



ACT Heritage Council

## Entry to the ACT Heritage Register

***Heritage Act 2004***

### **20048. Kingston Powerhouse Historic Precinct**

Section 8, Blocks, 8, 11, 14, & 24

**KINGSTON**

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## 48. Kingston Power House Historic Precinct, Kingston [V113]<sup>1</sup>

### Location

District of Central Canberra, Division of Kingston, Section 8, Blocks, 8, 11, 14, & 24 as identified on Figure 48 and indicated on the Territory Plan Map by the Heritage Places Register Overlay H48.

### Features Intrinsic To The Heritage Significance Of The Place

The Place comprises the following significant features identified on Figure 48a

- a) Power House building, together with significant internal fabric identified at Schedule 1 and Figure 48b;
- b) Fitters' Workshop (Bulk Supply Store);
- c) original alignment of the railway and existing railway track and embankment
- d) landscape elements: Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*- A), White brittle gum (*Eucalyptus mannifera* - B);
- e) base of the second chimney stack;
- f) fabric and operation of the siren and whistle; and
- g) 1948 Switch Room.

### Statement Of Significance

The Power House and Fitters' Workshop are of industrial and architectural significance. Other intrinsic features assist in demonstrating the industrial use of the site for power generation. The Power House is a landmark structure in its Lakeside setting.

The Power House generated the first power to the Federal Capital in 1915. The Power House and its associated Fitters' Workshop are early examples of buildings that housed coal fired steam powered electricity generation equipment. The Power House, Fitters' Workshop, base of the second chimney stack and remnant railway embankment and existing railway track to the north west of the Power House demonstrate the technology and process of early electricity generation in the Federal Capital. The siren and whistle located on the main power house building was an important soundscape feature throughout Kingston. The landscape elements are remnants of Thomas Charles Weston's 1920s windbreak plantation along Interlake (now Wentworth) Avenue and have an evident relationship with the establishment and development phases of the Federal Capital.

The Power House was the first permanent public building in the Federal Capital. Its existence was fundamental to the development and establishment of the City. It is an example of early 20th century industrial architecture and the first building in the Federal Capital designed by John Smith Murdoch, a major figure in the creation of the 'Federal Capital' architectural style. The Power House retains numerous internal fittings demonstrating its substantial industrial use.

The Fitters' Workshop (Bulk Supply Store) is the second permanent structure in Canberra designed by J. S. Murdoch. The remnant railway embankment and existing railway track are part of the original rail system and were associated with the delivery of coal to the Power House.

The Power House ceased to provide power to the National Capital in 1929 when a cheaper source of electric power became available. It was reactivated for short periods in the years 1936-42 when repairs to the Burrinjuck Dam (which supplied water to the Burrinjuck Hydro Electric Scheme then servicing Canberra) were required, and in 1948-57 when post war construction in NSW placed severe strain on the NSW Grid. The 1948 switch room provides evidence of this later period of reactivation.

### Specific Requirements

In accordance with s54(1) of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991* the following requirements are identified as essential to the conservation of the heritage significance of the place. These requirements are prepared to implement the following conservation policy for the place:

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<sup>1</sup> [V113: Added to Heritage Places Register Number 48 08/06/2000 (Variation Number 113)]

The place is to be conserved and appropriately maintained consistent with its heritage significance. In conserving the place, its prior use as an industrial site for the generation of electricity should continue to be evident and accessible to the public.

i) **Buildings including alterations and additions**

- a) The Power House is to remain the dominant feature of the Precinct in any future development.
- b) The industrial character, form and scale of the Power House and Fitters' Workshop shall be retained. External additions to the Power House, Fitters' Workshop and 1948 Switch Room shall only be permitted if the proposed additions do not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place.
- c) External alterations to the Power House, Fitters' Workshop and 1948 Switch Room, including alterations to external finishes, shall reflect and complement the architectural style of the buildings.
- d) Internal alterations or additions to the Power House and Fitters' Workshop will respect proportions of space and may only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place. Any alterations or additions shall be undertaken in accordance with a Conservation Management Plan approved by the ACT Heritage Council and any subsequent amendment of that plan. Any proposed works which will require the alteration or removal of the significant internal fabric identified at Schedule 1 will require a Development Application.
- e) Any new buildings or elements shall be consistent with the architectural character of the place, and where possible, shall positively enhance the public's ability to understand its former industrial use and historic role in the development of the National Capital. New construction shall only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place and will not affect the landmark qualities of the Power House and Fitters' Workshop.
- f) The base of the second chimney stack shall be conserved in its current location. If the base of the first chimney stack is uncovered during development works this shall be conserved and protected from disturbance.
- g) The siren and whistle shall be conserved and retained in its current location on the roof of the Power House and maintained in working order. Consideration shall be given to future operation for interpretive purposes or new use.

ii) **Demolition of Buildings**

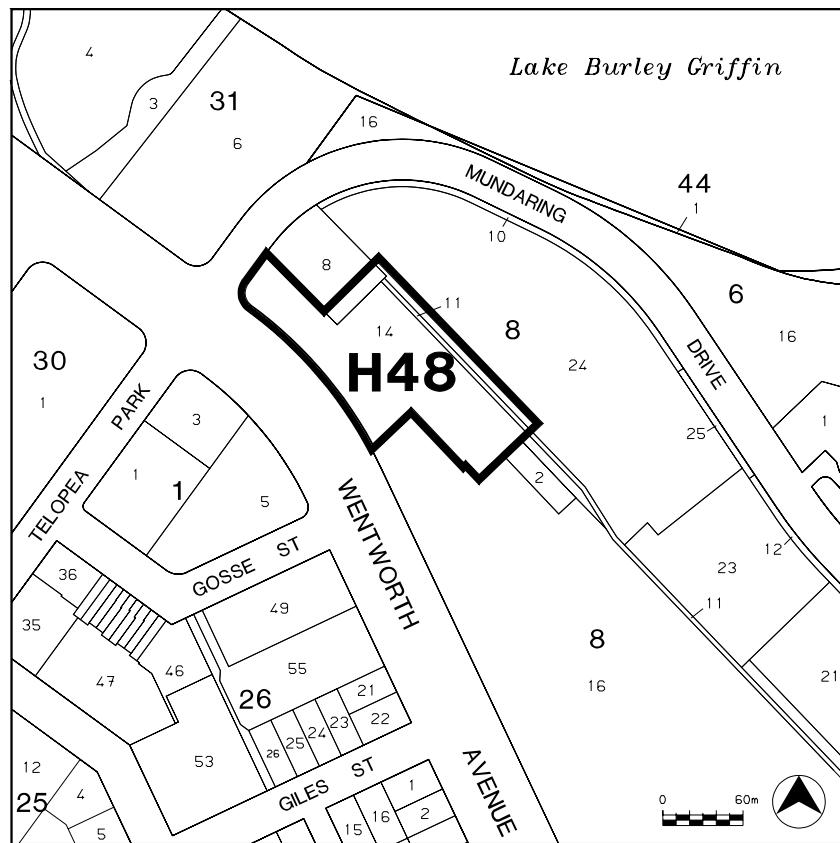
- a) Demolition of the Power House, Fitters' Workshop, base of the second chimney stack and 1948 Switch Room shall not be permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances, including circumstances in which the buildings are structurally unsound and beyond economic repair or where there are significant public health and safety reasons to warrant demolition. Demolition shall not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no prudent and feasible alternative.
- b) Demolition of any part of the original fabric of the above features shall only be allowed in the context of sympathetic conservation of the place, including any alterations and additions.
- c) Accurate recording of any building or structure shall be undertaken prior to any demolition or removal of fabric.

iii) **Landscape**

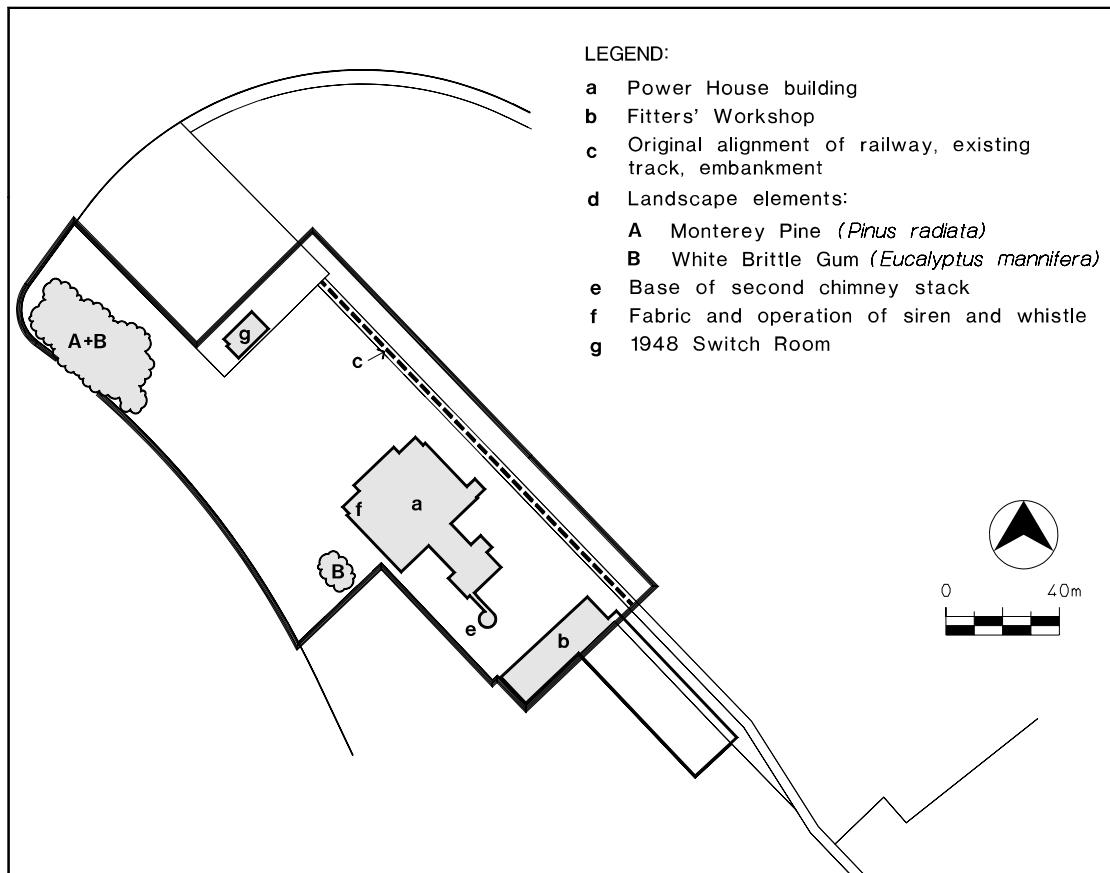
- a) The plantings on the corner of Mundaring Drive and Wentworth Avenue of Monterey Pine (A) and White Brittle Gum (B), and those to the west of the Power House of White Brittle Gum (B), are to be conserved and when appropriate, replaced with the same species of tree. All are to be maintained.
- b) The alignment of the former railway and existing railway track should be retained as a linear open space and appropriately expressed in future landscaping treatment. An indicative portion of the existing railway track should be retained, conserved and interpreted *in situ*.
- c) The immediate spaces surrounding the Power House, Fitters' Workshop and railway alignment that demonstrate the industrial servicing and operation of these buildings shall be retained and appropriately landscaped.
- d) Significant visual links shall be retained between the Power House and (i) East Basin and (ii) Bowen Park. The prominent gables and roof form of the Power House shall be visible from potential water transport links to and from the Kingston Foreshore area.

- e) Excavation and landscaping works shall be undertaken in accordance with approved archaeological procedures.

**Figure 48: Kingston Power House Precinct: Location**



**Figure 48a: Kingston Power House Precinct: Significant Features**



**SCHEDULE 1**  
**SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL FABRIC: POWER HOUSE**

**Stairwell (Ground and 1st Floors)**

- Steps, railings, handrails, cupboards beneath stairs (1)
- Original light fittings (8)

**Basement (Ground Floor)**

- Condensing pits (2)
- Light fitting on central beam (4)
- Ladder to 1st floor and into condensing pit (5)
- Ash chutes (6)
- Coal elevator (7)
- Original light fittings (8)

**Battery Room (Ground Floor)**

- Original joinery and 3 phase switch on right hand side of door as you enter, ceiling and cable terminating boxes and cable rack

**Economiser Room (Ground Floor)**

- Trusses
- Drill press (9)
- Position of flue (10)

**Engine Room (1st Floor)**

- Floor, ripple iron ceiling, trusses, fenestration, louvres and gantry, sign, columns, beams, and services (external electrical wiring)
- Internal operating mechanism for siren and whistle (11)
- Building services switch board (12)

**Tea Room (1st Floor)**

- Windows and door and wall framing

**Switch Room (1st Floor)**

- Original position of high voltage switches evident on the vinyl floor tiles (3)
- Curved moulding on the wall (13)

**Boiler Room (1st Floor)**

- Walls, ceiling
- Coal hopper (19)
- Coal elevator (7)
- Ladder/stairs on east wall (14)
- Air dampers (15)
- Wall bracket light fittings with shovel shaped reflectors (16)
- Original light fittings (8)
- Evidence on east wall of original wall surface decoration featuring red section from floor finished with a black line below cement washed walls (17)
- Portion of pipes through west wall of Boiler Room into the Engine Room (18)

**Figure 48b: Kingston Powerhouse Precinct: Significant Internal Fabric of Power House Building**

