).

Later that year Weston was appointed officer-in-charge of the Campbelltown Nursery in New South Wales and C.R Scrivener, the Director of Commonwealth Lands and Surveys, reported his concern that Weston would not accept the position of 'Superintendent of Nurseries' at Canberra. However, in May 1913 Weston accepted the position and arrived to take charge of the Afforestation Branch.

After arriving in Canberra on 'a bitter cold day which gave me the shivers', Weston set out the objectives he was to pursue. These were:

- to establish a first-class forest and general nursery;
- to raise a large stock of all subjects likely to prove suitable for all purposes;
- to reserve at an early date mountains and hills such as Black Mountain, Mt Ainslie, Mt Stromlo etc. with a view to
  - a) allowing natural reafforestation
  - b) testing in these areas a variety of trees with a view to ascertaining the best to plant and
  - c) testing various methods of planting, from broadcast sowing to preparing of ground and planting out strong healthy nursery stock;
- and to continue procuring from all sources as opportunity offers, all seeds likely to prove useful or ornamental (Murphy, 1979).

Weston at this time considered the Acton nursery site to be relatively unsuitable for this purpose.

#### Establishing the Yarralumla Nursery and arboretum

During May 1913, Weston inspected several sites for a forest and general nursery and recommended that it be established on a site to the north-east of Yarralumla Homestead buildings. He suggested that the Yarralumla Nursery, of some 400 acres, be divided into four equal areas to be devoted to:

- nursery work proper,
- the permanent planting of Australian trees and shrubs,
- an arboretum and
- a pinetum (Murphy, 1979).

Rout and Eldridge (1983) record Weston's reasons for the choice of site:

*'In May 1913 he recommended an area for this purpose which he felt had generally good soil, a permanent water supply and was big enough to give scope for nursery extension so that all classes of trees etc could be planted, experimented with and tested with a view to being planted throughout the territory. Also being on the fringe of the future city it could 'be so planned to be an added ornament to the city'. He drew up a proposal for the 160 hectare area that contains the present Westbourne Woods and Yarralumla Nursery sites. The proposal divided the land into four parts of equal size – Division A for the nursery, Division B for Australian trees and shrubs, Division C for an arboretum and Division D for a pinetum'.*

Later Weston reported that: 'the site chosen for the experimental nursery was fully calculated to impose a very severe test upon the trees and shrubs planted there, as it was fully exposed to prevailing winds from the west, south-west and north-west' (Rout and Eldridge, 1983). Shelter belts and windbreaks were established to the north and west of the nursery and from the 1920s planting to edge the future lake commenced (Murphy, 1979).

The first plantings took place in 1914 and by 1918 the initial planting of Westbourne Woods was completed, including an experimental orchard where 17 species of fruit trees were trialled along with cereal crops and fodder grasses (Rout and Eldridge 1983).

In May 1914 Griffin arrived in Australia to take up his appointment as Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction in Canberra. By this time Weston had been in Canberra for a year, had established the Nursery at Yarralumla and had provided a report giving a list of trees recommended for use in Canberra. Griffin's plans for the landscaping of Canberra included particular types of plantings he wanted to establish, including a Redwood forest and a Cork Oak plantation. A plantation of Redwood was established by Weston at East Lake Park using seeds obtained by Griffin. However, the trees generally did not do well in Canberra's dry climate. By contrast, the Cork Oaks have grown well at Green Hills.

As a result of his experimentation, Weston had developed an excellent knowledge of the trees suited to Canberra's climate and there is evidence to suggest that Griffin's instructions to Weston in relation to the types of trees to be planted were not well received. J H Maiden, Director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens, commended Griffin for his desire to cultivate native trees, but stated that he believed Weston was able to make a better selection of tree species for planting in the National Capital. He also suggested that Weston not be given too many detailed instructions (Murphy, 1979).

By February 1915 Weston was able to report that the buildings for the permanent nursery at Yarralumla were nearly complete. These included research office buildings, cutting, potting and seed storage sheds, and an equipment storeroom (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 11). These all still exist. A horse stables and brick and glass greenhouses were also built around this time.

### Early plantings

Weston used Yarralumla Nursery and the adjacent Westbourne Woods and Weston Park as trial grounds for a wide range of native and exotic species. The nursery was very significant in the establishment of the garden capital. A very extensive list of tree species was tested for suitability to local conditions and propagation and distribution of successful species was undertaken in great quantity. Most of early inner Canberra was landscaped with plant material grown by the government nursery.

Trees and shrubs were used for ornamental purposes to 'provide shade, seasonal colour and mark out major avenues and public parks in the city. Trees were also used to clothe the bare or semi-bare hillsides, and provide a backdrop of bush setting to the city. Trees were also important to provide shelter from the strong and dusty winds of the district' (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 10). In addition, trees raised at the Yarralumla Nursery and trialled in Westbourne Woods were also planted to stabilise the water catchment for the new city dam at the Cotter and contributed to the water security of the city' (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 10). Fruit trees also played a part in food security for the new capital, by providing fruit and nut trees suitable for Canberra home gardeners and included apples, almonds, apricots, cherries, figs, currants, nectarines, nuts, olives, pears, peaches, persimmons, plums, quince and grapes. (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 10). Wheat and other food crops were also trialled at the Yarralumla Nursery.

Obtaining an interesting and successful range of plant species for the beautification of the new city was a major challenge. Weston obtained seed from suppliers and nurseries in Australia and overseas. Australian suppliers included the State Nursery in Campbelltown where he had worked before coming to Canberra, and long-standing suppliers in the nursery trade such as Yates & Co., Brunning and the Goulburn Nursery Company. He also collected both native and exotic seeds in the local area (Boden, 1996). Walter Burley Griffin was also active in obtaining seeds to be raised at the Yarralumla Nursery.

After trialling in Westbourne Woods, the Yarralumla Nursery was the primary source for suburban trees and shrubs, resulting in 'common' plantings. Species grown in Ainslie and Braddon were initially the



same as those in Blandfordia and Red Hill. New residents were entitled to receive plants free on request from the Yarralumla Nursery, and Weston recorded in 1922 that 22,668 plants had been distributed between 1912 and 1922 (Boden, 1996). Godden Mackay Logan (2010: 11) state that 'by controlling the species available to homeowners, the planners wanted to create a link between private gardens and public landscapes'. The scheme provided for up to 10 trees, 40 shrubs and additional hedging plants.

The Nursery was also used to raise pine seedlings for plantation forestry in the Territory. Early hybridisation experiments were also carried out at the Yarralumla Nursery (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 11) and tested in Westbourne Woods.

New residents were entitled to receive plants free on request from the Yarralumla Nursery, and Weston recorded in 1922 that 22,668 plants had been distributed between 1912 and 1922 (Boden, 1996). Godden Mackay Logan (2010: 11) state that 'by controlling the species available to homeowners, the planners wanted to create a link between private gardens and public landscapes'. The scheme provided for up to 10 trees, 40 shrubs and additional hedging plants.

The production Nursery initially occupied more than 28 hectares (70 acres). Until the early 1970s some of this area was used for the Parks and Gardens research department and the Department of Health plants quarantine. Another 130 hectares (330 acres) was to be used for various permanent plantings. All of this larger area became part of Westbourne Woods (now Royal Canberra Golf course) or Weston Park ([http://www.tams.act.gov.au/live/yarralumla\\_nursery/nursery\\_history](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/live/yarralumla_nursery/nursery_history), accessed 2/9/10).

#### The Weston period

Charles Weston worked as Officer in Charge of Afforestation until 1926. By this time the Yarralumla Nursery was well established and earning a reputation for being one of the finest research nurseries of the time. It was from this Nursery that trees, which now form the avenues of Canberra were tested and propagated. Weston's aims were to moderate the harsh local climate of 'summer heat, winter frosts and strong dusty winds; to provide seasonal effects to the aesthetics of the landscape with both regionally indigenous trees and exotic trees most likely to succeed, and to do so within the shortest possible time; and continue experimentation with trees likely to succeed in the locality' (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 12).

Special arrangements were made to retain Weston after his retirement in a consultative capacity up until the opening of Parliament House on 9 May by the Duke and Duchess of York. Weston was awarded the MBE which was invested by the Duke of York. Before leaving Canberra, Weston recorded the principle native trees and shrubs which had been tested in the nurseries at Canberra since 1914. Weston retired to Turramurra in Sydney, where he died in December 1935.

#### The Bruce period

After Weston's retirement, A.E. Bruce became Director of Parks and Gardens and continued in this position until 1937. In 1929, with the onset of the Great Depression, the Federal Capital Commission requested the reduction of the Yarralumla Nursery by two thirds as the land was required for park purposes (Ramsay, 1989).

#### The Hobday period

John Peace Hobday, who was appointed Chief Nurseryman in 1923, became Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in 1937, following Bruce's retirement, and occupied this position until 1944 (Murphy, 1979, Ramsay, 1989). He lived with his family in the Chief Nurseryman's Cottage within the Nursery grounds. Little expansion or changes in relation to planting and cultivation occurred during this time, due in part to the constraints applying during World War II.

The original orchard had been planted where the main glasshouse is located today. The orchard proved so successful in its fruit production that it became necessary to establish accommodation for a nursery watchman onsite (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 13). This is the origin of Hobday's cottage.

#### The Pryor and Moore period

Following Hobday, Lindsay Pryor was appointed Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in 1944 and held the position until 1958. Considerable hybridisation and research work was undertaken during this period. Trial plots of trees, raised from seeds collected by Pryor from different parts of the world, were established in generic groups in the research area to the south of the Nursery. Pryor was also involved in Grevillea hybridisation trials and the well-known hybrid grevillea, Canberra Gem, was conceived at the Nursery

The Chief Nurseryman during this time was Percy Moore and under his direction general nursery work continued with horticultural trials for improving selection of street trees, garden shrubs, hedging plants and exotic grasses.

In the immediate post-war period and up to 1957 when the National Capital Development Commission took over the role of planning the city, Pryor was responsible for overseeing the landscaping of the rapidly growing city. He introduced many new species to Canberra's parks, streets and gardens.

#### Later periods

From the 1950s to the 1970s, the Yarralumla Nursery offered important employment opportunities for migrant workers, with the nature of work not requiring a high level of English language (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 17). Over time, the Yarralumla Nursery has also provided an important work opportunity for less advantaged sections of the Canberra community.

The Molonglo River was dammed in 1963 and by 1964 the lake had filled. A lakeshore landscape of inlets, small peninsulas and islands were created. Westbourne Woods, together with Weston Park now offered considerable lake edge recreation opportunities.

Together, the Yarralumla Nursery, Weston Park and Westbourne Woods played an important role in the early beautification of Canberra. Weston and his successors sought not only to monitor orchard and other species, but also to promote the Woods as a feature of the garden city landscape, with wonderful spring and autumn colours.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF YARRALUMLA NURSERY

During the 1950s and up until the 1970s, the Yarralumla Nursery contained quarantine facilities as well as experimental laboratories which were established in the old nursery administration offices.

The area of the nursery has been reduced and now many of the former research plots, specimen plants and bedding out areas have become part of Weston Park.

The nursery continues to supply plants for development work, breed plants to resist the harsh Canberra climate and difficult conditions of development sites, has a long and short term plant hire service and provides bedding out flowers for floriculture display.

Within the existing Yarralumla Nursery area, old glasshouses are being replaced by newer ones and only a few of the original glasshouse structures remain.

The Chief Nurseryman's cottage remains as an historic feature.

The nursery has been in continuous operation since 1914 with peaks and troughs in production resulting from social and economic influences affecting Australia as a whole and Canberra as the National Capital. Troughs include World War I (1914-1918) the Great Depression (1929-1933) and World War II (1939-1945).

Peaks of production arose from Government decisions on the rate of growth of Canberra including transfer of major government departments to the city resulting in rapid increases in domestic housing, government buildings and schools and parks and gardens in the 1950s and 1960s.

The start of Floriade as a major spring floral pageant, which continues annually resulted in a major increase in the Nursery's production of bedding plants.

The Yarralumla Nursery is now operated by the ACT Government as a self funded business enterprise and comprises two sites: 10 hectares (25 acres) at Yarralumla where plants are propagated, wholesale plants are dispatched and where the retail garden centre serves the general public; and 21 hectares (52 acres) at the Pialligo annex where deciduous trees are propagated and grown in-ground ([http://www.tams.act.gov.au/live/yarralumla\\_nursery/nursery\\_history](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/live/yarralumla_nursery/nursery_history), accessed 2/9/10).

The Yarralumla Nursery is the largest wholesale nursery in the Southern Tablelands. Its activities include:

- growing and supplying plant material for ACT Government landscape development projects
- selling plant material to landscape contractors in the local region
- growing and supplying plant material for use by Canberra Public Parks and Places
- growing and providing plants for the ACT Government Plant Issue Scheme for new leases
- retailing locally sourced and grown plants through the Nursery Garden Centre
- undertaking contract growing for the nursery industry, hobby farmers, rural landholders, district councils and government departments
- conducting horticultural study tours for local schools, horticultural colleges and other educational institutions

The nursery relies on seeds and cutting material collected locally to ensure the plants grown will be suitable for local climatic and soil conditions. It also continues innovation through the development of better growing techniques for pot grown plants.

## DESCRIPTION

The Yarralumla Nursery is located on the foreshores of Lake Burley Griffin on the Yarralumla Peninsula, to the east of Yarramundi Reach and west of Tarcoola Reach. The Nursery is operated by the ACT Government. It includes a wholesale section, the largest area, and a retail section, separate from the wholesale section. A section of the retail nursery is operated by the ACT Government and its sales include endangered local plants propagated by the Nursery. The remaining section of the retail nursery is operated as a garden centre under lease. The Nursery also includes an annexe of 21 hectares at Pialligo where plants are propagated and wholesale plants are dispatched.

The Wholesale Nursery of about 10 hectares is surrounded by a high metal and wire security fence and the Retail Nursery is located just outside this fence, on the south eastern side. The Nursery is surrounded on all sides by the public parkland of Weston Park which covers the remainder of the Peninsula. The greater area of Weston Park is to the north and north east of the Nursery and the total area of the Nursery and Weston Park combined is 58 hectares. The basic framework of planting established by TCG Weston and LD Pryor remain, with approximately one third of the area intensively developed for recreational use (See Weston Park citation).

### Nursery Landscape



The primary landscape components of the Weston period are the main avenues of Deodar, (*Cedrus deodara*), Pin oak, (*Quercus palustris*), Torrey pine, (*Pinus torreyana*) and mixed pine species. Torrey pine is now a rare and threatened species in its native habitat on the west coast of the United States of America.

There are a few eucalypts behind the original glasshouses, which are believed to be the progeny of hybridisation trials carried out by Weston.

The nursery benefits physically through wind protection and visually by the borrowed landscape of pines, elms and oaks which were formerly within the nursery but are now outside following construction of the new security fence in 1993.

From 1944 to 1958 when Lindsay Pryor held the position of Superintendent (later Director) of Parks and Gardens considerable plant introduction and hybridisation research was undertaken at the Nursery.

#### Buildings and Structures

Within the Nursery area, buildings formerly used for Nursery administration and later for research laboratories, still exist. The original bush house structure constructed in Weston's time has been replaced (Ramsay, 1989).

- The Chief Nurseryman's Cottage (Hobday's Cottage) and Garage

The Chief Nurseryman's Cottage, built in 1923, is located near the English Garden, to the south of the Wholesale Nursery and near the Retail Nursery. The Cottage, which was occupied by JP Hobday, Chief Nurseryman and later Superintendent of Parks and Gardens, and his family is in its original configuration and has been well preserved. It is a building (128m<sup>2</sup> including the patio) of brick and concrete render construction with a terracotta tiled gable roof and sash windows with wooden frames. It was vacant for some years and is now used as a café and gallery without any structural alterations.

There is also a detached brick garage to the north of the cottage, thought to have been built in the 1920s. It is a single garage, painted white with a terracotta tile gable roof and double wooden doors. A mature English oak tree (*Quercus robur*) is located near the garage.

- Glasshouses

The original glasshouses are all located within the fenced area of the Wholesale Nursery. While many of them have had some repairs carried out and new ones have been built over the years, there are still some dating from 1930. Any recent alterations have ensured that they retain as much of their original materials as possible. The three glasshouses used for quarantine of plants were built in the 1930s and are still in their original state, although no longer used for this purpose. They are located behind the old stables. The glasshouses built in the 1930s are No.s 25, 26, 33 and 34. Other glasshouses and the current propagation house were built in the 1960s (No.s 21, 24, 27, 29, 30, 31 and 32).

The pond with the sculpture feature, located behind the old stables, was also built at this time. There are two modern aluminium framed, double gable roofed glasshouses, which were built by the Department of Housing and Construction in 1987 and 1988.

- Original Nursery Office and Stables (Current Offices and Dispatch Area)

The original Nursery Office dates from Weston's time (circa 1914), when it consisted of two rooms with a gable roof and a verandah. A skillion extension was built circa 1962 and it was then used as the research laboratory.

A small 'Besser block' shed nearby was built as a pesticide store where chemicals used in research trials were stored.

The original building was refurbished in 1996 in keeping with its original design and retaining the original 1914 structure and building materials. It is a timber framed structure, clad in painted galvanised iron, with a timber floor and timber framed sash windows. The original fireplace and chimney have been retained. The building is now used as office accommodation for Nursery staff. To the south is the corrugated iron building where the original stables were located and which was later used as the potting shed, seed store and tools and equipment store. It has also been recently refurbished with the retention of the original materials and is now used as a dispatch area where plants are detailed prior to dispatch. These two buildings, located together in the centre of the Nursery complex, retain their original external appearance.

- Public Toilet Block

The public toilet block is located on the edge of the English Garden adjacent to the security fence. It is a solid brick structure of Canberra commons, with a main gable roof of terracotta tiles. This building may have been built in the 1940s (exact date unknown) and is still in good working order. It provides male, female and handicapped toilet facilities.

- Boiler House and Water Tower; Pump House

The boiler house and adjoining timber-framed water tower are of some heritage significance. The boiler house is an original 1930s brick structure with a low pitched gable roof of galvanised iron, having a concrete slab floor, two windows and a set of double timber doors. It was used to heat the glasshouses via metal water pipes installed under the benches in the glasshouses. Also of some interest is the old pump house located within the fenced area to the east of the Wholesale Nursery. It was built around 1930 of Canberra red brick. Unfortunately, the pump no longer exists and the building is unused.

#### Other

In 1993 the Nursery boundary was relocated to place the English Garden outside the Wholesale Nursery and in Weston Park.

## **REFERENCES**

Boden, R. W. (1996). *Public face and private space* in P. Freeman (ed.) *The Early Canberra House*, The Federal Capital Press of Australia Pty Ltd, Canberra ACT.

Clough, R. and Gray, J. (1964) *Landscape of Lake Burley Griffin*. Paper presented to the Institute of Park Administration Conference, Canberra 1964

Cosgrove, C. (1998). *Yarralumla Nursery/Weston park draft citation* prepared for the National Trust of Australia (ACT).

Firth, D (2000) *Behind the Landscape of Lake Burley Griffin: Landscape, water, politics and the national capital 1899-1964*. Thesis accepted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Canberra (unpublished).

Godden Mackay Logan, 2010, 'Weston Park Conservation Management Plan – Draft Report', report prepared for ACT Government (TAMS).

Gray, J. E. (1999). T.C.G.Weston (1866-1935) Horticulturist and Arboriculturist. Thesis accepted for the degree of Doctor of Environmental Design of the University of Canberra.

Gugler, A. (1994). *The Builders of Canberra 1909 1929*, C.P.N. Publications Pty Ltd Fyshwick, ACT.

Kearslake, L. (1990). *The Yarralumla Nursery*. Major report in Historical Cultural Landscapes unit by Leanne Kearslake student University of Canberra.

Murphy, G. P. (1979). *Parks and Gardens in Canberra*. Department of the Capital Territory, Canberra.

Ramsay, J. (1989). *Heritage values of Yarralumla Nursery and Weston Park*. A report for the Australian Heritage Commission by Strine design Yarralumla ACT.

Rout, T. and Eldridge, K. (1983). *Westbourne Woods*. The Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra Incorporated, Canberra ACT.

Royal Canberra Golf Club (2001). *Royal Canberra Golf Club The first 75 years 1926-2001*

Strine Design (1989) *Weston Park Tree Survey*, National Capital Development Commission

[http://www.tams.act.gov.au/live/yarralumla\\_nursery/nursery\\_history](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/live/yarralumla_nursery/nursery_history), accessed 2/9/10, TAMS, 'Nursery History'.

## SITE PLANS AND MAPS



Yarralumla Nursery Boundary - as indicated by the solid white line

Figure 1: Place Boundary as indicated by the solid white line

FIGURE 7  
YARRALUMLA NURSERY  
SHOWING STRUCTURES AND  
VEGETATION

- A Administration buildings
- B Old mass hall
- C Sheds/storage
- D Garden centre
- E Greenhouses
- F Electricity hut
- G Public toilets
- X Power line posts
- (P) Parking areas
- O Ornamental pool

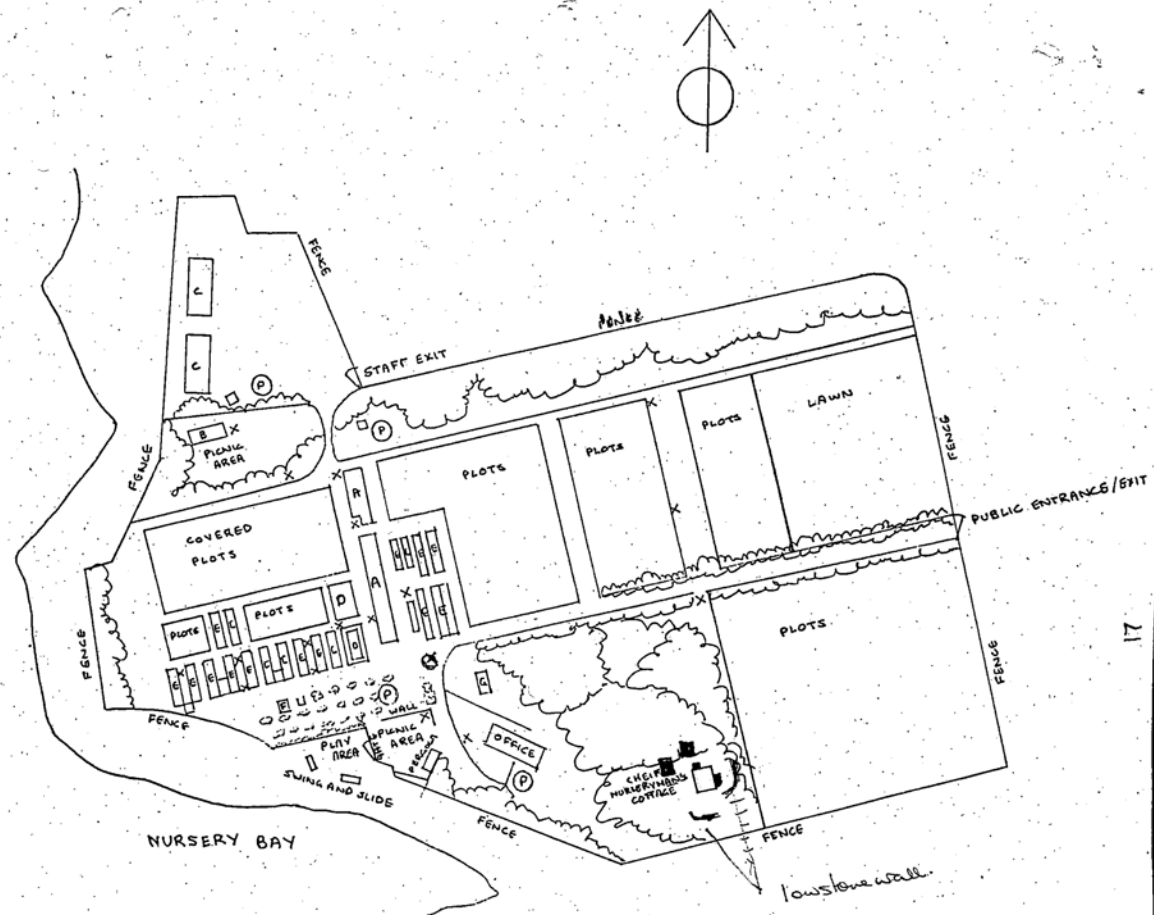


Figure 2: Site Plan of Yarralumla Nursery

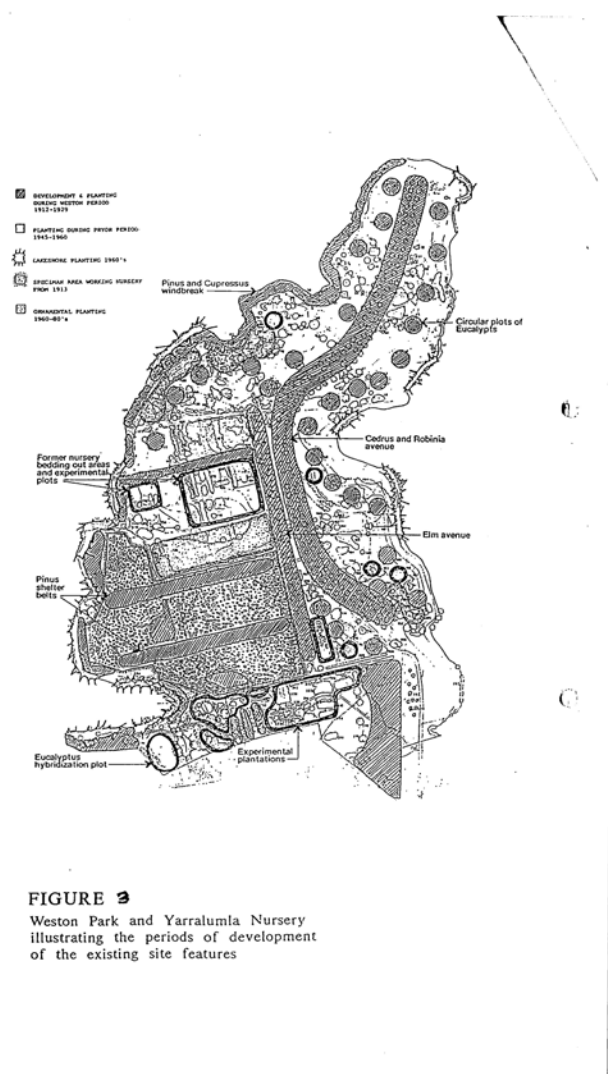


Figure 3: Weston Park and Yarralumla Nursery illustrating the periods of development of existing site features



**Images of Yarralumla Nursery taken 17 December 2010-12-17**



Hobday's Cottage



Hobday's Cottage



Brick outbuilding to Hobday's Cottage



Hobday Cottage garage



Landscaping



Landscaping



Early potting, cutting and storage sheds



Early potting, cutting and storage sheds