

Study Item/ Area	School of Art
Acton Campus Precinct	BALDESSIN Precinct
Building Nos. & Names	105 (Canberra School of Art), 13B (Asian Studies Demountable), 105A (Baldessin Annex), 105C (School of Art Transportable, East), 105D (School of Art Transportable, West), Canberra Repertory Theatre*

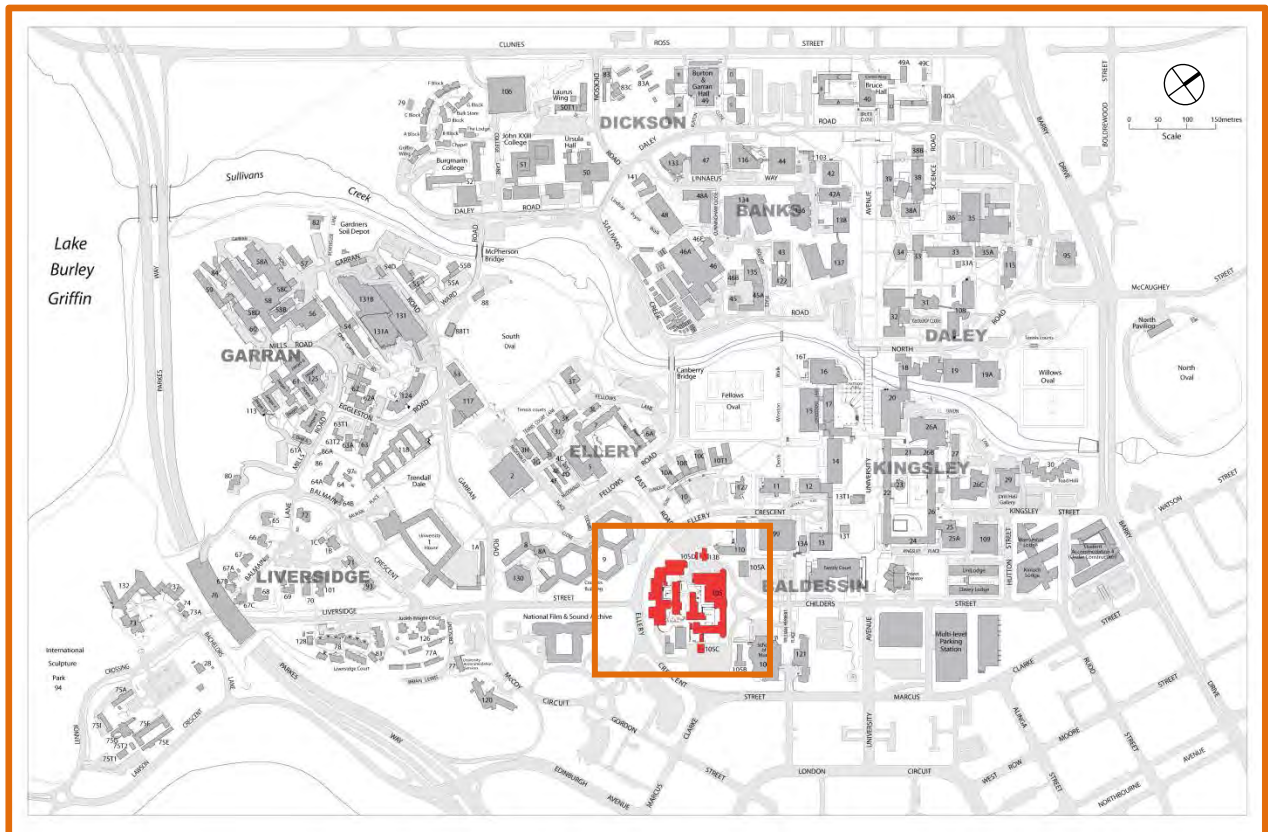


Figure 1: Location of study area within the ANU Acton Campus site.

Heritage Ranking	School of Art Complex— Exceptional —Meets the criteria for Commonwealth Heritage List
Heritage Listing	The School of Art building is individually listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL).
Condition—Date	The condition noted here is at December 2011. The extant buildings (and trees) in the Canberra School of Art continue to be well maintained for a range of uses under the school and are in reasonable condition.
Relevant Documentation	2000 Conservation Management Plan was developed by Daryl Jackson Alastair Swain Architects.

Context of the Buildings

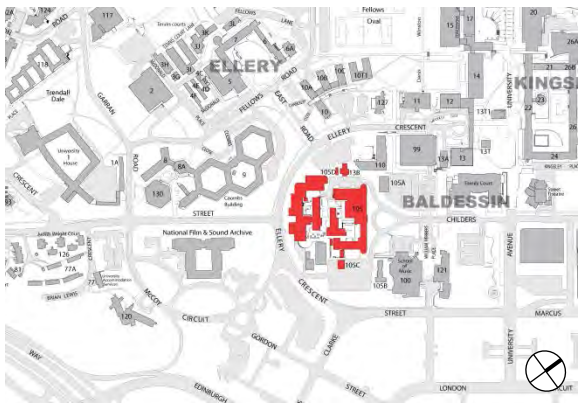


Figure 2: The School of Art Building in its context of the Baldessin Precinct.

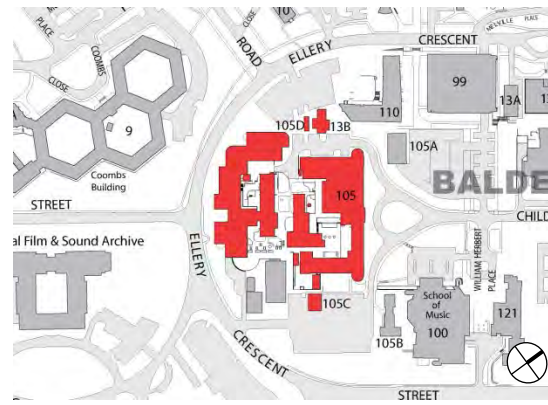


Figure 3: The School of Art Buildings in relation to the School of Music and The National Film and Sound Archive on Ellery Crescent.

Brief Historical Overview

With the Burley Griffin and subsequent designs of the city of Canberra, a zone of land west of the city centre was set aside for the future development of a university. It was in this zone that the building initially known as the 'Canberra High School' was constructed. The Depression of the 1930s and World War II economy did little to aid the growth of the city during the initial construction period and financial cuts hit all sectors very hard. With the development of housing and building of the capital in the post-war era, work camps for labourers and builders spread over the city area. One such camp was erected on the site that would soon become Canberra High School.

The choice of site for the high school was the area available at the site for sports grounds and 'the grouping of educational buildings thus afforded.' The design of the building is attributed to E H Henderson and Cuthbert Whitley from the Department of the Interior Works Branch; Whitley also designed Ainslie Primary and the Patents Office and was highly regarded for his Art Deco/ Inter War architecture in Canberra. The chief feature of Canberra High School's design was the Art Deco inspiration with its emphasis on verticality, decoration and symmetry. This style was much used in Canberra during this period. K Charlton wrote: 'Economic factors around 1930 produced a period of minimal building which coincided with the emergence of Australian Art Deco... the first strand of modern architecture to appear in Canberra.'¹

A major design element which contributes to the building's landmark qualities was the central clock tower on the front façade. Given the open landscape of the period, the building with its intricate design elements, made a powerful statement in the City-Acton area. With tenders called for in November 1937, Gaskin Brothers of Sydney won the contract for £68,478.4.4, however financial difficulties forced them to withdraw and so the contract was picked up by H G Whittle, Sydney for £75,500 in April 1938.

Minister for the Interior John McEwan laid the foundation stone for the building on the June 30 1938. This was the first time a minister with the responsibility for the development of the Territory had laid a foundation stone for a public building in Canberra. The handover was on the August 17 with the official opening on the November 18 1939 by Interior Minister, Senator Foll.

The School was considered one of the most modern in the country with well fitted school rooms, workshops and a large library. It also included a radio system and school counsellor to assist with vocational guidance. The school soon generated interest from overseas with a particular request from Canadian magazine 'School Progress' for an article on the school.

The Second World War erupted early in the Schools history and many former students enlisted. A number of them served in the 3rd battalion (militia) on the Kokoda Track. Canberra was seen as being at risk from air attack during the war and school air raid trenches were dug (and used during drills) on the other side of Ellery Crescent where the HC Coombs Building now stands. A klaxon horn was mounted on the schools clock tower to warn of imminent air raids. 43 ex-students lost their lives during the war and a memorial plaque was unveiled on Anzac Day 1947 in the entrance hall. A planned memorial planting, running from the entrance of the school grounds to the building entrance was scrapped in favour of a planting of two eucalypts adjacent to the

drive leading to the building entrance. The two *Eucalyptus Maculosa* trees were planted by James Torrence and Ron Crawley and a copper plate was installed at the base of each.

Work on the school landscape commenced early. The continuing work on the landscape was supervised and designed by John Hobday in consultation with Charles Daley. It was noted by Lindsay Pryor that there was a certain amount of planting done at the school had been implemented gradually. Additional planting was added and as the use of the building changed so the landscape arrangement also changed. The construction of the playing fields and courts to the north of the building was completed in 1941-42.

In 1954 plans were drawn for the two storey extension to the side wings and for a multipurpose hall or 'pavilion'. In 1960 the pavilion was divided into classrooms and extended to the west for general activities and in 1961 a purpose built assembly hall was belatedly constructed slightly to the south east of the main building.

Curriculum and population changes in the 1960's had a large impact on the school and the opening of high schools in Lyneham and Campbell reduced the Canberra High School's population to approximately 600. In 1967 the Department of the Interior announced that the school would be closed owing to the declining enrolments and lack of facilities to cope with the curriculum requirements. A campaign to move the school rather than close it was successful and the school moved to a new site in the suburb of Macquarie.

Following the departure of Canberra High School, the old buildings became known as the City Education Centre. A variety of groups were accommodated, including the Canberra Technical College's Art School which had formerly been using huts in Kingston. The buildings became rather neglected during the 1970s and reasons for the lack of maintenance included the planned construction of the Molonglo Expressway. As it turned out, no major road works affected the site.

By 1966 the Canberra Technical College's Art School Canberra Technical College's Art School was offering full time courses, however conditions and space limitations at Kingston had reached acute levels. The school moved to the Canberra High School building in 1969. Further space issues led to the installation of portable building on the site. In 1975 there were student protests over facilities, staff numbers and other issues. With the inauguration of a separate Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system in the ACT the Art School was reconstituted as the Canberra School of Art (CSA), an independent entity from 1976.

The space limitations within the building became an issue for the CSA. Other tenants were gradually removed and the CSA took over the whole site. In 1978 redevelopment of the site was discussed with the Department of Education and the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC), and Daryl Jackson Evan Walker (DJEV) Architects were commissioned to design the alterations and extension to the building.

The award-winning design included features such as definition and use of the North-South spine along the central axis of the former high school building. This allowed infill to the rear of the main building to be arranged along the spine, encouraging student interaction with the various areas of the campus. The style of the new buildings provided links with the Art Deco style of the original; while the new walls were painted in the same colour as the original, they were constructed of bagged brickwork allowing them to be distinguished from the original rendered wall surfaces.

As well as the creation of new structures, the design made alterations to the main U-shaped building, the former tuck shop building and the 1950s pavilion. Construction began in 1980 and was managed by Project Coordination P/L. It was completed in March 1981 and opened by Governor General Sir Zelman Cowen on July 13 1981. Since this time a range of building works have taken place and Alastair Swain of Daryl Jackson Alastair Swain P/L has played a significant role in the design of these works. Included are the mezzanine floors in various areas, the extension of the glass workshop, changes in the painting, former leather and sculpture workshops and other alterations.

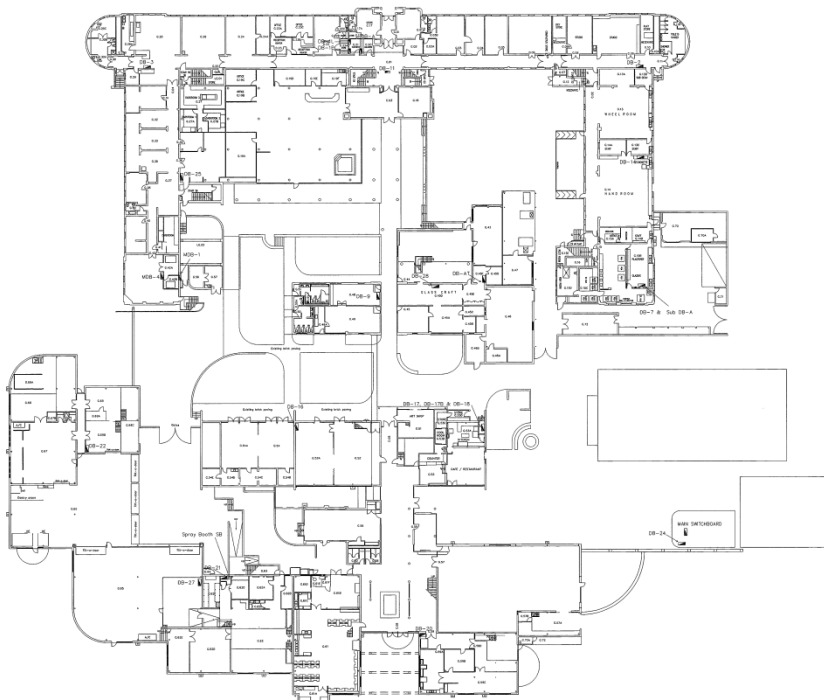
During the CSA period, the setting of the building has changed dramatically. In 1976 the Canberra School of Music (CSM) Building was built over the former oval and car parks now extend down Childers street to University Avenue. The narrowing of the southward vista along Childers Street has helped to make the building and its landmark clock tower an even stronger terminal point of that streetscape.

In 1983 the CSA's four year Bachelor of Arts (Visual) was accredited and represented a major breakthrough as the first four year accredited visual arts degree in Australia. The 1990s saw the introduction of the Master of Arts (1990) and the Doctor of Philosophy (1994). It has become one of the leading art schools in the nation, often setting the trend for other schools to follow.

After the amalgamation of the CSA and the CSM to form the Canberra Institute of the Arts (CITA) in 1988, CITA recognised the advantages of a link with the ANU and affiliated in 1989. In 1992 full amalgamation took place and CITA became the ANU Institute of the Arts.

The development of the CSA's stature has meant higher enrolments and pressure on the building for space. In 1990 a site development plan was commissioned when it was seen that building extension would be necessary.

The CSA's complex heritage significance has been recognised. In 1981 the National Trust classified the façade of the main building and three years later the complex was placed on the Australian Heritage Commission's Register of the National Estate. Since then it has also been placed on the ACT and Commonwealth Heritage Registers.



		CONTRACTOR/CONSULTANT FREEBODY & ASSOCIATES trading as T&L ENTERPRISES 0413943661		 AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY Facilities and Services		PROJECT TITLE: GROUND FLOOR PLAN		DRAWING TITLE: ELECTRICAL SERVICES SWITCHBOARD LOCATION PLAN		Date: 16 - 06 - 98 Scale: 1:400 Drawn: [initials] Checked: [initials] Approved: [initials] Issue No: 01 Pathname: \\S:\SMA\Site\052-2 L105/E/002/2 of 3	
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Figure 4: June 1996 site plan of the School of Art including extensions and other buildings in the area. Compiled by T&L Enterprises for Facilities and Services Division, ANU.

Description of the School of Art Building.

Buildings

The footings of the School of Art Building are reinforced concrete strips to masonry walls, which are of load bearing brickwork. There is a noted lack of provision for articulation of the walls. The basement floors are of reinforced concrete on ground level and the stairs are suspended reinforced concrete. The ground floor is constructed of suspended reinforced concrete within the areas of the corridors, toilets, entry-tower zone and over the basement. The pottery wheel room in the east wing demonstrates a concrete finish, contrary to the timber framed floors shown in the documentation of the building. The remainder of the floors are timber framed and boarded (some overlaid with vinyl), supported off sleeper piers and footings of brickwork.

The first floor and tower floors are suspended and reinforced concrete slabs. The roof consists of a timber frame, rafters and

Description of the School of Art Building.

support under purlins, all supported off regularly spaced steel beams, except for the original areas of extension to the upper floors in the east and west wings, where steel trusses with timber purlin construction has been adopted. The roof is clad with corrugated iron sheeting. The original ceiling linings appear to have been removed and replaced by suspension off the framework of an exposed grid plasterboard panel ceiling.

Landscape

The landscaping of the area has evolved with the buildings changes in tenants and its uses. Much of the pre-development vegetation has been removed and/or replaced with intentional plantings of both native and exotic species. These have included *Quercus robur*, *Ulmus parvifolia* and members of the *Cedrus* and *Platanus* genera. Many of the native plantings are eucalypts and acacias and include memorial plantings in the area. This vegetation runs along both Childers Street and Ellery Circuit and also includes much of the Baldessin Precinct.

Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

CHL Statement of Significance

The Canberra School of Art consists of a group of buildings with courtyards and curtilage spaces. The predominant building is the former 1938 Canberra High School, the first purpose built high school in Canberra that was adapted and extended to form the School of Art in 1980-81. The complex represents a period of growth, change and development and forms an important contribution to Canberra's arts educational precinct.

From the inception of Canberra until World War II the Federal Capital Authority established a suite of buildings mostly designed by Government architects. They demonstrate the modern design style of the time and are a distinctive suite of gracious buildings that reflect the ideals of the period. The original Canberra High School building in the Inter War Art Deco style is an important contributor of the era and a significant example of the style in Canberra. The High School building was designed by the architect Cuthbert Whitley, a government architect and prolific designer of early Canberra government buildings. It is essentially unchanged with its Inter War Art Deco form and features.

The place is notable for its empathetic extensions, firstly to the High School in the 1950s and the 1960s in matching style, and also in 1980 when the building was extended and adapted for a School of Art by Daryl Jackson and Evan Walker who won architectural awards for the design achievement. As the School of Art it is a feature of the Canberra arts precinct originally defined in Walter Burley Griffin's plan of Canberra.

With its hill top location and stylized tall clock tower, the School of Art complex has a distinctive visual presence. The complex makes a very successful grouping, with architectural cohesion and unity and is a land mark townscape feature in Canberra's arts precinct.

Criteria	Assessment
(a) Historic The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history.	<p>CHL Criteria</p> <p><i>The Canberra School of Art is an ensemble of buildings that includes the former Canberra High School constructed in 1938 during the Federal Capital period, 1911-1939. The period was important in Canberra's history as the time when architects implemented infrastructure and architectural development to Walter Burley Griffin's plan to create an estate of gracious modern-styled buildings. The buildings of this era contribute to the architectural qualities of Canberra and the Canberra School of Art is itself a significant contributor to that group of Federal Capital era buildings.</i></p> <p><i>Serving as the School of Art since 1976, the complex consists of the 1938-1961 former High School buildings of the main two storey building, with a central clock tower and two extending two storey wings, the multi-purpose hall with its west end extension and the assembly hall building, the driveway and forecourt. It includes the 1980s extensions to develop it as the School of Art consisting of studios, teachings spaces, a library, studios and studio residences, a gallery, courtyard spaces, and a colonnaded walkway that connects the buildings.</i></p> <p><i>Two memorial brittle gums were planted in 1947 to flank the entrance driveway to the building and</i></p>

Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

	<p>commemorate 43 former Canberra High School students killed in action during World War Two. The plantings and plaques demonstrate a strong association of past students with the place.</p> <p>The School of Art meets CHL criterion (a) for historic values.</p> <p>Attributes</p> <p>The ensemble of building and landscape features and their direct connection to the Federal Capital Period of Canberra's history.</p>
<p>(b) Rarity The place has significant heritage values because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history.</p>	<p>The School of Art does not meet CHL criterion (b) for rarity values.</p>
<p>(c) Scientific The place has significant heritage value because of the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history.</p>	<p>The School of Art does not meet CHL criterion (c) for scientific values.</p>
<p>(d) Representative The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: A class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or A class of Australia's natural or cultural environments.</p>	<p>CHL Criteria</p> <p><i>The Canberra School of Art is significant for its essentially unchanged architectural style, and is significant for demonstrating the principal characteristics of the Inter-War Art Deco Style in the original High School buildings. The style is expressed in the building in the symmetrical front façade with a central clock tower, the streamlined form of the building with in recessed narrow fenestration patterns, semi-circular ends to the main wing, a long horizontal spread with stylised low-relief ornamentation, parallel line motif embellishing the monumental entrance, and vertical fins to some of the back buildings. Internally the building retains some of the typical stylistic details of ironmongery, doors and windows. The long east west corridor with its parquet floor retains the survey lines in lighter wood and brass datum points. Original period furniture designed by Fred Ward is featured in the building.</i></p> <p>The School of Art meets CHL Criterion (d) for representative values.</p> <p>Attributes</p> <p>The building displays excellent examples of the Inter-War Art Deco Architectural style, with design of an award winning standard as well as examples of internal fittings and fixtures of the same style.</p>
<p>(e) Aesthetic The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or</p>	<p>The School of Art does not meet CHL criterion (e) for aesthetic values.</p>

Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

cultural group.	
<p>(f) Creative/Technical The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.</p>	<p>CHL Criteria</p> <p><i>The School of Art is important for the creative achievement of the former Canberra High School design that demonstrates classical symmetry and well-proportioned building elements. The brick base enhances the clean lines of the building façade typical of the Inter-War Art Deco style. The building demonstrates craftsmanship in its use of timber, render, terrazzo, metalwork, construction details. The circular driveway and forecourt, and the siting of the building on a prominence call attention to the elegance of the façade and clock tower and emphasise its importance in the townscape.</i></p> <p><i>The empathetic modern additions are creative in the way they complement the major design elements of proportion, scale and functionality with the introduction of a colonnaded central pedestrian spine connecting the courtyards and the original old building to the 1980 additions. The 1980's library with large windows provides views from the conversation pit to the courtyards. The pit corner is a feature of the library and is enhanced aesthetically by the sculpture 'Standing Figure' by Maria Kuczynska. Sculptures that add to the designed image of the place include the sculptures 'Reclining Figure' and 'Seated Figure' by Olavi Lanu in the courtyards and 'The Aetina Bench' by Ron Roberston-Swan on the walkway. Mature specimens of Eucalyptus blakelyi to the side and rear of the building complement the architectural elevations.</i></p> <p><i>The complex of buildings from different eras, the court yard and curtilage spaces, circular driveway and trees create a design cohesion and unity that has been recognized through architectural awards.</i></p> <p><i>Architects Jackson and Walker received the inaugural RAI A Sir Zelman Cowan Award for Public Buildings and the ACT Chapter of the RAI A the Canberra Medallion in 1981 for the 1980 School of Art extensions. The Sir Zelman Cowan Award is awarded annually for an executed work of outstanding merit and the Medallion is awarded for architectural excellence. The Canberra School of Art was listed on the Royal Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter Register of Significant Twentieth Century Buildings in 2003.</i></p> <p>The School of Art meets CHL criterion (f) for creative/technical values.</p> <p>Attributes</p> <p>The building, its context and layout and its exterior and interior features.</p>
<p>(g) Social The place has significant heritage value because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.</p>	<p>The School of Art does not meet CHL criterion (g) for social values.</p>
<p>(h) Associative The place has significant heritage value because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in</p>	<p>CHL Criteria</p> <p><i>The Canberra High School is significant for its special association with the architect Cuthbert Whitley who lived and worked in Canberra. He is notable as one of the early major government architects contributing numerous innovative works of modern urban design in Canberra during the 1930s that included the Patent Office, Ainslie Public School and the first Forrest Fire Station.</i></p> <p><i>The 1980 extensions are significant as the work of architects Daryl Jackson and Evan Walker. Jackson, recognised as a key practitioner of the late 20th Post-Modern Style, received the RAI A Gold Medal in 1987.</i></p>

Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

Australia's natural and cultural history.	<p>The School of Art meets CHL criterion (h) for associative values.</p> <p><i>Attributes</i></p> <p>The building and its significant associations with notable persons.</p>
<p>(i) Indigenous</p> <p>The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.</p>	<p>The School of Art does not meet CHL criterion (b) for rarity values.</p>

Photographs



Figure 5: Front Façade of the School of Art. (Source: ANU Heritage Office.2011)



Figure 6: Demountable buildings connected to the north of the School of Art. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)



Figure 7: Interior of School of Art including survey lines in the parquetry and interior Inter-War Art Deco style detailing. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)



Figure 8: View of one of the courtyards with gardens and artworks. (Source: ANU Heritage office 2011)

Photographs



Figure 9: Aerial view of School of Art complex. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)



Figure 10: View of main façade of the School of Art including sculptural artworks. (Source: ANU Heritage Office. 2011)

Management Issues

Constraints and Opportunities

Constraints arise from the identified heritage values of the School of Art and the requirement under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)* (EPBC Act) to conserve them. The significant fabric of the School of Art, as indicated in the attributes above, should be conserved wherever possible.

The School of Art is of exceptional heritage value and meets the EPBC Commonwealth Heritage criteria a) historic, d) representative, f) creative/technical and h) associative. Elements of exceptional heritage value are generally associated with the earliest phase of development of the ANU and must be retained and conserved. The tolerance for change level is generally low. Loss or alteration of individual elements of exceptional significance would significantly diminish the Commonwealth Heritage (or other) values of the ANU Acton campus.

The Tolerance for Change heritage management tool, outlined in Section 7.6 of the ANU Acton Campus Heritage Study 2012, will assist in conserving heritage values through a process of change. The School of Art is able to tolerate some level of change through development whereby the historic, creative/technical and associative attributes and characteristics are conserved and interpreted in a state-of-the-art design for the area.

Opportunities arise from the identified heritage values of the School of Art. The history of the School of Art should be interpreted to maintain the historic and associative values of significant attributes identified in the assessments above. A greater degree of change may be tolerated if interpretation is of a very high quality and considered in any future development, which presents the identified heritage values for the future.

Recommendations

Referral to the current Heritage Management Plan for the School of Art is required when preparing advice for alterations to the School of Art. This plan should be updated as soon as possible.

If development resulting in loss of significant fabric is proposed, interpretation and a heritage impact assessment would be a prerequisite according to EPBC Act requirements.

Photographic recording for the ANU archives should be undertaken prior to any potential loss of significant fabric, buildings or landscaping in any future development of the School of Art

A formal assessment of the aesthetic and social values of the building should be carried out.

Australian National University

Acton Campus — Site Inventory



¹ Charlton, K, 1984. *Federal Capital Architecture, Canberra 1911-1939*, National Trust of Australia, Canberra.