

Australian National University



Acton Campus — Site Inventory

Study Item/ Area	University Accommodation Services / Brian Lewis Crescent Houses
Acton Campus Precinct	LIVERSIDGE Precinct
Building Nos. & Names	77 (University Accommodation Services), 77A #1-5 (16 Liversidge Street, 18 Liversidge Street, 23 Brian Lewis Crescent, 25 Brian Lewis Crescent, 27 Brian Lewis Crescent)

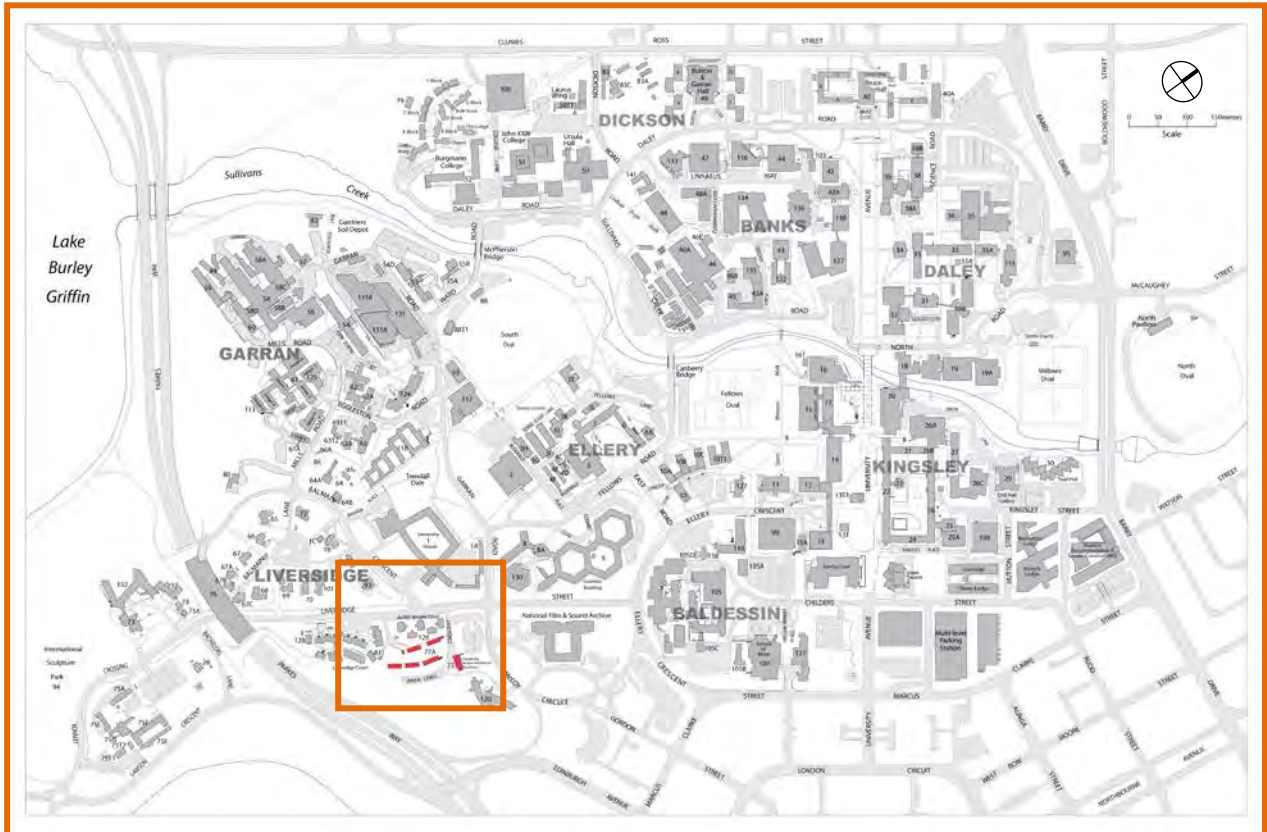


Figure 1: Location of study area within the ANU Acton Campus site.

Heritage Ranking	Brian Lewis Crescent Houses— Moderate —Meets the criteria for Commonwealth Heritage List University Accommodation Services— Neutral —Does not meet the criteria for Commonwealth Heritage List
Heritage Listing	The Brian Lewis Houses are not listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL).
Condition—Date	The condition noted here is at January 2012. All buildings and the surrounding landscape have been altered since the publication of the Ratcliffe and Armes assessment of the site. The buildings have lost some integrity as a result.
Relevant Documentation	2008 Heritage Report has been prepared by the ANU Heritage Officer. It provides a detailed history and description of the Brian Lewis buildings within the Liversidge Precinct.

Context of the Buildings

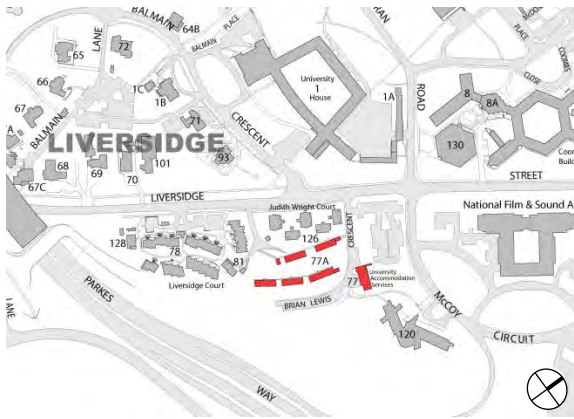


Figure 2: The Brian Lewis Crescent Houses in the context of the Liversidge Precinct.

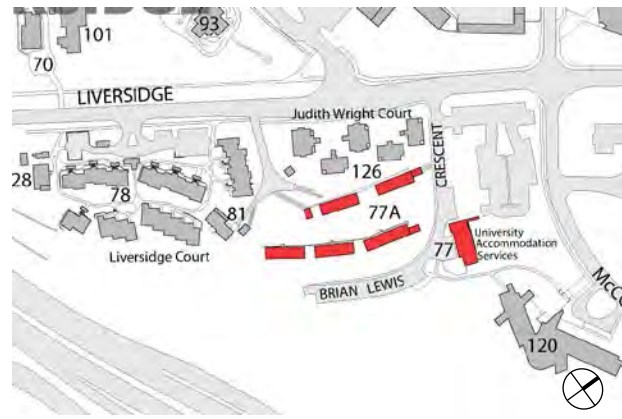


Figure 3: Brian Lewis Crescent Houses in relation to Liversidge Court and The Roland Wilson Building.

Brief Historical Overview

The Brian Lewis Crescent ('F' Type) houses were designed by the first University Architect, Professor Brian Lewis, of the University of Melbourne and were completed in 1952-54. The five houses were constructed in conjunction with other University accommodation premises, in particular University House and the Vice Chancellor's Residence. These houses were constructed to provide accommodation and for visiting academics and staff with families. Accommodation elsewhere in Canberra was limited and it was agreed that housing on campus was required.

Lewis had been appointed Consulting Architect to the ANU in 1947 and in addition to a site plan and several academic buildings he was required to produce plans for residential housing including flats. After initial delays over siting of the buildings, construction was approved by the Prime Minister on January 16 1950 and began shortly afterwards. The first two buildings were occupied by April 1952. Initially occupants found fault with the design and layout of the buildings and conversion to laboratories was recommended however it did not take place.

In 1970 the cottages at 16 and 18 Liversidge Street were let on a furnished basis to scholars and their families visiting from abroad. In 1974, Lawson Crescent was renamed Brian Lewis Crescent and carports were constructed for the individual houses by mid-1982. Prior to this, occupants had shared a communal garage located to the north of the group of buildings which today houses the University Accommodation Services.

By 1993, modifications to the Brian Lewis Crescent houses had altered the internal layout and planning and to a lesser extent the external appearance. To accommodate more single tenants, the houses were divided into one and two bedroom units, each of which contained a kitchen, bathroom and laundry facilities. The northeast unit (no 27) has been extended in length for use as academic offices.

The building's urban and landscape context has been considerably altered since their construction. A series of two and three storey accommodation blocks have been constructed between the F type houses and Liversidge street. This is a result of the loss of the views of the lake due to vegetation growth and the nearby expressway.

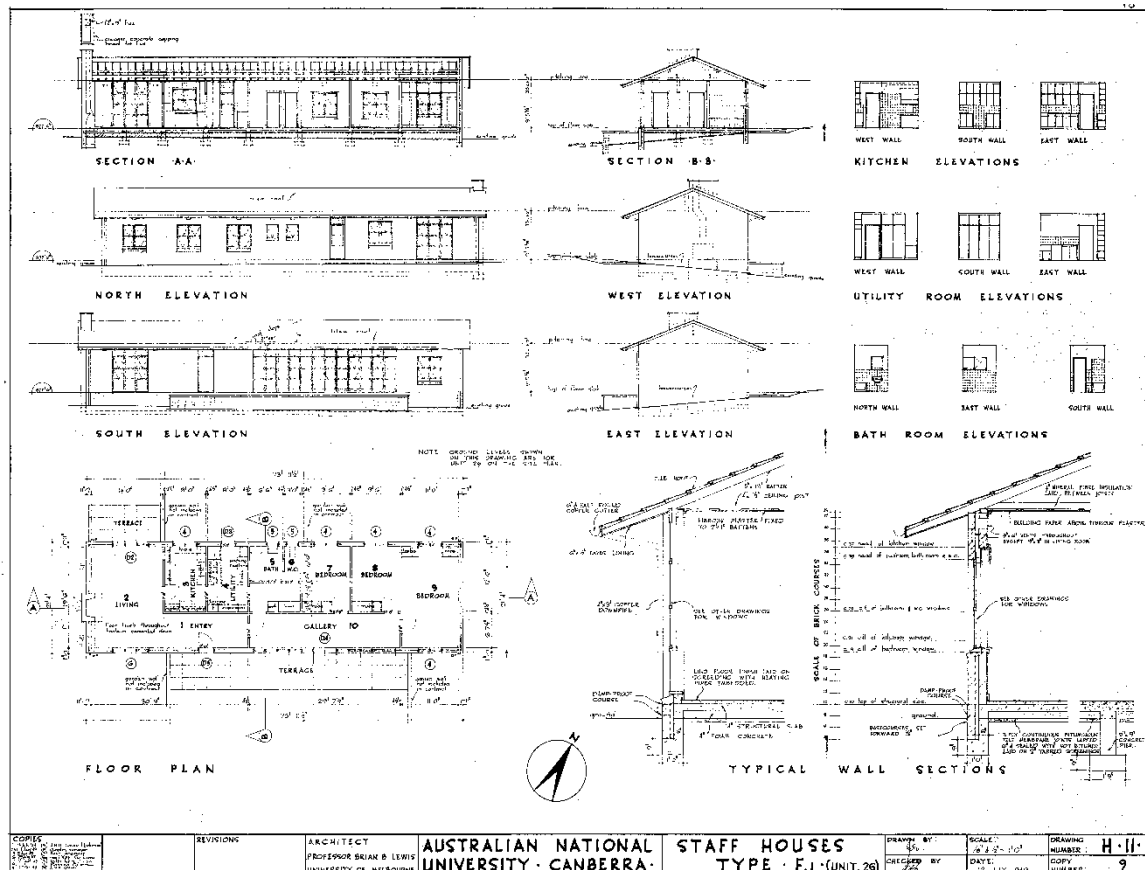


Figure 4: Plan and layout of the F Type staff housing created by Brian Lewis in July 1949. Five such houses were constructed.

Description of the Brian Lewis Houses

Buildings

The five houses are set in two rows that follow the land contours, with each building differing slightly in alignment. The buildings were designed to face the future lake and hence face almost due east. The distance between each building is 6-10 metres with the distance between front and back rows approximately 20 metres. It is understood that each building initially had a similar floor plan. The external footprint remains the same today other than for the extension to the north of unit 27/77, plus linking carports not shown in plans.

Buildings are of cavity brick construction with single brick internal walls. It is believed the sub flooring is timber framing with floorboards. Floors were 'linoleum finish throughout cemented down'. The ceiling height is approximately 2.7 metres with a roof pitch of 20 degrees clad in Marseilles terracotta tiles. The eaves follow the roof line and have been in-filled with spaced timber boards. The exterior brickwork was a painted 'Tyrolean' finish (A rough render). A distinctive feature of the buildings is the multiple glazed timber sash windows in a large, full height configuration facing east with smaller units on the west side in the bedrooms.

Much of the internal structure of the buildings has changed over the life of the site, with little sympathy for the original interior design. Additional doorways were cut into the rear wall of the building and the door arrangements on the eastern (front) side were also altered, with additional doors being added to banks of windows, doors cut into solid walls and banks of windows relocated or narrowed. The internal trim (skirting, architraves and cornices) was originally understated. Following the renovation work, large 'scotia' profile cornices were added that are out of character with the period of the buildings.

Landscape

The landscape is primarily open grassed areas with a mix of established native and exotic plantings and groups of bushes.

Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

Statement of Significance

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>This group is significant as the first set of residences built specifically by the ANU for visiting academics and staff with families in the early days of the University's establishment. Apart from the Vice Chancellor's house and that of Sir Keith Hancock, no other single-dwelling residences have since been built on the campus.</p> <p>It was recognised at the time that if the University was to achieve its goal of becoming a first-class institution, the campus need to attract and provide for interstate and international staff and scholars. In the 1950s, Canberra was a fledging capital, with low vacancy rates in housing, and the decision to building suitable family dwellings on Campus coincided with the strong desire to have academics and research staff living on site to engender a more collegiate and stimulating environment.</p> <p>The buildings were designed by Professor Brian Lewis, the University's first Architect, who had a strong influence on the early building styles and planning of the campus.</p> <p>The Brian Lewis Crescent Houses meet criterion (a) for historic values.</p> <p>Attributes The Houses, their design and construction and their associations with the early establishment of the University.</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 F Type residences are rare at the ANU as the only set of individual dwellings constructed for visiting academics at ANU and their families. Subsequent construction phases moved away from this style of accommodation and consist primarily of multistorey units.</p> <p>The Brian Lewis Crescent Houses meet criterion (b) for rarity values.</p> <p>Attributes The Houses, their design and construction.</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 Brian Lewis Crescent Houses do not meet 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>The buildings are representative of the University's early approach to providing staff housing, especially for those with families.</p> <p>The residences are also representative of modern domestic scale architecture, a common feature following World War II. The conservative detailing, materials and fenestration also demonstrate the frugality of the University during these post war years, and the restrained style of Brian Lewis, as demonstrated at University House and the Vice Chancellor's Residence. The buildings were substantially altered in the 1990s and this greatly diminished their ability to demonstrate the former 1950s interiors, however many of the significance exterior features remain.</p> <p>The Brian Lewis Crescent Houses meet criterion (d) for representative values.</p> <p>Attributes</p> <p>The Houses, their conservative design and construction.</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>While Brian Lewis Crescent Houses display some aesthetic values, however to fully meet this criterion, aesthetic values must be demonstrated as being valued by the community. The community appreciation of aesthetic value has not been formally tested.</p> <p>The Brian Lewis Crescent Houses do not meet CHL criterion (e) for 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>The Brian Lewis Crescent Houses do not meet criterion (f) for creative/technical values.</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 presence of social values (strong or special attachment to the place by an identified community group) has not been formally tested.</p> <p>The Brian Lewis Crescent Houses do not meet criterion (g) for scientific 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>The F Type houses have strong associations with their designer, the University's first Architect, Professor Brian Lewis, who won the coveted Sulman Medal for Architecture in 1953 and was important in establishing Melbourne University's Faculty of Architecture.</p> <p>Lewis was a fundamental player in the early development of the ANU, and contributed other buildings including University House, the Oliphant Building, the Vice Chancellor's Residence and the Central Store is also an interesting building.</p> <p>The Brian Lewis Crescent Houses meet criterion (a) for historic values</p> <p>Attributes</p> <p>The Brian Lewis Crescent Houses have direct association with their architect, Brian Lewis, as first official architect for the ANU.</p>
<p>(i) Indigenous The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.</p>	<p>The Brian Lewis Crescent Houses do not meet criterion (i) for Indigenous values.</p>

Photographs



Figure 5: Brian Lewis Crescent complex in 1953, not long after construction. (Source: ANU Archives)



Figure 6: Aerial view of the Brian Lewis Crescent complex in relation to University House and Sir Keith Hancock's house. (date unknown) (Source: ANU Archives)

Australian National University

Acton Campus — Site Inventory



Figure 7: Brian Lewis Crescent houses under construction in 1952. (Source: ANU Archives)



Figure 8: View of the Brian Lewis Crescent houses in current condition. (Source: <http://www.heritageatrisk.org.au>)



Figure 9: View of the communal lawn area of the Brian Lewis Crescent complex. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2012)

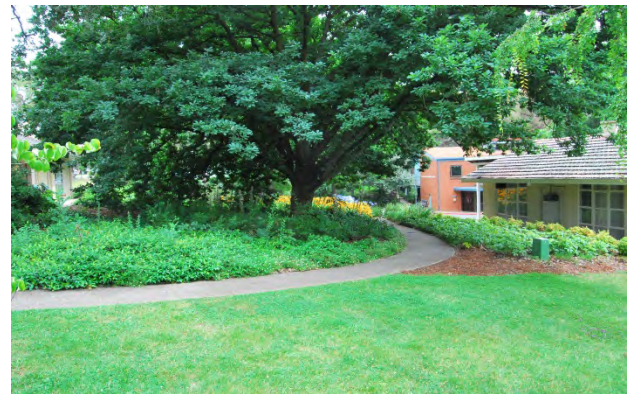


Figure 10: View of the gardens of Brian Lewis Crescent complex. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2012)



Figure 11: View of Brian Lewis Crescent complex from the University Accommodation Services Building. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2012)



Figure 12: View of the University Accommodation Services Building. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2012)

Management Issues

Constraints and Opportunities

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

The Brian Lewis Houses are of moderate significance and meet the EPBC Commonwealth Heritage criteria a) historic, d) representative and h) associative. 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 a low degree of change or some 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 Brian Lewis Houses are able to tolerate some level of change through development whereby the significant attributes and characteristics are conserved and interpreted.

Opportunities arise from the identified heritage values of The Brian Lewis Houses. 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 Brian Lewis Crescent Houses should be nominated to the CHL and a Heritage Management Plan developed to guide the best practice conservation and management of the sites.

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.

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