

Australian Capital Territory

# Heritage (Swinger Hill Cluster Housing) Guidelines 2013 (No 1)\*

Disallowable Instrument DI2013–34

made under the

*Heritage Act 2004, Section 25 Guidelines about conserving heritage significance*

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## 1. Name of Instrument

This instrument is the Heritage (Swinger Hill Cluster Housing) Guidelines 2013 (No 1).

## 2. Commencement

The Instrument commences on the day after it is notified.

## 3. Guidelines

The ACT Heritage Council makes the following guidelines under section 25 of the *Heritage Act 2004* in relation to the conservation of the heritage significance of the Swinger Hill Housing Precinct. The Guidelines are Schedule 1 of this Instrument.

Jennifer O'Connell  
Acting Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
13 February 2013

\*Name amended under Legislation Act, s 60



ACT Heritage Council

## Heritage Guidelines

### *Heritage Act 2004*

#### **Heritage Guidelines: Swinger Hill Cluster Housing, Phillip**

1-30 Barnet Close and 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, and 49 Barnet Close, Phillip, ACT

Blocks 1-14 Section 62 Phillip, Block 1 Section 128 Phillip, Block 1 Section 124 Phillip, Blocks 1-30 Section 63 Phillip, and Block 1 Section 125 Phillip, (Part) Block 1 Section 122 Philip Woden Valley.

Adjacent road verges as indicated within the registered boundary

This document has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council.

Copies of the Register Entry and Guidelines are available for inspection at the ACT Heritage Unit. For further information please contact:

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## SWINGER HILL CLUSTER HOUSING, PHILLIP.

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### CONTENTS

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE.....	3
STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE.....	3
FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE .....	4
APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES.....	4
1.0 CONSERVATION OF THE SUBDIVISION AND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING BUSHLAND SETTING.....	5
1.1 <i>Road and Subdivision Patterns</i>	
1.2 <i>The Bushland Setting and Predominately Native Character of Public Landscaping</i>	
1.3 <i>New Street Furniture and Utility Services</i>	
2.0 CONSERVING THE UNITY OF FORM AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OF ORIGINAL RESIDENCES WITHIN THE STREETScape.....	6
2.1 <i>Unity of the Cluster and Additions to Original Residences</i>	
2.2 <i>Architectural Character of the Original Residences</i>	
2.3 <i>New Architecture</i>	
3.0 CONSERVING THE STREETScape VALUES OF THE CLUSTERFORM INCLUDING the HISTORIC EMPHASIS ON CAR ACCESS and LANDSCAPE ACCENTS .....	8
3.1 <i>Garages and Carports for all Original residences</i>	
3.2 <i>Verges, Crossings and Driveways</i>	
3.3 <i>Cluster Linkages, Courtyard Walls, and Fences including Designed Letter-box Elements</i>	
4.0 SOLAR PANELS, WATER TANKS AND NEW TECHNOLOGY.....	9
4.1 <i>Historical Integrity of the Precinct</i>	
5.0 DEMOLITION.....	9
5.1 <i>Preserving the Historical Integrity of the Precinct</i>	
FIGURE 2: SITE VIEWS – BOUNDARIES AND REGISTERED AREA.....	11
FIGURE 3: BLOCK AND SECTION PLAN.....	12

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## IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE

Swinger Hill Cluster Housing, 1-30 Barnet Close and 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, and 49 Barnet Close, Phillip

Blocks 1-14 Section 62 Phillip, Block 1 Section 128 Phillip, Block 1 Section 124 Phillip, Blocks 1-30 Section 63 Phillip, and Block 1 Section 125 Phillip, (Part) Block 1 Section 122 Phillip Woden Valley.

Adjacent road verges as indicated within the registered boundary

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## STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

This statement refers to the Heritage Significance of the place as required in s12(d) of the *Heritage Act 2004* (the Act).

The Swinger Hill Cluster Housing is of heritage significance as important evidence of a distinctive design of exceptional interest, for its strong and special associations with a development and cultural phase in local ACT history, for showing qualities of innovation, as a rare example of medium density stepped housing and as a notable example of medium density cluster housing in the ACT.

The planning design of Swinger Hill is of exceptional interest as one of the first medium-density residences in Australia to achieve a density of 40 persons per acre. It retains a high level of integrity which continues to demonstrate the design principles at the time of its planning and construction in the 1970s. Respecting the contours and natural elements of the site and achieving privacy and individuality in each townhouse, it offers alternative approaches to residential accommodation and challenges previous notions of suburban living.

The Swinger Hill Cluster Housing has a strong and special association with the cultural phase of 1970s planning ideals for medium-density housing and the NCDCs experimentation in providing alternative forms of suburban lifestyles at this time. The concept of Swinger Hill is widely recognised as 'the first major housing development to challenge directly the Australian suburb' (Freestone, 2010: 200), in terms of the combination of medium-density living and the arrangement of units. Its planning and development was in direct response to NCDCs recognition of a need to curtail urban sprawl and minimise an otherwise wasteful use of land resources.

A high degree of innovation is demonstrated as Swinger Hill Cluster Housing was the first medium density cluster housing in Australia to achieve a density of 40 persons per acre, providing an alternative lifestyle and additional housing choices for Canberra residents in the 1970s.

It is a rare example of medium density stepped housing located on a hillside in the ACT. The stepped nature of the housing illustrates the planning response to the site's topography and contours. This distinctive feature is uncommon within the ACT.

The Swinger Hill Cluster Housing is a notable example of medium density cluster housing, demonstrating the main characteristics of this kind. It is notable as the first medium density housing in the ACT which pioneered the way for later developments.

## **FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE**

The attributes listed below are assessed as features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place:

- Original residences;
  - Physical and visual links between residences;
  - Individual courtyard design;
  - Pedestrian pathways and communal open spaces;
  - Orientation of residences to the north or north-east;
  - Underground cabling of services; and
  - Variety in individual house types, allowing a degree of flexibility and freedom of choice.
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## **APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES**

The guiding conservation objective is that the Swinger Hill Cluster Housing, Phillip, 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. 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).

The 'Heritage Guidelines - Swinger Hill Cluster Housing, Phillip', prepared by the ACT Heritage Council (the Council) provide detailed guidance on conservation measures for proposed works and development in the Swinger Hill Cluster Housing and should be referred to for specific conservation advice.

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## **APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE PRECINCT**

In accordance with S.25 of the Act, a series of applicable heritage guidelines have been identified to implement conservation objectives to ensure the retention of the heritage significance of the place.

### **Intent:**

To retain and conserve the intrinsic features of the precinct:

- for their ability to demonstrate historical values including medium density and cluster planning principles and architectural design. The planning principles and architectural design of Swinger Hill is distinguished from earlier urban development within Canberra that is characterised by individual housing in large garden settings; and
- for the physical and visual links between residences arising from the integration of medium-density built forms on a hillside location.

The following interpretations shall apply in respect of the inclusion of 'shall' and 'should' within these applicable heritage guidelines:

'decision maker' means the ACT Heritage Council.

'shall' the requirement is mandatory and must be complied with in any development or action post dating gazettal of this Register.

'should' the requirement represents the Council's interpretation of how a development may fulfil the relevant objective in a manner that is consistent with the conservation of the heritage values identified in the statement of significance and intrinsic features. The Council shall have discretion to accept an alternate solution subject to the applicant demonstrating to the satisfaction of the Council that:

- the alternative solution fulfils the relevant conservation objective without risk of adverse impact upon the heritage values, and
- the alternative solution provides a high quality outcome which is comparable to the outcome that would be achieved by directly complying with the relevant requirement, or
- the alternative is necessary to address public health and safety concerns.

Buildings included within these guidelines are classified as identified original dwellings and subject to the relevant applicable heritage requirements, unless specifically excluded.

<b>1.0 CONSERVATION OF THE SUBDIVISION AND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING BUSHLAND SETTING</b>	
<b>Objective 1.1 - Road and Subdivision Patterns:</b>	
To conserve the existing original road hierarchy and subdivision layout.	
<b>Mandatory Conservation Requirements</b>	
<b>1.1a</b>	Blocks shall retain the visual characteristics of the original development when viewed from the street or adjacent public domain, i.e. articulated cluster development of medium density original residences.
<b>1.1b</b>	Roads shall retain their current alignments and widths and shall remain bitumen or asphalt sealed with ribbed concrete traffic calming devices in their original location. Kerbs, gutters and driveway crossings shall remain in the same location and of the same alignment.
<b>1.1c</b>	Original footpaths and grassed verges shall retain their alignments and widths. Surface treatments shall remain consistent with the original throughout the precinct. All pedestrian walkways shall be retained.
<b>1.1d</b>	Visitors parking with crushed red granite surfaces shall be retained.
<b>Objective 1.2 – The bushland setting and predominantly native character of public landscaping:</b>	
To reflect the perimeter bushland setting including the predominant use of native trees and plantings within the precinct, on verges and in the Children's Park Reserve.	
<b>Mandatory Conservation Requirements</b>	
<b>1.2a</b>	The Children's Park Reserve, (Section 124, Block 1) shall remain an open area with seating, native trees and plantings and play equipment.
<b>Requirements Subject to the Discretion of the decision maker</b>	
<b>1.2b</b>	'Environmental Weeds' or trees where the species has not proven suited to the location may be replaced with an alternate species. Replacement species should, at maturity, be of similar size, shape and habit to the original.
<b>1.2c</b>	Original verge alignments and widths should be retained. Surface treatments are varied throughout the precinct but should remain consistent with the original range of materials, and plantings should remain predominantly native species.

<b>Objective 1.3 – New Street Furniture and Utility Services:</b>	
To ensure that the design of new street furniture and utility services is complimentary with remaining examples of street furniture from the 1970 period and that it is of a uniform appearance.	
<b>Mandatory Conservation Requirements</b>	
<b>1.3a</b>	New utility services shall be routed underground in a manner that does not impact on built or major landscape elements.
<b>1.3b</b>	The design, scale and location of new or replacement street furniture (including street signs, seating and footpath lighting) shall compliment the design, scale and location of original street furniture and the streetscape character.
<b>Requirements subject to the discretion of the decision maker</b>	
<b>1.3c</b>	New street furniture or utility services should not require the removal or detrimental pruning of trees within the precinct.
<b>2.0 CONSERVING THE UNITY OF FORM AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OF ORIGINAL RESIDENCES WITHIN THE STREETScape</b>	
<b>Objective 2.1 - Unity of the Cluster and Additions to Original residences:</b>	
To conserve the arrangement of the original residences and their modulated design, which gives interest to the streetscape, as an articulated unified cluster by ensuring that additions and alterations to original residences do not adversely affect the articulated form of the cluster, including the physical and visual inks of the residences or privacy for neighbours.	
<b>Mandatory Conservation Requirements</b>	
<b>2.1a</b>	There shall be no new structures or infill additions between the original street facade of original residences and the street alignment.
<b>2.1b</b>	Minor additions may be made to the side or rear of original residences where the side or rear of the building does not face Barnett Close and where sufficient open space exists within the block, provided they do not impact adversely on the articulation of the cluster. Additions shall be articulated by a minimum setback of 1.8 metres from the nearest front face of the original residences.
<b>2.1c</b>	Original private courtyards shall be retained as private open space and there shall be no infill additions.
<b>2.1d</b>	The level (RL) of the ridgeline or highest roof point of any additions shall not exceed the level of the ridgeline or highest roof point of the original townhouse.
<b>2.1e</b>	Additions shall be sited to retain the visual characteristics of the original development when viewed from the street or adjacent public domain, i.e. the articulation of the cluster
<b>2.1f</b>	Upper level balconies shall not be enclosed above balustrade height. Horizontal timber railings of upper level balustrades may be replaced by timber balustrade designs complimentary with the architectural quality of the building.
<b>Objective 2.2 – Architectural Character of Original Residences</b>	
To conserve the unified architectural character of the cluster by ensuring that additions and alterations to original residences are sympathetic to the scale, form and materials of the original residences.	

**Mandatory Conservation Requirements**

**2.2a** The original roof shall not be replaced with an alternate form. Original roofing materials shall be retained or matched in repairs and maintenance. Applied finishes to the roofs of original residences shall not be allowed.

**2.2b** Face brickwork walls shall not be rendered or painted.

**2.2c** The roof form, roof pitch, eaves overhang, roof and wall materials and height-to-width ratio of windows in any additions visible from the street or adjacent to the public domain shall compliment the architectural character of the original townhouse.

**2.2d** Feature timber boarding below window sills and in association with skillion roof forms, and timber windows shall be retained or replaced where necessary with timber sections matching the original profile.

**2.2e** The colour palette used for the original townhouses shall reflect 1970s design and colour preferences and only subtle differences in colour applications will be permitted. Colours shall be in mid tones of an earthy range of brown, maroon, grey and an organic grey-green. For example, AS2700 Colours such as:

- Browns: X54, X55, X61, Y66
- Reds: R63, R64
- Greens: NB32, G53 G65
- Greys: N43, N44; N55, X62, G64

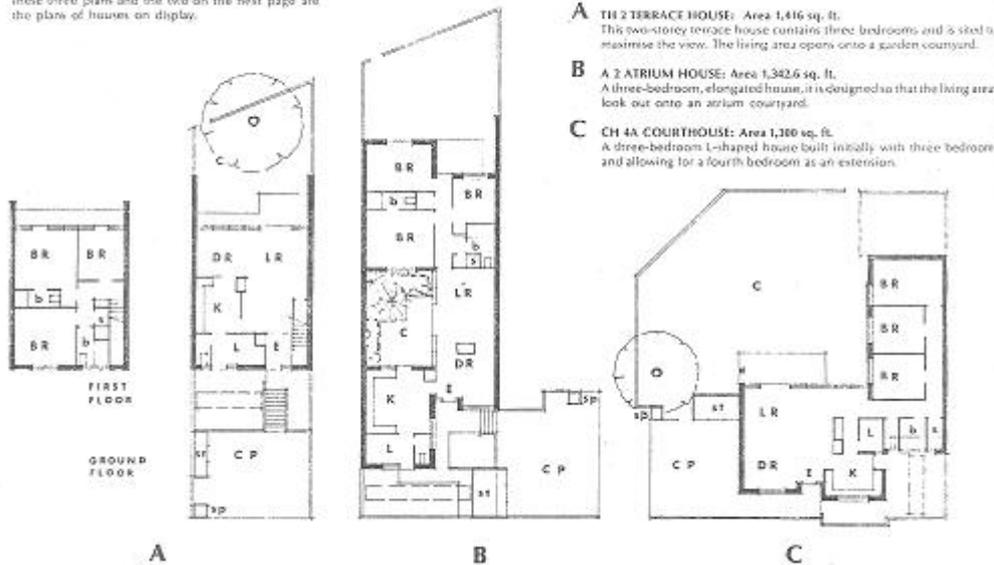
Down pipes and gutters shall be painted grey.

**2.2f** The original point of entry to original residences shall be conserved as an element which is not a prominent feature within the streetscape (e.g. whether the entry faces the street or is a side entry or recessed entry.)

Figure 1: The character of the point of entry is illustrated by the exhibition house plans where E is the entry.

**Exhibition House Plans**

These three plans and the two on the next page are the plans of houses on display.



<b>Requirements subject to the discretion of the decision maker</b>	
<b>2.2g</b>	Timber framed windows and doors should be replaced with timber to the same design.
<b>2.2h</b>	The external materials palette for any additions and alterations should include roof tiles to match original, face brick to match original and pigmented stained timber boarding to match as closely as possible the original.
<b>Objective 2.3 - New Architecture:</b>	
To enable the distinction between permissible additions and the original residences where this will not impair the integrity of the cluster.	
<b>Requirements subject to the discretion of the decision maker</b>	
<b>2.3a</b>	Additions that vary in architectural style to that of the original residences may be permitted on individual merit only where the design, scale and materials of the additions are subordinate to the form of the original dwelling, and the design is sympathetic to the original and compliments the architectural character of the precinct.
<b>3.0 CONSERVING THE STREETSCAPE VALUES OF THE CLUSTER FORM INCLUDING THE HISTORIC EMPHASIS ON CAR ACCESS AND LANDSCAPE ACCENTS</b>	
<b>Objective 3.1 - Garages and Carports for all Original Residences</b>	
To retain the existing pattern of open carports sited to the front of the block, where they are visually prominent in a streetscape character which favours car access over pedestrian access.	
<b>Mandatory Conservation Requirements</b>	
<b>3.1a</b>	Basement parking shall not be permitted as part of the approval for the replacement of a townhouse.
<b>3.1b</b>	Enclosure of carports shall not be permitted and garage doors shall not be fitted to open carports.
<b>3.1c</b>	Development shall not infill the original provision of vehicle accommodation.
<b>3.1d</b>	Underground car parking shall not be permitted.
<b>Requirements subject to the discretion of the decision maker</b>	
<b>3.1e</b>	Unobtrusive cupboards against original walls of carports may be constructed.
<b>Objective 3.2 - Verges, Crossings and Driveways:</b>	
To retain the streetscape character of the cluster with car access prominent in the streetscape, and minimal provision for pedestrian access within the close.	
<b>Mandatory Conservation Requirements</b>	
<b>3.2a</b>	Where landscaped accents exist in the form of grassed or planted verges they shall be retained in their original widths and remain either grassed or planted.
<b>3.2b</b>	Driveways shall be retained in their original locations. Original exposed aggregate concrete driveways shall be retained. New driveways shall be a similar finish to the original exposed aggregate driveways.

<b>Objective 3.3 – Cluster Linkages, Courtyard Walls and Fences Including Designed Letter-Box Elements</b>	
To retain the physical links by means of brick walls between neighbouring original residences, retain designed letter-box elements and defined unified fence patterns including heights, locations and materials.	
<b>Mandatory Conservation Requirements</b>	
<b>3.3a</b>	Retain face brickwork walls with soldier capping courses as physical links between original residences
<b>3.3b</b>	Retain original timber slatted screens as screening elements between carports and private courtyards
<b>3.3c</b>	Retain original designed letter-box elements, even if sympathetically sealed against use and not in use.
<b>3.3d</b>	Garden walls and timber slatted screens shall be no more than 1.8 metres high.
<b>Requirements subject to the discretion of the decision maker</b>	
<b>3.3e</b>	Face brickwork corner details of courtyard walls which are not at right angles should be retained in their original detail where existing.
<b>4.0 SOLAR PANELS, WATER TANKS AND NEW TECHNOLOGY</b>	
<b>Objective 4.1 Historical integrity of the precinct</b>	
To ensure that new technology does not impact on the historical integrity of the townhouse cluster	
<b>Requirements subject to the discretion of the decision maker</b>	
<b>4.1a</b>	<p>Solar panels, water tanks and elements of new technology should not be prominently located or visible in the streetscape. With solar panels there may be no functional alternative where the street face has northern orientation. In such cases panels should be laid out to minimise the impact.</p> <p>Further information is available in the Heritage Council's 'Policy 1: External Solar, Water, Air Conditioning and Other Services in Heritage Places.'</p>
<b>5.0 DEMOLITION</b>	
<b>Objective 5.1 – Preserving the historical integrity of the precinct:</b>	
To retain original residences.	
<b>Mandatory Conservation Requirements</b>	
<b>5.1a</b>	<p>The total or substantial demolition of original residences shall not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances, including:</p> <p>The dwelling is so structurally unsound as to be beyond reasonable economic repair. The application must include a professional structural assessment in support of demolition; or</p> <p>The existing condition poses a significant health or safety risk that is beyond reasonable economic repair. The application must include a professional structural or health assessment in support of demolition.</p>
<b>5.1b</b>	An application for demolition of a townhouse must include an application for a replacement townhouse which compliments the cluster.

<b>5.1c</b>	Where in the opinion of the decision maker, neglect of a townhouse has contributed to the townhouse becoming structurally unsound so as to necessitate total demolition, the reconstruction or redevelopment of the site shall not exceed the gross floor area of the original townhouse. Additions to a replacement townhouse constructed in accordance with this objective shall not be permitted within 3 years of completion of the replacement townhouse.
<b>5.1d</b>	The minor demolition of original external building fabric of original residences shall only be permitted for the purpose of the construction of proposed development that meets these guidelines.
<b>Requirements subject to the discretion of the decision maker</b>	
<b>5.1e</b>	Alteration to, or demolition of, internal building fabric of an original townhouse may be permitted provided the external building fabric of the townhouse is not adversely affected.

FIGURE 2: Site views – boundaries and registered areas



Site boundaries as indicated by solid red line.



Red hatching clearly shows registered area

FIGURE 3: Block and Section Plan

