



ACT Heritage Council

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
INTERIM HERITAGE PLACES REGISTER**

For the purposes of s54(1) of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*, a citation for:

HOTEL ACTON, CITY

has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council and included in an interim Heritage Places Register.
This is pursuant to the ACT Heritage Council Resolution No.44/7 made on 23 March 1998.

Date of Gazettal: 24 April 1998

Background information about this place and copies of the citation are available from:

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INTERIM HERITAGE PLACES REGISTER

CITATION

HOTEL ACTON, CITY

LOCATION OF PLACE:

Section 24 Block 1, City and the area bounded by Edinburgh Street, Parkes Way and extending to the kerb of Marcus Clarke Street and including the area outside the southern block boundary formed by joining the ACT grid reference points 210235.3E, 603448.3N; 210232.2E, 603430.2N; 210273.0E, 603419.7N; and 210275.7E, 603435.2N (refer Fig 1)

FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE:

The features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place are:

- Hotel Acton comprising Blocks A,B,C,E,F &G;
 - the associated courtyards;
 - the nine bay garage; and
 - the landscape elements comprising three Cottonwoods (*Populus deltoides*), seven Lusitanian oak (*Quercus lusitanica*), two Californian big trees (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), one Roman cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), one Arizona cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*), and one Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlanticus*), one smooth barked Chinese elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) and seven Blakely's red gums (*Eucalyptus blakelyi*) (refer fig. 2).
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Hotel Acton built in 1927 comprises Blocks A,B,C,E,F & G, the associated courtyards and the nine bay garage, is significant for its association with the early development of the Federal Capital Territory, and in particular as one of the major hostels constructed by government to overcome the acute housing shortage that affected Canberra at that time. The construction of the building set in landscaped gardens, with its subsequent additions, alterations and changed uses closely reflects the economic, political and social circumstances surrounding the design and development of the nation's capital.

Hotel Acton is one of a suite of buildings designed under the Commonwealth Architect John Smith Murdoch for Canberra. It exemplifies the design attributes of the Federal Capital style and is important for its contribution to an understanding of early Canberra architecture. The plan and elevation of the building combine with the architectural detailing to produce a building complex of considerable aesthetic appeal. The scale of the building and its articulated roof forms make an important contribution to the urban landscape, which is reinforced by the proximity of stylistically similar buildings, such as Sir Ian Potter House.

Landscape elements which enhance the aesthetic values of the place include the open grassed courtyards and the following trees remaining from the original planting: three Cottonwoods, seven Lusitanian oak, two Californian big trees, one Roman cypress, one Arizona cypress, and one Atlas cedar, one smooth barked Chinese elm and seven Blakely's red gums remnant of pre-settlement woodlands.

Hotel Acton is significant for having played an important role in the provision of accommodation for a large number of Canberrans from 1927 until 1976. It represents the shared experiences and the community spirit which developed as a result of communal living. As a consequence it is imbued with considerable social value, evidenced by its place in local social documentation.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

The land on which Hotel Acton stands is National Land subject to the *National Lands Act 1989*. Registration of the place is a matter of record and section 54(1)(d), of the *Land Planning and Environment Act 1991*, does not apply to require and restrict actions that might affect the conservation of the place because of its significance for the heritage of the ACT.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

In assessing this place for the interim Heritage Places Register, the Council recommends that a number of actions and activities should be undertaken which will enhance the heritage values of the place. They are made as recommendations and have no legal effect.

1. A detailed conservation and management plan be prepared, in consultation with the ACT Heritage Council and the Australian Heritage Commission. The plan should be reviewed periodically to retain its relevance.
 2. The 1927 blocks (A,B,C,E,F,& G) and garages should be conserved. Alterations and changes may be made to the buildings where, in the opinion of the ACT Heritage Council and the Australian Heritage Commission, the proposed works will not adversely affect the significance of the place.
 3. Demolition should not be permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances, including circumstances in which the building is structurally unsound and beyond economic repair or where there are significant public health and safety reasons to warrant demolition. Demolition should not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no prudent and feasible alternative. The demolition of original building fabric should only be allowed in the context of sympathetic alteration and additions.
 4. The established landscape character of the place should be retained. These elements include: three Cottonwoods, seven Lusitanian oak, two Californian big trees, one Roman cypress, one Arizona cypress, and one Atlas cedar, one smooth barked Chinese elm and seven Blakely's red gums remnant of pre-settlement woodlands.
 5. The open, grassed courts should be retained.
 6. Construction of new landscape elements in the place should only be permitted where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Heritage Council and the Australian Heritage Commission, that the new elements do not adversely affect the landscape setting of the place.
 7. Further research should be conducted to assess the significance of the mosaic under the Blakely's red gum in the western carpark.
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DOCUMENT HISTORY:

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| 23 August 1997 | Draft citation released for public comment. |
| 24 April 1998 | Gazetted in an interim Heritage Places Register. |

