



ACT Heritage Council

## Entry to the ACT Heritage Register

*Heritage Act 2004*

### 20149. Arizona and Himalayan Cypress Trees in Kingston

Section 46 Block 1 (part)

KINGSTON

This document has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council.

This entry which was previously part of the old heritage places or the old heritage objects registers (as defined in the *Heritage Act 2004*), as the case may be, is taken to be registered under the *Heritage Act 2004*.

Conservation Requirements (including Specific Requirements), as defined under the *Heritage Act 2004*, that are contained within this document are taken to be Heritage Guidelines applying to this place or object, as the case may be.

Information restricted under *the old heritage places register or old heritage objects register* is restricted under the *Heritage Act 2004*.

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ACT Heritage Council

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

For the purposes of s. 54(1) of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*, an entry to the interim Heritage Places register for:



## ARIZONA AND HIMALAYAN CYPRESS TREES KINGSTON

Part Block 1 Section 46 Kingston

has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council.

Notification effective: 11 December 2003

Background material about this place and copies of the entry to the Interim Heritage Places Register are available from:

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## ARIZONA AND HIMALAYAN CYPRESS TREES, KINGSTON ENTRY TO AN INTERIM HERITAGE PLACES REGISTER

### LOCATION OF PLACE:

*Division of Kingston:*

- Part Block 1 Section 46, part enclosed within existing traffic island adjoining Wentworth Avenue opposite the Giles Street intersection

### FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CYPRESS TREES:

The features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place are:

- Four mature Cypress (*Cupressus torulosa* and *Cupressis arizonica*) trees planted in alignment with Wentworth Avenue (being the remnant of an original planting consisting of 6 Cypress trees and 4 Prunus trees). (Fig1: #1-4)
- The setting of the 4 trees that demonstrates their historical relationship to the site of the first Government Printing Office. (The printing office is now demolished but was formerly located c.30m northeast of the trees within (former) Block 16). The trees are within an area that was formerly triangular in shape and related to the alignment and siting of the original Printing Office, which in turn was aligned parallel to the early railway line serving the Kingston Power House
- The presence of the trees as a prominent landscape element within the Wentworth Avenue Streetscape, particularly from the northeast carriageway.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Cypress trees within the Kingston Foreshore locality have heritage significance because of their historical association and location in relation to the original Government Printing Office. The trees were planted contemporaneously with the opening of the Printing Office in 1927 and are the physical remains of a daily assembly point and social gathering place for the many hundreds of staff engaged throughout the operation of the Printing Office from 1927 - 1963. The Printing Office has since been demolished, however for past staff and the broader community alike the trees remain as a landmark of the historic phase of industrial activity within Kingston. Likewise they are a reminder of the lives of working class people who once operated the range of government industrial facilities which have been removed from the Kingston Foreshores area.

The mature Cypress trees are also a significant aesthetic element in the Wentworth Avenue streetscape. They were originally complemented by an interspersed planting of Flowering Plums. They represent the remnant of a small formal planting typical of planting styles of the 1920s in Canberra. Similar mixed plantings of cypress and flowering plum trees are also still evident in street plantings elsewhere along Wentworth Avenue.

The Cypresses within their former triangular pocket park setting are of historical value because they demonstrate early design approaches to public landscaping within Canberra including:

- the composition of tall evergreens interspersed (in this case formerly) with flowering plums.
- the utilisation of tall and slender triangular tree forms within the limited landscaped space between kerb and building; and
- the inclusion of small 'pocket parks' within the urban area, reflected in Kingston and other early suburbs;

Such planting designs were established by the first Superintendent of Parks and Gardens, Charles Weston. They continued under the direction of his successor Alexander Bruce, who is generally credited with implementing the layout of the triangular park and plantings including the Cypress trees within the Kingston Foreshores area.

## **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:**

In accordance with s.54(1) of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*, the following specific requirements are identified as essential to the conservation of the heritage significance of the place. These specific requirements are prepared to implement the following conservation policy for the place:

**The Cypress trees are to be conserved and sympathetically integrated into the proposed redevelopment of the Kingston Foreshore area. Where there is no prudent and feasible option for their retention then the broader historical and social values to which they relate should be commemorated and interpreted within the Kingston Foreshore area.**

Any action affecting the requirements to conserve the heritage significance of this place may require an approval, either in accordance with the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991* or any current relevant tree protection legislation operating in the Territory, prior to undertaking the activity.

### **1. Cypress Trees**

#### *Objective*

**To retain the 4 currently identified Cypress trees in a landscape setting at their current location adjacent the site of the (former) Canberra Printing Office.**

#### *Specific Requirements*

- 1.1 The redevelopment of the Kingston Foreshores area shall provide for the retention of the 4 Cypress trees unless there is no prudent and feasible option for their retention.
- 1.2 The landscape setting of the trees may be enhanced through the addition of sympathetic hard and soft landscaping elements to provide an appropriate formal entry to the Kingston Foreshore development area. New plantings sympathetic to the historic planting styles are encouraged, particularly reinstatement of flowering plums.
- 1.3 Where an individual tree has been assessed by a professional arborist to be senescent, of poor health and/or a potential risk to public safety, then the individual tree may be removed and replaced with new stock of the same species. All prudent and feasible alternatives to removal will need to be explored before removal or felling will be considered. Removal for other than safety reasons shall be subject to a development

approval.

- 1.4 In a situation where two or more trees are assessed by an arborist or equivalent practitioner to be senescent, of poor health and/or a potential risk to public safety, then the future of the collective group may be reviewed in consultation with the Heritage Council. If the removal of the suspect trees is deemed to substantially diminish the aesthetic integrity or long term survival of the group, then a decision to remove and replace all of the trees may be permissible. Any decision in respect of replacement species shall also be determined at such time.
- 1.5 Tree surgery or other actions which would adversely affect the character of any of the 4 trees shall not be permitted unless such actions are essential for the conservation of the tree/s in which case such actions are subject to approval, or are essential for safety reasons.
- 1.6 Disturbance of the ground within the identified root zone of any tree (including changes of soil level, changes to drainage or watering, the introduction of hard paving, use or dumping of chemicals or wastes, or compaction due to vehicle traffic or parking) shall be subject to an approval.
- 1.7 All work upon the trees shall be carried out by appropriately qualified arborists.

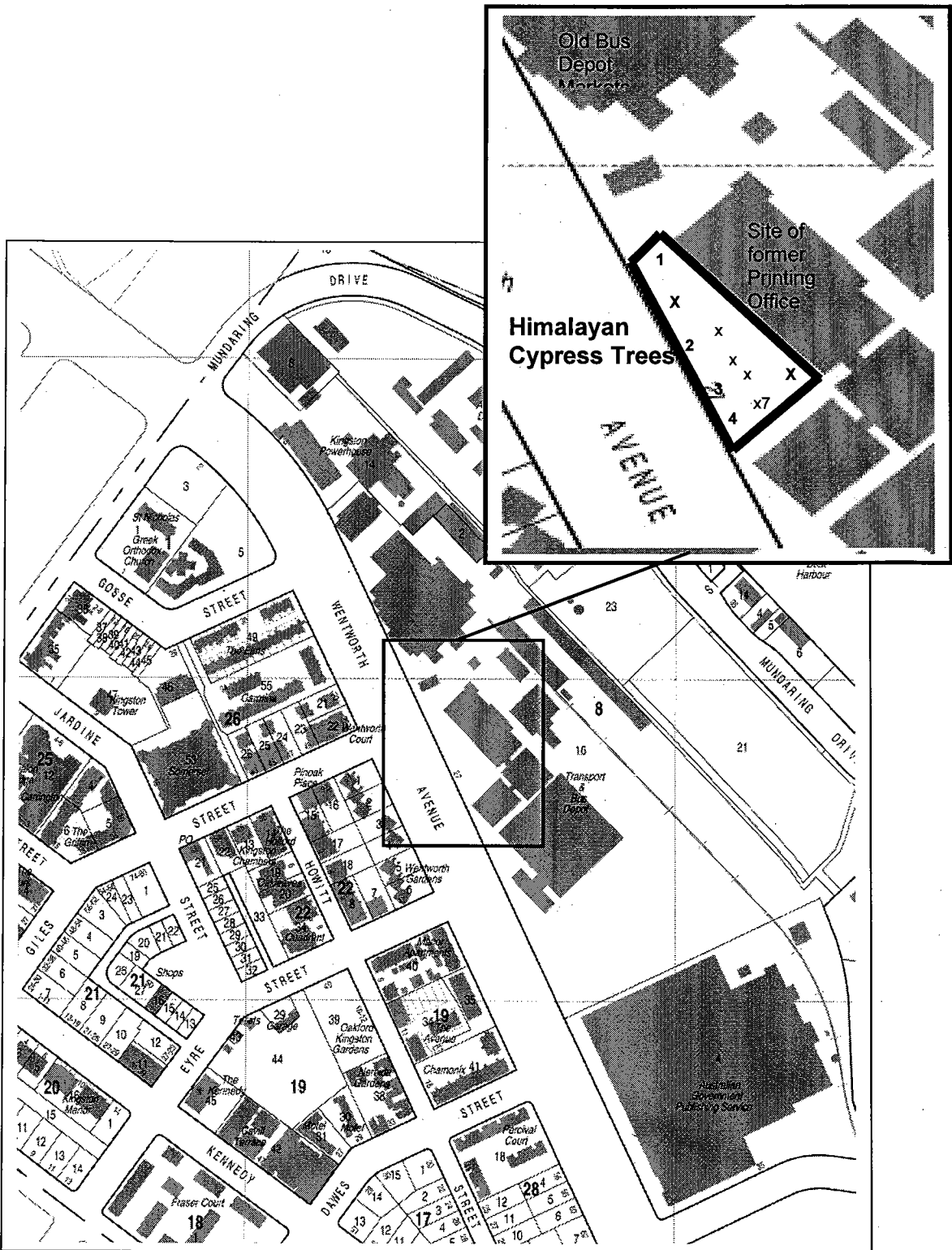
## **2. Interpretation of Heritage Values**

### *Objective*

**To interpret the historic and social values of the locality within the redevelopment of the Kingston Foreshore area.**

### *Specific Requirements*

- 2.1 The trees should be retained within a landscaped space, however, in the event that it is not prudent and feasible to retain all of the Cypress Trees then the historic and social values of the trees and former Printing Office should be interpreted at an appropriate location within the Kingston Foreshore redevelopment, consistent with the following guidelines:
    - Interpretation should occur within publicly accessible landscaped open space, preferably similar in style to a 'pocket park';
    - The space may incorporate new plantings of Himalayan and/or Arizona Cypress trees and if desired flowering plums;
    - The space should include a prominent interpretative display which includes structural or sculptural elements and information on the history of the Printing Office and its staff;
    - The design of the space and content of interpretive material should be developed in consultation with key stakeholders including the families of former Printing Office staff and the Heritage Council.
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**Figure 1**  
**Cypress Trees, Kingston**

*Cypresses (#1- 4)*  
*Former Cypresses X*  
*Former Flowering Plums x*

## **Attachment A Himalayan Cypress Trees Background Information**

### **A1. DESCRIPTION:**

The 4 Cypress trees evident today are the remnant of a planting of 6 Cypress trees and four Flowering Plum trees within a small roughly triangular area at the junction of Wentworth Avenue and a proposed northern extension of Giles Street.

The heights and crown spreads of the Cypress trees are consistent with trees of about 70 years of age. The trees are currently within the Kingston Foreshores development area.

In 1999 the perimeter of the area around the trees was fenced by the Kingston Foreshores Development Authority (K DFA) in response to representations about the harmful effects of cars parking beneath the trees.

A health and condition assessment of the trees was carried out on 4 July 2001, and all the Cypress trees were found to be in good condition. The safe and useful life expectancy of these trees if appropriately maintained is believed to be of the order of 40 years.

The Cypresses satisfy the criteria for significance under the *Tree Protection (Interim Scheme) Act 2001* as well as Schedule 2 of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991* on the basis of their cultural heritage significance.

### **A2. STATUS OF PLACE AT NOMINATION DATE:**

No known heritage listings with Commonwealth, National Trust or other bodies.

### **A3. HISTORICAL SUMMARY**

Photographic records suggest that the trees were planted in the late 1920s coincident with or after the Government Printing Office was opened on 14 July 1927. If so then the planting would have occurred during the period when Alexander Bruce had taken over as Superintendent of Parks and Gardens, following on from Charles Weston. Nevertheless the pattern of planting is similar to styles used by Weston where deciduous flowering trees are interplanted with evergreen conifers. Such patterns are repeated in the street-tree planting in Wentworth Ave.

The roughly triangular design of the planting bed indicates the way in which former industrial sites in the Kingston Foreshore were aligned with the railway lines that serviced them, rather than the adjacent roads, (in this case Wentworth Avenue).

The area containing the Cypress trees is immediately opposite the site of the first Government Printing Office. The printing Office opened on 14 July 1927 and played a very important role in early Canberra's history. The first printing job was 2.5 million telegram forms - the only means of expeditious long distance communication before telephones became common.

Annual budgets, legislation and the daily Hansard (transmitted to Parliament House by pneumatic tube) were a fundamental part of the work of the Government Printing Office for over

70 years. During this period thousands of people were employed at the printing office. The location of the former office consequently has strong social value.

The history and social values of the printing office have been identified in publications such as:

- *Printed By Authority: fifty Years of government printing in Canberra* by George Dick, 1977 NLA accession NLP 686.2099471D547
- *A Printer's Retrospection: being a memoir of the first forty years of federation* by David Hicks, 1941 NLA accession NLP 655.194HIC.;
- *Golden Jubilee 50 years of Government Printing in Canberra* a special edition of the Commonwealth Government Printing Office Journal July 1977. Reference copy held by the Canberra and District Historical Society. Mr John Thompson who worked at the Government printing Office for forty years and was Government Printer 1978 - 1988 (contact tel 6295 7339), wrote the foreword to this edition. John Thompson also taught his trade to apprentices at the technical college also on the Kingston Foreshore site.

These publications reveal that the small space containing the Cypress trees in front of the old Printing Office has social significance for its former role as a gathering place for workers and their families:

*'In the early morning and the lunch hour the men and youths played marbles (ring game) outside the office. Quite a lot of contestants took part and the crowd of players and spectators attracted passing workmen when going to their work in other parts of the capital, who gradually worked themselves into playing teams.'*

The printing union, called the 'Chapel', was a significant part of Printing Office life with associations extending back into English industrial history. The late Jim Fraser, first MHR for the ACT, would address workers assembled under the trees. He was a former journalist and the Printing and Kindred Industries Union was dear to him.

In hard times when many people lived from week to week, wives would wait outside the closed doors on pay day to collect the wages from the men before going off to do the weekly shopping.

The practice was for the doors of the printing office to be closed promptly at 8.00am with latecomers not allowed entry until 8.15am and being docked 15 minutes pay for being late. The fifteen minutes penance was spent under the cypress trees.

Many staff rode bicycles to work leaving them unlocked in bike racks under the trees. There are many stories of people borrowing bikes and returning them at the end of the shift. Until recently evidence of these bike racks could still be seen under the trees. The galvanised bike sheds are still in use at the Railway Historical Society's site at Kingston.

The Cypress trees are thus a physical link to the former Government Printing Office. This office played a significant role in the government, working and social life of people in pre and post-war Canberra. With the demolition of the Printing Office the trees now play a similar role to copses of elms, oaks and black locust trees in rural areas around Canberra – providing indicators of past human endeavour – ie: *'the farmhouse may have gone but the trees remain as living reminders'*.

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**A5. ANALYSIS AGAINST THE CRITERIA SPECIFIED IN SCHEDULE 2 OF THE LAND (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT) ACT 1991:**

**Criterion (i):** *A place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure or representing a new achievement of its time.*

*Indicative value:*       high    med    low    not applicable

**Criterion (ii):** *A place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group.*

*Indicative value:*       high    med    low    not applicable

The Cypress trees are a prominent landmark within the Wentworth Avenue streetscape. The original composition of evergreen cypresses and interplanted flowering plums complemented the early street plantings of Roman Cypresses and flowering plums elsewhere along Wentworth Avenue.

**Criterion (iii):** *A place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest.*

*Indicative value:*       high    med    low    not applicable

**Criterion (iv):** *A place which is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations.*

*Indicative value:*       high    med    low    not applicable

The trees are significant for their association with the social history of the area. They mark the location of the Government Printing Office (now demolished) They are also prominent elements of the small park used by the workers and their families on a weekly basis.

**Criterion (v):** *A place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type.*

*Indicative value:*       high    med    low    not applicable

**Criterion (vi):** *A place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class.*

*Indicative value:*       high    med    low    not applicable

The inclusion of a pocket park within the urban area of Kingston and the designed use of evergreen cypress trees interplanted with flowering plums demonstrates historical public landscaping design of a distinctive character within Canberra during the 1920s and 1930s under the direction of Charles Weston and Alexander Bruce.

**Criterion (vii):** *A place which has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history.*

*Indicative value:*       high    med    low    not applicable

The Cypress trees have a significant association with the workers of the Government printing Office and their families. The small park containing the trees served as a congregation place for workers to farewell or meet families, a

meeting place for social interaction or union meetings during the working day, and as the repository of the workers private transport of the period – bicycles.

The ability of the trees to create a sense of place is strengthened by their continuing role as a prominent landmark within the streetscape, the absence of the Printing Office itself and the connection of the place with the former working lives of many members of the Canberra community.

The place signifies the former industrial functions of this part of Kingston.

**Criterion (viii): A place which represents the evolution of a natural landscape, including significant geological features, landforms, biota or natural processes;**  
Indicative value:  high  med  low  **not applicable**

**Criterion (ix): A place which is a significant habitat or locality for the life cycle of native species; for rare, endangered or uncommon species; for species at the limits of their natural range; or for district occurrences of species;**  
Indicative value:  high  med  low  **not applicable**

**Criterion (x): A place which exhibits unusual richness, diversity or significant transitions of flora, fauna or natural landscapes and their elements;**  
Indicative value:  high  med  low  **not applicable**

**Criterion (xi): A place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site.**  
Indicative value:  high  med  low  **not applicable**

## **A6. REFERENCES:**

- Dr Robert Boden detailed submission nominating the Himalayan Cypress trees to an interim Heritage Place Register. References cited by Boden include:
- *Printed By Authority: fifty Years of government printing in Canberra* by George Dick, 1977 NLA accession NLp 686.2099471D547
  - *A Printer's Retrospection: being a memoir of the first forty years of federation* by David Hicks, 1941 NLA accession NLp 655.194HIC.;
  - *Golden Jubilee 50 years of Government Printing in Canberra* a special edition of the Commonwealth Government Printing Office Journal July 1977.
  - *Trees and Shrubs in Canberra*, LD Pryor and JCG Banks, Little Hills Press 1993.
  - *Kingston Foreshore Site Cultural Mapping Study*, Freeman Collett & Partners Architects, unpublished report, 1996.
- Prof Ken Taylor *Review of Interim Heritage Place Nomination, Himalayan Cypress Trees Kingston Foreshore*, report to Heritage Unit (Environment ACT), July 2001.

## **A7. REGISTER DEVELOPMENT**

13 July 2001	Submission by Dr Robert Boden.
23 July 2001	Review of heritage assessment by Prof Ken Taylor.
27 July 2001	Preliminary review of nomination by Heritage Council at meeting #70.
15 August 2001	Draft interim Heritage Place Register circulated to ACT Heritage Council members and ACT Government stakeholders for comment
15 September 2001	Draft interim Heritage Place Register released for public comment

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