

# Heritage (Decision about Registration of Canberra Grammar School Complex, Red Hill) Notice 2008 (No 1)

Notifiable Instrument NI 2008 - 483

made under the

*Heritage Act 2004* section 34 Notice of decision about registration

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**1. Revocation**

This instrument revokes NI2008 – 280.

**2. Name of instrument**

This instrument is the Heritage (Decision about Registration of Canberra Grammar School Complex, Red Hill) Notice 2008 (No 1).

**3. Registration details of the place**

Registration details of the place are at Attachment A: Register entry for: Canberra Grammar School Complex, Red Hill.

**4. Reason for decision**

The ACT Heritage Council has decided that the Canberra Grammar School Complex, Red Hill 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**

14 October 2008.

The Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
GPO Box 158  
CANBERRA ACT 2602

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**Gerhard Zatschler**  
**Secretary ACT Heritage Council**  
**GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2602**

**14 October 2008**



ACT Heritage Council

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**HERITAGE REGISTER  
(Provisional Registration Details)**

**Place**

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:

- **CANBERRA GRAMMAR SCHOOL COMPLEX at Red Hill**

**DATE OF REGISTRATION**

Notified: 17 October 2008 Notifiable Instrument: NI2008–483

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: 132281 Facsimile: (02) 6207 2229

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## IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE

- **Canberra Grammar School ( including the Headmasters residence) at Block 1 Section 6, Red Hill, District of Canberra Central**
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## HISTORY OF THE PLACE

The first buildings at the school were completed in 1929. Prior to that the Church of England had been active in the new capital to establish such as school (McKeown 1979):

In 1908 Canon Burgess as Rector of Cooma established the Manaro Grammar School there as a Diocesan foundation under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Goulburn, by 1926 a small school of twenty-six boarders. Bishop Radford applied in March 1927 to the Federal Capital Commission for land in Canberra, and 14 acres were granted for the Cooma school's new home re-named Canberra Church of England Grammar School. The site was later enlarged in 1929, to twenty acres in all, six acres to be used for school buildings and leased for ninety-nine years and the original fourteen or so acres to be used for playing fields on a lease of twenty years.

In 1928 plans were drawn up by the Sydney architectural firm of Burcham, Clamp and Finch. The history of this early period showed the efforts made to raise money for the school by the diocese and a group of citizens who formed a private company, the Canberra Grammar School Association. The first tender was for £5,000 for the construction of the first section of the School – the main entrance foyer and the then administration building, by builders by A Stephens and Co. A further mortgage of £10,000 was granted in July 1929 for building the east wing and its cloister, ready by September that year. The large Headmaster's house, built in 1934, cost £1,500, and in July 1938 a further mortgage of £21,500 was taken out on the school property to further extend the school with the Great Hall (dining room) and kitchen, opened in 1939. *The Canberran* outlined the architect's brief:

*The final plan for the School is that the buildings should form the sides of a large quadrangle and the new additions should harmonise with this scheme. They are in two sections, the one past, and by far the larger, which will almost complete the southern end of the quadrangle, and the other which will form a unit of the western side... The main feature is a large Great Hall ... principally to be used as a dining hall, but a fully equipped stage at one end will make it very useful for School theatrical productions ... Underneath the hall there will be two laboratories, one physics and one chemistry, and a library ... the whole of this section to be steam heated in winter.*

*Opening off the hall will be the new and permanent kitchen and domestic staff accommodation. The kitchen will be the last word in modernity.*

In the 1950s the site was extended to the whole of the area in the section to permit the inclusion of a Junior School and additional facilities; enrolments growing to 361 by 1959. On 23 September 1964, the Governor-General, Viscount De l'Isle, opened the new Junior School in the south-west of the grounds.

Built additions to the quadrangle area were part of this growth, with an increased sporting activity resulting in the Gymnasium being built in 1958, and the 1960s the Commonwealth laboratories program was a major initiative for secondary science teaching (Goodrum et al 2000:6.5.2), resulting in the new Science and Administration wing along the school's front, that was opened in 1962 by the then Prime Minister, the Rt Hon R G Menzies

These and subsequent school buildings, were designed by Yuncken Freeman (mainly Roy Simpson), until the early 1980s, including the Chapel. This was dedicated the Chapel of Christ the King by the Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, the Rt Reverend K J Clements on 8 August 1965 (Canberra Times 9 August 1965). This Chapel replaced several earlier 'temporary' chapels, including a fibro-cement demountable purchased from Duntroon in 1934, as no benefactor had been found to fund the Lancing type chapel envisaged in the original plan.

Enrolments climbed steadily during the 1960s in line with the Menzies' Governments promotion of Canberra's growth and dignity as the national capital. By March 1967, 730 boys were enrolled including some 200 in the Junior School and 210 boarders, and further facilities continued to be added across the school grounds.

From the early 1980s Philip Cox and Partners were appointed as the school's architects, and the McKeown Building was added to the quadrangle complex in 1985, named in honour of PJ McKeown, headmaster for 27 years (1959-1985).

Several notable Australians are associated with the Canberra Grammar School:

**John Burcham Clamp (Snr)** (1869 – 1931) first architect for the Canberra Grammar School, established his practice in the early 1900s. Burcham Clamp's work included a wide variety of building types including commercial, residential and institutional; his other buildings designed in Canberra are the Ainslie Hotel and St Paul's Church. Clamp was active in the federation of the state Institutes of Architects. At the time of his death in 1931 he was the Sydney Diocesan Architect.

In his early years of practice, Burcham Clamp's work was influenced by the nationalistic fervour of federation which was noted architecturally by the introduction of native flora and fauna pretorially in buildings (Graham 1997:66). Stylistically he was influenced by the work of significant Australian Architect John Horbury Hunt, as well as later by Walter Burley Griffin, with whom he worked on Griffin's private commissions, whilst Griffin's Melbourne office undertook all Canberra (National Capital Design) works. (Johnson, 1977:56; Australian Dictionary of Biography 2008)

**Thomas Henry Timpson AO** (1913-2004), Master of Arts and Bachelor of Education of the University of Melbourne, Licentiate of Theology of the Australian College of Theology, Fellow of this College and Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management, is one of the most widely known, respected and affectionately regarded members within the College was the first Director of Studies at Canberra Grammar School in 1950 and was an influential and well regarded educator. Tom Timpson was also Senior Master till 1954 when he was appointed Headmaster of Camberwell Grammar School. (Australian College of Educators 2004)

**Edward Gough Whitlam**, Prime Minister of Australia from 1972 to 1975, Gough Whitlam was a student at the Canberra Grammar School in the mid-1930s, his last year being 1933. A poem written by Whitlam at the school around the school's Latin motto, hints at his world view of classical humanism at the time when totalitarian regimes were taking control in Europe (Curran 2004):

*DEO, ECCLESIAE, PATRIAE  
The promised time is drawing near  
The everlasting reign of peace;  
The aspirations men hold dear  
Will make their ancient discords cease.  
The lessons learned of lands grown old  
Will blossom in an age of Gold.  
...  
Our country scorns the tyrant state  
In which the ancient empires stood;  
Free nations must co-operate  
And aim to serve the common good:  
A foreign clime or coloured skin  
Will not disguise that men are kin.*

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## DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE

The Canberra Grammar School is located at the junction of Mugga Way and Flinders Way in Red Hill, a site on the edge of that suburb, and Canberra, until the late 1950s. The school consists of several different groups of buildings across the school grounds, including the original school buildings, the Junior School, the new boarding house, Science Laboratories, Music School, Gymnasium-Swimming Pool and playing fields.

The core area of the school consists of (Figure 2):

- East Wing of classrooms and (originally) dormitories (1929) (Figures 3 & 4)
- Headmaster's Residence (1934) (Figure 5)
- former Dining Room and Kitchen (1939) (Figure 6)
- Garran House (1939) (Figure 7)
- Gymnasium (1958) (Figure 8)
- Science and Administration Wing (1962) (Figure 9)
- Chapel (1965) (Figures 11 & 12)
- McKeown Building (1985) (Figure 10)

These buildings include the earliest school buildings, and with the later additions are set around a grassed quadrangle and create a cloister. The Headmaster's Residence and Chapel are set roughly symmetrically to either side of the north elevation of the quadrangle complex. The axis of the quadrangle extends through landscaping to the north through the main oval; to its west the Chapel sits in a prominent position above the Chapel Oval.

A collection of 14 building stones from a number of famous English 'public schools', such as Eton, Westminster, St Pauls, were set into a wall of the East Wing in 1937 (full list at [www.cgs.act.edu.au/history.html](http://www.cgs.act.edu.au/history.html)).

The buildings are generally of two storeys, constructed of red face brickwork with sandstone or rendered trim, and terracotta tile gabled roofs. The four early structures (1929-39) - the Headmaster's Residence and three facing the quadrangle, are built in the Inter-war Gothic style. This is expressed in the load-bearing face brickwork including some brick patterning, medium pitched roofs with parapeted gables, the use of pointed arch forms including window tracery, and the exposed timber roof trusses in the former Dining Room.

The later additions close the quadrangle and are built in complementary styles that reinforce the earlier form, other than the 1962 northern façade. This is in a different architectural style that is inconsistent with the other architectural aesthetics of these quadrangle buildings.

The Chapel is also two-storeyed and constructed of red/brown face brickwork, with narrow stained glass slits as windows. However, it is circular in plan, has a low-pitched conical metal roof and spire with a clerestory window between the walls and roof. The main entrance is marked by glazing with strong vertical proportions surrounding the doors. The main chapel and seats 320 close to the freestanding altar. Two staircases lead to a crypt chapel on the lower ground floor, the design of the building taking advantage of the sloping site and allowing entry to both chapels from the ground level. Sited beside open ground enables it to be viewed from a distance.

Large trees line the main driveway and the grounds are furnished with gardens near the buildings and evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs across the site. The placement of the main quadrangle with minimal planting, set within an attractive landscape of mature trees, gardens and shrubs, and centred on the oval and the general unity of materials reinforces the aesthetic qualities of the place.

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## STATEMENT ABOUT THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE

The Canberra Grammar School complex is significant as an architecturally fine and rare Canberra example of architecture and design. The four buildings (three to facing the main quadrangle and the Headmaster's Residence) from the period 1929-39 exemplify the Inter-war Gothic style. The later buildings are sympathetic in style and close the cloistered quadrangle. The Chapel is significant as the only circular church in Canberra and its quality design related to the Post War Melbourne Regional style by Roy Simpson. This part of the school reinforces traditional styles and values associated with the traditions and educational philosophy of private schools elsewhere.

The form and planning of the complex is aesthetically significant for its harmonious balance as well as contrast in the circular Chapel, landscaping, and relationship to the surrounding playing fields and grounds. The Chapel's elegant circular form creates a significant landmark in the school grounds, emphasising its function as a place of worship, its harmony with the surrounding landscape and its relationship to the Chapel Oval.

The school has been an important part of Canberra's and Australia's history with associations with many prominent citizens, educators and architects.

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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:

- (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 Chapel meets this criterion in demonstrating a high degree of technical merit with its unusual but effective circular design. The stained glass windows also exhibit a high degree of creative achievement and demonstrate high artistic merit.

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

This Church school complex is significant as an architecturally fine and rare Canberra example of the Inter-war Gothic style which, as in this case, is generally restricted to colleges and churches. This style is exemplified by the use of load-bearing face brickwork including some brick patterning, medium pitched roofs with parapeted gables, the use of pointed arch forms including window tracery, and exposed timber roof trusses in the former Dining Room. The only other example of this style of note in Canberra is the Baptist Church in Kingston. Its main quadrangle and surrounding cloisters create a strong sense of place and pleasing aesthetics which is valued by the whole school community which is demonstrated by the degree of community participation supporting the school. The placement of the main quadrangle with minimal planting, set within an attractive landscape of mature trees, gardens and shrubs, and centred on the oval and the general unity of materials reinforces the aesthetic qualities of the place.

The only detracting design feature is the front section (1962) which differs architecturally from the rest of the complex and is inconsistent with the aesthetics of the rest of the place.

The Chapel is of high quality design in a modern style (Post War Melbourne Regional Style) and aesthetic quality and despite being different to the rest of the school sits as a separate building comfortably beside the quadrangle's earlier Inter-war Gothic buildings. The individual design reinforces the distinction and importance of the Chapel, which sits within a contained landscape of paving, steps and planting boxes that further reinforce the aesthetic appeal of the building.

**(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 school retains boarders which is not common today except in the older traditional schools. Although the boarders' functions have been relocated from the main quadrangle they still remain on site.

**(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 school has generated a very strong community, educational and social association which is highly valued. This is illustrated by the strong commitment of teachers and past students and support within the school community, and the strong spiritual significance at the school centred on the Chapel.

The stones set into the quadrangle walls from famous English 'public schools' reinforce the symbolic association between the Canberra Grammar School and those schools' educational philosophy and tradition.

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

This criterion is not applicable.

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

The school buildings around the quadrangle, with the Headmaster's Residence, are rare as Inter-war Gothic buildings in Canberra, the only other one of note being the Baptist Church in Kingston.

The Chapel is unique in Canberra as the only circular church in Canberra, the only comparable churches being multifaceted (eg St Joseph's O'Connor).

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

The Main Quadrangle and Headmaster's Residence demonstrate the principal characteristics of the Interwar Gothic Style including load bearing face brickwork, including some patterning, medium pitched terra cotta tiled roofs with parapeted gables, use of pointed arch forms including window tracery and exposed timber roof trusses in the dining room. The later buildings have been sympathetic additions reinforcing the earlier form.

The Chapel is in a modern style with a simple and elegant shape but would not be called an exemplar of any one particular style. However, it does demonstrate a number of features of the

Post War Melbourne Regional Style such as low pitched roof, steel roofing, wide eaves, long unbroken roof line and narrow edge of roof.

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

The school has had a number of notable students (for example Gough Whitlam 1934), educators (for example Thomas Henry Timson) and contains the work of a number of notable Australian architects, including Burcham Clamp and Finch, Yuncken Freeman and Philip Cox and Partners (especially Roy Simpson who won the RAIA Gold Medal in 1997), all of whom contributed buildings to the main quadrangle. The school has been a major contributor to Canberra's education and history, and the Chapel has a continuing association with the school including many past students who have been married in it.

**(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.

**(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**

This place 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**

This criterion is not applicable.

**(l) for a place—it is a significant ecological community, habitat or locality for any of the following:**

- (i) the life cycle of native species;**
- (ii) rare, threatened or uncommon species;**
- (iii) species at the limits of their natural range;**
- (iv) distinct occurrences of species.**

This criterion is not applicable.

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## **FEATURES INTRINSIC TO HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The physical features of the Canberra Grammar School, Red Hill, that particularly reflect its heritage significance are:

- The exterior of all the buildings to the quadrangle (except the 1962 front section refer Figure 2)
- The Headmaster's Residence and garden setting
- The circular Chapel, including its exterior and interior, with the stained glass windows, and its setting
- The interior of the main dining room including floor, walls, ceiling, structure, windows
- The axial relationship of the main quadrangle and the oval
- The setting of grassed open quadrangle, gardens, shrubs and mature trees around the buildings
- The stones of famous English schools in the quadrangle walls

Intangible aspects that reflect its heritage significance are:

- The history of the use of the buildings as part of the School

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## REASON FOR REGISTRATION

*The Canberra Grammar School, Red Hill has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance against 7 of the heritage criteria under the ACT Heritage Act.*

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## APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES

The Heritage Guidelines adopted under s27 of the *Heritage Act* 2004 are applicable to the conservation of the Canberra Grammar School, Red Hill.

The guiding conservation objective is that the Canberra Grammar School, Red Hill, 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. A conservation management plan (CMP) would help to guide conservation and future use. Any works that have a potential impact on significant fabric (and/or other heritage values) which are necessary prior to the development of a CMP shall be guided by a professionally documented interim assessment and conservation policy relevant to that area or component (i.e. a Statement of Heritage Effects - SHE).

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1. CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Draft provisional registration entry was released for public comment on 17 July 2008 and period for public comment closed on 14 August 2008.

### 2. REFERENCES

Australian College of Educators Web Site ([www.austcolled.com.au/about.php?id=808](http://www.austcolled.com.au/about.php?id=808) -Viewed 7/9/2004).

Australian Dictionary of Biography Website entry( [www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A080001b.htm](http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A080001b.htm) – viewed April 2008)

Canberra Grammar School website - History ([www.cgs.act.edu.au/history.html](http://www.cgs.act.edu.au/history.html) – viewed April 2008)

Curran, James 2004 “The Verdant Vista of the New Gough Whitlam and the ‘new nationalism’”, a chapter in *The Power of Speech, Australian Prime Ministers Defining the National Image*, Melbourne University Press.

Goodrum, Denis, Mark Hackling and Leonie Rennie 2000 *The Status and Quality of Teaching and Learning of Science in Australian Schools*, a report to the then federal Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, now Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (online at [www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school\\_education/publications\\_resources/science\\_in\\_australian\\_schools/chapter\\_6.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/science_in_australian_schools/chapter_6.htm) - viewed April 2008)

John, Graham 1997 *Sydney Architecture*, Watermark Press

Johnson, Donald Leslie 1977 *The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin*, Griffin Press.

McKeown, P J Ed 1979 *Deo, Ecclesiae, Patriae – Fifty Years of Canberra Grammar School*, Australian National University Press, Canberra.

RAIA Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture Citation RO31

RAIA Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture Citation RO75 (Chapel)

Register of the National Estate (Place ID 13323, Place File No 8/01/000/0042).

*The Canberra Times*, 9 August 1965

### 3. PHOTOGRAPHS AND PLANS

All photos and plans EMA 2004

Figure 1: Location of Canberra Grammar School



Figure 2: Plan of Canberra Grammar School



Figure 3: East Wing (1929)



Figure 4: East Wing Cloisters (1929)



Figure 5: Headmaster's Residence (1934)



Figure 6: Former Dining Hall and Kitchen (1939)



Figure 7: Garran House (1939)



Figure 8: Gymnasium (1958)



Figure 9: Science and Administration Wing (1962)



Figure 10: McKeown Building (1985)

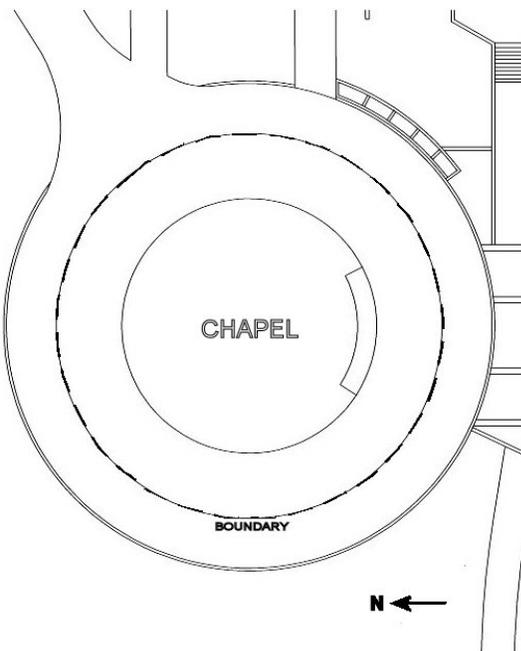


Figure 11: plan of Chapel



Figure 12: Canberra Grammar School Chapel (1965)