

# Australian National University



## Acton Campus — Site Inventory

Study Item/ Area	College of Law
Acton Campus Precinct	ELLERY Precinct
Building Nos. & Names	5 (College of Law South Wing), 6 (College of Law North Wing), 6A (Sparke Helmore Law Theatres), 7 (Law Link & Law Lecture Theatre)

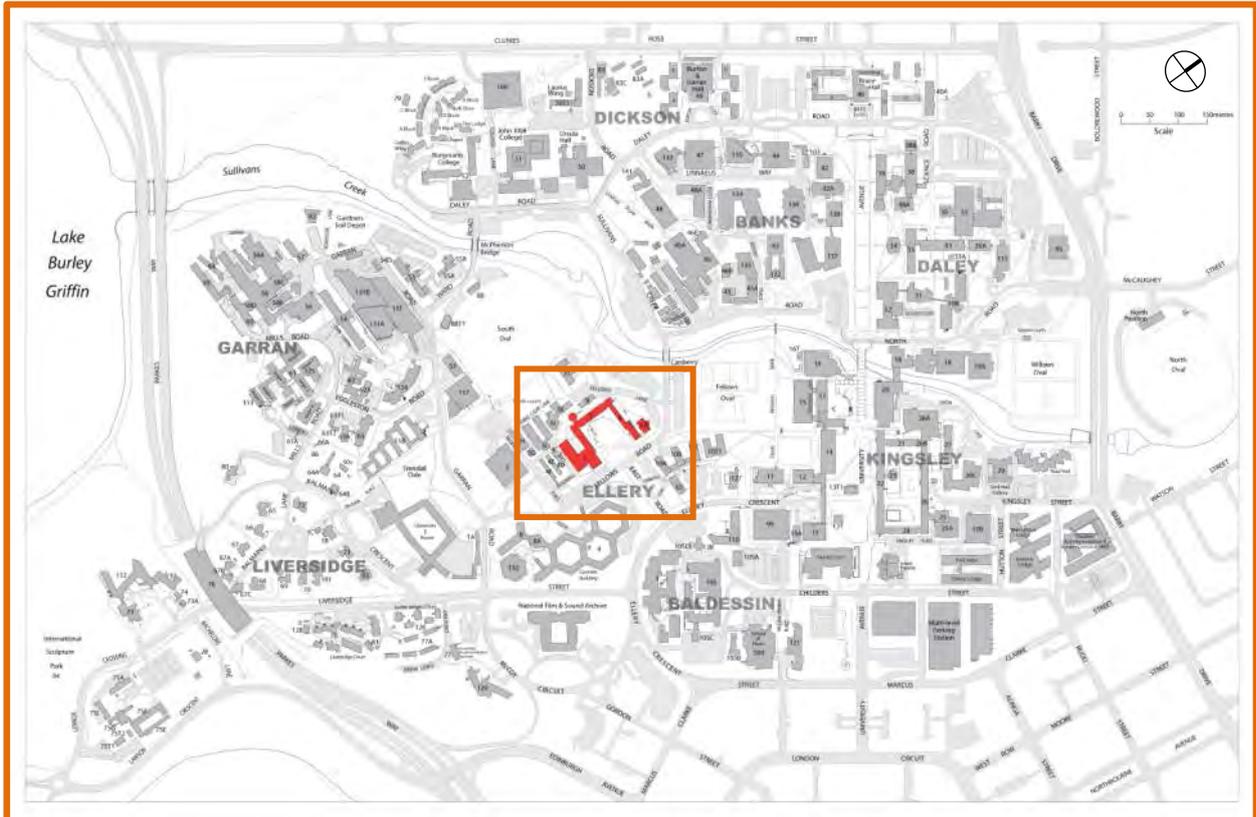
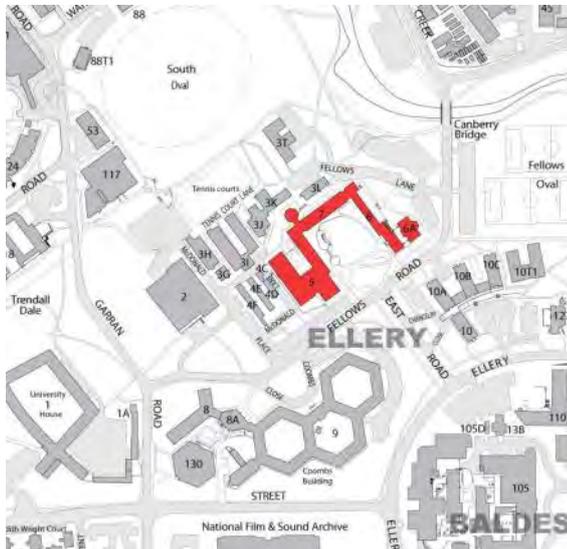


Figure 1: Location of study area within the ANU Acton Campus site.

Heritage Ranking	The College of Law (group)— <b>Moderate</b> —Meets criteria for Commonwealth Heritage List
Heritage Listing	The College of Law is not individually listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL).
Condition	The condition noted here is at August 2011. Generally, the Faculty of Law is in good condition. The separate buildings that make up the complex have been well maintained and minor repairs are necessary (mainly in private areas). Minor repairs are required throughout the complex. The landscape of the Law Faculty is in very good condition.
Relevant Documentation	2011 Heritage Study for the College of Law has been prepared by the ANU Heritage Officer. It provides a detailed history and description of the buildings within the College of Law.

### Context of the Buildings



**Figure 2:** College of Law and surrounding faculty buildings including HC Coombs building and Chancery Building.



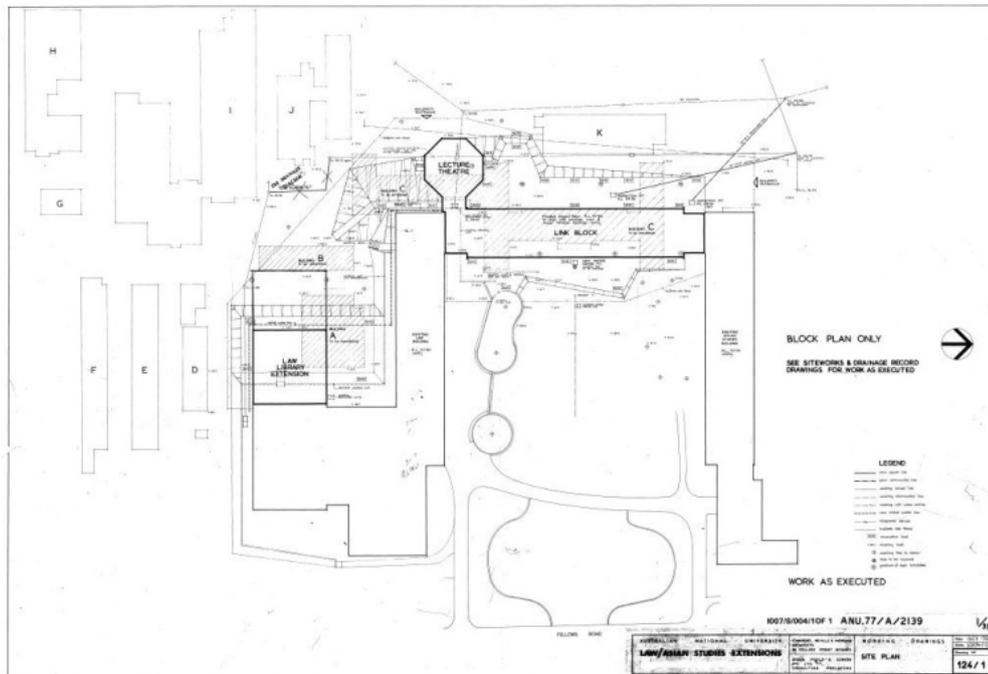
**Figure 3:** Asian Studies Building and College of Law, October 1965. (Source: ANU Archives 2011)

### Brief Historical Overview

The College of Law has gradually developed since 1965. The complex was constructed in the centre of the Acton campus, partially on the site of the Old Administration Area (OAA). The complex was designed to take full advantage of the pre-existing infrastructure and vegetation, including nearby roads, buildings and remnant trees. Prior to occupation by the College of Law the facilities housed Asian Studies.

The facility has been the location of notable Asian Studies and Law research, and is today considered one of Australia's premiere legal training institutions. Thomas Edmund O'Mahoney, of O'Mahoney Neville & Morgan architects, was engaged to prepare an overall site plan of the Faculty of Law in the early 1960s. His brief included design of the main Faculty of Law buildings as well as a small staff café and general sporting facilities to the west. O'Mahoney designed the buildings to sit within the pre-existing OAA; the North Wing was to take the place of the existing staff cottages, the South Wing was to replace the large Administrative Building (A Block) and Accounts Section Building (B Block), while the central link was to eventually replace the buildings constructed for the Department of Regional Development (C 6 Block). In this, the University was able to take full advantage of the pre-existing accommodation in the OAA buildings while the permanent facilities were under construction. The graded car park to the east of the facility was landscaped as the Law Courtyard, Latham Court.

The rapidly expanding Faculty of Law soon occupied all buildings of the complex. A major extension to the Law Library was completed in 1983, providing an upper floor for book stacks and a lower floor for general study and additional book storage. Moot Court, originally located opposite the ground floor Lecture Theatre, was refurbished and converted into offices (a large conference room on the top floor has since become Moot Court).



**Figure 4:** The final plan layout of the College of Law overlaid on the original Old Administration Area as context. (Source: ANU Drawing Office)

### Description of the College of Law

#### Buildings

The College of Law is one of several major office/research facilities on the Acton campus constructed in the 1960s. The complex is made up of two double-storey wings and a three-storey 'Law Link Building' connecting the two wings to the west. The facility is fitted for offices throughout, interspersed with larger meeting spaces, teaching areas, library collections and amenities.

The South Wing extension was completed in 1983 to provide additional room for the Law Library. The North Wing extension was completed in 2004 and provides two lecture theatres 'in the round' (Sparke Helmore Lecture Theatres). The semi-detached building is constructed of sympathetic brickwork to the other buildings of the complex, painted white on the upper half. Most recently a ramp and door have been added to the Sparke Helmore Law theatre to provide greater accessibility for staff and students.

The College of Law buildings sit on a foundation of piers of brick construction. The cast in-situ concrete arches provide a stylistic reference to similar elements of the Chifley Library (also designed by O'Mahoney). The arches are clad in 'special rendered facing' specifically chosen for the complex (essentially small 'pebble-crete' render), and external walls above first floor level are painted white to provide a bright finish contrasting with the raw brick.

Windows are spaced uniformly throughout the complex, providing a vertical perspective to the long horizontal buildings. Original casement windows are set below a fixed transom pane, in a brushed aluminium frame on pre-cast concrete sill. Awning windows of the cloistered areas are in closer proximity to those seen on the upper stories, permitting more light into the ground floor areas that may be shaded by the arches.

The walls of the Law Library extension (South Wing) are long rows of narrow panes set in aluminium frames. The roof is clad in Colorbond, with some original copper sheeting on the South Wing and Library extension. The roof has a 7" pitch and trimmed by copper gutters and downpipes (some of which have been replaced). Internally the building is similar to other office facilities, with rooms stemming from a central corridor and access stairways at either end.

Original hardware has been retained on most windows, though some closers have been replaced with modern steel examples.



Doors are generally similar throughout: solid wood with sliding timber panels on some (small mailbox). Doors to the more notable spaces are expressive, including glazed doors in an aluminium frame (Library) and timber doors with glazed panels (cloisters).

## Landscape

Two large oaks have been retained in Latham Court, likely early University species that were planted at the front of the main administrative Building. These trees were likely planted by Lindsay Pryor, prior to his tenure with the University. The Law Courtyard was formed based on the location of the original Old Administration buildings and central carpark. A separate smaller courtyard has also been formed between the South Wing and South Library extension. This area has some low-scale vegetation with no physical connection to the main courtyard, though is still an important space as a break-out area for staff. Artworks and sculptures are scattered throughout the landscape, with a tribute to the Allen family has also been established to the west of the Sparke Helmore Law Theatres.

## Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

### Statement of Significance

The ANU College of Law is significant as an important part of early university planning the Acton Campus. The College was purpose designed to fit within and complement the landscape and setting and to address the nearby Old Administration Area (part of which it replaced). The architectural characteristics of the College demonstrate elements of the late-twentieth century stripped classical style.

The ANU College of Law was designed by Thomas O'Mahoney, a notable architect for the ANU campus, was given charge of the overall development of this site. The site of the building was chosen by Professor Denis Winston, as an important part of his 1960 ANU campus site plan. Some internal furniture was designed by Frederick (Fred) Ward and the ANU Design Section. The College of Law complex also has associations with notable researchers of both Asian Studies and legal training.

Criteria	Assessment
<p><b>(a) Historic</b> 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 ANU College of Law is significant as an important part of early university planning the Acton Campus. The College was purpose designed to fit within and complement the landscape and setting as well as addressing the nearby Old Administration Area (part of which it replaced). The site for the College was chosen by Professor Denis Winston, who was instrumental in the integration of the 1960 Campus Site Plan, in which the College played an important part.</p> <p>The architectural characteristics of the College are reminiscent of the Chifley Library, designed by the same architect, Thomas O'Mahoney, and demonstrate elements of the late-twentieth century stripped classical style including the symmetrical façades, regular bays with height exceeding width, a horizontal skyline and a lack of classical detailing.</p> <p>The College has in the past and continues to provide world class legal training.</p> <p><b>The College of Law meets CHL criterion (a) for historic values</b></p> <p><b>Attributes:</b></p> <p>The location and appearance of the College of Law complex; the role of the buildings as part of the evolution of the Acton Campus, the provision of legal training within the College.</p>

## Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

<p><b>(b) Rarity</b> 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 College of Law does not meet criterion (b) for rarity values.</p>
<p><b>(c) Scientific</b> 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 College of Law does not meet criterion (c) for scientific values.</p>
<p><b>(d) Representative</b> 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>The College of Law does not meet criterion (d) for representative values.</p>
<p><b>(e) Aesthetic</b> 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>Aesthetic values must be demonstrated as being valued by the community to qualify for recognition on the CHL. At this stage, the College of Law does not meet this criterion because community appreciation of aesthetic value has not been formally tested. The College of Law does not meet criterion (e) for community held aesthetic values.</p>

Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

<p><b>(f) Creative/Technical</b> 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 College of Law does not meet criterion (f) for creative/technical values.</p>
<p><b>(g) Social</b> 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 ANU College of Law has associations with staff and students who have carried out legal training at the University. The presence of social value (strong or special attachment to the place by an identified community group) has not been formally tested. The College of Law does not meet criterion (g) for social values.</p>
<p><b>(h) Associative</b> 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>The College of Law does not meet criterion (h) for associative values</p>
<p><b>(i) Indigenous</b> The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.</p>	<p>The College of Law does not meet criterion (i) for Indigenous values</p>

### Photographs



**Figure 5:** College of Asian Studies (College of Law,) June/July 1965. (Source: ANU Archives)



**Figure 6:** North Asian Studies Building, now the College of Law, October 1965. (Source: ANU Archives 2011)



**Figure 7:** The Law Link Lecture Theatre's new accessible entrance. (Source: ANU Heritage Study 2011)

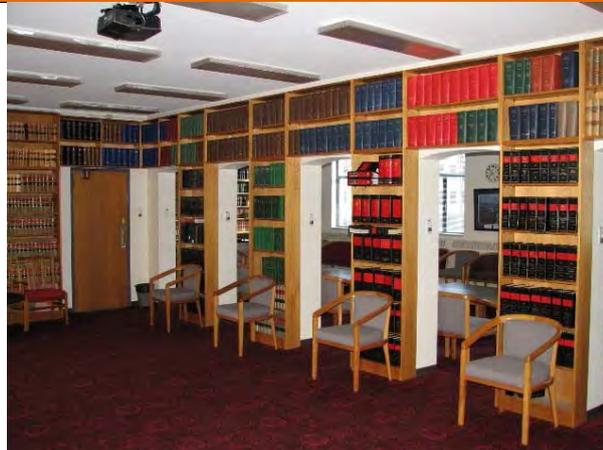


**Figure 8:** College of Law, North Building (8) and Courtyard. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)

### Photographs



**Figure 9:** College of Law South Building (5) and Courtyard  
(Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)



**Figure 10:** The Phillipa Weeks Staff Library and Common Room.  
(Source: ANU Heritage Study 2011)

### Management Issues

#### Constraints and Opportunities

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

The College of Law Building is of moderate heritage value and meets the EPBC Commonwealth Heritage criteria a) historic. Elements of moderate heritage value and make a contribution to the overall heritage significance of ANU Acton campus and should be retained and conserved. They require care in their management and can generally tolerate some degree of change and adaptive reuse. Loss or unsympathetic alteration could diminish the Commonwealth Heritage or local heritage 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 College of Law Building is able to tolerate a moderate level of change through development whereby the significant attributes and characteristics are conserved and interpreted.

**Opportunities** arise from the identified heritage values of the College of Law Building. The history of the College of Law Building should be interpreted to maintain the historic 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

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 College of Law Building.

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