

Australian Capital Territory

# Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration for the former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Griffith) Notice 2011

Notifiable Instrument NI 2011 - 635

made under the

***Heritage Act 2004* section 34 Notice of Decision about Provisional Registration**

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**1. Name of instrument**

This instrument is the Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration for the former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Griffith) Notice 2011 -

**2. Registration details of the place**

Registration details of the place are at Attachment A: Provisional Register entry for the former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Griffith.

**3. Reason for decision**

The ACT Heritage Council has decided that the former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Griffith 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.

**4. Date of Provisional Registration**

20 October 2011

**5. Indication of council's intention**


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

**6. Public consultation period**

The Council invites public comment by Wednesday 23 November 2011 on the provisional registration of the former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Griffith to:

The Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
GPO Box 158  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

**Gerhard Zatschler**  
Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
20 October 2011

 <p>ACT Heritage Council</p>	<p><b>AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY</b></p> <p><b>HERITAGE REGISTER</b> <b>(Provisional Registration Details)</b></p> <p><b>Place No:</b></p>
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For the purposes of s. 33 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, an entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

Former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Manuka Circle, Griffith  
Block 16, Section 15, Griffith, Canberra Central

**DATE OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION**

Notified: 20 October 2011 Notifiable Instrument: 2011-635

**PERIOD OF EFFECT OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION**

Start Date 20 October 2011      End Date 20 March 2012

**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

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## IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE

Former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Manuka Circle, Griffith

Block 16, Section 15, Griffith, Canberra Central

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## 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 former Griffith Child Welfare Centre is of heritage significance for its role in women's history, through the improvements of the health and welfare of mothers and babies in the early twentieth century. Associated with the Mothercraft Society which was formed in 1927, the centre was established in 1937 as a place dedicated to the education and promotion of health and welfare of Women and Children.

The work undertaken by Child Welfare Centres brought about a new knowledge regarding the health and welfare of both mother and baby to the forefront of the medical profession, and also to the wider community. Matters of infant hygiene and the importance of breast feeding in particular, originating from these Mothercraft Centres, were steadily introduced into hospitals and more importantly into the homes of mothers, reducing the high rate of infant mortality throughout Australia.

The former Griffith Child Welfare Centre is important as the first permanent baby health centre in the ACT, and the earliest such centre which remains within the ACT, and one of only a few that remains at all.

In a further association with the Mothercraft movement, the building housed the first public playgroup in the ACT, in 1942, and was instrumental in the development of the Canberra Nursery Kindergarten Society.

The building is now a rare example of the type of services provided by the Mothercraft Society, with a high level of comparative intactness.

The former Griffith Child Welfare Centre has an important association with the early development of Canberra as the nation's capital. The Centre, together with neighbouring places in the Griffith, Kingston and Barton areas, illustrates the immediate and changing needs of the community, as it grew and established from the 1920s and through the first half of the twentieth century.

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## OTHER RELATED PLACES

Other places nominated and/or registered within the Telopea/Manuka area, and associated with the early development of Canberra are:

- Telopea Park
- Telopea Park School
- Manuka Oval and Caretaker's cottage
- Manuka Swimming Pool
- Brassey Hotel
- Hotel Kurrajong
- Manuka Shopping Precinct

- Kingston Shopping Precinct
  - St Christopher's Cathedral Precinct
  - St Paul's Church
  - Garden city precincts – Barton Housing Precinct  
Kingston/Griffith Housing Precinct  
Red Hill Housing Precinct  
Blandfordia 5 Housing Precinct  
Blandfordia 4 Housing Precinct  
Forrest Housing Precinct
  - Site of the former Canberra Services Club
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### **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 and warrant conservation:

- Former Griffith Child Welfare Centre of Federal Capital Architecture, including:
  - Tiled roof
  - Symmetrical proportions
  - Small-paned double-hung sash windows
- Garage building
- Mature plantings contributing to the streetscape setting and Garden City planning
- Circular drive
- Second, separate verge crossing to garage

*(n.b – this registration does not include Studio 1 or Studio 2).*

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### **APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES**

The 'Heritage Guidelines: General Conservation Guidelines for Historic Heritage Places 2011' adopted under s25 of the *Heritage Act* 2004 are applicable to the conservation of the former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Griffith.

The guiding conservation objective is that the former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Griffith, 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).

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### **REASON FOR PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION**

The former Griffith Child Welfare Centre has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance when assessed against three criteria under the *ACT Heritage Act 2004*:

- (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;
  - (f) it is a rare or unique example of its kind, or is rare or unique in its comparative intactness; and
  - (h) it has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase in local or national history.
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## 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 former Griffith Child Welfare Centre does not meet this criterion.

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

The former Child Welfare Centre does not meet 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 former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Manuka is important as evidence of a distinctive function of exceptional interest. It operated from 1937 to 1963 as a Child Welfare Centre, in association with the Mothercraft Society in the ACT, providing the distinctive function of the education and promotion of the health and welfare of women and children. Centres such as the Griffith Child Welfare Centre, brought about an improved knowledge for doctors and nurses and resulted in widespread improvements to the health and wellbeing of mothers and their children.

This place is important as evidence of this function as the first permanent baby health centre in the ACT, and the earliest such centre which remains within the ACT.

The former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Manuka 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;**

There is no evidence before Council to indicate that the place meets this criterion.

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

The former Griffith Child Welfare Centre does not meet this criterion.

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

The former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Manuka is a rare example of its kind, being one of few child welfare centres which remains in the ACT, and has a high level of comparative intactness. At its peak, in 1969, there were 32 Mothercraft facilities operating within the ACT.

The former Griffith Child Welfare Centre is now the oldest remaining baby health clinic in the ACT, with the earlier two temporary buildings, at Eastlake and Braddon, no longer extant. Other remaining buildings in the ACT which were constructed and occupied in association with the Mothercraft Society include the Manuka Mothercraft Centre in Flinders Way (1963) and the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Home for Post-natal Care (1963).

The former Griffith Child Welfare Centre, Manuka 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 former Griffith Child Welfare Centre does not meet this criterion.

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

Constructed intentionally as a Child Welfare Centre, the former Griffith Child Welfare Centre has a strong association with the Mothercraft movement of the early twentieth century and the development of improved health and welfare for mothers and their babies in the ACT.

The work undertaken by Child Welfare Centres brought about a new knowledge regarding the health and welfare of both mother and baby to the forefront of the medical profession, and also to the wider community. Matters of infant hygiene and the importance of breast feeding in particular, originating from these Mothercraft Centres, was steadily introduced into hospitals and more importantly into the homes of mothers.

In a further association with this movement, the building housed the first public playgroup in the ACT, in 1942, and was instrumental in the development of the Canberra Nursery Kindergarten Society.

The place also has a special association with the cultural phase of the earliest development of Canberra as the nation's capital. Together with neighbouring places within Griffith, Kingston and Barton, the area demonstrates the services required by, and provided to the new community, and demonstrates its evolution and changing needs over time during the first half of the twentieth century.

The building also has significance for its special association with the cultural phase of Canberra's early development, as the first government building sited for the comfort of its occupants rather than civic tidiness.

The former Griffith Child Welfare Centre meets this criterion.

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

The former Griffith Child Welfare Centre does not meet this 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 former Griffith Child Welfare Centre 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 former Griffith Child Welfare Centre does not meet 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.**

The former Griffith Child Welfare Centre does not meet this criterion.

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## **SUMMARY OF THE PLACE HISTORY AND PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

### **HISTORY**

#### Contextual background

The Manuka and Telopea areas (incorporating Griffith, Kingston, Barton and Forrest) were among the first developed as part of the emerging nation's capital in the early 1920s. Together with Civic in the north, both were identified in Walter Burley Griffin's and the Federal Capital Advisory Committee's (FCAC) plans for the new city.

Walter Burley Griffin won the competition for the design of Canberra in 1912. Griffin prepared a preliminary plan of 1913 and a revised plan in 1918 following which the Official Plan was Gazetted. Griffin's plan included housing areas planned for different socio-economic groups within the community. This reflected contemporary views. The Barton and Kingston areas were planned for middle income public servants, while Griffith and Forrest were planned for higher-income families (RNE, 17370).

Griffin's design intent for the nation's capital included twin towns in the north and south. The Manuka area was intended by Walter Burley Griffin as the initial city, with Civic Centre located to the north.

The Manuka and Telopea areas are named after features identified on Walter Burley Griffin's original plan for Canberra—Manuka Circle and Telopea Park (now the site of the Telopea Park School).



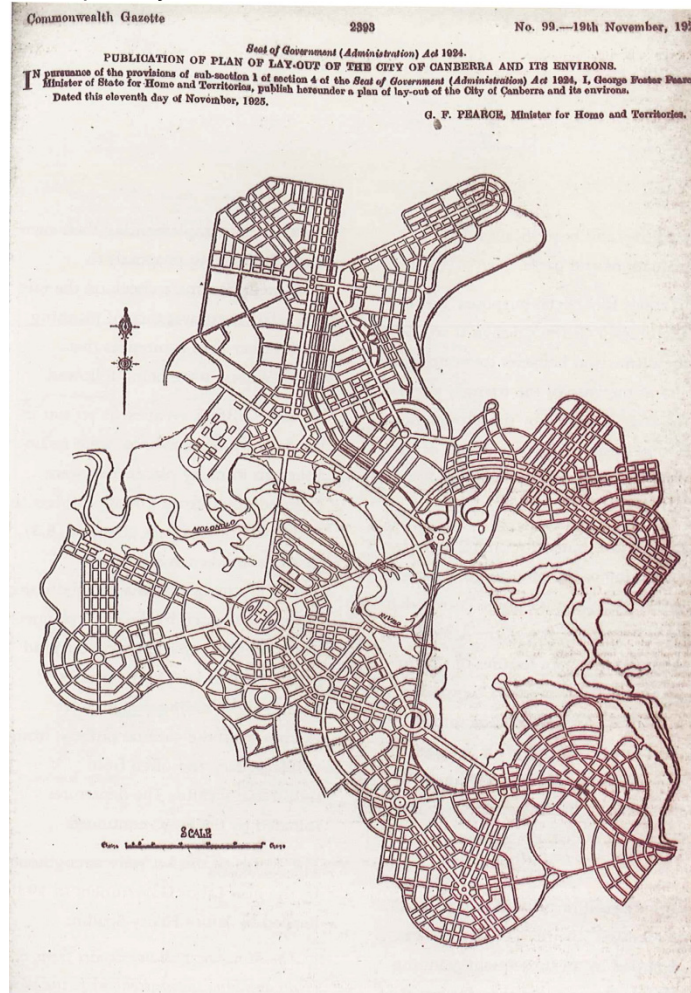
Detail of Walter Burley Griffin's final Plan of Canberra, 1918  
'Canberra plan of city and environs. Walter Burley Griffin, Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction'  
National Archives of Australia, A13312-8

Griffin left Canberra in 1921 leaving development under the control of the FCAC chaired by the planner, John Sulman. The Committee had been appointed to complete sufficient permanent buildings to enable Parliament to move from Melbourne to Canberra.

In the early 1920s the FCAC supported Griffin's notion of twin settlements and set about building the nation's capital. In the north, activity focused around the Civic Centre, with the adjacent suburbs of Ainslie and Braddon. In the south, work began in the areas of Manuka and Kingston, with adjacent suburbs of Kingston, Griffith, Barton and Forrest.

In the 1920s Canberra went through its first major phase of development as the National Capital. This phase was focussed on the completion of the Provisional Parliament House and the relocation of Parliament to Canberra in 1927. The Garden City movement was a very strong influence on the early planning and development of Canberra at this time.

The FCC's Gazetted Plan of 1925 provides an interesting comparison between Griffin's planning for the city, and the later version adopted by the FCC.



1925 Gazetted Plan  
Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, no.99, November 1925

The development of the Manuka and Telopea areas in the early 1920s has left a strong legacy today of a number of features that were established early in the history of the nation's capital, to support the new community. They demonstrate the services provided for the city's earliest construction workers and public servants who relocated to Canberra from Melbourne for the opening of Parliament House in 1927 and paint a picture of the community and its needs at that time.

Development in the Manuka/Telopea area can be summarised through the following timeline of key developments:



- 1920s site of the Manuka Oval being used for recreation purposes
- 1922 plantings were introduced to the then Waratah Pathway (now Telopea Park)
- 1923 Telopea Park School opened
- 1924 first land auctions for residential and commercial premises – including for the suburbs of Barton, Kingston, Griffith and Forrest
- 1926 development started at the Manuka and Kingston shopping centres
- 1927 Kurrajong Hotel opened
- 1927 Brassey House opened
- 1928 St Christopher's Convent opened
- 1931 Manuka Swimming Pool opened
- 1937 Griffith Child Welfare Centre opened
- 1937 Manuka Oval Caretaker's Cottage constructed
- 1939 St Paul's Church, Griffith opened
- 1939 St Christopher's Cathedral opened
- 1941 Canberra Services Club opened
- 1947 Kingston Post Office opened

The floodplain of the Molonglo River divided the site of Canberra into two towns. 'The real city was the southern town, centred on the shopping centres of Manuka and Kingston, and lying in the sheltered valley east of Kurrajong where departmental officers had planned the capital since they first saw the site in 1908' (Reid, 2002: 193).

#### Site History

The first building at this site was constructed in 1937 by the Department of Health as Canberra's first permanent Baby Health Clinic, the 'Griffith Child Welfare Centre', through Canberra's Mothercraft Society. It later became the School of Music and, later still, the School of Art.

- Child Welfare Centre

The first Baby Health Clinic in the ACT was opened in a small cottage in Eastlake (now Kingston) in 1927.

Throughout Australia, the 1920s was a turning point in the development of community health and welfare services for mothers and babies. 'Previously focused on the development of maternity hospitals and the extension of district nursing to country and outback areas, new organisations were now being formed, bringing the newer knowledge of maternal and infant welfare to the mother in the home through the setting up of infant welfare centres. It soon became apparent through the work done by these centres the lack of knowledge of both doctors and nurses in baby care and in matters of infant hygiene' (Moses, 2002: 15).

The Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies was established in 1919 for the purpose of saving the life of infants. Subsequently, a number of societies and associations began to emerge throughout Australia including the Tresillian Mothercraft Homes, the Country Women's Association, the Australian Mothercraft Society and Bush Nursing Associations (Moses, 2002: 15-16).

The Canberra Mothercraft Society was formed in 1927, dedicated to the promotion of health and welfare of women and children in the ACT, and it was largely government funded (Moses, 2002: 16). The society reached its peak in 1969 when there were 32 mothercraft clinics across the ACT, two occasional care centres at the City and Manuka, and the Queen Elizabeth II Home for post-natal care (Moses, 2002: 16).

'Dedicated to the education and promotion of health and welfare of women and children, the Mothercraft movement played a vital role not only in significantly reducing infant mortality rates throughout Australia, but also through changing attitudes towards natural motherhood, both before and after childbirth' (Moses, 2002: 14). 'The work done by these centres exposed matters of baby care, that were previously lagging

behind, to the forefront of the medical profession and to the wider community, such as the promotion of breastfeeding, stringent infant hygiene and immunisation concerns' (Moses, 2002: 14).

Mothercraft Societies also became the model for the provision of organised child care centres for children up to primary school age, prior to the rise of pre-school centres (Moses, 2002: 14).

The Griffith Child Welfare Centre was designed and constructed in 1937, and was to house both a clinic and residential accommodation for two sisters (Moses, 2002: 24).

'At a time when national interests were drawn to the health of mothers and infants, the Griffith Child Welfare Centre sprang from the growing need for a permanent baby health centre in the Canberra region' (Moses, 2002: 30). A toddler's playground was included at the rear of the building (Moses, 2002: 32).

The centre was devoted to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates.

Moses (2002: 31) states, of the construction of the building:

*During the design of the Centre, difference of opinions arose between the Mothercraft Society and Mr C.S Daley (Assistant Secretary, Department of Interior) and the architects regarding the positioning of the building. Concerned with prevailing winds blowing upon the centre's entrance doors, Mrs Holt of the Mothercraft Society successfully argued that the building be rotated 90° so that it faced a more northerly direction. This victory was significant in itself as, up to that time, Government buildings in Canberra had been sited for a tidy civic effect rather than the comfort of the occupants, a cause which was taken up later with considerable success by the National Council of Women in relation to the siting on the block of domestic houses in the Territory.*

Canberra's first public playgroup was formed in 1942 by the Mothercraft Society and was conducted at the Griffith Child Welfare Centre. The centre then went on to play a crucial role in the formation of the Canberra Nursery Kindergarten Society in 1943 (Moses, 2002: 30).

The building operated as a Child Welfare Centre until 1963 when its functions were relocated to a new combined Mothercraft and Occasional Care Centre at Manuka (Moses, 2002: 30).

The former Griffith Child Welfare centre is now the oldest remaining baby health clinic in the ACT, with the earlier two buildings, at Eastlake and Braddon, no longer extant. Other remaining buildings in the ACT which were constructed and occupied in association with the Mothercraft Society include the Manuka Mothercraft Centre in Flinders Way (1963) and the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Home for Post-natal Care (1963).

- School of Music

After the closure of the Child Welfare Centre, the building became Canberra's first independent School of Music. The suggestion of a Conservatorium of Music for Canberra was first made in 1926. However, due to the limited population at that time, the slowed growth of the Territory during the Depression and the onset of World War II, this idea was not realised for another 40 years.

Mr Harold Leob was appointed as the school's director, and the recently vacated Child Welfare Centre was identified as a suitable venue. However, it soon became apparent that the School of Music could not commence teaching at the beginning of 1964. 'To ensure the Manuka building was held for the School of Music, Mr W. Hoffman was asked to move his music library and store of spare instruments and equipment for the City Band into the Manuka building until the school could be started' (Moses, 2002: 36).

The School of Music was officially opened on 20 September 1965. The building had undergone structural alterations to make it more suitable for its new music teaching requirements, including the provision of an administration area, an office for the Director, four teaching studios and a lecture room (Moses, 2002: 36).

The School saw an immediate success in the number of enrolments, which resulted in the need for extensions to the building. The 'Studio Building' was constructed adjacent by 1967 and consisted of a large room for lectures and recitals, offices for the Director and the Registrar, and a general office, together with toilet and storage facilities (Moses, 2002: 37).

Already by 1968 further expansions were needed, resulting in a third building, 'Studio Two', with six teaching studios, a further lecture room and a library (Moses, 2002: 37).

The impact of the School of Music on the city was becoming evident through the involvement of teachers and students in the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and the Canberra Youth Orchestra (Moses, 2002: 38).

There was still further pressure for additional facilities, including the demand for the construction of a new specialised building to house the entire School of Music. Eventually, a new structure was built for this purpose in West Civic between the Australian National University and Civic. The move from Manuka to the new building was undertaken in early 1976 (Moses, 2002: 38).

The building remained under the control of the School of Music and in 1986 the premises opened again as the Manuka Campus of the School of Music to accommodate the Primary Music Department, the Jazz Department and the Composition Department. It is from this time that the building became referred to as the Jazz School (Moses, 2002: 39). The Jazz and other departments remained here until 2001.

In 2002, the building became an arts facility, run by the ACT Government. It continues this function in 2011.

## **DESCRIPTION**

Built structures include the Child Welfare Centre building, garage, School of Music Studio Building and School of Music Studio Building 2.

- Child Welfare Centre building

The original Child Welfare Centre building has been constructed of Federal Capital Architecture, typical of Canberra's early buildings, with rendered masonry and a tiled roof. It is a symmetrical building, with two protruding bays to the front.

Despite some modifications over its lifetime, the original building design, materials and fabric can still be easily read and recognised as being of Federal Capital Architecture. The building has small-paned, double-hung sash windows and a small porch over the front entrance.

- Garage

An adjacent garage building is constructed of rendered brick, similar to the Child Welfare Centre building. The building was converted into a studio space at the time of the School of Music's occupation of the site.

- Studio building

The studio building is constructed of brick, with exterior bagged and painted. It is constructed in a modest style which does not detract from the Federal Capital architecture of the first building on the site.

- Studio building 2

This building has the same construction design and materials as the first studio building – brick, bagged and painted.

- Setting

The four mature cedar trees along Manuka Circle form a significant street edge. Other significant trees on the site include three Pin Oaks and four Ash trees that line New South Wales Crescent, reflecting the Garden City planting schemes of early Canberra. These trees continue the length of New South Wales Crescent, forming a strong streetscape with the same species planted on the street edge of Telopea Park.

The site is contained by an evergreen hedge running along the boundaries.

The main double gate into the site is constructed of painted timber battens fixed to a metal frame. Inside the gate is a curved semi-circular driveway.

- Circular drive

Images from 1950 show the building, with circular drive, which remains today. Also evident in this image is a separate drive leading to the garage. This driveway also remains evident today.



ACTPLA 29-11-1950, Run 5 Print 5203, ACT Government

### **Physical condition and integrity**

Although the original Child Welfare Centre has undergone some modification, both internally and externally, its Federal Capital Architectural origins are still evident.

### **REFERENCES**

Moses, J., 2002, 'The Old Jazz School, Manuka – A Draft Heritage Study', student report prepared for the University of Canberra Cultural Heritage Management Program.

Reid, J., 2002, *Canberra Following Griffin – A Design History of Australia's National Capital*, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

Gibbney, J., 1988, *Canberra 1913-1953*, Aus Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

**SITE PLAN**



Place boundary indicated by solid red line



Features marked

**IMAGES**

Images taken 31 August 2011



Former Griffith Child Welfare Centre building  
This small garage became a teaching studio c.1966



Circular driveway and Studio one 1967



Studio two 1968



Studio two 1968

