Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of the Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records) Notice 2012

Notifiable Instrument NI 2012—282

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 of the Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records) Notice 2012.

2. Registration details of the place

On 31 May 2012 the ACT Heritage Council decided to provisionally register the Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records to the ACT Heritage Register. Registration details of the object are at <u>Attachment A</u>: Provisional Register entry for the Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records.

3. Reason for decision

The ACT Heritage Council has decided that the Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria at s 10 of the *Heritage Act* 2004. The provisional register entry is at <u>Attachment A</u>.

4. Date of Provisional Registration

31 May 2012

5. Indication of council's intention

The Council intends to decide whether to register the object under Division 6.2 within 5 months of provisional registration.

6. Public consultation period

The Council invites public comment by Wednesday 4 July 2012 on the provisional registration of the Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records to:

The Secretary ACT Heritage Council GPO Box 158 CANBERRA ACT 2601

Jennifer O'Connell A/g Secretary ACT Heritage Council

31 May 2012



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HERITAGE REGISTER (Provisional Registration Details)

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 object:

Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records

Weston Park (off Banks St), Yarralumla

DATE OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

31 May 2012 Notifiable Instrument: 2012—282

PERIOD OF EFFECT OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

Start Date: 31 May 2012 End Date: 31 October 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

IDENTIFICATION OF THE OBJECT

Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records

Yarralumla Nursery, Weston Park (off Banks St), Yarralumla

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

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

The Yarralumla Nursery records originating from 1913 are highly significant as evidence of, and for their association with, the research undertaken which was vital in the creation of Canberra as the Garden City. The Nursery has played a significant role in the development of Canberra as the National Capital. It is as a direct result of the research undertaken at the Nursery that Canberra today has developed its unique character and identity as a garden city with lakeside public amenity.

The Yarralumla Nursery Records form an historic plant accession database. The Records are key evidence of how this unique Canberra character and identity was achieved by the Nursery, and have heritage significance in their own right. The records consist of the Original Card System, which provides a record of seed acquisitions, cutting material and planting dates from 1913 to the 1960s; the Ledgers, three large folios used for the seed inventory from 1948 to the present; and the New Plant Files, which are documentary records of accessions and in some cases species performance.

The Nursery Records are significant as evidence of a distinctive function that is of exceptional interest. The Records are significant documentary evidence of the function of the large scale propagation, experimentation, trialling and recording of plant materials within the Yarralumla Nursery and the subsequent early tree planting throughout Canberra. The Records are unique examples of their kind, and have strong associations with the development of Canberra. The Records are of considerable value to researchers, and continue to contribute to a wider understanding of the natural and cultural history of the ACT.

OTHER RELATED PLACES

- Yarralumla Nursery
- Weston Park
- Westbourne Woods

FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OBJECT

The attributes listed below are assessed as features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the object and warrant conservation:

- The original card system
- The ledgers
- The new plant files including herbarium boxes and samples

APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES

Heritage Guidelines adopted under s25 of the *Heritage Act* 2004 are applicable to the conservation of the Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records.

The guiding conservation objective is that the Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records shall be conserved and appropriately managed in a manner respecting their 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 the object (i.e. a Statement of Heritage Effects – SHE).

REASON FOR PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

The Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records have been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance when assessed against five criteria under the ACT *Heritage Act 2004* including (c), (f), (g), (h) and (j).

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;

While the Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records provide evidence of technical and creative achievements by the Yarralumla Nursery, they do not in themselves achieve this threshold.

The Nursery Plant Records are in a conventional form, and the system itself does not break any new ground. The Records are cards, ledgers, government files and herbarium boxes, and have been described as 'plain workaday records' (Lenore Coltheart, 2011: 6).

The Nursery Plant Records do not meet this criterion.

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

While the Nursery Plant Records describe some important examples of outstanding design and aesthetic qualities that are valued by the community, they do not possess these qualities themselves.

In Coltheart's paper "Nursery Tales for a Garden City" she observes, 'These plain workaday records are a far remove from Marion Mahony Griffin's beautiful renderings of Walter Burley Griffin's design for the layout of the city. Those drawings are rightly considered among our national treasures, their aesthetic appeal the partner of their historic significance. But the records at Yarralumla Nursery, with their associated planting plans and records of plant experimentation, are an essential complement to these drawings.' (Coltheart, 2011: 6).

The Nursery Plant Records do 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 Nursery Plant Records are important as evidence of a distinctive function of exceptional interest. The Records, originating from 1913 are highly significant as evidence of, and for their association with, the research undertaken which was vital in the creation of Canberra as a Garden City.

The Nursery Plant Records are significant documentary evidence of the function of large-scale propagation, experimentation, trialling and recording of plant materials in the Yarralumla Nursery 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 these records 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.

(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;

While the Nursery Plant Records are highly valued by the Australian Garden History Society, the Friends of the ACT Arboreta and the Friends of the Canberra International Arboretum, these organisations are not cultural groups. There is no evidence to suggest that the Nursery Plant Records are highly valued by the wider Canberra community.

The Records, while a fascinating and invaluable resource for historians, botanists, landscape architects and gardeners, do not have the broader community appeal of the Nursery itself, which 'has a special place in Canberra community consciousness for its provision of plant material through many decades' (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 72).

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. In contrast, the Nursery Plant Records do not have the same social associations. They have a 'niche' appeal to the organisations described above, and are used by Nursery staff in the course of their duties.

The Nursery Plant Records do not meet 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 Plant Records are an unique example of their kind, being an intact historic and current plant accession database. It is notable for its rarity, its age and its scope. No comparable collection exists in the ACT. While the Australian National Botanic Gardens also has a collection of pressed herbarium samples dating back to the 1950s, it is not of the same age and scope as the Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records.

The database represents a process of taxonomic classification of plant material for horticultural use, and contains both exotic and native plant species. Plant accession databases of this kind are an important resource for nurseries and arboreta. The records are unusually extensive, and represent many decades of botanical scholarship.

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

The Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records are a notable example of a kind of a plant accession database, and demonstrates the main characteristics of that kind. These characteristics include the storage of herbarium boxes containing plant samples and the tracking and recording of plant acquisitions through the use of accession numbers. As noted above at (f), the database at Yarralumla nursery is notable for its age, its scope and its rarity.

Other examples of plant accession databases include records at the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens, Cambridge University Botanic Garden and University of California Botanical Garden.

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

The Records date back to the beginning of Canberra itself, and have strong associations with many prominent figures in Canberra's history; namely Walter Burley Griffin, TCG Weston, AE Bruce, JP Hobday and Professor Lindsay Prior.

Charles Weston, as head of the Nursery, began the original index cards in 1913 'as a meticulous account of the source, propagation, cultivation, location and trial results of the trees, shrubs, flowers and even pasture grasses the Nursery supplied the city and its countryside' (Coltheart, 2011: 5). The ledgers have a special association with Lindsay Pryor who in the 1940s 'began recording the seeds and cuttings he collected around the world – and from the streets and parks Weston had planted' (Coltheart, 2011: 5).

These index cards also link the Nursery Plant Records to Walter Burley Griffin, who with Marion Mahony Griffin is believed to have supplied many seeds to the Yarralumla Nursery. Coltheart notes, 'So prolific a supplier were they, that in their six years most cards not the source of their seed despatches only as 'FCD of D & C', for Griffin's official post as Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction.' (Coltheart, 2011: 18).

In addition to these associations, the Nursery Plant Records also have a strong association with the history of Canberra as the National Capital. They document 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 Plant Records meet this criterion.

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

This criterion is not applicable. While the Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records do provide evidence of Canberra's development as a planned garden city dating back to 1913, they do not provide an account of the evolution of natural landscapes in the ACT.

(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 Plant Records has considerable value as an object that has provided, and will continue to provide, information that will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of the natural and cultural history of the ACT. The plant accession database is a significant research and teaching object, which 'link[s] Australia to a century of world botany' (Coltheart, 2011: 41).

The material in these records is still being used and provides a useful reference source for people managing the public landscapes of the ACT and providing the garden allocations for the private sector as well. But from a heritage perspective this resource is valued by a variety of community groups in Canberra including students of the planted heritage of the ACT, botanists, horticulturalists, garden and landscape historians, heritage practitioners, landscape designers and analysts, arborists and tree managers in the private sector.

Beyond the ACT the records provide a wealth of information in examining the performance and suitability of species for private and public domains. This type of information is often sought by managers of trees in public spaces. It is also likely that this record will be of historical value to historians of botanical gardens in Australia and internationally through the potential for the exchange of rare plant material.

The records have provided, and continue to provide, information that contributes to a wider understanding of the cultural history of the ACT because of their potential use as a research and teaching resource.

The Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records meet this criterion to a high degree.

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

Not applicable.

- (I) 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 OBJECT HISTORY AND PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

HISTORY

<u>Contextual background – Yarralumla Nursery</u>

The Yarralumla Nursery has played an important role in the development of Canberra as the national capital. Prior to the finalisation of plans for the nation's capital, a nursery was established in Acton 1911 to propagate seed for trees, an essential feature of the city proposal. The nursery was later moved to Yarralumla in 1914.

Thomas Charles George Weston, Officer-in-Charge of Afforestation and Nursery Superintendent, 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.

Cullen notes, 'The chief roles of the Nursery were to:

- propagate and supply plants for public landscaping in Canberra, tenants and owners of houses in Canberra and rural leases
- conduct research into plants suitable for the region

- supply potted plants and cut flowers on request for government institutions in Canberra
- supply seed and plant material to research institutions and government nurseries outside Canberra' (Cullen, 2004: 3)

The Nursery has contributed to a number of important activities in Canberra history. In its early days, Weston used the Nursery and the adjacent Westbourne Woods and Weston Park as trial grounds for a wide range of native and exotic species. The trees and shrubs propagated by the Nursery were used for a number of purposes including ornamental, providing shelter, stabilising the water catchment for the Cotter dam and providing food security through fruit trees (Godden Mackay Logan, 2010: 10).

During the Lindsay Pryor era (1944-1958), considerable hybridisation and research work was undertaken at the Yarralumla Nursery. 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 Nursery has also played an important social role in Canberra's history. From the 1950s to the 1970s it provided employment opportunities for migrant workers. The Nursery has also provided an important work opportunity for less advantaged sections of the Canberra community.

Further information about the Yarralumla Nursery can be found in NI 2011-499 Heritage (Decision about Registration for the Yarralumla Nursery, Yarralumla) Notice 2011.

Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records

The Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records cover the history of plant accessions by the Nursery from the period 1913 to the present. The original 20cm x 15cm card index has 14 drawers (approximately 1000 cards per drawer) of records which cover the period from 1913 to the 1960s. These records are of seed acquisitions, cutting material and planting dates, along with various comments. They encompass both the Weston era and the Pryor era. The ledgers are three large folios, which are used for seed inventory and cover the period from 1948 to the present. They are a significant record of Lindsay Pryor's management of the Nursery from 1944 to 1958. They record accessions and use of the seed bank and are actively used.

The New Plant Files are largely paper based documents, inherited by the Nursery from the Technical section of the former Department of the Capital Territory. They are traditional government files associated with herbarium boxes and herbarium sheets. There are four filing cabinets, with approximately 400-500 files, and 40 herbarium boxes. These are documentary records of accessions and in some cases species performance.

The Nursery Plant Records form an historic plant accession database, which dates back to 1913. They provide documentary evidence of the work of the Yarralumla Nursery and its role in shaping Canberra. Coltheart observes.

The corrugated iron shed housing these records is the same building we see in the background of the iconic images of Nursery head Charles Weston and his nurseryman John Peace Hobday and their families. It was the first Nursery office in 1914 and it serves the same purpose today. The index cards in wooden drawers are the very ones Weston began as a meticulous account of the source, propagation, cultivation, location and trial results of the trees, flowers and even pasture grasses the Nursery supplied the city and its countryside. The ledgers are those where thirty years later, Lindsay Pryor began recording the seeds and cuttings he collected around the world – and from the streets and parks Weston had planted. (Coltheart, 2011:5).

The Records had a "scientific and operational" purpose (Coltheart, 2011:41). As records of government they "play[ed] their part in the national accounting of investment in public work" (Coltheart: 41). As scientific records, "[t]he careful recording of data on experimentation and propagation in these two periods retains its importance to botany and to forestry and horticulture today" (Coltheart: 41).

DESCRIPTION

Yarralumla Nursery Plant Records

The Yarralumla Plant Records are housed in several buildings on site at the Nursery. They are so housed because they form a still working collection of information actively used by the Nursery horticulturalists as part of the plant management program for both public and private domains in the ACT. Associated trial plantings in Weston Park and Westbourne Woods provide complementary horticultural information. It is unlikely there is another set of data in Australia which gives such a rich history of the private and public plantings for a city. The Records consist of three types of material, all of importance for future scholarship and the historical record of the landscape of the ACT:

- 1. The original card system: The (approx) 20cm x 15cm card index has 14 drawers (approximately 1000 cards per drawer) of records which cover the period from 1913 to the 1960s. These records are of seed acquisitions, cutting material and planting dates, along with various comments.
- 2. *The ledgers*: Three large folios are used for the seed inventory and cover from 1948 to the present. They record accessions and use of the seed bank and are actively used.
- 3. The New Plant Files: these are largely paper based documents, inherited from the Technical Section of the former Department of the Capital Territory. They are traditional government files associated with herbarium boxes and herbarium sheets. There are four filing cabinets (perhaps 400-500 files) and 40 herbarium boxes. These are documentary records of accessions and in some cases species performance.

Physical condition and integrity

The Yarralumla Nursery Records are in good condition.

REFERENCES

Australian Garden History Society Preserving the Yarralumla Nursery Records 2012

Dr Lenore Coltheart *Nursery Tales for a Garden City – The Historical Context of the Records at Canberra's Yarralumla Nursery* A Report for the Australian Garden History Society (ACT, Monaro and Riverina Branch) December 2011

Laurie Cullen Yarralumla Nursery – A Potted History, LandMark, April 2004

Dr John Gray *Charles Weston and the Greening of Canberra*, Capital Facts, National Capital Authority, www.nationalcapital.gov.au/downloads/education_and_understanding/factsheets/7CharlesWeston.pdf
Accessed 19 April 2012

Greg Murphy *Weston, Thomas Charles George (1966-1935)*, Australian Dictionary of Biography, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/weston-thomas-charles-george-9054 Accessed 5 April 2012

Territory and Municipal Services *Nursery History*, www.tams.act.gov.au/live/yarralumla_nursery/nursery_history Accessed 5 April 2012

IMAGES

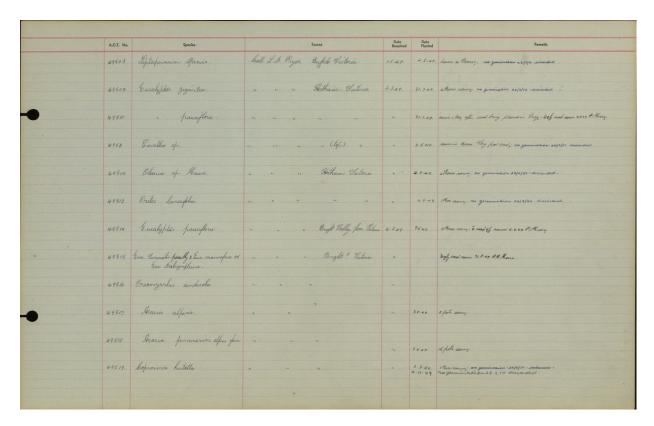
Source: Australian Garden History Society

NURSERY REGISTER.	PLANTED 10.6.18 No. 176 POSITION Mugga
NAME Cucalipptus Cinera	
RECEIVED 22,9/6 CONDITION Fair	
SOURCE Mras Revidency action.	
SEED QUANTITY Small PLANTS No.	
CUTTINGS NO.	
SOWN 27, 10, 16HOW SOWN apen Leds B. Hours.	
SOWING RESULTS	
SOWING REMARKS	Eta Para 1 2 d old
PROPAGATED	10.6° Fad. Serverely infured by Frolt 26th
PRICKED OFF No. POSITION	10.0 Jah. Set. My un - 29 19.11
POTTED 2, 1,14 No. 235 SOIL 3"	
" " "	NOTES 14 1016 Sowing budy domased by
	heavy rams
TRANSPLANTED No. POSITION	
H	
	[OVER
Cord record indicating Fundamena planted	at Mugga was severely injured by freet on 26 June

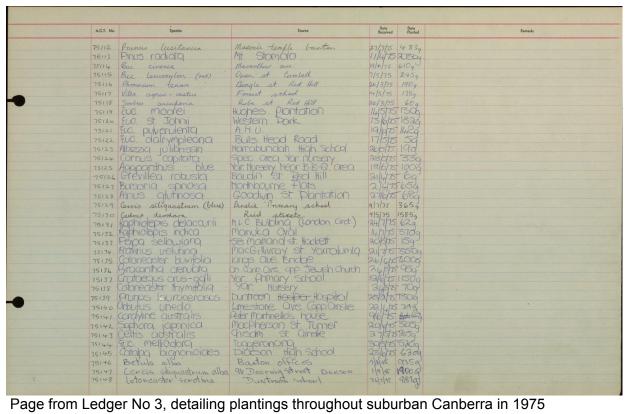
Card record indicating *Eucalyptus cinerea* planted at Mugga was severely injured by frost on 26 June 1918. Details of the temperature are recorded as 16.6 degrees Fahrenheit (approx minus 8 degrees Celcius).

NURSERY REGISTER.	
	PLANTED 21 6 14 NO. 3 POSITION W. Doods 13-14
NAME Pyrus Domestica	5. 7. 17 32 Tath Line
RECEIVED 4. 5.13. CONDITION	
SOURCE State Nursery, Campbelltown.	
SEED QUANTITY PLANTS No.	
CUTTINGS No.	
SOWN 9.5.13. HOW SOWN Upen beas.	
SOWING RESULTS Excellent.	
SOWING REMARKS	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
PROPAGATED	INJURY
PRICKED OFF No. POSITION	
POTTED No. SOIL	
	NOTES disst flowers 10/21
TRANSPLANTED 13. 8.14. No. 90 POSITION	
13. 9.15 40	
29.817 2. M. Brak. Open A.	
	[OVER
JOHN SANOS LTD. 17286-6 [OVER	Maria Maria

Card Record indicating the planting of *Pyrus Domestica* at Westbourne Woods in June & July 1917.



Records from Ledger 1 indicating specimens collected by Lindsay Pryor from Mt Buffalo and Mt Hotham in Victoria in 1949.



Page from Ledger No 3, detailing plantings throughout suburban Canberra in 1975