

NON-STATUTORY BACKGROUND INFORMATION For WODEN LIBRARY AND PHILIP HEALTH CENTRE, PHILIP

As of 14 July 2008

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE

- Woden Library, Block 27 Section 8 and Phillip Health Centre, Block 21 Section 8, Suburb of Phillip, District of Woden Valley. ACT
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HISTORY OF THE PLACE

The Woden Library was built in 1976, and is integrally linked with the Phillip Health Centre by its design and concrete pergola over the public space, all designed by the same architects (Ancher Mortlock and Woolley) for the National Capital Development Commission in 1975.

The development of Woden in the 1960s and Belconnen in the 1970s was part of the Y-Plan shift from Griffin's original plan in response to the growth of Canberra. These two new town centres were planned to cater for the increase in population and government office space to house the expanding public service and associated services. (Trickett 2004)

The cruciform urban plan of the Woden Town Centre, master planned by the NDC in 1963-64, has a north/south lineal axis, more dominant today than originally intended, with development that stretches from the south end large indoor shopping mall, Woden Plaza, and associated car-parking facilities, across the civic square, which is surrounded by commercial buildings including Canberra's tallest office building, Woden Tower, to the north where various multi storeyed public service buildings are situated. The east/west axis, which is less obvious today, extends across Callam Street from the Callam Offices across the civic square to community facilities to the west. (Trickett 2004)

The simple planning concept of a cruciform shape with the north arm for offices, south arm for retail mall and cross arms for community facilities remains but has been blurred and unbalanced within 1980s and 1990s expansion. The only element that remains with some integrity is the central pedestrian spine between the office buildings. (Eric Martin & Associates 2002).

The architecture is generally mediocre but there are some significant buildings:

- House 1970 Ian McKay, a Canberra Medallion winner of an innovative and creative design (since demolished).
- Callam Street Offices 1978, John Andrews, striking and innovative space aged buildings exhibiting strong structural expression.
- Woden Library and Health Centre, 1975-76, Ancher Mortlock and Woolley, a finely detailed complex of cream block and smooth concrete with some excellent features, and

Discovery House 1997, Woods Bagot, a fresh and innovative contribution to the office complex which broke new ground in form, use of colour and materials has some architectural interest although not significant in Heritage terms.

An outline of the history of libraries in Canberra is provided below (AARL 2003):

- 1927 No public library services for the new city of Canberra when Parliament House opened.
- 1935 Small building erected in Kings Ave to house the National Library collection, including a lending service for the people of Canberra.
- 1947 National Library Extension Division established to develop public library services for ACT.
- 1952 Pilot children's library opened in Kingston, with another at Corroboree Park in 1953.
- 1960 The name Canberra Public Library Service was adopted and in 1963 the Canberra Public Library Service Advisory Committee was established to advise the Council of the National Library. Canberra's population increased from 46,000 in 1959 to 121,000 in 1969.
- 1961 Civic Library opened in March 1961, followed by Hughes Library in 1964 and a children's library in Lyneham, and also Downer, Red Hill and Narrabundah.
- 1969 First permanent district library opened in Dickson, then Woden Library in 1977. Smaller service points closed and these larger libraries added new services such as paperback lending, music listening facilities, music score lending and Print Handicapped cassette service.

The Woden Library and Phillip Health Centre represents one of the ongoing works by Ancher Mortlock and Woolley in Canberra by one of Australia's leading architects. Other Canberra work includes Lyneham and Dickson Flats (1960), RAIA Headquarters (1976), Criminology Building (1979), Yarralumla Townhouses (1984), ADFA Cadets Mess (1986), the Australian/Hellenic Memorial (1987) and the Tuggeranong Health Centre (1988)

Sydney Ancher began an architectural practice in 1946. It was formed into the partnership of Ancher Mortlock and Murray in 1951 and practised under that name until 1964 when Ken Woolley left the Government Architect's office to become a partner. The firm of Ancher Mortlock Murray and Woolley was incorporated in 1969. Over the years Ancher, Murray and recently Mortlock have retired. During the past 41 years of practice, the firm has been responsible for projects of greatly varying size, cost and function. Commissions have been completed for a wide variety of government departments, statutory authorities and a variety of commercial clients. (RAIA 1988).

Ken Woolley was awarded the RAIA Gold Medal in 1993, Harold Mortlock in 1979 and Sidney Ancher in 1975.

The Woden Valley woven tapestry by Belinda Ransom that hangs in the Woden Library depicts a slab hut, Yarralumla Woodshed, the original Yarralumla Homestead and the new Woden TAFE College. The top and bottom panels are panoramas of the valley as grazing land and the modern town. (NCDC 1986).

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE

The Library is located on the corner of Corinna and Furzer Streets Phillip within the Woden Town Centre and provides an important community facility. Built in 1976 the building is integrally linked by its design, construction form, and concrete pergola over the public space with the Phillip Health Centre which was designed by the same architects (Ancher Mortlock and Woolley) for the National Capital Development Commission in 1975, and with which it forms an integrated public function.

Both buildings are two storey buildings (The Health Centre also has a basement car-park) in the Late Twentieth Century Brutalist style with cream painted concrete block with expressed (sandblasted) concrete columns, wall sections (entry and stair), fascia panel, spandrel panel to balcony and external stairs. There is a single storey section to north.

There is a full height bronze anodised aluminium framed glazing to entry but few windows elsewhere.

The Library links with the Phillip Health Centre of similar design by a concrete pergola between the two and over the public space that provides access to the entrances of both buildings; a smaller concrete pergola is over a first floor verandah on the north side of the Library.

The building has a low pitch metal roof concealed by parapet walls.

The interior of the library has large open areas with a two storey void at the entry. A range of support rooms are located along the north and east sides. Finishes internally are exposed concrete, painted walls, carpeted floors and suspended ceilings. The interior was refurbished in 2004.

The library contains a woven tapestry by Belinda Ransom title 'Woden Valley' (1984) which is an important art work representing the history of the Woden Valley.

The Health Centre also has a two storey central space from which a network of rooms are located off at both levels. Finishes include exposed concrete, painted walls, carpeted floors and suspended ceilings.

The Health Centre was upgraded by May and Russell Architects in 1999 which included a small extension to the south east, the south and a change to the Corrina Street entry.

The Library and Health Centre are an integrated design and provide a strong communal space between covered by the grant concrete trellis. The work by May and Russell is away from this communal space and has substantially not affected the relationship between the two buildings.

The buildings are in quite good condition with only some minor maintenance required. Light posts were inserted into the space beneath the pergola in May/June 2008.

REFERENCES

'CASL Libraries 2003 – A Snapshot of their History, Services and Key Facts' in *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*, Vol 34, No 4, December 2003.

Eric Martin and Associates 2002 *Woden Heritage Study*, undertaken for ACT Planning and Land Management.

NCDC 1986 *Works of Art in Canberra – Volume 2*, NCDC, Canberra.

RAIA 1988 *Architects of Australia*, The Bicentennial Edition, Images Australia Pty Ltd, Melbourne.

Trickett, Graeme 2004 'Nomination of Callum Offices to ACT interim Heritage Register'

PHOTOGRAPHS AND PLANS

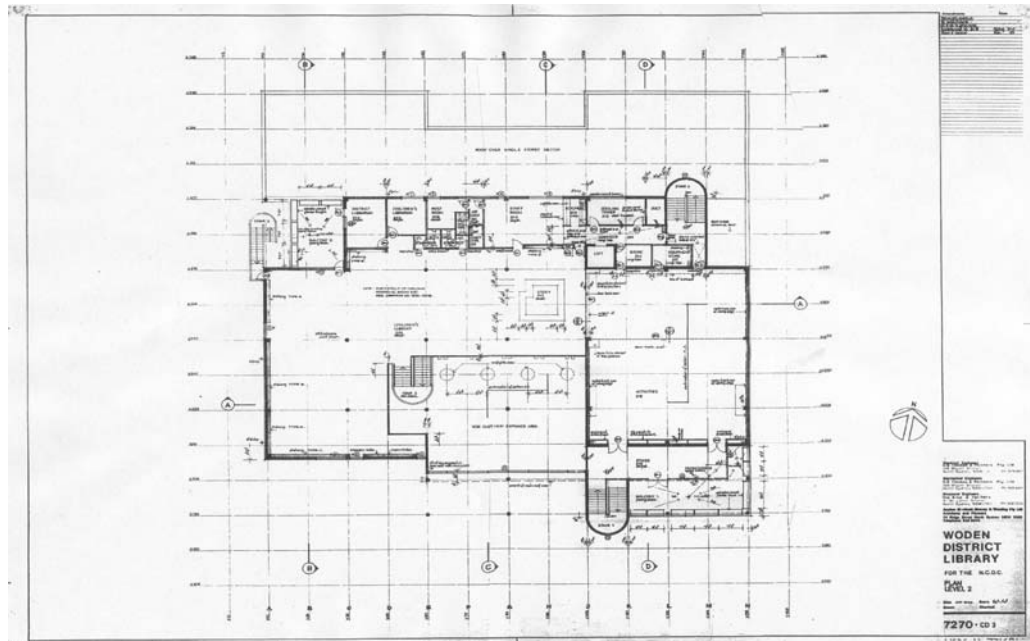


Figure 1. Woden Library Floor Plan



Figure 2. Phillip Health Centre – Basement Plan

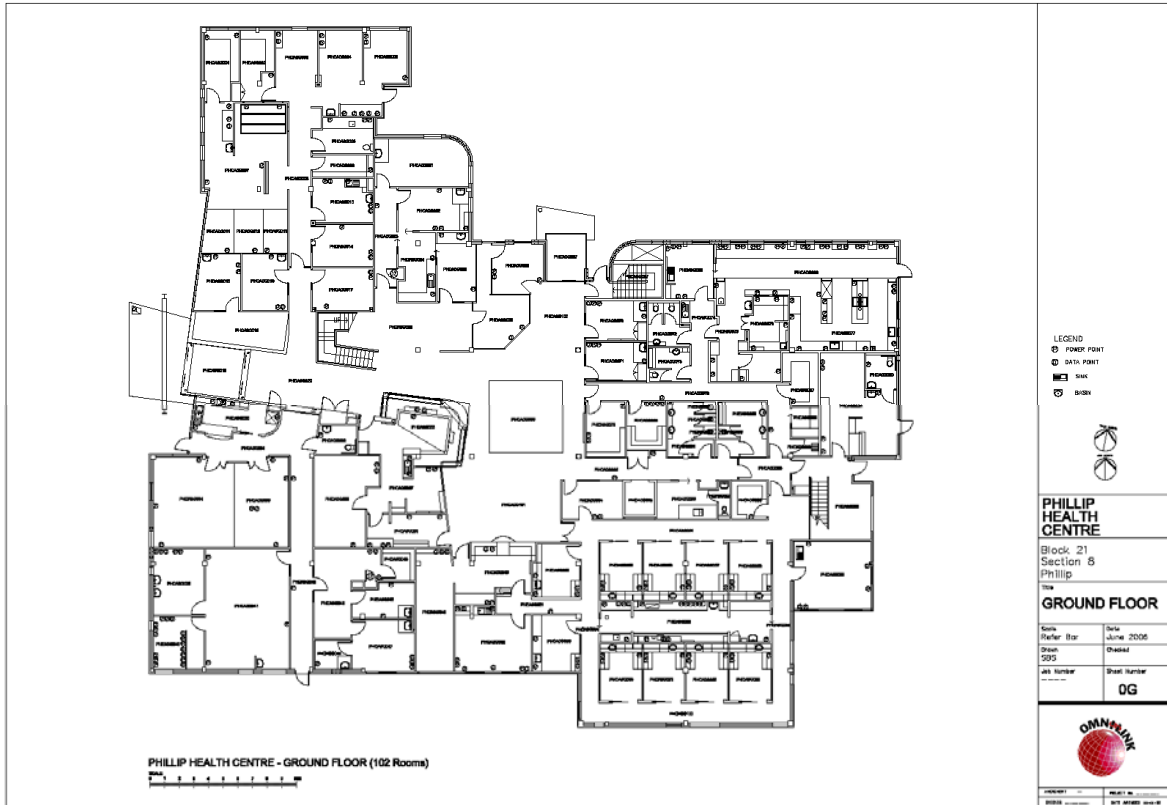


Figure 3. Phillip Health Centre – Ground Floor Plan

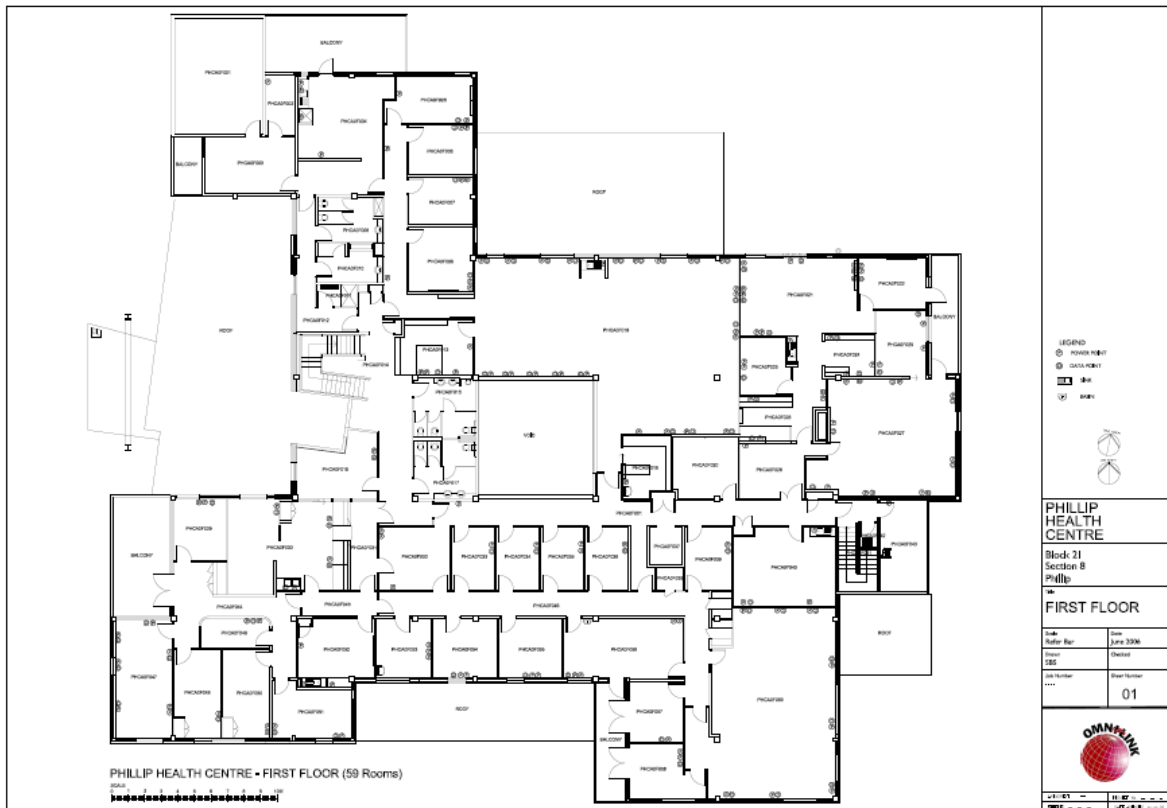


Figure 4. Phillip Health Centre – First Floor Plan



Figures 5-19. Internal Photos
Woden Library and Philip Health
Centre



Figures 20-22. Internal Photos Woden Library and Philip Health Centre