

# Heritage (Decision about Registration of 4 Cobby St, Campbell) Notice 2008 (No 1)

Notifiable Instrument NI 2008 - 425

made under the

*Heritage Act 2004* section 42 Notice of decision about registration

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**1. Revocation**

This instrument replaces NI2008 – 120

**2. Name of instrument**

This instrument is the Heritage (Decision about Registration for 4 Cobby St, Campbell) Notice 2008 (No 1).

**3. Registration details of the place**

Registration details of the place are at Attachment A: Register entry for 4 Cobby St, Campbell.

**4. Reason for decision**

The ACT Heritage Council has decided that the 4 Cobby St, Campbell 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**

11 September 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**

11 September 2008



ACT Heritage Council

**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 place:

- **4 Cobby Street**

Block 5, Section 40

**CAMPBELL**

**DATE OF REGISTRATION**

Notified: 11 September 2008 Notifiable Instrument: NI2008-425

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

- 4 Cobby Street, Block 5, Section 40, Suburb of Campbell, ACT.
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## HISTORY OF THE PLACE

4 Cobby Street, Campbell was designed by Roy Grounds, with Theo Bishoff as project architect, in 1969-70. It was built in 1970-71.

Grounds was recognised as one of Melbourne's and Australia's leading architects of the modern movement. He was awarded the RAI Gold Medal in 1968 and knighted the same year. As noted by Metcalf (2003:153):

*Roy Grounds was an eclectic individualistic architect... By the late 1920s he was in the United States on a travelling scholarship working in New York and Los Angeles, the latter at RKO Studios as a set designer. Upon his return to Melbourne he formed a partnership with Geoffrey Newton that is now recognised as one of the early architectural practices to introduce Modernism to Australia. ... Between 1939 and 1942 Grounds, practising on his own, designed several significant apartment blocks. After the wars he re-established his private practice and then from 1953 to 1962 was part of Grounds Romberg and Boyd, It was during this period that he produced the important Canberra works.... In 1959 Grounds won a commission to design the National Gallery of Victoria and Cultural Centre, and eventually left the partnership in 1962 to concentrate on this project which occupied him until his death in 1981, aged 76.*

The building at 4 Cobby Street, Campbell is one of a small number of private residences that Grounds designed in Canberra. It exhibits aspects of his work that combine rational planning with the use of natural materials and explores the use of geometric forms.

Grounds is associated with the following buildings in Canberra:

- Australian Academy of Science, 1958
- Forrest Townhouses, 1960
- Holy Trinity Lutheran National Memorial Church, Turner, 1961
- Houses at 42,44, 46 Vasey Crescent, Campbell, 1960-61
- CSIRO Phytotron Building, Acton, 1963
- 24 Cobby Street, Campbell, 1963-4
- ANU Botany Building, 1968

His major works in Victoria include:

- Ranelagh, Mt Eliza, 1934-5
- Evan Price House, Essendon, 1935-6
- Bellaire Flats, St Kilda, 1936
- Moonbria Flats, Toorak, 1941
- Round House, Frankston, 1952
- Grounds House and Flats, Toorak, 1953-4
- National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1959-68
- Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne, 1969-84

Theo Bishoff practised as an architect in Canberra in the 1960s.

Sir Otto Frankel (1900-98) was a renowned Geneticist who advanced agricultural science as head of the CSIRO's plant industry division from 1951-1961. He was knighted in 1961. In his retirement he was able to undertake some of his greatest work, arguing the cause of bio-diversity; the preservation of the genetic pool rather than individual species, long before it became fashionable. In 1962 he was elevated to the executive of the CSIRO, and on retirement in 1966 he returned to plant industry as an honorary research fellow, continuing his cytogenetic research...until he was 90. At 95 he published his last book, *The Conservation of Plant Bio-diversity* (1995 with A H D Brown. and J J Burdon).

His major achievement on the world stage took place after his formal retirement. He became involved in the genetic resources issue through the International Biological Program of UNESCO.

Frankel became acquainted with Grounds during the design of the Academy of Science Building. Frankel was a member of the committee, Grounds the design architect. From this friendship Grounds was later to design the house in which Frankel spent his 'retirement'.

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## DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE

4 Cobby Street, Campbell, has a simple rectangular plan, which has been slightly curved in form and set out concentrically with the curve of the street boundary. It is sited to the front of a double block and sits largely to the western side. The block is bounded to the north and east by Canberra Nature Park, the Australian native garden flowing into that space. The concave curved face brick wall of the front façade is relieved only by an unobtrusive recessed entry porch and simple ash timber veneered door and seven small windows concealed behind 'hit and miss' brick screening or grilles. The effect is somewhat intimidating. The attached double garage lies to the west side under the main roof form. (Metcalf 2003:79)

The front door opens into a small tiled lobby. A door to the left leads to the laundry and then into the kitchen. Both these rooms face the street. The lobby opens directly into the living room, which is separated from the dining room by a brick fireplace with joinery on both sides. These rooms open to a brick paved terrace and rear garden with a northerly aspect. Sun shading is provided by a 2m roof overhang.

A sliding door opens directly from the dining room into the garage. To the rear of this are located a walk through store room and a utility room which opens off a service terrace, separated from the main living terrace by trellis and planter.

A sky lit hallway leads from the living room to the bedrooms. Two large bedrooms are located on the north east side with windows overlooking the rear garden. At the end of the hallway is a study with a window to the rear garden and another looking over the eastern side garden, together with an external door which links the room with the garden via suspended concrete steps and a pipe rail. A smaller third bedroom is in the south east corner with a large window to the east and a small window to the street concealed by a brick grille. Along the south side of the passage way are two bathrooms lit by skylights and brick grilled windows.

All bedrooms have extensive joinery and the passageway is lined with storage cupboards on the south side, which together with the entrances to the bathroom and bedroom 3 form a wall of door panels

The floor is a suspended concrete slab with built in oil fired ducted heating. Finishes include carpet to living areas, bedroom, passage and study, quarry tiles to entry lobby and bathrooms, and sheet vinyl to laundry and kitchen. Walls comprise mid brown exterior face brick throughout. The garage areas and north wall of the living areas are of cavity brick with face brick internally, the bathrooms are cavity brick with rendered walls internally, other internal walls are timber studwork lined internally with 900mm wide

and full length Mountain Ash veneer panelling. All windows and sliding doors are bronze anodised aluminium.

Ceilings to living areas are 75 x 25 spaced Mountain Ash boards. Wall panelling was placed before ceilings and there are no skirtings or cornices. The flat metal deck roof has a 450mm high metal fascia all round with a projecting, slotted timber detailed eave of 450mm generally to the north and south elevations, extending to 1800mm deep over the living and service terraces. Gutters and downpipes are concealed.

The garden, with its original curved brick wall, native plants and fruit trees, is relatively well maintained. It is understood that Otto Frankel was very involved in the garden planting and maintenance.

### **Condition**

The building is in good condition and is well maintained.

### **Design Comments**

Post War Melbourne Regional Style is characterised in the building by:

- steel roofing
- widely projecting eaves
- long, unbroken roofline
- narrow edge to roof

Post War International Style (1940 – 1960) is characterised in the building by:

- cubiform overall shape
- overhang for shade
- plain smooth wall surface
- large sheets of glass

This combination of styles is also evident in Grounds' building at 24 Cobby Street, Campbell, although that building is significantly altered, meaning that No. 4 is the only surviving example.

The individual styles are illustrated in Canberra in the following buildings:

Post War Melbourne Regional Style:

- Forrest Townhouses by Roy Grounds, 1959
- Houses at 42,44,46 Vasey Crescent, Campbell by Roy Grounds, 1960-61
- Fenner House, Red Hill, by Robin Boyd, 1954
- Manning Clarke House, Forrest, by Robin Boyd, 1954

Post War International Style:

- Bowden House, Deakin, by Harry Seidler, 1952
- Birch House, Yarralumla, by Bunning & Madden
- Benjamin House, Deakin, by Alex Jelinek, 1956

Other elements which are important to the integrity of the building include the curved plan and resulting radiating wall setout, open planning of main living areas, the interior opening up to the landscape, the timber veneer lining boards and panels, the extensive joinery and the fine detailing of materials and finishes.

The house has not been altered, the original utility room being used as a studio, to be converted to a guest room, while a two-roomed studio is constructed to the rear of the house in 2008. A dual occupancy building to be constructed in 2008 to the west of the current house, on its very large block, is designed to reflect the values of the Grounds house, including the curved front wall.

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## STATEMENT ABOUT THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE

The building within its landscape setting at 4 Cobby Street, Campbell is significant for its architectural and design qualities. The building is a combination of Post War International Style and Post War Melbourne Regional Style and displays typical characteristics of both. The building is unaltered and in good condition in its original native landscape, and provides a wider understanding of both styles and the work of the architect, Roy Grounds.

4 Cobby Street has strong associations with significant people. Sir Roy Grounds was celebrated as one of Australia's foremost architects of the modern movement. This is an excellent example of his work and one of only a few examples of his explorations in these styles in Canberra.

The original house owner, Sir Otto Frankel was recognised internationally as Australia's pre-eminent Geneticist and was a member of the executive of the CSIRO. The writing and research he completed after his formal retirement is considered to be his most productive and was undertaken in this residence, which was specifically designed for this phase of his life.

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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. 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;**

This place does not meet this criterion.

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

The house is a good example of Post War International Style, exhibiting typical characteristics such as cubiform overall shape and large sheets of glass. It also exhibits characteristics of Post War Melbourne Regional style including widely projecting eaves and a long unbroken roofline.

The following design features are of additional significance:

Steel roofing, overhang for shade, plain smooth wall surfaces, curved plan, open planning of living rooms, radiating walls, timber veneered plywood sheeting and boarding, extensive interior joinery, and the detailing of materials and finishes.

The building is unaltered and a good example of Grounds' work in which he combined aspects of both styles, as recognised by the RAI. The building can be compared with 24 Cobby Street, in its original design before altered, and 42, 44, 46 Vasey Street, Campbell.

**(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;**

This criterion is not applicable.

**(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;**

This place does not meet this criterion.

**(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**

This place does not meet this criterion.

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

This place does not meet this criterion.

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

The building is significant for its association with its architect, Sir Roy Grounds and its owner, Sir Otto Frankel.

Sir Roy Grounds (1905-81) is recognised as one of Australia's leading architects of the modern movement and a key practitioner of the Post War Melbourne Regional Style. He was awarded the RAIA Gold medal in 1968 and knighted the same year. The building at 4 Cobby Street, Campbell is one of a small number of private residences that Grounds designed in Canberra. It exhibits aspects of his work that combine rational planning with the use of natural materials and explores the use of geometric forms.

Sir Otto Frankel (1900-98) was a renowned Geneticist who advanced agricultural science as head of the CSIRO plant industry division from 1951-1961. He was knighted in 1961. His major achievement on the world stage took place after his formal retirement. Frankel became acquainted with Grounds during the design of the Academy of Science Building. Frankel was a member of the committee, Grounds the design architect; this led to Grounds designing Frankel's house.

**(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**

As an excellent intact example of a combination of Post War International Style and Post War Melbourne Regional Style in its original landscape setting, the building provides a valuable resource for students in providing a wider understanding of the both styles and the work of Roy Grounds.

**(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 THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE**

The physical features of the 4 Cobby Street, Campbell, that particularly reflect its heritage significance are:

- original external fabric, including metal deck roofing, concealed gutters and downpipes, metal fascia, slotted timber eaves detail, face brick walls, 'hit and miss' brick screening, brick sills, bronze anodised aluminium windows and sliding doors, ash veneered doors, suspended concrete steps and steel pipe rail from study.
- original internal fabric and detailing including quarry tiled floors, plywood veneer wall panelling, veneered doors, timber boarded ceilings, timber veneered joinery units;
- curved planning arrangement;
- the Australian native landscape setting.

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### **REASON FOR REGISTRATION**

*4 Cobby Street, Campbell, has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance against 3 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 4 Cobby Street, Campbell.

The guiding conservation objective is that 4 Cobby Street, Campbell, shall be conserved and appropriated 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. 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 that area or component (i.e. a Statement of Heritage Effects – SHE).

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1. CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Draft provisional registration entry was released for public comment on 22 April 2008 and period for public comment closes on 22 May 2008.

### 2. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Apperly, R, R Irving and P Reynolds 1989 *Identifying Australian Architecture Styles and Terms from 1788 to Present*, Angus & Robertson.

Bishoff, Theo April 1970 ACTPLA Building File, Original Working Drawings & Specification.

Metcalf, A 2003 *Canberra Architecture*, Landmark Press, Item Q114.

Miles, M 2008 [www.canberrahouse.com/houses/1960s-house-profiles/4-cobby-street-campbell-1969-70](http://www.canberrahouse.com/houses/1960s-house-profiles/4-cobby-street-campbell-1969-70)

Royal Australian Institute of Architects Register of Significant Twentieth Century Buildings, Citation No. R124

### 3. PHOTOGRAPHS AND PLANS

**Figure 1. Front view of 4 Cobby St, Campbell**



([www.canberrahouse.com/houses/1960s-house-profiles/4-cobby-street-campbell-1969-70](http://www.canberrahouse.com/houses/1960s-house-profiles/4-cobby-street-campbell-1969-70))

**Figure 2. Location of 4 Cobby St, Campbell**

