



ACT Heritage Council

Entry to the ACT Heritage Register

Heritage Act 2004

20019. St.John the Baptist Church and Churchyard

Section 33 Block 1(part) Block 2 Block 10 (part)

REID

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19. St. John The Baptist Church and Churchyard, Reid [V56]¹ [V145]²

Location

District of Canberra Central, Division of Reid, Section 33 Block 1 part, Block 2 and Block 10 part and part of adjacent road reservations to the nature strip as identified in Figure 19 and indicated on the Territory Plan Map by the Heritage Register Overlay at H19.

Features Intrinsic To The Heritage Significance Of The Place

The place comprises:

- a) St John the Baptist Church and Churchyard:
 - i) church building;
 - ii) rectory building;
 - iii) lychgates;
 - iv) tree planting surrounding the church and churchyard; and
 - v) graveyard.
- b) St John's Schoolhouse Museum:
 - i) the schoolroom and residence building; and
 - ii) the surrounding open space

Statement Of Significance

St John's Church has been a focus for the religious and social life of the Canberra region since the 1840s, and enduring into the development years of the National Capital.

St John's Church has a strong association with the early pioneering pastoral families of the Canberra area. The church was valued by the local Anglican congregation and was seen by others as a feature of the landscape. It has particularly significant links with the Campbell family. Rev Alberto Dias Soares, who was engaged to design the extension to the nave and add the chancel and crypt, had a strong affiliation with the region through his design of local church buildings. The impact of the Rev Pierce Galliard Smith as the Rector for fifty years was significant, as are his tree plantings. They are still to be seen at St John's Church, Glebe Park and the site of the old Glebe House.

The prominent Victorian architect Edmund Blacket (1817-1883) is strongly associated with the church. He was a prolific designer of churches in New South Wales and an eminent architect of his time. Blacket was the designer of the tower and spire that was to become a familiar landmark in the Canberra region.

The Church building has grown with an increasing congregation, into a building of fine proportion. The many plaques on the internal walls are an historical testament to the local people through the years. The church reflects the strong links with the Campbell family, while the influence of Rev Pierce Galliard Smith can be seen in the tree planting.

Examples of the fabric of the church at various stages of construction are clearly evident and shows various materials and crafted finishes. The large stained glass east window represents an ambitious attempt considering the development of Australian technology at the time.

The graveyard is as old as the church itself with many members of pioneering families interred there. The headstones provide a valuable social history and are complementary not only to the life of the church, but also the early history of the Limestone Plains.

The East and West Lychgates at St John's are a rare example of this type of structure in Australia. These gates combined with the hedge, planted by the Federal Capital Commission in 1926, assist in retaining the early character of the church by visually shielding it from the encroaching development of urban Canberra.

¹ [V56: Added to Heritage Places Register 27/09/1996 (Variation Number 56)]

² [V145: Amended 14/09/2000 (Variation Number 145)]

The grounds, including the Rectory and Horse Paddock contribute to the visual circumscription of the site, the trees and planting maintaining the serenity and distinctive character of the church within an otherwise busy part of the city.

St John's Schoolhouse was the first combined school and school teachers' residence built on the Limestone Plains. The school building and remnant open space to the west, which formed part of the school's playground, are tangible evidence of the education practices in the community life of early European settlement in the ACT. The place is important for the way it demonstrates the education practices for children of the families brought out from Scotland to work on the Duntroon estate, as well as for other pioneering rural families on the Limestone Plains. It is also demonstrative of the attitudes and social mores of the Campbells of 'Duntroon', as the benefactors of the school.

St John's Schoolhouse museum is important for its role as a teaching and research site for local and interstate schools, TAFE colleges and universities in local history and cultural and social values.

Specific Requirements

In the National Capital Plan, the land which comprises the St John the Baptist Precinct is specified as a Designated Area under the provisions of s. 10(1) of the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* and work carried out is subject to the approval of the National Capital Authority. The land is not classified as National Land under the *National Land Ordinance 1989* or subsequent amendments. Consequently the land is Territory Land and Territory planning requirements may also apply. In accordance with s.54(1) of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*, the following requirements are identified as essential to the conservation of the heritage significance of this place. These requirements apply to works undertaken by the Territory and in circumstances where the Territory is the approving authority. The Territory's conservation policy for the place is:

St John the Baptist Precinct, comprising the church and grounds, including the Rectory and associated garage and sheds, the Horse Paddock, the graveyard, the Schoolhouse Museum, the open areas of grass and mature trees as well as the hedges and pathways that link the outer grounds to the main church building and schoolhouse, is to be conserved and appropriately maintained consistent with its heritage significance.

i) Building including alterations and additions

- a) Minor external alterations and changes may be made to the buildings, including the window weather mouldings, and the conservation of the stonework, and other external finishes where they will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place and where they are undertaken in accordance with the current Conservation and Management Plans for the place endorsed by the Heritage Council.
- b) Any work to conserve the place shall be in keeping with the requirements of the current Conservation and Management Plans endorsed by the Heritage Council.

ii) Landscape

- a) The area around the existing buildings shall be retained as open space and additional buildings or structures shall only be permitted where they do not adversely affect the heritage significance of the Place.
- b) The lychgates and perimeter hedges shall be conserved to provide a visual screen.

iii) Demolition

- a) Subject to (iii)(b) demolition of the original built fabric shall not be permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances, including circumstances in which the building or structure is structurally unsound and beyond economic repair or where there are significant public health and safety reasons to warrant demolition. Demolition shall not be permitted unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative.
- b) The demolition of original built fabric shall only be permitted in the context of sympathetic alteration and additions.

Figure 19: St John the Baptist Precinct, Reid

