

Australian Capital Territory

Heritage (Decision about Cancellation of Gungahleen School (formerly Stone Hut School), Lyneham) Notice 2014

Notifiable Instrument NI2014–41

made under the

Heritage Act 2004, section 49 Notice of decision about cancellation

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Heritage (Decision about Cancellation of Gungahleen School (formerly Stone Hut School), Lyneham) Notice 2014*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after notification.

3 Notice of Decision

Pursuant to section 47 of the *Heritage Act 2004* the ACT Heritage Council cancels the registration of Gungahleen School (formerly Stone Hut School), Lyneham from the ACT Heritage Register.

Jennifer O'Connell
Secretariat (as delegate for)
ACT Heritage Council
10 February 2014



ACT Heritage Council

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HERITAGE REGISTER
(Cancellation)

For the purposes of s.49 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, a cancellation for an existing entry on the Heritage Register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

Gungahleen School (formerly Stone Hut School)

Block 10, Section 95, Lyneham

DATE OF CANCELLATION

6 February 2014 Notifiable Instrument: 2014–41

Copies of the Register Entry and the Cancellation 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

Website: www.environment.act.gov.au/heritage Telephone: 13 22 81

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE

The place currently included on the ACT Heritage Register as:

Gungahleen School, 8 Piguenit Close, Block 10, Section 95, Lyneham, Central Canberra.

REASON FOR CANCELLATION

Gungahleen School was entered on the ACT Heritage Register in 1998 however it was significantly destroyed by fire in 2007. The remains of the original building were demolished and a new building, reminiscent of the previous structure, was erected in its place.

The new Gungahleen School building is a reinterpretation of the last state of the building before it burnt down. It has used modern materials and fittings and a design that resembles, but does not match, the previous building. The only original material that has been incorporated into the new building has been the bricks from the original fireplaces, which have been disassembled, cleaned and then used to reconstruct the fireplaces anew.

The heritage values that the Gungahleen School was originally assessed against were intrinsically linked to the material of the building, which demonstrated the population dynamics of the area as well as changing education practises in the region's history that are reflected through the design and alterations of the building. The new building was constructed in a single phase based on the final state of the original before it burnt down and, as such, does not fully represent the different construction phases visible in the original. The new building is also a modified reconstruction which does not accurately reflect the final state of the original building.

Accordingly, the Gungahleen School no longer has sufficient heritage value to meet the criteria for entry in the ACT Heritage Register.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

In assessing the Cancellation Proposal for the Gungahleen School, it has been reassessed against the criteria in s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* (the Act). Pursuant to s10 of the Act, a place or object has heritage significance if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria. Significance has been determined by research as detailed in the report by the ACT Heritage Unit titled, *Background Information Gungahleen School*, November 2013, containing photographs and information on history, description, condition and integrity.

(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;

Gungahleen School, Lyneham, does not meet this criterion.

The original Gungahleen School building was, and the replacement building is, a basic wood framed and clad building. Original plans, photos and documentary evidence indicate standard building practices were followed in the design and construction of the building. There is no evidence that the replacement building demonstrates a high degree of technical or creative achievement.

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

Gungahleen School, Lyneham, does not meet this criterion.

Whilst surviving mature trees on the site and the orchard, as well as the recreated building contribute to the site's aesthetic qualities; there is no evidence to demonstrate that it is valued by the community or a cultural group for exhibiting outstanding design or aesthetic qualities.

(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;

Gungahleen School, Lyneham, does not meet this criterion.

The original Gungahleen School was a testament to the provision of education to the children of residents of remote areas of NSW before the establishment of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and into the first decades after the Territory was established. In 1885 there was sufficient population in the area to warrant construction of a small school and again in 1915 to construct a new building after the FCT was established. After closing as a school, it continued an indirect association with education in the ACT as a residence for teachers from 1923 when it was modified for its new purpose until 1988 when it was left vacant.

In its pre-2007 state, the place demonstrated a distinctive way of life, that of the education of rural children in the late 19th and early 20th century in the region. Gungahleen School went through periods of changing status from a full-time school to part-time to closed until finally it stopped being used as a school and was converted to a teacher's residence. It demonstrated the changing fortunes shared by several schools in the region with many closing, opening and changing to and from part-time and full-time schools several times during its history and being modified when changing to a new use when no longer required as a school building.

The design of the original 1915 building was interesting because of the result of the *Public Instruction Act of 1880* in which many schools were created or received funding for buildings to allow for 100 cubic feet per child. The plans for the Gungahleen School were for 30 children, but according to the legislation, could have accommodated up to 35. The design was simple and suited its purpose.

The post-1923 conversion of the building into a residence for teachers was evidence of a function that is no longer practised: government providing school teachers with a residence as a part of their job.

Whilst the place had some local significance due to its association with the establishment and development of an education system in the region from 1885 to 1923, it has not functioned as a schoolhouse since 1923 and has not functioned as a residence for teachers since 1988. The functions of the different phases of the building and the evidence of modification of the original fabric to suit were of exceptional interest, however, due to the destruction of this fabric in the 2007 fire, the evidence of these designs and functions have been lost.

The current building is an interpretation of the final state of the original structure before its destruction. The lack of accuracy in planning, detailing and loss of original fabric no longer demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, design or function that is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost or is of exceptional interest.

(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;

Gungahleen School, Lyneham, does not meet this criterion.

Whilst the place had some local significance due to its association with the establishment and development of an education system in the region from 1885 to 1923, it has not functioned as a schoolhouse since 1923 and has not functioned as a residence for teachers since 1988. After the School was refurbished, and again after the new building was created, the place has been used by community groups such as the YWCA and the Women's Legal Centre (ACT and Region), however there is no evidence that these groups have a special or enduring connection to the place, constitute a cultural group, or that they represent the wider ACT community. As such, there is no evidence that the Gungahleen School is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations.

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

This criterion does not apply to Gungahleen School, Lyneham.

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

Gungahleen School, Lyneham, does not meet this criterion.

There are few extant schools from the rural origins of the region, such as the Tuggeranong Schoolhouse and the Hall School, and the Council acknowledges that they are rare in the ACT. However, the Gungahleen School, as a 2010 recreation of a school, it lacks the intactness to meet the threshold of this criterion.

The differences between the recreated building and the original are:

- the windows are set lower in wall;
- the window frames are stained not painted;
- the front and rear verandahs are more enclosed;
- the entry door is central on front verandah;
- fibre cement board cladding is used in place of weatherboard;
- a timber ramp to the front entry replaces timber steps;
- concrete paths to entry and along north side are a post 2007 detail;
- an air conditioner unit on roof and no roof vents;
- roof cladding is Colorbond not galvanised corrugated iron and;
- internal layout modified in kitchen, laundry and bathroom;
- the 1915 building had a lower roof ridgeline, which ran in a north-south direction;
- the rear wall has been extended further to the east and the rear verandah has been enclosed;
and
- the room representing the 1915 classroom was used instead of the 1923 design which split it into two separate rooms.

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

Gungahleen School, Lyneham, does not meet this criterion.

The heritage values of the place were represented by the physical material of the school building which demonstrated changing use over time that echoed population dynamics, legislation and local politics. However, with the destruction of the original building and the modified reconstruction, the evidence of this history has also been lost. As a result, the Gungahleen School is not a notable example of a kind of place or object and demonstrates the main characteristics of that kind.

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

Gungahleen School, Lyneham, does not meet this criterion.

The place is one of a small collection of former rural school sites in the ACT which are associated with the implementation of the NSW *Public Schools Act 1866* and the *Public Instruction Act of 1880* which predated the formation of the ACT, but whose effects carried through into the early decades of the national capital. The Council acknowledges that the place has the potential in its landscape and reinterpreted fabric to demonstrate the changing fortunes and use of a school site from before the foundation of the ACT. However, the lack of original material, fabric and details in the reconstructed school has negated any strong or special associations that may have existed with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase in local or national history.

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

Gungahleen School, Lyneham, does not meet this criterion.

The Gungahleen School grounds contain several older plantings, e.g. cypresses, fruit trees and red gums; however, they are part of the landscaped grounds or remnants of cleared trees and are not significant for understanding the evolution of natural landscapes.

The Council has recognised that there may be some heritage value in the trees belonging to the pre-European landscape and the inter-war period when the school was converted to a teacher's residence and these have been referred to the ACT Conservator of Flora and Fauna for consideration for inclusion to the ACT Tree Register.

(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;

Gungahleen School, Lyneham, does not meet this criterion.

The grounds may hold some archaeological research potential for the site of the 1885 schoolhouse and material culture relating to education from that time onwards where disturbance has been minimal. If the evidence exists it would be relatively minor, sufficient only to confirm the location of the earlier building and echo finds from other school sites. This will add to the knowledge about the Gungahleen School site; however it is unlikely to significantly impact on the understanding of the cultural history of the ACT.

The physical material contained within the landscape and plantings are unlikely to provide any information that will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of the natural or cultural history of the ACT.

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

Gungahleen School, Lyneham, does not meet this criterion.

The Gungahleen School is a landscaped and built environment with no evidence of any flora or fauna that this criterion refers to and, as such, 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.**

Gungahleen School, Lyneham, does not meet this criterion.

The Gungahleen School is a landscaped and built environment with no evidence of any species that this criterion refers to and, as such, this criterion is not applicable.

SUMMARY OF THE CANCELLATION

Gungahleen School was an example of an early NSW school, now part of the ACT, and was associated with the major changes brought about by and related to the NSW *Public Schools Act of 1866* and the *Public Instruction Act of 1880*. These changes provided a very important framework for New South Wales public education and the provision of more resources by the Government.

The heritage values of the original Gungahleen School were intrinsically linked to the design, planning, material and alterations of the building; which demonstrated the changing population of the area as well as education practises in the region's history.

Following the fire in 2007 which destroyed the building, the structure was demolished in 2010 and a new building reconstructed with modern fittings, fixtures, finishes and material. Only the brick structure of the rebuilt fireplace remains of the original fabric. The new building was constructed as a single design based on the final phase of the original before it burnt down and, as such, does not fully represent the different construction phases that were visible in the original. In addition, the original planning has been lost.

While the Council acknowledges the efforts of recreating the Gungahleen School as a worthy pursuit, the heritage values of the place were contained within the physical material of the original, which no longer exists and, without the original building, the place does not meet the threshold for inclusion in the ACT Heritage Register. The current recreation is a testament to a once significant building in the history of the ACT, but does not have any heritage value of its own.

The Council has recognised that there may be some heritage value in the trees belonging to the pre-European landscape and the inter-war period when the school was converted to a teacher's residence and these have been referred to the ACT Conservator of Flora and Fauna for consideration for inclusion to the ACT Tree Register.

The reconstructed Gungahleen School no longer meets the criteria for inclusion in the ACT Heritage Register and the Council has cancelled the registration in accordance with Part 7 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.