

Image 8: Plan of Contour Survey of Aerodrome Site – Canberra (NAA: A6664, L120)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ORIGINAL CANBERRA AERODROME



Image 9: Possible remnant of Lockspit A (provided as an Attachment to the Nomination)

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Daily Telegraph (Launceston, Tas. : 1883 - 1928), *News Summary*, Wednesday 10 November 1926, page 1. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article153747368>

Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW : 1883 - 1930), *Royal Visit Plans – Elaborate Combined Welcome – By Navy, Army and Air Force*, Wednesday 10 November 1926, page 1 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article245911464>

Examiner (Launceston, Tas. : 1900 - 1954), *The Federal Capital*, Tuesday 20 October 1925, page 4. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91688820>

Telegraph (Brisbane, Qld. : 1872 - 1947), *Opening Canberra – Defence Department Plans – Combined Camp*, Wednesday 10 November 1926, page 9.
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article179576236>

Week (Brisbane, Qld. : 1876 - 1934), *Opening Canberra – Defence Department Plans – Combined Camp*, Friday 19 November 1926, page 14.
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article181461880>

MINUTES OF REGISTER TASKFORCE MEETING

4 March 2021

DATE: 4 March 2021

VENUE: Innovation Lab, Level 5, 480 Northbourne Avenue, Dickson

ATTENDED BY:

Members	Time In	Time Out
Dr Ken Heffernan (Chairperson)	9.30am	12.00pm
Dr Laura Dawes (Deputy Chairperson)	9.30am	12.00pm

In Attendance: Ms Daisy Chaston, Mr Richard Hekimian, Ms Mary Clare Swete Kelly.

Minutes: Ms Adriana Lulic

1.0 WELCOME

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country, apologies and attendances

The Register Taskforce acknowledges the Indigenous peoples of Australia, and welcomes to this gathering today those of you that self-recognise with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

We acknowledge and recognise the significant contribution of the Ngunnawal people; and we pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and conduct our business, and on which we meet here today.

We also recognise the substantial contribution to the Canberra region of neighbouring Nations– including Wiradjuri to the west, Walgalu to the south, Yuin to the east coast, Ngarigo to the south east, Gundungdurra to north east and the Ngambri people.

Dr Heffernan welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

1.2 Confirmation of Agenda

The agenda was confirmed as presented.

1.3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

1.4 Previous Minutes & Actions

The draft minutes for RTF meeting, held on 14 January 2021, were endorsed as presented.

The Actions List was noted.

MINUTES OF REGISTER TASKFORCE MEETING

4 March 2021

2.2 **Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson**

In considering the draft citation, Dr Heffernan noted that whilst there was no physical fabric/remains at the site, the history of the place will be honoured through Canberra Tracks signage which Ms Linda Roberts is currently arranging.

Minor edits were noted by Dr Heffernan.

ACTION:

The Register Taskforce agreed for the draft citation for the Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson, proceed to the Heritage Council with a recommendation not to provisionally register the place.

3.0 **ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

3.1 **Kingston Shopping Precinct – update and direction**

The Register Taskforce discussed strategies for communication and consultation with key stakeholders for the Kingston Shopping Precinct, prior to developing the citation for the precinct.

Dr Heffernan noted that initial thoughts about engaging the Heritage Advisory Service for survey work was not possible due to budgetary constraints. There were also some discussions, prior to Covid-19 restrictions, for Council to go on-site to meet with owners and the community.

Taskforce considered an on-site day to talk to owners and occupiers, and possibly work with the Kingston Library to gather stories from the community. Ideas were discussed surrounding a communication strategy that includes letter-drops to owners and local resident groups (possibly local members too), work with EPSD Comms for community feedback and story uploads (text/photos) via Yoursay or a similar website platform. Council also discussed the feasibility of early release of the Background Information document (or summary version).

Taskforce agreed that the Registration team will discuss the above with Ms Edwina Jans and Drs Heffernan and Dawes will include it on their catch-up agenda with Ms Jans to determine how to proceed. Update to be provided at the next Register Taskforce meeting.

Meeting concluded at 12.00pm

Swetekelly, Maryclare

From: Ken Heffernan [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 15 March 2021 1:14 PM
To: Swetekelly, Maryclare
Cc: Laura Dawes; Chaston, Daisy
Subject: Re: Original Canberra Aerodrome

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the ACT Government. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Thanks for the heads up- that is fine,
Ken

Sent from my iPhone

On 15 Mar 2021, at 12:34 pm, Swetekelly, Maryclare <Maryclare.Swetekelly@act.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Hi Ken and Laura,

This e-mail is just to let you both know that I have added the SOR for the Original Canberra Aerodrome to the agenda for the next Council meeting.

Following the last RTF meeting, I spoke to Edwina about the possible concerns regarding the timing of the Aerodrome SOR with regards to the Canberra Tracks signage unveiling. She is keen to go ahead at the next Council meeting to avoid any appearance of hesitation or mixed messaging. She pointed out that the messaging around the signage might even be easier to convey at the launch of the signage if we proceed now (i.e. there's no registerable remains, but we are acknowledging the important historical context of the site).

With kind regards,
Mary Clare

Mary Clare Swete Kelly | Registrations Assessment Officer

Hours: 9am-1pm Monday to Friday

Phone: 6207 6902 | Email: maryclare.swetekelly@act.gov.au

ACT Heritage | Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development | **ACT Government**

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any other person.

From: EPSD Government Services
Sent: Thursday, 1 April 2021 2:11 PM
To: Chaston, Daisy
Cc: Lulic, Adriana; Jans, Edwina
Subject: RE: Decisions of the Heritage Council

UNOFFICIAL

Hi Daisy
Both loaded for notification on the Legislation Register on Tuesday, 6 April 2021. NI numbers below.

NI2021-211	Heritage (Decision about Registration of Cinema Center, City) Notice 2021
NI2021-212	Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson) Notice 2021

Have a lovely Easter!

Thanks

Tash Hartwig
☎ 02 6207 0701

From: Chaston, Daisy <Daisy.Chaston@act.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 1 April 2021 12:13 PM
To: EPSD Government Services <EPSDGovernmentServices@act.gov.au>
Cc: Lulic, Adriana <Adriana.Lulic@act.gov.au>; Jans, Edwina <Edwina.Jans@act.gov.au>
Subject: Decisions of the Heritage Council

UNOFFICIAL

Good afternoon Government Services

Please be advised that at today's Heritage Council meeting the following notifiable decisions were made:

- Decision about Provisional Registration of Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson
- Decision about Registration of Cinema Center, City

The NIs are attached (word and pdf) and have been cleared by Legal Services.

Under the *Heritage Act 2004*, a notice must be notified within 5 working days after the day the decision is made.
Please arrange notification on the Legislation Register no later than Monday 12 April 2021.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Regards

Daisy Chaston

Daisy Chaston | Manager | Registrations
Phone: 6207 7379 | Email: daisy.chaston@act.gov.au

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From: Chaston, Daisy
Sent: Thursday, 1 April 2021 2:53 PM
To: Roland, Skye
Subject: Dickson Aerodrome - Heritage Council Decision

OFFICIAL

Hi Skye,

This is an informal notice to advise that, at its meeting of today, 1 April 2021, the ACT Heritage Council decided not to provisionally register the Original Canberra Aerodrome Remnants, Dickson. The decision will be formally notified next week, at which time a copy of the decision will be publicly available. We will also send formal correspondence within 15 working days, which will include a copy of the decision. While further details are forthcoming, the decision summary will be:

The presence of the Original Canberra Aerodrome that was previously located in the present-day suburb of Dickson is of historical note, as the first official aviation facility in the ACT and the location of Canberra's first air fatalities. However, the physical remains have been significantly disturbed, removed or destroyed over the years. Consequently, there are no evident remains of the central ring marker, nor three of the four lockspits. Only one lockspit fragment potentially remains, but its provenance is not certain. The Heritage Council considers that the known physical remnants are too fragmentary to meet the criteria for heritage listing.

Kind regards

Daisy

Daisy Chaston | Manager | Registrations

Phone: 6207 7379 | Email: daisy.chaston@act.gov.au

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From: Chaston, Daisy
Sent: Thursday, 1 April 2021 12:18 PM
To: EPSDD Media
Cc: Jans, Edwina
Subject: Media Q and A's - Council Decisions
Attachments: Q and A Council - 153 Limestone Nomination Fassifern House.docx; Q and A Council - Cinema Center.docx; Q and A Council - Original Canberra Aerodrome - Heritage Decision.docx

OFFICIAL

Dear Comms,

For information, today the ACT Heritage made three decisions:

- Registration – Cinema Center, City
- Decision not to provisionally register – Original Canberra Aerodrome Remnants, Dickson
- Nomination accepted – 153 Limestone Avenue, Braddon

Attached are the Q and A's that have been provided to the Chair and Deputy Chair, should they be approached by the community or the media before or after the decisions are formally notified.

Daisy Chaston | Manager | Registrations

Phone: 6207 7379 | Email: daisy.chaston@act.gov.au

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**ACT HERITAGE COUNCIL
AGENDA FOR MEETING 110
1 APRIL 2021**

Meeting Room 022, Ground Floor, 480 Northbourne Avenue, Dickson


Meeting to start at 9.30am

*Denotes that decision/discussion is required.

No asterisk means the agenda item is for noting purposes, with opportunity for questions.

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Welcome | 9.30am |
| 1.1 Acknowledgement of Country, attendance and apologies | |
| 1.2 Confirmation of Agenda for Meeting 110 | |
| 1.3 Declarations of Interest | |
|
 | |
| 2. Previous Meetings | 9.40am |
| 2.1 *Endorsement of Minutes from previous Meetings | |
| 2.2 Action Report on Business Arising | |
|
 | |
| PRESENTATION | 9.50am |
| ACT Planning Review and Reform Project | |
| Dr Erin Brady | |
|
 | |
| 3. Reports to Council | 10.20am |
| 3.1 Chief Planner's Report – Dr Brady | |
| 3.2 Chair's Report – Dr Heffernan | |
| 3.3 A/g Senior Director's Report – Ms Jans | |
| 3.4 Conservator's Report – Mr Walker | |
| 3.5 Finance Report – Ms Lulic | |
|
 | |
| BREAK | 10.50am |
|
 | |
| 4. Register Issues | 11.00am |
| 4.1 Minutes of Register Taskforce – Ms Lulic | |
| 4.2 *Decision on Registration – Ms Chaston | |
| 4.2a – Cinema Center, City | |
| 4.3 *Decision about Provisional Registration – Ms Swete Kelly | |
| 4.3a – Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson | |
| 4.4 Background Report on the Nomination List – Ms Chaston | |
| 4.5 *Decision on Nomination – Ms Chaston | |
| 4.5a – 153 Limestone Avenue, Braddon | |

Chief Planner's Report to the ACT Heritage Council

MATTER	COMMENT	HERITAGE COUNCIL INTEREST	STATUS UPDATE
<p><i>DA 201936662 & DA202037196 Block 25 Section 72 Dickson</i></p> 	<p>Multi-storey Supportive Housing Development (Common Ground)</p>	<p>The proposed development seeks to redevelop a site formerly occupied by the Downer Club. The site also formed part of Canberra's first airfield, i.e. "Canberra aerodrome".</p> <p>A nomination application for the Original Canberra Aerodrome Remnants, Block 25, Section 72 Dickson, (the Place) was submitted to the ACT Heritage Council on 15 June 2020. The application was submitted by the National Trust of Australia in partnership with No. 3 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Association. On 3 July 2020, the ACT Heritage Council advised the Chief Planner it is expected that the application will be considered by the Heritage Council at its meeting on 23 July 2020.</p>	<p>A concept for redevelopment of Block 25 Section 72 Dickson (Common Ground) was presented to the National Capital Design Review Panel on 15 May 2019. Generally, the panel considered the proposal to be a clever offering that will provide high levels of amenity for future residents with an appropriate consideration of the built form in this location.</p> <p>On the 24 April 2020 the ACT Heritage Council advised that Block 25 Section 72 does not contain any heritage places or objects nominated to or registered on the ACT Heritage Register, and that the site is unlikely to contain any unrecorded Aboriginal places and objects given the prior development of the site.</p> <p>A nomination application for the Original Canberra Aerodrome Remnants, Block 25, Section 72 Dickson, (the Place) was submitted to the ACT Heritage Council on 15 June 2020. The application was submitted by the National Trust of Australia in partnership with No. 3 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Association. The application</p>

Chief Planner's Report to the ACT Heritage Council

MATTER	COMMENT	HERITAGE COUNCIL INTEREST	STATUS UPDATE
			<p>relates to the potential archaeological remains of the national capital's first planned and developed aviation facility, and the site of the ACT's first fatal aviation accident.</p> <p>In its initial advice, the Heritage Council proposed conditions to address Heritage Management by requiring a qualified archaeologist to undertake an archival recording of any surface remnants of the Original Canberra Aerodrome within the development area and report on the outcomes to the ACT Heritage Council in addition to an unexpected finds protocol.</p> <p>Both Development Applications were approved by the Minister for Planning and Land Management on 7th August 2020 and plans were endorsed on 14 October 2020.</p>

ACT HERITAGE COUNCIL MEETING 110
1 April 2021
AGENDA PAPERS

REPORTS TO COUNCIL

A/G SENIOR DIRECTOR'S REPORT

3.3

Prepared By: Edwina Jans

PURPOSE

To provide the Council with an update of ACT Heritage activities.

REPORT

REPORT

1. Staffing update

- a. Recruitment is underway for a Manager, Aboriginal Engagement (ongoing) and Project Manager, Register Database and Website (12 months with possibility of ongoing). Both positions are currently on the ACTJobs website.
- b. Recruitment is also underway for two positions in the Advice and Approvals team - a 3-month contract to provide short term support during an unprecedentedly busy time; and a 12 month contract to cover Jen Dunn who has taken a secondment to the NCA.

2. Snapshot – ACT Heritage work program

A snapshot of key projects worked on by ACT Heritage in this period include:

a. Festival

- i. 160 events registered. Launched on 18 March by Minister Vassarotti at Dirty Jane's in Fyshwick. Thank you to those Council members who were able to attend.

b. Grants

- i. 2021-22 Grant opened on 6 March and close on 30 April. A total of \$387,000 is available comprised of the \$366,000 Territorial budget allocation and \$21,000 from a cancelled project from a previous year. Funding will be allocated across the 3 streams: Individual/Community including the Heritage Festival, the Emergency Fund, and the Heritage Advisory Service.

c. Heritage register database

- i. Recruitment of Project Manager; development of project plan; 2021 business case/budget bid

d. Ongoing funding for National Trust

- i. Meeting with National Trust 18 February; development of multi-year funding agreement and annual work plans

ACT HERITAGE COUNCIL MEETING 110
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e. Registrations

- i. 1 registration has been approved for Council decision, the Cinema Center (see Attachment 4.2)
- ii. 1 provisional registration Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson
- iii. 2 nominations referred to Register Taskforce

f. Advice & Approvals

- i. 148 approvals/advice issued under delegation
 - 0 matters referred to Aboriginal Taskforce; and
 - 2 matters referred to DA/CMP Taskforce
 - 2 matters referred to DA Taskforce
 - 1 matter referred to CMP Taskforce

3. Government business

A snapshot of government reporting requests during this period:

- 1. Government/Ministerial Requests.
 - a. Estimates and Annual Report Hearings – 1 March
 - b. Commonwealth heritage - EPBC Act review; National Heritage listing of Canberra; Commonwealth Heritage listing of Lake Burley Griffin
 - c. Ministerial briefings:
 - i. Heritage Festival - launch, arrangements briefs
 - ii. Question Time Briefs for March 2021
 - iii. Doma Foothills development and Ainslie Volcanics nomination
 - iv. State of the Environment 2021 Report
 - v. Australian Heritage Strategy Review
 - vi. Removal from Dickson Library of bronze plaque with incorrect information re Dickson Aerodrome
 - d. Ministerial correspondence:
 - i. Approval responsibility for 'The Foothills' development and Traditional Owner consultation

5. Inter-government Engagement

- a. During this period, there has been a significant demand for consultation and liaison with ACT Heritage from other government agencies, as relate to their works applications/proposals. This includes:
 - i. Arts ACT and Suburban Land Agency for: Kingston Arts Precinct
 - ii. TCCS – Tree removals
 - iii. Parks and Conservation

6. Media

- a. Media Interviews: Linda Roberts – Heritage Festival on ABC Canberra, The Riots Act, HerCanberra

DRAFT MINUTES OF REGISTER TASKFORCE MEETING

4 March 2021

2.2 Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson

In considering the draft citation, Dr Heffernan noted that whilst there was no physical fabric/remains at the site, the history of the place will be honoured through Canberra Tracks signage which Ms Linda Roberts is currently arranging.

Minor edits were noted by Dr Heffernan.

ACTION:

The Register Taskforce agreed for the draft citation for the Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson, proceed to the Heritage Council with a recommendation not to provisionally register the place.

3.0 ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

3.1 Kingston Shopping Precinct – update and direction

The Register Taskforce discussed strategies for communication and consultation with key stakeholders for the Kingston Shopping Precinct, prior to developing the citation for the precinct.

Dr Heffernan noted that initial thoughts about engaging the Heritage Advisory Service for survey work was not possible due to budgetary constraints. There was also some discussions, prior to Covid-19 restrictions, for Council to go on-site to meet with owners and the community.

Taskforce considered an on-site day to talk to owners and occupiers, and possibly work with the Kingston Library to gather stories from the community. Ideas were discussed surrounding a communication strategy that includes letter-drops to owners and local resident groups (possibly local members too), work with EPSD Comms for community feedback and story uploads (text/photos) via Yoursay or a similar website platform. Council also discussed the feasibility of early release of the Background Information document (or summary version).

Taskforce agreed that the Registration team will discuss the above Ms Edwina Jans and Drs Heffernan and Dawes will include it on their catch-up agenda with Ms Jans to determine how to proceed. Update to be provided at the next Register Taskforce meeting.

Meeting concluded at 12.00pm

ACT HERITAGE COUNCIL MEETING 110
1 April 2021
AGENDA PAPERS

REGISTER ISSUES

DECISION ABOUT PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

***4.3**

Prepared By: Mary Clare Swete Kelly

PURPOSE

To inform the Council of places requiring decisions in relation to provisional registration.

ISSUES

Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson

RTF has recommended that the Council agree not to provisionally register this place.

The Original Canberra Aerodrome was located in the area of Dickson before suburban development occurred. It was operational from 1924-1926. It has historic interest, as the first official aviation facility in the ACT and the location of Canberra's first air fatalities. However, the physical remains have been significantly disturbed, removed or destroyed over the years. Consequently, there are no evident remains of the central ring marker, nor three of the four lockspits. Only fragments of one lockspit potentially remain, but these appear to be disturbed and their provenance is not certain.

The place was nominated by Mr Gary Kent, President, National Trust of Australia (ACT) and Mr James Oglethorpe, Treasurer, No. 3 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force Association. Jane Goffman, a town planner, presented historical research on this site at the Australia ICOMOS Heritage of the Air conference (November 2019) and published this in the Canberra Historical Journal (March 2020).

Canberra Tracks signage explaining the history of the Original Canberra Aerodrome and the crash that occurred there will be installed in 2021.

4.3a(i) – draft Statement of Reasons

4.3a(ii) – draft background document

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- * in accordance with section 32 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, decide not to provisionally register the Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson.

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ACT Heritage Council

**STATEMENT OF REASONS
DECISION NOT TO PROVISIONALLY REGISTER
ORIGINAL CANBERRA AERODROME
PART BLOCK 25 AND 26 SECTION 72; PART BLOCK 33 SECTION 73; PART BLOCK 6 SECTION 76, DICKSON
IN THE ACT HERITAGE REGISTER**

In accordance with s32 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, the ACT Heritage Council has decided not to provisionally register Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson. This Statement of Reasons provides an assessment of Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson, and finds that the place does not meet any of the criteria under s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

The presence of the Original Canberra Aerodrome that was previously located in the present-day suburb of Dickson is of historical note, as the first official aviation facility in the ACT and the location of Canberra's first air fatalities. However, the physical remains have been significantly disturbed, removed or destroyed over the years. Consequently, there are no evident remains of the central ring marker, nor three of the four lockspits. Only one lockspit fragment potentially remains, but its provenance is not certain. The Heritage Council considers that the known physical remnants are too fragmentary to meet the criteria for heritage listing.

This statement refers to the location of the place as required in s34(5)(b)(ii) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

LOCATION OF THE PLACE

The nomination refers to three specific locations based on map data relating to presumed remnants of the Original Canberra Aerodrome:

1. Central ring marker location (part Block 25 and 26 Section 72): centroid coordinates -35.250306, 149.145610.
2. Lockspit A (part Block 33 Section 73): centroid coordinates -35.252218, 149.149233.
3. Lockspit B (part Block 6 Section 76): centroid coordinates -35.248639, 149.148896.

This section refers to the description of the place as required in s34(5)(b)(iii) of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The boundary of the place and extent of features listed below is illustrated at Image 1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE

The Original Canberra Aerodrome (also known as Canberra Aerodrome, Aerodrome at Canberra and the Northbourne Aviation Ground) consisting of the following attributes:

- The nomination refers to the central ring and the location of two of the four original lockspits (A and B). The other lockspits are presumed to have been destroyed during construction in the suburb of Dickson. The only known remnants belong to Lockspit A.
 1. Central ring marker location with a radius of 11.65m and a depth of 2 metres below ground.
 2. Lockspit A with a radius of 18m, and a depth of 1 metre below ground.
 3. Lockspit B with a radius of 9m, and a depth of 2 metres below ground.

This statement refers to the Council's reasons for its decision as required in s34(5)(b)(iv) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Council is not satisfied on reasonable grounds, there being only one element of discernible physical evidence, that the place is likely to have heritage significance as defined by s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*; the Council, however, notes that the place may be renominated and reassessed if further physical evidence is discovered in the future.

This statement refers to the Council's assessment of the place against the heritage significance criteria as a part of its reasons for its decision as required in s34(5)(b)(iv) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The Council's assessment against the criteria specified in s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* is as follows.

In assessing the heritage significance of the Original Canberra Aerodrome, Dickson, the Council considered:

- the original nomination and documentary evidence supplied by the nominator;
- the Council's *Heritage Assessment Policy* (March 2018);
- information provided by a site inspection on 16 February 2021 by the Council and ACT Heritage; and
- the report by ACT Heritage titled, *Background Information Original Canberra Aerodrome, February 2021*, containing photographs and information on history, description, condition and integrity; and
- Extent. 2020. *Common Ground Dickson Cultural Heritage Assessment Report*. Unpublished report for Housing ACT, Extent Heritage Advisors; and
Extent. 2020. *Historical Archaeological Test Excavation Report*. Unpublished report for Housing ACT, Extent Heritage Advisors.

Pursuant to s10 of the Heritage Act, a place or object has heritage significance if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria. Future research may alter the findings of this assessment.

(a) importance to the course or pattern of the ACT's cultural or natural history;

The Council has assessed the Original Canberra Aerodrome against criterion (a) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

The Original Canberra Aerodrome is the site of the first official aviation facility in the ACT and the location of Canberra's first air fatalities. Consequently, it had potential to be an important site in understanding the course and pattern of the ACT's cultural history. However, the physical fabric relating to the past land use is all but erased with the only known remains relating to one partially intact lockspit. Moreover, since the closure of this aviation facility the suburb of Dickson been built over the area, not only resulting in the aforementioned disturbance of the physical remains, but also substantially changing the landscape that was associated with the operations of the Original Canberra Aerodrome. Thus, the place does not meet this threshold as it is so altered that it can no longer provide evidence for its meaning.

(b) has uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the ACT's cultural or natural history;

The Council has assessed the Original Canberra Aerodrome against criterion (b) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

The Original Canberra Aerodrome was the earliest aviation facility in the ACT and thus representative of the expansion of early flight into the region. After operations ceased the official aviation grounds were moved to the Majura Valley on part of the site of the present-day airport. It is thus an uncommon aspect of the ACT's cultural history, however, due to the lack of substantive physical remains it lacks intactness. This, combined with the construction of the suburb of Dickson, means that the integrity of the place is too low to meet the threshold for this criterion.

(c) potential to yield important information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT’s cultural or natural history;

The Council has assessed the Original Canberra Aerodrome against criterion (c) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

There is potential to uncover some further physical traces of Lockspits A and B relating to the Original Canberra Aerodrome, however the integrity of these remains is unknown. Detailed archaeological investigations at the site of the ring marker failed to find any intact remains demonstrating that the area has been significantly disturbed. Moreover, the operational set-up of the site is well-documented in other sources. Although there is some potential for buried remnants to be found in the location of Lockspits A and B there is no indication that such information, if ever unearthed, will significantly advance the body of knowledge about the history of the ACT, as required under this criterion. Therefore, the place does not meet the threshold for this criterion, as it lacks potential to yield new information relating to its cultural history as Canberra’s first official aviation facility.

(d) importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or objects;

The Council has assessed the Original Canberra Aerodrome against criterion (d) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

Had the physical remains been intact, the Original Canberra Aerodrome, potentially could have demonstrated characteristics relating to the course of aviation history in the ACT. However, the place no longer displays the high integrity or good condition needed to meet the threshold for this criterion.

(e) importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT;

The Council has assessed the Original Canberra Aerodrome against criterion (e) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

There is no indication of the place having particular aesthetic characteristics that can be demonstrated to be linked to the physical fabric of the place, nor is there evidence to suggest that a community or cultural group in the ACT values the place on the basis of its aesthetic qualities.

The Council notes that the ‘ACT community’ encompasses the broad community of the ACT, across the full geographical context, and a broad spectrum of society; while ‘a cultural group’ has a narrower focus, taken to be a ‘group of people within a society with a shared ethnic or cultural background’ or ‘a group of people connected through the same way of living, which has been transmitted from one generation to another’. The definition specifically precludes professional organisations or special interest groups.

(f) importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement for a particular period;

The Council has assessed the Original Canberra Aerodrome against criterion (f) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

The place contains no visibly intact characteristics that clearly demonstrate creative or technical achievement relating to early aviation facilities. Moreover, although related to early aviation development, landing facilities at this time essentially consisted of open paddocks with simple markers to aid navigation and landing. Consequently, this place does not meet the thresholds demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement.

(g) has a strong or special association with the ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;

The Council has assessed the Original Canberra Aerodrome against criterion (g) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

Although the history of the Original Canberra Aerodrome is of known interest to local historians and to members of the No. 3 Squadron RAAF, the place does not meet the threshold relating to a strong or special association with the ACT community or a cultural group. This is because, for the purposes of this criterion, professional and special interest groups do not constitute the community or a cultural group. Furthermore, there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that the broader ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT has a strong or special association with this site.

(h) has a special association with the life or work of a person, or people, important to the history of the ACT.

The Council has assessed the Original Canberra Aerodrome against criterion (h) and is not satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

In its role as Canberra's first official aviation facility the Original Canberra Aerodrome has an incidental association with many prominent figures in the early planning and development of Canberra, but these associations were not enduring.

It was also the site of Canberra's first aviation fatalities in which the lives of Flying Officer Philip Mackenzie Pitt and Aircraftsman AC1 William Edward Callander were lost. Both men belonged to the No. 3 Squadron RAAF that regularly flew into and out of the Original Canberra Aerodrome during its operational period. This group consequently maintains an historical interest in the site. However, the physical and landscape features are missing that would demonstrate clear evidence associating the people/group and the place. Furthermore, the place is so altered that it no longer provides evidence for this association.

Efforts have been undertaken to memorialise the men who died, including a plaque installed by the ACT Heritage Committee at the front entrance of the Dickson Library. In addition, Canberra Tracks signage explaining the history of the Original Canberra Aerodrome and the crash that occurred there will be installed in 2021.

SITE PLAN



Image 1 Original Canberra Aerodrome remnants at Dickson nominated locations



ACT Heritage Council

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ORIGINAL CANBERRA AERODROME

(PART BLOCK 25 AND 26 SECTION 72; PART BLOCK 33 SECTION 73; PART BLOCK 6 SECTION 76, DICKSON)

At its meeting of 1 April 2021 the ACT Heritage Council decided that the Original Canberra Aerodrome was not eligible for provisional registration.

The information contained in this report was considered by the ACT Heritage Council in assessing the nomination for the Original Canberra Aerodrome against the heritage significance criteria outlined in s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

HISTORY

The Original Canberra Aerodrome was the first official aviation facility in the ACT and the location of Canberra's first air fatalities. It became operational in 1924, but remained so for a relatively short period of time, with a decision to move the aerodrome being made in 1926.

At the time that the Original Canberra Aerodrome was operational the territory and city were in relative infancy. The Federal Capital Territory (not known as the Australian Capital Territory until 1938) was formed on the 1 January 1911. On 12 March 1913, the city of Canberra was founded and officially named. A proposed location for an aerodrome was included on a plan from Canberra City and its environs published in 1922 (Griffin 1922; Image 2). This was located not too far from the eventual location of the Original Canberra Aerodrome. During the operational period of the Original Canberra Aerodrome the Commonwealth parliament was still based in Melbourne and did not move to Canberra until 9 May 1927. In fact, the impending move of the federal government was one reason that prompted the closure of the Original Canberra Aerodrome and the creation of new and expanded facilities in the Majura Valley.

The aerodrome was constructed at a time of rapid expansion in aviation across Australia in the aftermath of World War I. Veteran pilots of the Australian Flying Corp operating in WWI returned to Australia with the knowledge they had gained about flying and their enthusiasm combined with the many aircraft brought back from the war fuelled the initial development of air services (Brogden, 1960). Initially flying was unregulated, but in 1920 Colonel Brinsmead was appointed as an independent Controller of Civil Aviation and other policies were implemented to regulate flying. This led to the Department of Home and Territories purchasing selected sites in capital cities and proposed stopping places. The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) was founded, as a separate defence force from the army and navy, in 1921 but remained relatively small for many years. Around 1924 a period of long-range flights began to demonstrate air capabilities, it has been stated that this was "probably the most important single development in post-war Australian aviation history because of the effect the flights had en masse on the public mind" (Brogden, 1960). It is concurrent with these developments around the rest of Australia that the Original Canberra Aerodrome became operational. Although Canberra was a very small and young town, which did not directly link into many of the aforementioned developments in aviation, it was a time of considerable public interest in aviation.

Site Selection

In October 1921 the Defence Department wrote to the Home and Territories Department saying that provisions needed to be made for a civil aerodrome in Canberra and requested that the necessary area be set aside in a location selected by the Superintendent of Aerodromes (Image 3; NAA: A1, 1931/1751). In response, the Minister for Home and Territories expressed the view that a more suitable location for the aerodrome be found that would not interfere with the city design.

A memorandum from the Secretary of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee to the Director-General of Works dated 5th July 1922 indicates that further discussions regarding the provision of grounds for aviation facilities in Canberra had commenced (NAA: A199, FC1924/447).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ORIGINAL CANBERRA AERODROME

A trip by Colonel Owen to select an aerodrome site was announced by the Prime Minister, Mr Bruce, on 13 Feb 1923 following a meeting of the Federal Cabinet. On the 15 Feb 1923, Colonel Owen (Federal Director of Works) flew from Melbourne to Canberra with Sgd. E. C. Johnson (Superintendent of Aerodromes) to select a site for the new aerodrome. This trip received considerable coverage in the national newspapers (Appendix 1). It was the first plane to fly from Melbourne to Canberra (some newspapers reported that it was the first to land in Canberra). It was forced to descend at Wangaratta due to bushfire smoke before successfully reaching Canberra.

Soon after the trip by Owen and Johnson (2 March 1923), the Department of Defence identified the selected area in a Memorandum to the Department of Home and Territories. On 10 May 1923 the Secretary of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee sent a letter to the Minister of Works and Railways recommending a large area between Majura and Northbourne Avenues be set aside, as shown in Plan No. A. C. 446 (Image 4; NAA: A199, FC1924/447; NAA: A1, 1931/1751). The Commonwealth Surveyor-General also confirmed there were no difficulties with the selected site and approved it to be set aside for the aerodrome.

On 28 March 1924 Sgd. E. C. Johnson provided a report to the Controller of Civil Aviation stating that he had selected an appropriate area for marking (NAA: A199, FC1924/447). A letter from Colonel Owen to the Secretary of the Department of Defence dated 12 May 1924 indicates that the necessary preparation and marking of the site had been completed by the Department of Works.

A contour map of the aerodrome site was published on 11 September 1926 (Image 8). However, this was only completed when plans for establishing a new aerodrome were already well advanced.

Aeroplane Crash

Canberra's first aviation fatalities occurred at the Original Canberra Aerodrome and were related to the operations of the No. 3 Squadron RAAF. The crash of the plane, a de Havilland 9 A6-28 owned by the Defence Department and operated by No. 3 Squadron RAAF out of Richmond aerodrome, occurred on Thursday, 11 February 1926 at about 10:30am (NAA: A1, 1926/3472; Images 5-7 show original photographs of the wreckage). The crash claimed the lives of Flying Officer Philip Mackenzie Pitt and Aircraftsman AC1 William Edward Callander.

The pilot, Flying Officer Philip McKenzie Pitt, was killed upon impact (NAA: A9300, PITT P M). He was 27 years old at the time of the accident, unmarried and originally from Queensland. He graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon in December 1920. He did 12 months training at the Royal Artillery in England, followed by one and a half years at the Royal Garrison Artillery in Sydney. He was afterwards attached to Royal Australian Air Force. He graduated as a pilot on October 31, 1925 and was then assigned to the No. 3 Squadron. He was buried in the Roman Catholic section of the Queanbeyan General Cemetery. A memorial mass was also held St Monica's, Richmond.

Pitt's passenger, Aircraftsman AC1 William Edward Callander, was a photographer and 26 years old at the time of the accident (NAA: A9301, 370). He was married with two children. He was initially saved from the burning wreckage by a ploughman, Walter Johnson, but died from his injuries that same day in hospital. He was buried at St John the Baptist's, Canberra.

The aforementioned, Walter Johnson, later provided evidence to the coroner and the defence inquest (NAA: A9300, PITT P M; NAA: A9301, 370). He was awarded a Humane Society medal for his efforts in attempting to save Mr Callander from the burning wreckage (see Appendix 1).

The aim of the flight had been to undertake an aerial photographic survey of the Murrumbidgee River on behalf of the Federal Capital Commission. A second aircraft, piloted by Flight Lieutenant Hepburn (Director of Works and Buildings, RAAF) with Mr Moss as passenger, landed safely before the accident. He was waiting for Pitt and Callander to arrive and observed the accident from a distance. The engine appeared to be running normally. However, the plane stalled, when landing, only 100 feet above the ground and spun, nose to the ground where it burst into flames. The fire was extinguished upon the arrival of the Canberra Fire Brigade.

A hearing by the district coroner, John Gale, on 12 February 1926 found that the disaster was caused by an error of judgement on the part of the pilot.

News of the accident quickly spread and there was considerable official interest, as well as coverage in the nation's newspapers (Appendix 1). Questions were asked of the Minister of Defence in the House of Representatives regarding

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ORIGINAL CANBERRA AERODROME

the accident on the same day (Hansard in NAA: A1, 1926/3472, p8). An official enquiry was announced by the Defence Department in the immediate aftermath of the crash. The day after the crash the safety of the aeroplane was raised as a point of discussion in the House of Representatives, by Mr Makin (Rep. for S.A.) (Hansard in NAA: A1, 1926/3472). He requested further assurances that everything had been done to ensure the safety of the pilots a week later (17 February 1926) and further comments were made by Sir Neville Howse defending the safety record and giving details as to the pilot error involved. The results of the official inquest (contained in NAA: A9300, PITT P M) were announced by the Minister of Defence, Sir Neville Howse, in the House of Representatives on 11 March 1926 in response to Mr Makin's questions (Hansard in NAA: A1, 1926/3472). The court found that the aeroplane was safe and adequately maintained (NAA: A9300, PITT P M; NAA: A9301, 370). Furthermore, the crash was the result of an error of judgement by the pilot that caused the engine to stall and no blame was attachable to anyone.

This crash occurred early in the history of the RAAF and there had only been two prior air fatalities within this force, although there were at least five others in the year to follow (Appendix 1). The No. 3 Squadron RAAF maintains a website commemorating the accident and the lives lost (https://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/Canberra_Survey_%20Sacrifice.htm).

Decision to move aerodrome from original location

The Original Canberra Aerodrome was only operational for a period of two years. In 1926 the aerodrome site was deemed unsatisfactory and a new site was selected by the controller of civil aviation, Lieut. Colonel Brinsmead, at the corner of Majura Valley road and Duntroon-Queanbeyan Road (Appendix 1). The main problem with the Original Aerodrome Site appears to have been that it could not be approached from the south and east due to its close proximity to Mt Ainslie. The new site had a greater landing distance in all directions, not less than 1000 yards. The plans for the Opening of Parliament in Canberra and the associated visit of the Duke of York were driving factors behind the selection of a new aerodrome site in order to adequately accommodate the Air Force unit during the royal visit (NAA: A1, 1931/1751, pgs 65-91; Appendix 1). The site selected for the new aerodrome in 1926 in the Majura Valley is part of the land still occupied by Canberra Airport.

Later Developments of the Site of the Original Canberra Aerodrome

After the aerodrome was moved the land that it occupied reverted to a pastoral lease. In the 1950s the city of Canberra expanded onto the location of the Original Canberra Aerodrome and the suburb of Dickson was constructed. Possible fragments of the ring marker are visible in aerial imagery from 1950 and 1958 in the form of an arc-shaped object but, if present, this must have been removed in subsequent years (Extent, 2020a).

Historical interest in the Original Canberra Aerodrome has endured. On 16 November 2019 Jane Goffman, a town planner based in Canberra and member of the Council of the National Trust of Australia (ACT), in association with James Oglethorpe, Website Coordinator for No. 3 Squadron RAAF Association, presented the history of the Original Canberra Aerodrome at the Australia ICOMOS Heritage of the Air Conference. A paper was subsequently published in the Canberra Historical Journal (Goffman, 2020). As part of their collaboration a digitised version of the contours of the aerodrome was added to the Historic Plans available on ACTmapi (<https://app.actmapi.act.gov.au/actmapi/index.html?viewer=hp>).

Following a proposal by Housing ACT to develop an area thought to be adjacent to the original ring marker location, a professional investigation was done to confirm if it was intact (Extent, 2020a; 2020b). No physical evidence for the ring marker was uncovered.

The location of the Original Canberra Aerodrome is commemorated on a plaque located at the Dickson Library. Canberra Tracks signage will also be installed in April 2021 explaining the historical significance of the Original Canberra Aerodrome and the crash that occurred there.

DESCRIPTION

During its operational phase the Original Canberra Aerodrome site consisted of an open field, with a central ring marker and four lockspits designating the corners of the landing area. These were all made of concrete and whitewashed to increase visibility.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ORIGINAL CANBERRA AERODROME

Physical condition and integrity

The nomination refers to the locations of the central ring and two of the four lockspits (the others are presumed to have been destroyed during construction in the suburb of Dickson). As described in the History section of this Background Information, the physical remains have been significantly disturbed, removed or destroyed over the years. At the time of the nomination it was thought that the central ring may still be partially intact. However, subsequent sub-surface archaeological investigations did not reveal any intact structure (Extent, 2020b). Consequently, there is no evident remains of the central ring marker, nor three of the four lockspits. It is possible that a small remnant of Lockspit A is intact due to the presence of concrete rubble at the location (Image 9).

The Original Canberra Aerodrome is of enduring historical interest as the first official aviation facility in the development of the region. However, only the remains of one lockspit fragment are known to exist. It is possible that more of this could be located underground and that there may also be subsurface remnants belonging to Lockspit B. However, as shown by the investigations of the central ring, it is probable that any potential remains are substantially disturbed. Therefore, it is unlikely that on their own any fragmentary remnants would meet the thresholds for inclusion in the ACT Heritage Register. Moreover, the context of what remains today within the suburban infrastructure of Dickson is substantially altered to what would have been the original context, thus diminishing any potential interpretation of its significance.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ORIGINAL CANBERRA AERODROME

SITE PLAN



Image 1 Original Canberra Aerodrome site boundary

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ORIGINAL CANBERRA AERODROME

IMAGES



Image 2: Plan of Canberra City and Environs indicating a possible future location for an aerodrome (Griffin 1922).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ORIGINAL CANBERRA AERODROME

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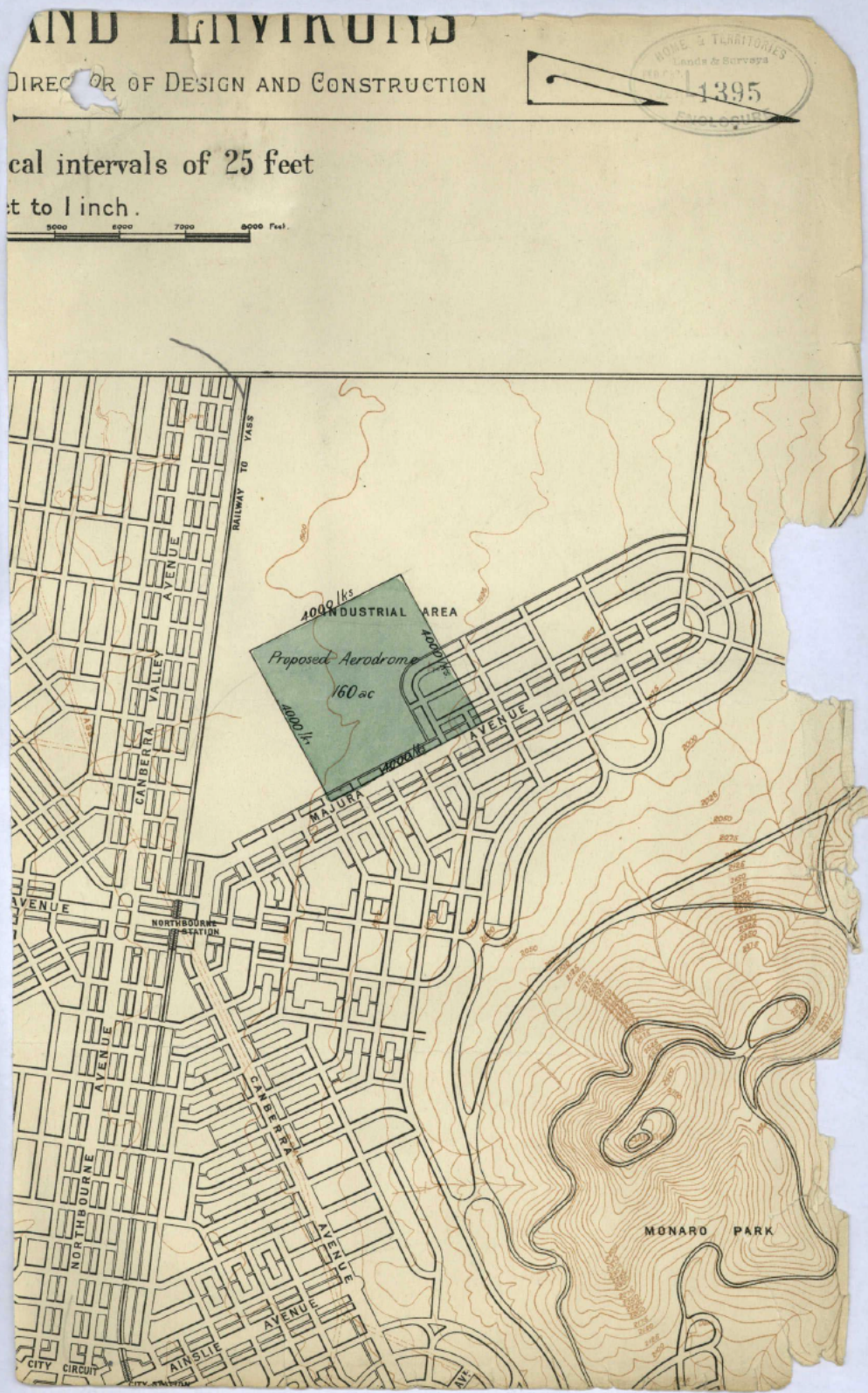


Image 3: Area proposed for aerodrome by Defence Department in October 1921 (NAA: A1, 1931/1751).