



ACT Heritage Council

Entry to the ACT Heritage Register

Heritage Act 2004

10010. AEC Regal Mark III Omnibus 1949

Section 11 Block 5 GREENWAY

OBJECTS

This document has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council.

This entry which was previously part of the old heritage places or the old heritage objects registers (as defined in the *Heritage Act 2004*), as the case may be, is taken to be registered under the *Heritage Act 2004*.

Conservation Requirements (including Specific Requirements), as defined under the *Heritage Act 2004*, that are contained within this document are taken to be Heritage Guidelines applying to this place or object, as the case may be.

Information restricted under *the old heritage places register or old heritage objects register* is restricted under the *Heritage Act 2004*.

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AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY HERITAGE OBJECTS REGISTER

For the purpose of S12 of the Heritage Objects Act 1991, a citation for:

1949 AEC Regal Mark III Omnibus

has been approved by the Minister for the Arts and Heritage for entry in the Heritage Objects Register.

The date of Instrument of Approval: 10 April 1996

Enquiries about this object and copies of this citation are available from:

The Secretary
ACT Heritage Council
TUGGERANONG ACT 2901

Telephone: 207 2179 Facsimile: 207 2177

HERITAGE OBJECTS REGISTER

CITATION

1949 AEC Regal Mark III Omnibus

NOMINATED BY Museums and Galleries Unit, Department of the Environment, Land and Planning

LOCATION OF OBJECT ACTION Depot
Greenway

Block 5, Section 11, Greenway

SHORT DESCRIPTION

This citation includes the bus together with its original components.

DESCRIPTION

A biscuit coloured half cab bus with a horizontal band around the body in vivid yellow, trimmed above and below in scarlet. There is a transfer of the Canberra Coat of Arms on each side. The bus has seating for 39 passengers. The original leather covering of the seats has been replaced by vinyl, of a colour approximating that of the original brown leather. The bus has front and rear manually operated vinyl concertina doors. The doors were originally made of leather. The luggage rack, which was normally used for prams and strollers only, is above the front left mudguard. Indications of intentions to stop or turn right are made with the manually operated mechanical hand which appears at the front right. At the front of the bus above the windscreen are twin boxes which indicate, in code form, the route and on each side above the windows at the centre are the destination boxes.

A metal disc attached to the bulkhead reads " Manufactured by Commonwealth Engineering Co Ltd (Inc) Waddingtons Pty Ltd 14/10/49 Granville NSW Australia"

Specifications : The chassis is type 'Associated Equipment Company Ltd (AEC) Regal Mark III' and numbered 0682 213. The engine is an AEC six cylinder 7.7 litre vertical diesel developing 95 bhp at 1800 rpm. The transmission is four speed crash (no synchromesh). The dimensions of the bus are : wheelbase 5.34m (17'6"); overall length 8.4m (27'6"); and width 2.44m (8'0").

Following the acquisition of the bus by Australian Capital Territory Internal Omnibus Network (ACTION) it was given the registration number C 59351, being one of a series of numbers given to buses delivered to Canberra between 1948 and 1951. The original registration number is not known.

CONDITION

The bodywork has been restored to its original appearance. The engine, gearbox and chassis have been restored by ACTION engineering staff to excellent working condition.

At this stage the bus has not been fitted with replica destination blinds and route number/route letter rolls.

HISTORY

To meet the demands of the newly created federal capital, both government and private bus services were established in Canberra during the 1920s. In 1926 the Federal Capital Commission established the public bus service. The bus service had various names including "Canberra City Omnibus Service", "Canberra City Bus Service", "Canberra Omnibus Service" and "Canberra Bus Service". The current name ACTION was adopted in 1977.

In 1933 the Canberra bus service became one of the first operators in Australia of AEC Regal buses. The service purchased 84 AEC Regal buses between 1933 and 1951 which serviced the increasing population and the gradual spread of residential suburbs. The Department of the Interior first took deliveries of an AEC Regal half cab to a design similar to the 1949 model in 1936.

The 1949 AEC Regal was part of the second batch of a total of 46 AEC Regal Mark III buses delivered between 1948 and 1951. The three batches were registered with numbers C 55778 - C 55799, C 59351 - C 59362, and C 60151 - C 60162. The body of the bus was manufactured in Sydney by Commonwealth Engineering to the English design. The bus was delivered in 1949 by Commonwealth Engineering to the Department of the Interior, the operators of the Canberra City Omnibus Service. The colours of the bus were the fleet colours in Canberra from 1931 to 1965. The Department adopted this livery after buying two Commer buses from the General Bus Company of Parramatta. The Department preferred the General Bus colours to its own maroon and buff and for the next 34 years all Canberra buses were painted in a colour which later became known as "Canberra Fawn" or "Canberra Sand" (ACTION pamphlet 1992). This class of half cab buses was operated by a two man crew, a driver and a conductor, from 1949 to 1959, when it was replaced by a one man operated underfloor engined AEC Reliance.

The last AEC Regal was sold by the ACT Administration in 1965. Canberra had the longest association with AEC of any Australian bus operator. The last AEC models supplied in 1974-5 were amongst the last batch made by the company.

The AEC Regal was one of the most successful of the English chassis types. This chassis type was used throughout Australia with various body designs. The half cab bus was a standard English design for many different chassis manufacturers from the early 1920s to the 1950s. Those countries buying English buses such as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India and Hong Kong also built bodies to the English pattern.

At the time of the purchase of the 1949 AEC Regal the city had a population of about 20,000 and there were about 55 buses serving the suburbs of Acton, Ainslie, Braddon, O'Connor, Reid and Turner on the northside and Barton, Causeway, Forrest, Griffith, Kingston, Manuka and Narrabundah on the southside with infrequent trips to Duntroon,

Fairbairn, Fyshwick, Molonglo and Westridge (now Yarralumla). Several rural settlements were served by school buses. The basic route taken by the bus service was maintained from 1926 to the early 1950s. The service ran between a southern terminus at Eastlake (now Kingston) and a northern terminus at Ainslie using several different routes.

At the time this bus entered service the Canberra Bus Service employed an unusual route coding system which was displayed on the front of the bus in the two small boxes side by side. This system used the letters A, B, F, R, T to identify the route north of the Molonglo River and the numbers one to seven for the route south of the River. The original destination blinds and route number/route letter rolls were removed at some time between 1959 and 1979.

The Regal's last regular operation in Canberra was based at the Department of the Interior's Ainslie Bus Depot in Stephen Street (now demolished). The bus was sold to Mr Ron Prior of Batemans Bay in 1959. It operated between Moruya and Batemans Bay and later from Batehaven to the Batemans Bay Primary School registered MO978. In late 1977 it was sold to Mr Colin Gray of Schofield, NSW, who intended restoring the bus. The restoration had not commenced when ACTION purchased the bus in June 1979. The bus was restored by ACTION apprentices. The ownership of the bus was transferred with ACTION to the ACT Government at the time of self government in 1989.

Two AEC Regal Mark III buses are known to exist in Australia and are at the Bus and Truck Museum of NSW at Tempe, NSW. They are reported to be incomplete and in the process of restoration (per. comm. David Wilson 1994). One was built in 1949, the other in 1951 (per. comm. Ian Cooper 1995).

The AEC Regal is currently used to carry passengers for special excursions and to promote ACTION at displays, exhibitions and parades.

ANALYSIS AGAINST THE CRITERIA

3 An object which is evidence of a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest.

The half cab bus is representative of the type of bus operating in the ACT from 1936 to 1965. The distinctive half cab design is no longer used and is of exceptional interest due to the small number that have survived.

5 An object which is the only known or comparatively intact example of its type.

The bus is the only known operational 1949 AEC Regal Mark III bus in the ACT.

6. An object which is a notable example of a class of objects and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class.

The 1949 AEC Regal Mark III is a rare operational example of a bus of the class of 1940s half cab buses, which were once very common, and provides an insight into the technology of its time. The bus has been restored to original appearance, with restoration of engine, gearbox and chassis, and is in excellent working condition.

7 An object which has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase in local or national history.

The 1949 AEC Regal Mark III has special associations with the development of Canberra. It was one of a fleet that serviced the increasing population and the gradual spread of residential suburbs between the 1940s and 1960s.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1949 AEC Regal Mark III bus is the only known operational bus of its class in the ACT and provides an insight into the distinctive design and technology of its time. It has a special association with the development of Canberra being one of a fleet of buses which serviced the increasing population and spread of residential suburbs from the 1940s to the 1960s.

CONSERVATION POLICY

1. Conserve the bus and keep it operational.
2. Preserve as much of the original material as possible.
3. Adaptation is acceptable if it means that the significance of the object is better conserved. When any original material is replaced it should be retained, its location recorded and the changes documented.
4. Replace any component that wears out or is lost with reconstructed components to match the original in detail and finish, and where appropriate, the original material.
5. Restore or reconstruct as much of the original bus as is necessary and feasible.
6. When making any decisions affecting the conservation of the bus consult a suitably qualified conservator.
7. Ensure the security of all elements of the bus at all times.
8. Review the policy on a regular basis.

The heritage significance of the object is to be retained as described under the Specific Conservation Requirements.

SPECIFIC CONSERVATION REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with Section 6 (d) of the *Heritage Objects Act 1991*, the following requirements are identified as essential to the retention of the heritage significance of the object :

1. A conservation and management plan is to be prepared for the bus and submitted to the Heritage Council for approval prior to action affecting the bus. The above mentioned policies are to be incorporated in the plan.
2. The approved plan is to be implemented and adhered to in regard to any work undertaken on the bus.
3. The bus is to be kept operational.
4. The bus is to be adequately protected, with sound and regular maintenance, careful operation and the replacement of worn parts.

RESTRICTED INFORMATION

Not applicable

PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS

Not known.

REFERENCES

ACTION 1992, *Canberra's 1949 AEC Regal Omnibus*

Cooper, I G, Pascoe, L J, & Morison, I 1990, 'Urban Public Transport' *Canberra's Engineering Heritage*, 2nd ed. Canberra, Canberra Division, The Institution of Engineers, Aust 1990 pp73-86

Standards Association of Australia, 1985, *Colour Standards for General Purposes Australian Standards 2700-1985 and 2700s-1985*, Sydney.

Personal communication with :

Ian Cooper, former Director of Public Transit, Policy and Planning, Department of the Capital Territory and acknowledged expert on the history of urban public transport in the ACT.

Graham Bigg, Senior Technical Officer, ACTION.

David Wilson, Secretary, Bus and Truck Museum of NSW, Sydney.

NOMINATION NUMBER	8
DATE OF NOMINATION	25 July 1994
REGISTER NUMBER	
DATE OF GAZETTAL : INTERIM REGISTER REGISTER	
FILE NUMBER	93/08063
TYPE OF OBJECT	Manufactured
OWNER	ACTION, ACT Department of Urban Services.
KEEPER	ACTION, ACT Department of Urban Services.

Prepared by Pamela Fabricius
18 May 1995