

Heritage (Decision about Registration of the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra) Notice 2016

Notifiable Instrument NI2016—545

made under the

Heritage Act 2004, s40 (Decision about registration)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Heritage (Decision about Registration of the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra) Notice 2016*.

2 Decision about registration

On 22 September 2016, the ACT Heritage Council (the **Heritage Council**) decided to register the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra (the **Object**).

3 Registration details of the Object

The registration details of the Object are in the schedule.

4 Reasons for the decision

The Heritage Council decided to register the Object because it has heritage significance as it meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria in section 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, as set out in the schedule.

5 Date registration takes effect

The registration of the Object takes effect on the day after this notice is notified.

6 Revocation

The *Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra) Notice 2016 NI2016—273* is revoked.

Fiona Moore
A/g Secretary (as delegate for)
ACT Heritage Council
22 September 2016



ACT Heritage Council

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
HERITAGE REGISTER
(Registration)**

For the purposes of s. 40 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, an entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following object:

Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra

Canberra and District Historical Society

DATE OF REGISTRATION

22 September 2016 Notifiable Instrument: 2016–

Copies of the Register Entry are available for inspection at ACT Heritage. For further information please contact:

The Secretary
ACT Heritage Council
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Telephone 13 22 81

This statement refers to the location of the object as required in s. 12 (b) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

LOCATION OF THE OBJECT

Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra, Canberra District Historical Society Office.

This section refers to the description of the object as required in s.12(c) of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The attributes described in this section form part of the heritage significance of the object.

DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT

Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra, consisting of the following attributes:

- Volume I:
 - Unpublished, hand-bound manuscript, 134 pages long, containing:
 - two progress maps;
 - four watercolour paintings; and
 - approximately 130 black and white photographs.
 - Volume II:
 - Unpublished, hand-bound manuscript, 67 pages long, containing:
 - Two progress maps;
 - Seven watercolour paintings; and
 - 116 black and white photographs.
 - Volume III:
 - Unpublished, hand-bound manuscript, 90 pages long, containing:
 - 11 watercolour paintings;
 - 61 black and white photographs; and
 - Nine hand-coloured photographs.
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This statement refers to the heritage significance of the object as required in s.12(d) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra is a unique and wide-ranging overview of life during the early years of the Capital, providing a previously unseen photographic, painted and written account of Canberra, its people, stories, histories, and environment between the years 1926 to 1931. It is atypical as a contemporary view of Canberra and the ACT, in that it was written in an informal, sometimes colloquial style by two 'ordinary,' self-educated people who were not associated with the new Government of Australia [*criteria (a), (b)*].

The three volumes that comprise the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra record the cultural and social lives of Canberrans in a range of living situations, from a range of social backgrounds, including those who lived in the developing civic centre, and those who lived in the less developed, remote parts of the ACT. For

some of these places, such as the Capitol Theatre in Forrest, and remote homesteads in modern-day Namadgi National Park, the volumes offer a hitherto unseen pictorial and written record of important places in the ACT that are of heritage significance [*criterion (c)*].

CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE

The guiding conservation objective is that the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra shall be conserved and appropriately managed in a manner respecting its heritage significance.

The ACT Heritage Council may adopt heritage guidelines applicable to the object under s25 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

For further information on guidelines applicable to the object, or for advice on proposed works or development, please contact ACT Heritage on 13 22 81.

REASON FOR REGISTRATION

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance when assessed against criteria [a, b, c] under s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

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

In assessing the heritage significance of The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra, the Council considered:

- the original nomination and documentary evidence supplied by the nominator;
- the Council's *Heritage Assessment Policy* (February 2015);
- information provided by a site inspection on 26 August 2015 by ACT Heritage; and
- the report by ACT Heritage titled, *Background Information Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra*, September 2016, containing photographs and information on history, description, condition and integrity.

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. Future research may alter the findings of this assessment.

(a) importance to the course or pattern of the ACT's cultural or natural history;

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra, meets this criterion.

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra is important in the context of the ACT's cultural history, as it provides a wide-ranging overview of Canberra's cultural, social, and environmental profile during its early development, providing a previously unseen photographic and written account of the early Capital. The three volumes contain imagery and informal, sometimes hand-written anecdotes of significant places, people, and events from the point of view of the 'average,' person without governmental bias. The informal quality of the volumes imbues them with significance, as it often enriches accounts of well-documented events. For

example, margin notes in Volume I describe Dame Nellie Melba swearing at the band during rehearsals for the opening of Parliament House.

Further, the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra records the cultural and social lives of Canberrans in a range of environments, from the burgeoning civic centre, the immediate undeveloped surrounds, to the more remote areas of the Territory. This has resulted in a unique record of the different ways of life of Canberrans of the era, from those close to the construction and excitement of the new Capital, to those who still resided in the distant reaches of Paddys River in slab and pisé huts built in the late nineteenth century before the resumption of land for the Federal Capital Territory.

(b) has uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the ACT's cultural or natural history;

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra meets this criterion.

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation represents an uncommon aspect of the ACT's cultural history. There are numerous important primary sources pertaining to life and development in the ACT during its formative years, such as the Mildenhall photographic collection, the Yarralumla Nursery Records, and the Family Papers of Robert Garran. However, the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation is uncommon amongst primary sources for early Canberra, as it is concerned with an unusually broad range of subjects, such as natural environment, geology, cultural and social life, civic construction, official events, individual anecdotes, Aboriginal history, settler and bushranger history.

Jefferis and Whelen did not work in administrative positions for the Government of Australia, and were not associated with politicians or high-profile individuals. Therefore, in addition to its broad focus, it differs from other known primary sources in that it is not a bureaucratic or government document, and as such is able to capture information from a different viewpoint. This is notable in the personal and hitherto unseen photographs and paintings of significant places, ranging from the Capitol Theatre, to Congwarra Homestead in Paddys River, and Orroral Homestead in the Orroral Valley, and the hand-written embellishments to many of the typed stories that add a layer of humour and oddity to the chapters within the volumes.

(c) potential to yield important information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT's cultural or natural history;

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra meets this criterion.

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation contains anecdotes, descriptions, photographs, and in some cases watercolour paintings of various places of historic importance within the ACT. In some cases these volumes are the only sources of information, and are likely to assist with future research and assessment. For example, Congwarra homestead is an historic pisé homestead in Paddys River, for which there is little information in the ACT body of literature. However, the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation recounts detailed information and incorporates a photographic record on Mr and Mrs Flint of Congwarra as well as the homestead. Further, there are paintings and photographs of Kaye's Hut, Orroral Homestead, the Capitol Theatre, and the Hotels Ainslie and Kurrajong which document the condition and appearance of these places in the late 1920s, where today, in some cases, the places are no longer standing or are substantially altered.

In recording anecdotes and stories of Canberra people, Jefferis and Whelen took care to include those who are often left out of government or official histories, and as such the volumes contain descriptions of widows, stockmen, and a variety of immigrants. Again, this provides a more complete picture of the social history of the ACT.

While Jefferis and Whelen made descriptions and paintings of mammals, insects, reptiles and plants during their expeditions, and collected some specimens for the Institute of Anatomy and the CS & IR (a precursor to the CSIRO), there is not enough evidence before the Council at this time suggesting the potential for the specimens to contribute to an understanding of the ACT's natural history. While the illustrations are striking and, in some cases quite detailed, some are reproductions from existing guidebooks or images, and are not necessarily an authentic record of animal/plant life of the ACT. Further, at a later date, if any evidence is presented to the Council on any contributions the specimens have made to research conducted by the CSIRO or other research bodies, the Council may reconsider this statement.

(d) importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or objects;

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra does not meet this criterion.

Broadly speaking, the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation could be classified as a primary, documentary source on early Canberra. However, more narrowly, it is a unique and idiosyncratic record, and as such, is not readily identifiable as a 'class' of cultural or natural objects, and therefore does not meet the basic test for inclusion under this criteria.

(e) importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT;

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra does not meet this criterion.

While there are striking watercolour paintings and evocative photographs within the volumes, there is no evidence before the Council suggesting the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation possesses landmark qualities, artistic excellence, or visual prominence demonstrated to be valued by the wider ACT community or a cultural group.

(f) importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement for a particular period;

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra does not meet this criterion.

There is no evidence before the Council suggesting the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra is important for its creative or technical achievement, artistic or technical excellence, innovation, discovery, invention, or displays an exceptionally fine level of application of existing artistic techniques or approaches.

(g) has a strong or special association with the ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra does not meet this criterion.

There is no evidence before the Council suggesting a strong or special association between the

Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra and the ACT Community or a cultural group in the ACT. While historical interest groups, such as the Canberra and District Historical Society, are invested in the volumes, interest groups do not constitute the ACT community or a cultural group.

(h) has a special association with the life or work of a person, or people, important to the history of the ACT.

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra does not meet this criterion.

The Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra was co-authored by John Whelen, who was a co-founder of the Canberra and District Historical Society (CDHS), which is a significant repository for documentary sources on the history of the ACT, and an advocating body for the conservation and celebration of the history and heritage of the ACT and region, and also publishes the *Canberra Historical Journal*, an ongoing historical source for the ACT. However, in order to meet this criterion, ‘important’ to the history of the ACT implies persons or people who are prominent in their contribution to shaping the history of the ACT. While the Council values all efforts to conserve, catalogue, and archive historical sources, this act in itself cannot be said to be prominent in shaping the history of the ACT.

Further, objects under this criterion should demonstrate an association with a strong, notable or influential contribution to the evolution or pattern of development in society or environment. There is no evidence before the Council suggesting the Jefferis and Whelen Historical Documentation of Canberra has made a strong, notable or influential contribution to the evolution of the ACT.