



ACT Heritage Council

STATEMENT OF REASONS

DECISION REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF 27 CAMPBELL STREET AINSLIE (BLOCK 11, SECTION 2, AINSLIE) IN THE ACT HERITAGE REGISTER

Background

The house at 27 Campbell Street Ainslie was nominated to the ACT Heritage Register on 12 July 2009 and is the property of the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services.

The land of block 11, section 2, Ainslie was identified on 28th November 1934 by the Department of the Interior Works and Services Branch specifically for a house to be built as a residence for a bus driver to act as caretaker for the adjacent bus depot on Campbell Street. This was to ensure the safety of the bus after locks to the bus depot building had been broken, the building entered and pilfering of petrol from the bus tank had occurred. The bus depot was located on two blocks of a subdivision set aside for minor industrial purposes identified in correspondence as Section 76 Ainslie.ⁱ Block 11, Section 2 is immediately opposite the old site of this now closed bus depot.

Ministerial approval was made for accommodation for a bus driver on 22/10/34 and a new house was built because existing houses in the area were already tenanted.ⁱⁱ The cottage was designed, tenders called and WE Bailey of Canberra built the house for a cost of £969. Edward Arthur Tormey, bus driver, signed a tenancy agreement on 14/8/1935. Letters on file from Mr Tormey describe the house as having been built as “a caretaker’s residence” for the bus depot and log complaints about the lack of street lighting making it difficult for him to keep a watch on the sheds. Street lighting was provided in 1936. Mr Tormey was granted a government rent reduction allowance for his extra caretaker duties. Similar government allowances were granted to other caretakers such as the Greenkeeper at the Royal Canberra Golf Club and Groundsman at the Manuka Oval. The rental allowance was dependant on Mr Tormey living in the Ainslie cottage and being Caretaker of the Ainslie bus depot.ⁱⁱⁱ

Mr Tormey vacated the cottage in May 1942 and was replaced by another tenant Mr A W Canning who was also a bus driver. Mr Canning was called up for full time military service from July 1943. His family remained in residence at the Ainslie house except for a short interlude in 1943-4 when the property was sub-let. The Canning family lived in the cottage until recently with various external and internal works being undertaken by the housing department. These included not only maintenance but also the enclosure of the sun-room to make an extra bedroom, the sealing of a chimney, complete renovation of the kitchen and alterations to various windows.^{iv}

The Federal Capital Commission started a public transport service in July 1926 running between a southern terminus at Eastlake (Kingston) and a northern terminus at Ainslie via a variety of routes. A depot at the corner of Leslie Crescent and Campbell Street, Ainslie was opened in June 1929 and initially consisted of two garages. Two more garages and a workshop were added in the early 1930s. The construction of the cottage at 27 Campbell Street Ainslie in 1934 occurred several years afterwards and it need arose primarily from security concerns rather than management of the depot. In December 1941 the Ainslie depot moved to the intersection of Stephen and Tyson Streets and finally closed in September 1979.^v The Ainslie depot site was reused until the early 1960s as a base from which Canberra north side public housing repair works were co-ordinated.

The cottage at 27 Campbell Street as it was originally designed was a charming but typical and unremarkable timber cottage of a type found throughout the suburb of Ainslie. Many other similar Ainslie timber cottages exist in better condition and with greater integrity of original fabric, many also in registered conservation precincts such as Corroboree Park.

The cottage is set on a block which is slightly larger than others in the immediate area, but it is more the lack of present mature landscaping than its actual size, which makes the block appear larger than normal. Plans of the early subdivision in Ainslie clearly show other residential blocks the same size as Block 11, Section 2.

Assessment

The Council's assessment against the criteria specified in s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* is as follows.

In assessing the nomination for the 27 Campbell Street Ainslie the Council considered:

- The original nomination form provided by the nominator.
- Background material including government files held by the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services – H104/2/11 parts 1 and 2.
- The physical evidence and surrounding context as ascertained from an onsite assessments in July 2009.

Assessment

The Council's assessment against the criteria specified in s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* is as follows.

Criterion (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*

The nominator made no claim against this criterion.

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

The nominator made no claim against this criterion.

Criterion (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

The nominator made no claim against this criterion.

Criterion (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

The nominator made no claim against this criterion.

Criterion (e) it is significant to the ACT because of its importance as part of local Aboriginal tradition

The nominator made no claim against this criterion.

Criterion (f) it is a rare or unique example of its kind, or is rare or unique in its comparative intactness

The nominator made no claim against this criterion.

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

The nominator made no claim against this criterion.

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

The nominator has indicated this criterion as 'high.

Heritage Council assessment:

The claims for strong or special associations are based on the cottage being the residence of the bus supervisor for the Ainslie bus depot opposite on Campbell Street.

The house was built for and occupied by a bus driver, Mr Tormey who acted as official caretaker for the bus depot opposite from the mid 1934-1941. Both the bus depot and Mr Tormey moved to a new location at Stephen Street Ainslie in 1941. A second bus driver and his wife lived in the house from 1941 for the rest of their lives to the 1980s. Therefore the 27 Campbell Street cottage was not tied housing that went specifically with the job of Ainslie bus depot caretaker.

The linkage between the house and the nearby bus depot was brief (1934-1941), and its occupation by bus personnel did not extend beyond two occupants. It is one of many houses linked to government jobs in Canberra, and the loss of a direct relationship with an operational bus depot site after only 7 years lessens the significance of the house to represent that association.

The cottage at 27 Campbell Street Ainslie does not meet threshold for listing on the ACT Heritage Register under this criterion.

Criterion (i) *it is significant for understanding the evolution of natural landscapes, including significant geological features, landforms, biota or natural processes*

The nominator made no claim against this criterion.

Criterion (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*

The nominator made no claim against this criterion.

Criterion (k) *for a place—it exhibits unusual richness, diversity or significant transitions of flora, fauna or natural landscapes and their elements*

The nominator made no claim against this criterion.

Criterion (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

The nominator made no claim against this criterion.

Conclusion

The ACT Heritage Council finds that 27 Campbell Street, Block 11, Section 2, Ainslie is of insufficient heritage value to warrant provisional registration in the ACT Heritage Register.

Dr Michael Pearson (Chair)
ACT Heritage Council

6 August 2009

ⁱ Letter from J Fleming Principal Mechanical Engineer Works & Services Branch to Assistant Secretary PA Gourgaud Property & Survey Branch, 31/5/1934 and memo from A Percival to the Secretary of the Department of the Interior. DHCS file H104/2/11 part 1.

ⁱⁱ Letter from A Percival to P Gourgaud, 10/8/1934. DHCS file H104/2/11 part 1.

ⁱⁱⁱ DHCS file H104/2/11 part 1.

^{iv} DHCS file H104/2/11 part 2.

^v www.action.act.gov.au/doc/aboutus/history.pdf viewed July 2009.