

Study Item/ Area	The RG Menzies Building
Acton Campus Precinct	ELLERY Precinct
Building Nos. & Names	2 (RG Menzies Library)



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

Heritage Ranking	RG Menzies Building— High —meets criteria for Commonwealth Heritage List
Heritage Listing	The RG Menzies Building is individually listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL) (Place ID 105685).
Condition	The condition noted here is at October 2011. The RG Menzies Building and surrounding landscape continue to be well maintained as a library facility and are in good condition. The RG Menzies Building was constructed as the General Studies Library in 1963.
Relevant Documentation	2010 Draft Heritage Management Plan has been prepared by the ANU Heritage Officer. It provides a detailed history and description of the building and landscape.

Context of the Buildings



Figure 2: The Menzies Library in relation to the Ellery Precinct including University House, Coombs Building and College of Law.



Figure 3: The Menzies Library Building layout in relation to the Old Administration Area and Garran road.

Brief Historical Overview

The RG Menzies Building was the first purpose-built library on the Acton campus, designed to house the Institute of Advanced Studies library collection. The ANU library collection was originally housed in Wyselaskie Hall of the University of Melbourne, and then in some of the Old Hospital buildings. The threat of fire instigated a move to the Childers Street Buildings, where the collection remained before moving to the current location in 1963.

The RG Menzies Building is a late-twentieth century design, featuring the overall cubiform shape of the International Style and elements of the strong, bold shapes of the Brutalist Style. J Scarborough and Partners in association with Collard, Clarke and Jackson, designed the building in 1961. The building was completed in 1963 after lengthy delays due to poor weather and problems sourcing the raw stone used in its construction. The local contractors Simmie & Co were engaged to construct the building. The RG Menzies Building is the central location for holdings of scholarly material relating to the Asia Pacific Region and houses one of the largest collections of Asian language scholarly information resources in Australia

The building was named after Australia's longest serving Prime Minister Sir Robert Gordon Menzies (1894-1978), due to his long-standing associations with the development of tertiary education and research in Australia. In particular, Menzies was instrumental in the development of the Research Schools at ANU, and laid the foundation stone for the building in 1961. HRH Queen Elizabeth II formally opened the RG Menzies Building on March 13 1963.

The library includes extant original purpose built furnishings including card catalogues, a map cabinet and Fred Ward designed chairs and tables. The Library also houses several significant works from the ANU Art Collection.

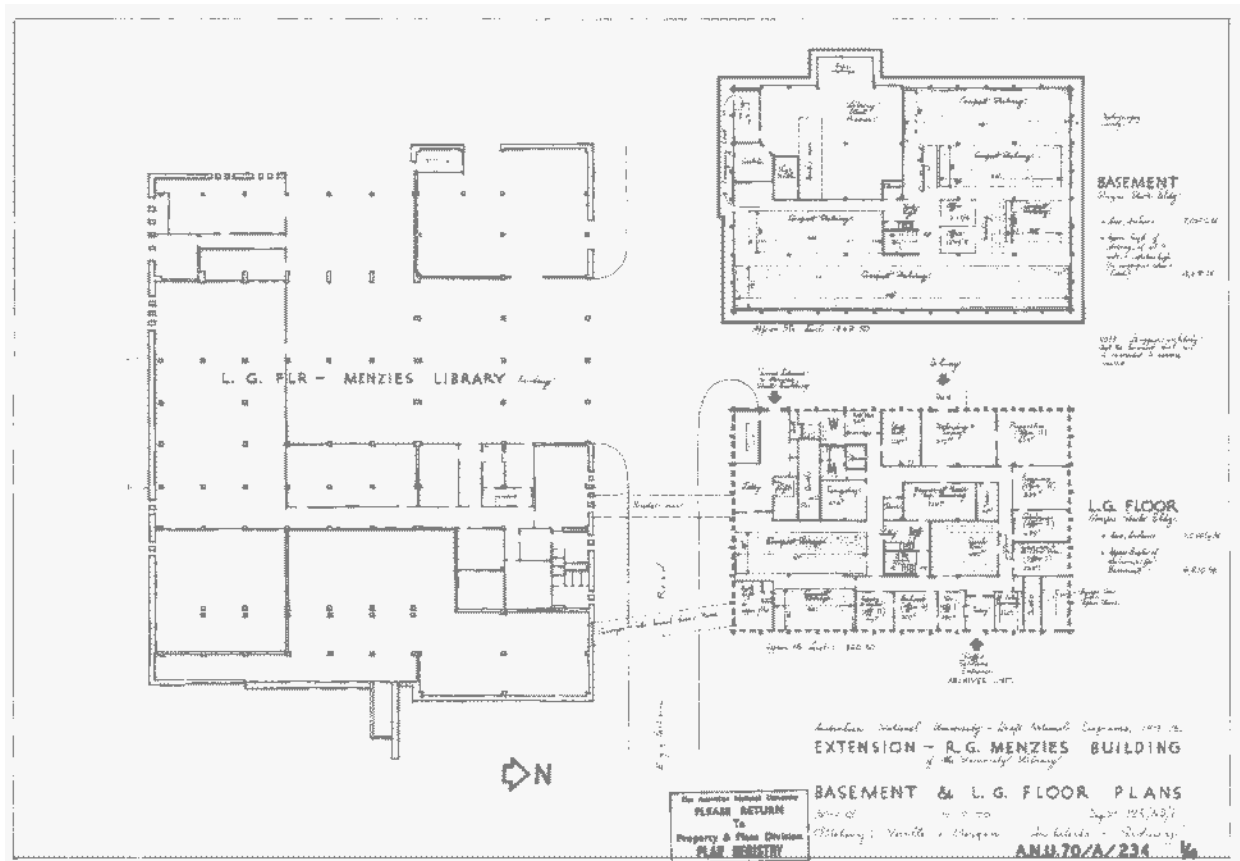


Figure 4: 1970 Plans for the extension of the Menzies building, including part of the original layout of the library.

Description of the RG Menzies Building

Building

The architectural inspiration for the RG Menzies Building was largely provided by Guy Collard, who referred to the work of Frank Lloyd Wright of Arizona, USA. Frank Lloyd Wright used various sizes of local stone set in and backed by concrete, emphasised by the use of textured stone and a copper roof.

The building is constructed on a textured raw concrete base with light-pink to grey stones that are set randomly in horizontal rustication. This plinth, an important 'connecting element' of the two distinct blocks, is set into the natural slope of the land and is separated from the upper section by an expressed metal channel. The building itself is formed of brick-infill walls which rest on a concrete pier base. The building is formed of two very distinct elements: the south block consists of a single storey structure, and the northern half provides four-levels of book stack space with study carrels (cubicles) and computer laboratories. Both halves of the building sit on a basement/undercroft level. The main entrance is from the eastern side of the southern block, and the rear entrance is from the basement level of the northern side of the building.

The exterior of the southern block is constructed upon a stone plinth, a major architectural element that extends to the height of the roof. The fenestration is punctuated by large windows covered with the decorative bronze screens designed by artist Lyndon Dadswell and other narrow windows provide light for the lower ground floor on the southern and western sides of the building.

The southern section sits beneath a concrete vault ceiling and copper roof with no eaves. The lack of downpipes, which are actually embedded in the structural columns, are a notable feature, providing for an unending run of the roof edge. The roof is clad in copper sheeting which is joined at the folded seams. A light, artificial membrane has recently been affixed atop the copper sheeting in order to correct the design flaws while also protecting the original roof fabrics. The roof of the enclosed courtyard is

Description of the RG Menzies Building

formed of a lighter shade of galvanized steel. Three original glazed sliding doors in the centre of the southern wall lead to a cantilevered concrete verandah, accessed from the McDonald Room. A concrete verandah has also been added above the rear entrance, with access from the Archives Reading Room. Both verandahs are tiled with stone of brick to the front entrance flagging, stack area cladding and window sills.

The main foyer of the southern block is the central focal point of the building. The double oak doors lead to a small entrance vestibule that is lined with beaded boards and sliding inner doors that are framed in aluminium/bronze. A large circular bronze memorial plaque commemorates the opening of the building by HRH Queen Elizabeth II in March 1963. The foyer has recently had refurbishments that have opened out the area. It is in the foyer that Dadswell's decorative screens are most effective. The screens, and copper windows frames, stand in contrast to the white walls and vermiculite ceiling. They block out most of the glare and provide distorted light at different times of the day.

The rear of the south block consists of the McDonald Room, the enclosed courtyard stack space, offices and reading room of the Noel Butlin & ANU Archives. The McDonald Room, built as a seminar room but used for exhibitions, is lined in timber. The west wall is a 'feature wall' formed of the same strongly textured raw concrete and stone used for the building's plinth.

The enclosed courtyard room is a high, open space. The ceiling infill is basic fibro panels that are a contrast to the barrel vault ceiling seen elsewhere in the building. The Archives Reading Room has some traditional timber shelving as well as modern shelving.

The staff offices have been fitted with modern computer desks, with space set aside for compactus and other shelving for photographs and archives. A notable feature of the Archives Reading Room are the regular exhibitions (changed about every 6 months) organised by the Archives staff. Similar display cabinets to those seen in the foyer area are used in this space and were designed by Fred Ward.

The northern block is a four-storey structure set on a stone base identical to that of the southern block. It is clad with sawn sandstone that leads to a copper pan roof with no eaves. A regular pattern of small vertical slit windows, framed in aluminium, line the north and southern fenestration, with some added to the ground and second floor of the front façade. Heavy steel venting provides circulation for the lower ground floor plant room and the lower floor of the northern block near the rear entrance. The vents on the western wall provide a partition between the large air-conditioning towers, which is also screened with identical steel vents. The tower also services the Chancery and the Faculty of Law.

The central staircase of the building is original, though does display signs of wear and minor damage. The concrete stairs have metal treads and are flanked by glass and brass balustrades with angled and stained timber handrails. Attractive features of the staircase include the terrazzo finishes applied to the facing wall, matching that of the columns on the ground floor.

The undercroft section was originally open to the west and north but has since been enclosed with glazed partitions. The basement runs between both blocks of the building. The closed stack areas annotated on the original plans have been converted into the rare books repository and other book stack space. Some original fittings, joinery and furnishings have been retained in the basement level, although there have been notable modern additions. These include new carpets and light fittings and carpet laid to the underside of the concrete vaults. An interesting remnant feature is the pavement light covers in the ceiling that originally provided sunlight from the courtyard. Stains from the water that leaked through the pavement lights are still visible on the vermiculite. These spaces are largely used for book stack space or compactus shelving, with some computer and other study facilities interspersed.

Landscape

The landscape to the south and west of the Menzies Building is highly significant, as the majority of the trees are classified as of high or exceptional significance to the University landscape. This significance lies in their age, condition or relationship to the building. The landscape was an important consideration for the University site planners Professor Denis Winston and Grenfell Rudduck, as well as the architect of the Menzies Building, John Scarborough. The building materials were chosen to sympathetically blend into the open Australian environment, with relatively uninterrupted views from the south, east and west. The landscape also serves as a 'buffer zone' between the Menzies Building and other nearby structures such as University House and the HC Coombs Building complex.

The landscaping is formed of open grassland with remnant indigenous trees and some introduced species. Highly significant trees are found to the south and east of the building. The mature Eucalypts, ten of which predate European settlement on the site, are comprised of nine *Eucalyptus bridgesiana*, three *Eucalyptus blakleyi*, one *Eucalyptus macarthurii*, one *Eucalyptus bicostata*, three *Eucalyptus melliodora* and one *Eucalyptus mannifera*. The 'Crabapple' groves consist of four *Malus hupehensis*, six *Malus x*

Description of the RG Menzies Building

purpurea, with six predominantly mature *Populus nigra* "Italica" and a notable *Banksia integrifolia* completing the extant trees to the south. Any trees considered to be of high or exceptional value are only removed when absolutely necessary. In most instances, the removed trees are replaced with similar species. An interesting component of the landscape is the barbecue area to the southeast of the building. This space is formed of the identical stonework to that seen on the building and is regularly used by University staff.

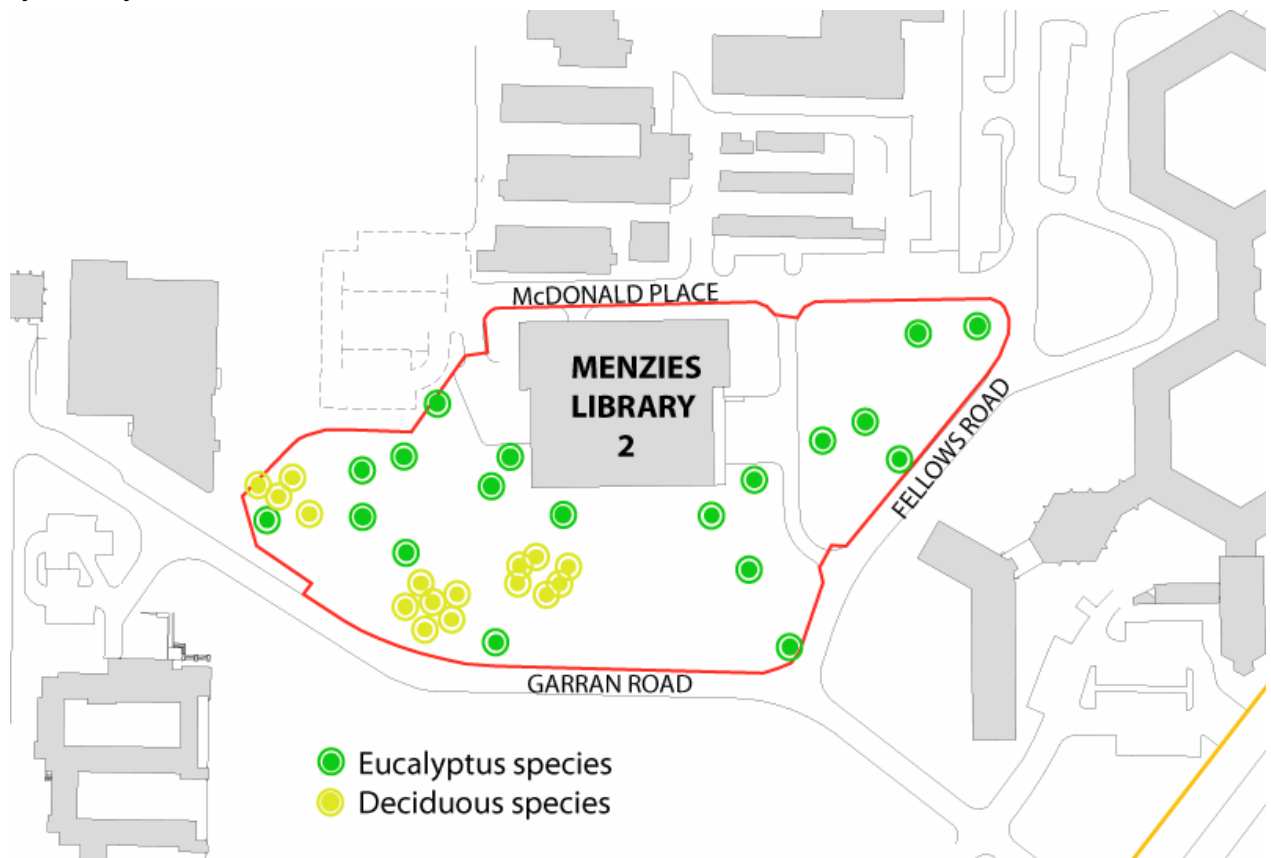


Figure 4.1: Notable tree species of the curtilage area. (Source: ANU Gardens & Grounds Division, 2010)

Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

The RG Menzies Building is individually listed on the CHL. The following assessment includes the original text from the CHL Citation, and a revised assessment undertaken for this project.

CHL Citation

The building has architectural significance for its innovative structure and design. The library has a strong architectural composition with functional zones clearly distinguished in the massing and elevations of the building by a change of materials, and is recognised as a significant Twentieth Century building by the ACT RAIA.

The R G Menzies building is significant as the first purpose-built library on campus and as a commemoration of Menzies contribution to the development of the University. The building is one of the main University Libraries and features one of the largest collections of Asian language scholarly information resources in Australia.

The distinctive elevation incorporating the Lyndon Dadswell metal panel sculptures is a good example of artwork integrated into the design and functionality of the building.

Revised Statement of Significance

The RG Menzies Building is significant as the first purpose built library on the Australian National University campus, to house the then Institute of Advanced Studies library collection. The building is one of 10 University Libraries and features one of the largest collections of Asian language scholarly information resources in Australia.

The building was named after Australia's longest serving Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, in recognition of his commitment to the development of tertiary education in Australia, and in the development of the research schools at the Australian National University. Menzies laid the foundation stone for the building in 1961, and Queen Elizabeth II formally opened the Library on 13 March 1963.

The building was designed by J. Scarborough and Partners, in association with Collard, Clarke and Jackson, and built by Simmie and Co. The RG Menzies Building is an innovative representation of several late-twentieth century architectural styles including the overall cubiform shape of the International Style and the strong, bold shapes of the Brutalist Style – with distinct functional zones which are clearly demonstrated on the exterior of the building. The metal panel sculpture 'Screens' are significant as a major work by the nationally recognised artist, Lyndon Dadswell.

Criteria	Assessment
<p>(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>	<p>CHL Citation <i>The R G Menzies Building was the first purpose built library on the Australian National University Acton campus. The building is associated with the contributions of Sir Robert Menzies to the development of the Australian National University. He laid the foundation stone for the building in 1961, and HRH Queen Elizabeth II formally opened the Library on 13 March 1963. The R G Menzies building is one of 10 libraries on the ANU Acton campus, housing some of the most significant collections of the ANU, and one of the largest collections of Asian language scholarly material in Australia.</i></p> <p>Attributes <i>The two distinct architectural elements, a low-level pavilion and three-storey block of the RG Menzies building.</i></p> <p>Revised Assessment The RG Menzies Building is significant as the first purpose built library on the Australian National University Acton campus, and was built to house the then Institute of Advanced Studies library collection. The building, designed by J. Scarborough and Partners, in association with Collard, Clarke and Jackson, strongly demonstrates several mid to late-twentieth century architectural styles including elements of the International and Brutalist styles. The building was named after Australia's longest serving Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, in</p>

Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

	<p>recognition of his commitment to the development of tertiary education in Australia, and in the development of the research schools at the Australian National University. Menzies laid the foundation stone for the building in 1961, and Queen Elizabeth II formally opened the Library on 13 March 1963.</p> <p>The RG Menzies building is one of 10 academic libraries on the ANU Acton campus, housing some of the most significant collections on the ANU campus, and one of the largest collections of Asian language scholarly material in Australia.</p> <p>The RG Menzies Building meets CHL criterion (a) for historic values</p> <p>Attributes The building, its foundation stone, its use as an academic library, commemorative plaques and landscape setting.</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 RG Menzies Building 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 RG Menzies Building 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 R G Menzies Building is a prominent feature of the ANU campus for its use of highly textured, contrasting materials and design to accentuate the interior function. The building is a Late Twentieth Century design; featuring the overall cubiform shape of the International Style and the strong, bold shapes of the Brutalist Style. The R G Menzies Building is representative of many of the architectural innovations of the time. The building is on the ACT Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Register of Significant Twentieth Century buildings. The ANU was awarded the 2003 Clem Cummings Award for their contribution to architecture and the built environment.</i></p> <p>Attributes <i>Two distinct architectural elements, a low-level pavilion and three-storey block of the R G Menzies building and the metal panel sculpture 'Screens' by Lyndon Dadswell located on the facade of the building.</i></p> <p>Revised Assessment The RG Menzies Building is representative of several mid to late-twentieth century architectural styles including the overall cubiform shape of the International Style and the strong, bold shapes of the Brutalist Style.</p>

Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

	<p>The RG Menzies Building is also representative of the work of John Scarborough & Partners, in association with Collard & Clarke architects. The bronze sculptural screens are representative of the work of Lyndon Dadswell, demonstrating the integration of art and design functionality.</p> <p>The RG Menzies Building meets CHL criterion (d) for representative values</p> <p>Attributes</p> <p>The building and its architectural features including 'Screens' by Lyndon Dadswell.</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 cultural group.</p>	<p>The landscape in the area, the architectural features and the differentiation in the building's design are of aesthetic significance and may be valued by the University or wider community.</p> <p>Aesthetic values must be demonstrated as being valued by the community to qualify for recognition on the CHL. At this stage, RG Menzies Building does not meet this criterion because community appreciation of aesthetic value has not been formally tested.</p> <p>The RG Menzies Building does not meet CHL criterion (e) for community held aesthetic values.</p>
<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 Citation</p> <p><i>The metal panel sculptures integrated into the design of the building are significant as a major work by the nationally recognised artist, Lyndon Dadswell. Dadswell is considered a pioneer of Australian sculpture, in particular for his innovative use of metals. The sculpture acts as both a decorative element for the exterior and a functional sun shield for the interior space of the library.</i></p> <p>Attributes</p> <p><i>Metal panel sculpture 'Screens' by Lyndon Dadswell on the facade of the R G Menzies building.</i></p> <p>Revised Assessment</p> <p>The building is significant for its innovative structure and design, with strong architectural composition with functional zones clearly distinguished in the massing and elevations of the building and by a change of materials. The RG Menzies Building also demonstrates creative achievement in the integration of 'Screens' by Lyndon Dadswell into the fabric of the building. The bronze screens are a significant major work of the nationally recognised artist. Dadswell is considered a pioneer of Australian sculpture, in particular for his innovative use of metals, and this innovation extends to the RG Menzies Building, wherein the sculpture acts as both a decorative element for the exterior and a functional sun shield for the interior space of the library.</p> <p>The RG Menzies Building meets CHL criterion (d) for representative values at a high level.</p> <p>Attributes</p> <p>The architectural features and detailing of the building as well as the metal panel sculpture 'Screens' by Lyndon Dadswell located on the façade of the building.</p>

Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

<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 RG Menzies Building has strong connections with the ANU community, both for historic associations with the early establishment of the University, and its recent ongoing contemporary use. The presence of social values (strong or special attachment to the place by an identified community group) has not been formally tested.</p> <p>The RG Menzies Building 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 Australia's natural and cultural history.</p>	<p>CHL Citation</p> <p><i>The R G Menzies building is significant as one of the major buildings designed by nationally recognised architects Collard, Clarke and Jackson and Scarborough and Partners. The building is on the ACT Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Register of Significant Twentieth Century buildings.</i></p> <p><i>The metal panel sculptures are significant as a major work by the nationally recognised artist, Lyndon Dadswell. Dadswell is considered a pioneer of Australian sculpture, in particular for his innovative use of metals.</i></p> <p>Attributes <i>Two distinct architectural elements, a low-level pavilion and three-storey block of the R G Menzies building and the metal panel sculpture 'Screens' by Lyndon Dadswell located on the facade of the building.</i></p> <p>Revised Assessment</p> <p>The RG Menzies Building is significant for its association with its designers, nationally recognised architects J Scarborough and Partners in association with Collard, Clarke and Jackson. Both firms made a significant contribution to Australian architecture in the mid to late-twentieth century including Scarborough and Partner's Monash University Main Library and Collard, Clarke and Jackson's Kanangra Court in Reid.</p> <p>The building is also associated with builders Simmie and Co, who constructed several of Canberra's most iconic buildings including the Australian War Memorial, The Institute of Anatomy (now the National Film and Sound Archives) and the since demolished Capitol Theatre in Manuka.</p> <p>The building is also significant for its strong associations with its namesake, Sir Robert Menzies, Australia's longest serving Prime Minister, and advocate of tertiary education and research in Australia. Menzies was instrumental in the establishment of the research schools of the ANU and laid the foundation stone for the building in 1961.</p> <p>The metal panel sculptures 'Screens' are significant as a major work by the nationally recognised artist, Lyndon Dadswell. Dadswell is considered a pioneer of Australian sculpture, in particular for his innovative use of metals.</p> <p>The RG Menzies Building meets CHL criterion (h) for associative values</p> <p>Attributes The building, its name, its architectural features including 'Screens' by Lyndon Dadswell.</p>

Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

(i) Indigenous

The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.

The RG Menzies Building does not meet CHL criterion (i) for Indigenous values.

Photographs



Figure 5: Construction of the RG Menzies Building, 1962 (Source: ANU Archives)



Figure 6: Official opening of the RG Menzies Building, March 13 1963. (Source: ANU Archives).



Figure 7: View of RG Menzies Building from University House. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)



Figure 8: View of Dadswell Screens on the main entrance to the RG Menzies Building. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)

Photographs



Figure 9: View of interior of RG Menzies building foyer including Menzies archives. (Source: ANU Heritage Office. 2011)



Figure 10: view of RG Menzies foyer including the sun screening effect of Dadswell's Screens. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)

Management Issues

Constraints and Opportunities

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

The RG Menzies Building is of high heritage value and meets the EPBC Commonwealth Heritage criteria a) historic, d) representative, f) creative/technical and h) associative. Elements of 'high' heritage value embody Commonwealth Heritage values in their own right and make a significant contribution to the values of the Acton Campus as a whole. Elements of high heritage value should be retained and conserved. They require a high level of care in their management and the tolerance for change is generally low or able to tolerate some change and adaptive reuse. Loss or unsympathetic alteration would diminish the Commonwealth Heritage values of an individual element and the campus as a whole.

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 RG Menzies Building is able to tolerate some level of change through development whereby the historic, representative, creative/technical and associative attributes and characteristics are conserved and interpreted.

Opportunities arise from the identified heritage values of the RG Menzies Building. The history of the RG Menzies Building 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

The HMP for the RG Menzies Building should be finalised and endorsed by the Australian Heritage Council as the core document for the conservation and management of the heritage values of the place.

Referral to the current draft Heritage Management Plan (2010) for the RG Menzies Building is required when preparing advice for alterations to the RG Menzies Building.

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 RG Menzies Building.

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