

HOW HERITAGE IS DETERMINED



TO DETERMINE WHETHER A PLACE OR OBJECT SHOULD BE ENTERED ON THE HERITAGE REGISTER, THE ACT HERITAGE COUNCIL (THE COUNCIL) NEEDS TO DETERMINE IF THE NOMINATED PLACE OR OBJECT MEETS ANY OF THE CRITERIA THAT DEFINE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE. THE CRITERIA ARE OUTLINED IN THE ACT HERITAGE ACT 2004 (THE ACT).



DEFINING PLACES AND OBJECTS

The definitions of 'place' and 'object' are fundamental to the heritage process.

A 'place' is defined as including:

- a site, precinct or parcel of land
- a building or structure, or part of a building or structure
- the curtilage, or setting, of a building or structure, or part of a building or structure
- an object or feature historically associated with, and located at, the place.

Examples of places may also include landforms, plantings or animal habitats. Places on the Heritage Register include 'Garden City' planned housing precincts, churches, rural homesteads, landscapes, brumby yards, fossil sites, habitats of endangered species, parks and bus shelters.

An 'object' is defined as a natural or manufactured object, but does not include a building or any other man-made structure. Objects on the Heritage Register include an historic map of Lanyon, the design of the ACT Coat of Arms, the first steam train to Canberra, surveying equipment used to determine the ACT boundary, the merry-go round in Civic and the Ethos Statue in Civic Square.

An 'Aboriginal place' and 'Aboriginal object' are defined separately under the Act. An 'Aboriginal place' is a place associated with Aboriginal people because of Aboriginal tradition. An 'Aboriginal object' means an object associated with Aboriginal people because of Aboriginal tradition. 'Aboriginal tradition' is defined as the customs, rituals, institutions, beliefs or general way of life of Aboriginal people. Some examples of Aboriginal places and objects include scarred trees, artefact scatters, rock shelters and grinding grooves.

TREES

The Urban Forest Act 2023 protects individual trees of heritage significance in urban areas. An urban tree must not be registered under the Heritage Act 2004 unless the tree forms part of a place that is registered. When a tree or trees form part of the heritage significance of a place, they can be registered and be protected by the Act.

The Council is responsible for assessing and registering trees of heritage significance in rural areas. However, the Council only has a consultative role in decisions on registration and management of heritage trees in urban areas.

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Once a place or object is defined, its significance needs to be determined using the following criteria in the Act:

- a. importance to the course or pattern of the ACT's cultural or natural history
- b. has uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the ACT's cultural or natural history
- c. potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT's cultural or natural history
- d. importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or objects
- e. importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT
- f. importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement for a particular period
- g. has a strong or special association with the ACT community or a cultural group within the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons
- h. has a special association with the life or work of a person, or people, important to the history of the ACT.

HERITAGE REGISTER

Each item on the Heritage Register includes a statement about its heritage significance, including the reasons for the registration and an assessment of the place or object against the heritage significance criteria. This information is publicly available unless it has been declared restricted because public disclosure would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect on its heritage significance.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, please contact ACT Heritage on 13 22 81.

Please note the material in this information sheet is provided for general information only, and should not be relied upon for the purpose of a particular matter covered by the [Urban Forest Act 2023](#).

