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| Study Item / Area     | Old Administration Area (OAA)  |
| Acton Campus Precinct | ELLERY Precinct  |
| Building Nos. & Names | 3H, 3G, 3I, 3J, 3K, 4D, 4E, 4F (Old Administration Area), 4C (Old Boiler House), 3L (Caterina's Café), 3T (Fellows Lane Cottage), 92 (Tennis Courts) |

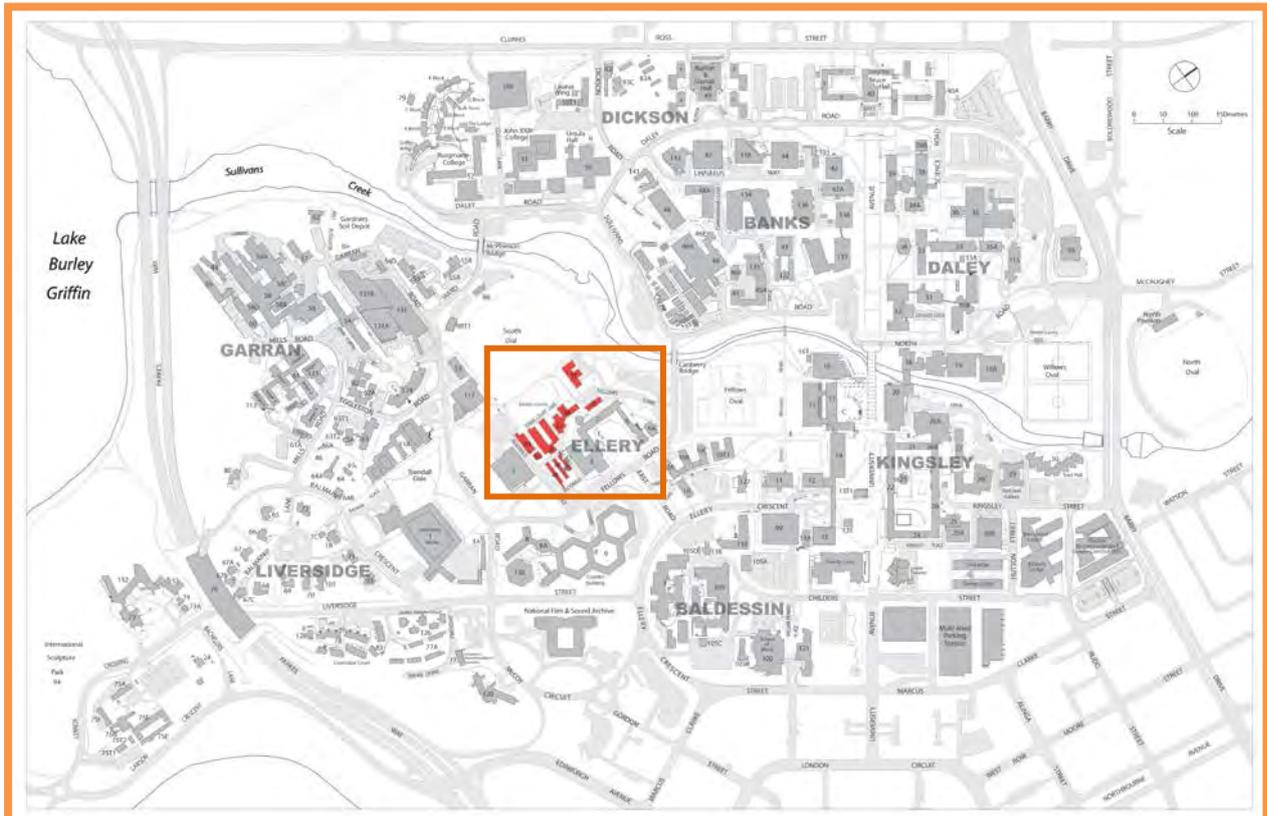
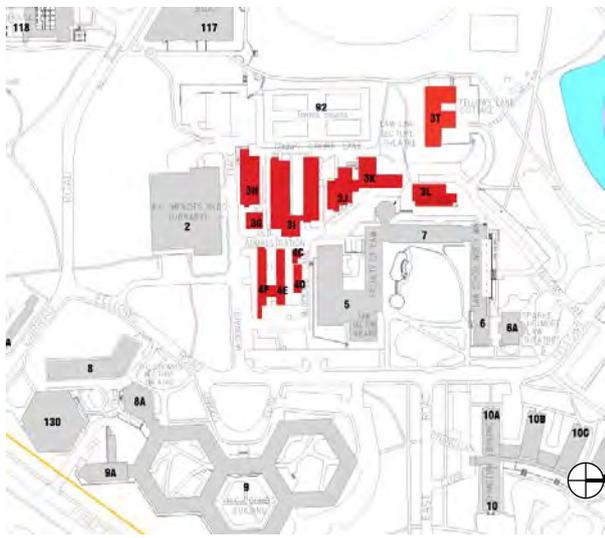


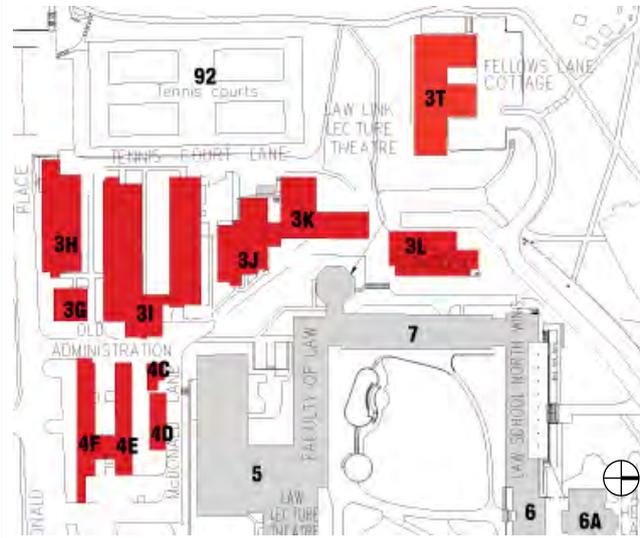
Figure 1: Location of study area within the ANU Acton Campus site.

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| Heritage Ranking       | Old Administration Area— <b>High</b> —Meets criteria for Commonwealth Heritage Listing<br>Fellows Lane Cottage— <b>Neutral</b> —Does not meet criteria for Commonwealth Heritage List   |
| Heritage Listing       | The OAA is not individually listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL).   |
| Condition              | The condition noted here is at June 2011. The extant buildings (and trees) in the OAA have until recently (February 2012) been well maintained for office accommodation and are in reasonable condition.<br>Many of the original buildings from the OAA (in particular Blocks A, B and C) were demolished for the construction of the Law School which commenced in 1967. The remaining buildings have been adapted for office accommodation and new roofs have been added as improvements to waterproof the buildings. |
| Relevant Documentation | 2011 Heritage Study for the OAA has been prepared by the ANU Heritage Officer. It provides a detailed history and description of the buildings within the OAA.  |

### Context of the Buildings



**Figure 2:** The remaining 'Blocks' of the OAA are highlighted. Fellow's Lane Cottage and the tennis courts are located to the west. The Menzies Library building is immediately to the south; Coombs Building to the east.



**Figure 3:** Configuration of remaining 'Blocks' of the OAA adjacent to the Law Buildings. Blocks A, B and C were demolished to make way for the Faculty of Law which commenced construction in 1967.

### Brief Historical Overview

Construction of the original administration area of the ANU, now referred to as the OAA, commenced in the early 1950s and the complex served as the administrative headquarters and early research facilities, or laboratories, for the University. The OAA, while not containing the oldest buildings on campus, does contain the oldest buildings purpose-built for ANU use. It was designed to be a temporary complex of buildings to be replaced at some point in the future.

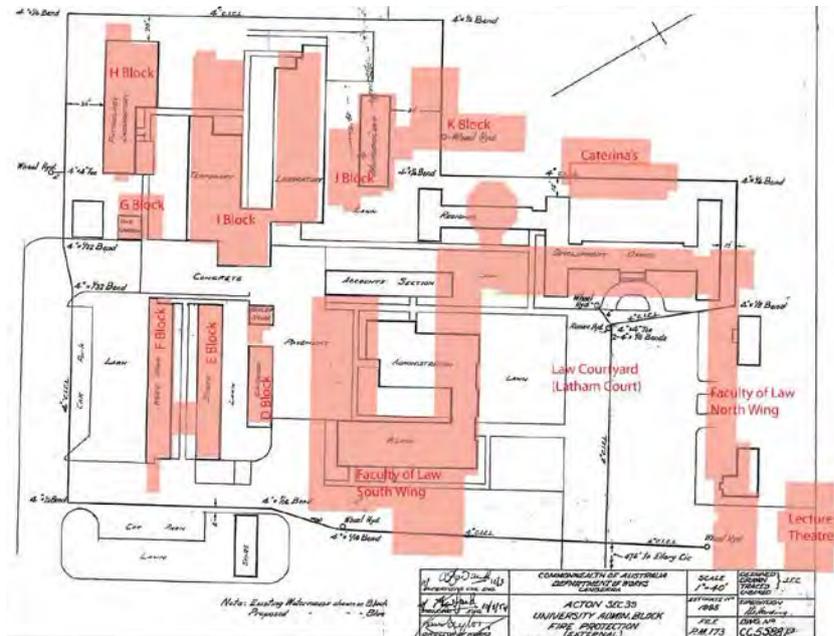
The complex was built in two phases, with the administrative buildings (Blocks A, B, C and D and two staff cottages) for the early University administration and the temporary laboratories which included the early Medical School and the Department of Geophysics (Blocks E, F, G, H, I and J). It was important that the siting of the temporary administration and research facilities be located away from the south of the ANU Acton Campus, where Brian Lewis' grand University design had proposed the majority of permanent buildings to be constructed. Together, these temporary buildings formed the earliest administration complex of the fledgling University, and served to properly establish the institution in the heart of the Capital. It was to be some time before the permanent facilities for the research schools would be constructed and ironically the temporary facilities continued to serve the ANU for more than 40 years.

Other buildings introduced later to the OAA complex include L Block (referred to as Caterina's Café and now proposed for removal), K Block and Fellow's Lane Cottage. L Block was transferred to the site in 1967 from its original position as the kitchen and dining block of the Old Hospital Buildings at Acton; K Block, a prefabricated transportable building was attached to the northern end of J Block in 1986; and Fellow's Lane Cottage a transportable building, was brought to the site from the Australian Institute of Sport, Belconnen, in 2005.

The construction of the College of Law commenced in 1967 and continued through to the early 1970s, necessitating the demolition of some of the OAA buildings. D Block, the administration garage, is the only remaining structure of the original administrative building complex and Blocks E, F, G, H, I and J and the old boiler house (located to the west of D Block) are the only extant research facilities/laboratories of the 'temporary' Medical School complex of buildings.

The extant buildings in the OAA have received substantial renovations and alterations for their reuse as office accommodation. Apart from the building shells, there is no physical evidence of the research facilities within these buildings once housed.

The extant laboratory buildings of the OAA, initially constructed as 'temporary' structures, continue to house several University functions at the Acton campus. In addition to the relic trees in the area landscaping, other trees have been added incrementally around the buildings, contributing to the seemingly permanent nature of the OAA complex.



**Figure 4:** The original plan of the original administrative area of the University, prepared by the Department of Works in 1954. The OAA complex and Faculty of Law buildings are superimposed over the original 1954 plan, shown shaded with building titles.

### Description of the OAA

#### Buildings

The individual buildings in the OAA complex are basic prefabricated structure, typical of the post-World War II era. A Block (now demolished) and D Block, were timber-framed structures clad in narrow rusticated weatherboard and fibro sheeting, D Block, the extant administration garage, is a long, timber-framed building clad with narrow rusticated weatherboards. Originally open to the north, it has been enclosed with weatherboards and fibro panels and windows have been added. Some alterations and repairs have been undertaken.

Blocks B, C, G, H, I and J, the research laboratory buildings, are elongated weatherboard-clad timber buildings and constructed using heavy reinforced concrete portal frames. The concrete frames were a substitute for steel which was in short supply at the time and the final form of the buildings relied heavily on the availability of materials. The buildings have a raised timber floor and corrugated-iron roof.

E and F Blocks, both extant, are elongated brick buildings with sash windows on the long facades. E Block, originally constructed as the Medical School store, was designed by Kenneth Oliphant. It has external portal frames on the upper half of the building. An adjoining weatherboard structure links E and F Blocks together. F Block, also designed by Oliphant as the Medical School Workshop, has a small brick incinerator and chimney on the eastern end which was a later addition to the building to dispose of the packing crates and other rubbish from the workshop.

G Block, originally referred to as the 'Rock Preparation Laboratories', consists of two attached small brick buildings. It is the only building of this 'double' type with its original roof, the roofs of the other 'doubles' having been filled and covered by single pitched roofs. H Block, a 'double' building, was built as the Physiology Laboratories, originally with a northern courtyard which has since been filled.

I Block, the Biochemistry and Microbiology Laboratories, and J Block, the Experimental Pathology Laboratories, are also 'double' buildings which have had been altered considerably including new roofs and extensions.

The old boiler house is a small brick building located to the west of D Block. Originally proposed to provide heating to A, B and C Blocks, the boiler house is currently being used for storage. The chimney was replaced in 1961 and the flue has since been removed.

L Block, Caterina's café, is a long weatherboard structure and displays many original features of the Old Hospital Buildings, of which it was originally a part. It has a large central room and a series of smaller rooms to serve as a kitchen, store and servery.

A deck has been constructed on the western side in two stages and other alterations include the replacement of some of the sash windows, doors, new paint and the addition of modern facilities including air conditioning and lighting. It is proposed for removal and possible relocation.

K Block, constructed in 1986 and referred to as the 'MSID', is a transportable building which adjoins J Block to the south. The building is sympathetic in its massing to the other laboratory buildings, but the galvanised fenestration contrasts with the other OAA weatherboard structures.

Fellows Lane Cottage and the associated tennis courts are located to the northwestern side of the OAA laboratory buildings and Caterina's café. They overlook the south oval of the Acton campus. It is located on the site of the original University tennis courts. These tennis courts were removed in the 1990s and replaced with new tennis courts constructed to the south of Fellows Lane Cottage. The only evidence of the earlier recreation period is a hit-up wall in the Fellows Lane Cottage carpark. The Fellows Lane Cottage is not like the OAA laboratories and is a single-storey flat roof box-like aluminum clad building.

## Landscape

The landscape in the area is mixed native and exotic. There is a group of oaks, mixed willows, poplars, a *Ginkgo bilboa* and eucalypts, some of which were planted by Lindsay Pryor in the area around Fellows Lane Cottage and the tennis courts. There are a few pockets of eucalyptus plantings near Caterina's café, which are relics of original Yellow Box-Red Gum Grassy Woodland species on the Campus.

## Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

### Statement of Significance

The buildings of the OAA, as the first purpose-built administrative and research buildings of the ANU, provide insight into the early campus site planning, provision of research facilities and the evolution of architecture and landscaping at the ANU. The buildings of the OAA complex were the location of important scientific research undertaken by a number of significant early ANU researchers, especially Sir John Eccles.

The use of prefabricated building sections and concrete trusses is indicative of the general shortage of building materials and labour experienced in the postwar years. They are an example of a prefabricated building precinct representative of those built by the Commonwealth Government in Canberra and the use of concrete portal frames is of note.

The landscaping of the OAA includes relic native trees from original Yellow Box-Red Gum woodlands, and exotic plantings associated with occupation by the Garden and Grounds Division under Lindsay Pryor.

| Criteria  | Assessment   |
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| <p><b>(a) Historic</b></p> <p>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>The buildings of the OAA provide insight into the early campus site planning, provision of research activities and the evolution of architecture and landscaping at the ANU.</p> <p>The OAA was the location for the first purpose-built administrative and research buildings of the ANU. The location was chosen so that it would not interfere with Brian Lewis' grand University design in the south of the campus. The OAA provided early research space for the Medical School, other ANU departments and for Commonwealth Government departments also being established during this period in Canberra (early 1950s). The buildings of the OAA complex were the location of important scientific research undertaken by a number of significant early ANU researchers, especially for the research undertaken by Sir John Eccles in H Block which resulted in the receipt of a Nobel prize.</p> <p>The use of prefabricated building sections and concrete trusses is indicative of the general shortage of building materials and labour experienced in the postwar years. Canberra contains many examples of prefabricated buildings and concrete construction, which were a common response to these shortages in the postwar building phase of the National Capital. The OAA complex demonstrates this means of providing easily constructed accommodation during a period of material and labour shortages.</p> <p>The landscaping of the OAA site includes relict native trees from original Yellow Box-Red Gum woodlands, and exotic plantings associated with occupation by the Garden and Grounds Division under Lindsay Pryor.</p> |

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|   | <p>The OAA meets CHL criterion (a) for historic values.</p> <p><b>Attributes</b></p> <p>The historic values of the site are embodied in the location of the OAA on campus, the early University use of the buildings and their prefabricated and concrete structure (which links them to the period of their construction), the continued university use over time and the landscaping of the area with mixed relict Yellow Box-Red Gum native trees and planted exotics. The Yellow Box-Red Gum relict trees and <i>Eucalyptus bridgesiana</i> (Apple Box) west of the OAA have also been identified as having High Heritage significance.</p>  |
| <p><b>(b) Rarity</b></p> <p>The place has significant heritage value because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history.</p>  | <p>The OAA does not meet criterion (b) for rarity values.</p>  |
| <p><b>(c) Scientific</b></p> <p>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 OAA does not meet criterion (c) for scientific values.</p>  |
| <p><b>(d) Representative</b></p> <p>The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places;</li> <li>or</li> <li>ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments.</li> </ul> | <p>The extant buildings in the OAA are an example of a prefabricated building precinct representative of those built by the Commonwealth Government in Canberra as a response to the shortage of materials and labour in the years after World War II. The main physical distinction of the prefabricated buildings in the OAA from other prefabricated buildings erected in Canberra is the use of concrete portal frames. In the post WWII era, prefabricated temporary buildings were a common feature in Canberra, and of other large Commonwealth sites, such as Defence bases and migration centres. The OAA is an example of a local precinct of prefabricated government buildings dating from the 1950s, but demolition of some buildings from the original OAA, and addition of major building (the College of Law), has reduced its integrity as an example of such a complex.</p> <p>The OAA meets criterion (d) for representative values.</p> <p><b>Attributes</b></p> <p>The prefabricated group of buildings and the nature of their construction.</p> |
| <p><b>(e) Aesthetic</b></p> <p>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, including Lindsay Pryor's plantings, the oaks, <i>Ginkgo bilboa</i>, pockets of eucalyptus plantings near Caterina's café and the individual trees in and around the buildings provide an attractive setting to the area which may be valued by the community.</p> <p>Aesthetic values must be demonstrated as being valued by the community to qualify for recognition on the CHL. At this stage, the OAA does not meet this criterion because community appreciation of aesthetic value has not been formally tested.</p> <p>The OAA does not meet criterion (e) for community held aesthetic values.</p>  |

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| <p><b>(f) Creative/Technical</b></p> <p>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>The OAA does not display a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. Prefabricated wooden and concrete buildings were a common building type in government developments after World War II. Any technical/creative achievements in the actual research carried out in buildings of the OAA is a historic value under criterion (a) rather than being demonstrated in the fabric of the place as a heritage value under this criterion.</p> <p><b>The OAA does not meet criterion (f) for creative/technical values.</b></p>   |
| <p><b>(g) Social</b></p> <p>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 OAA has strong connections with the ANU community, both for historic associations with the early administrative and research functions, and its recent ongoing contemporary use. The presence of social value (strong or special attachment to the place by an identified community group) has not been formally tested.</p> <p><b>The OAA does not meet criterion (g) for social values.</b></p>  |
| <p><b>(h) Associative</b></p> <p>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 or cultural history</p> | <p>The buildings of the OAA complex were the location of important scientific research undertaken by a number of significant early ANU researchers. Research undertaken by Sir John Eccles in H Block resulted in the receipt of a Nobel prize. There is a commemorative plaque in recognition of the important work done at this location at ANU. Members of the Academic Advisory Committee were involved in the design of the temporary laboratories and on-site designs were prepared by notable Canberra architect, Kenneth Oliphant, who is better known for his domestic architecture in Canberra—several of his houses still survive. The buildings were constructed by Karl Schreiner who was a well-known Canberra builder in the 1950s.</p> <p>However, the OAA buildings no longer retain remains of the scientific research laboratories where important early ANU research was conducted, and the physical link with these associations has been broken. The works of Kenneth Oliphant and Karl Schreiner are represented at other Canberra sites more highly associated with them, so these values at the OAA are below the threshold for this criterion.</p> <p>The OAA complex also served as the accommodation for early University Departments such as the ANU Design Section, Maintenance Division, and Garden and Grounds. There are surviving indications of these associations in the fabric of the OAA in the informal plantings which may be attributed to the Garden and Grounds Division.</p> <p><b>The OAA meets criterion (h) for its associative values.</b></p> <p><b>Attributes</b></p> <p>The associative values of the OAA are embodied in the landscape elements relating to Lindsay Pryor and the Garden and Ground Division, and the historic associations with key notable figures of the ANU who achieved remarkable finds in the complex.</p> |
| <p><b>(i) Indigenous</b></p> <p>The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.</p>  | <p><b>The OAA does not meet criterion (i) for Indigenous values.</b></p>  |

## Photographs



**Figure 5:** Construction of Block A, the Administrative Building, 1948. (Source: ANU Archives)



**Figure 6:** Construction of the temporary Medical School research facility, 4 March 1951. Note the concrete portal frames. (Source: ANU Archives)



**Figure 7:** 1950s aerial view of the first phase of development of the OAA. Visible are the two small staff cottages, Blocks A, B, C and D. (Source: ANU Archives)



**Figure 8:** First administrative staff of the ANU outside A Block, 1950. (Source: ANU Archives)

# Australian National University

Acton Campus — Site Inventory



## Photographs



Figure 9: Block D, northern wall. (Source: GML 2011)



Figure 10: Block G, view from east. (Source: GML 2011)



Figure 11: H Block, interior view showing exposed concrete portal frames. (Source: GML 2011)



Figure 12: View between E and F Blocks. (Source: GML 2011)



Figure 13: Southern view of Block L (Caterina's Café). (Source: GML 2011)



Figure 14: Fellow's Lane Cottage adjacent to the OAA and northwest of Caterina's Café. (Source: GML 2011)

## Management Issues

### Constraints and Opportunities

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

Constraints also relate to the proposed removal of the buildings from the site. The ANU has indicated that these buildings have outlived their useful life and that the area be redeveloped.

The OAA is of high heritage values and meets the EPBC Commonwealth Heritage criteria a) historic, d) representative 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 re-use. 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 attributes of the OAA identified as having high heritage value are relict native heritage trees and historic connections to the early university use as demonstrated in the location and nature of the prefabricated concrete structures. The key attributes (form, fabric, function and/or location) only partly embody the heritage values and since the OAA was built the site has been considerably modified. The OAA is able to tolerate moderate/some level of change through development whereby the historic and associative attributes and characteristics are conserved and interpreted in a state-of-the-art design for the area. The important historic trees are identified as having high heritage value and have some tolerance for change.

**Opportunities** arise from the identified heritage values of the OAA. Opportunities exist for further research and analysis to fully determine potential heritage values such as scientific, aesthetic and social values. The history of the OAA should be interpreted to maintain the historic and associative values of significant attributes identified in the assessments above. Interpretation could be used to mitigate adverse impacts arising from the removal of the OAA buildings. 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

Previous heritage studies for this area have recommended that a detailed Heritage Management Plan be prepared for the OAA to provide guidance for development in the precinct, given its historic, functional and research associated values with the establishment of the University, its pivotal location on campus and modest vernacular form and fabric. However, this has not occurred.

Given the OAA buildings are vacant and proposed for removal, it is important that heritage interpretation initiatives are integrated into any new development proposal to mitigate the heritage impact of their removal. To inform the new design, an Interpretation Strategy is required to outline measures for communicating the heritage values of the area, including the OAA's research contribution to the University and its role in the early administration of the site. The Interpretation Strategy should be incorporated into the future design brief and development proposal, to mitigate any significant adverse impacts on the heritage values arising from the removal of the OAA. The Interpretation Strategy would be a subset of the Interpretation Plan currently being prepared for the Acton campus as a whole.

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 the heritage values, significant fabric, buildings or landscaping in any future development of the OAA.