

Australian National University

Acton Campus — Site Inventory



Study Item/ Area	International Sculpture Park & Acton Grasslands
Acton Campus Precinct	LIVERSIDGE Precinct
Building Nos. & Names	94 (International Sculpture Park) and the White Box–Yellow Box–Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland.

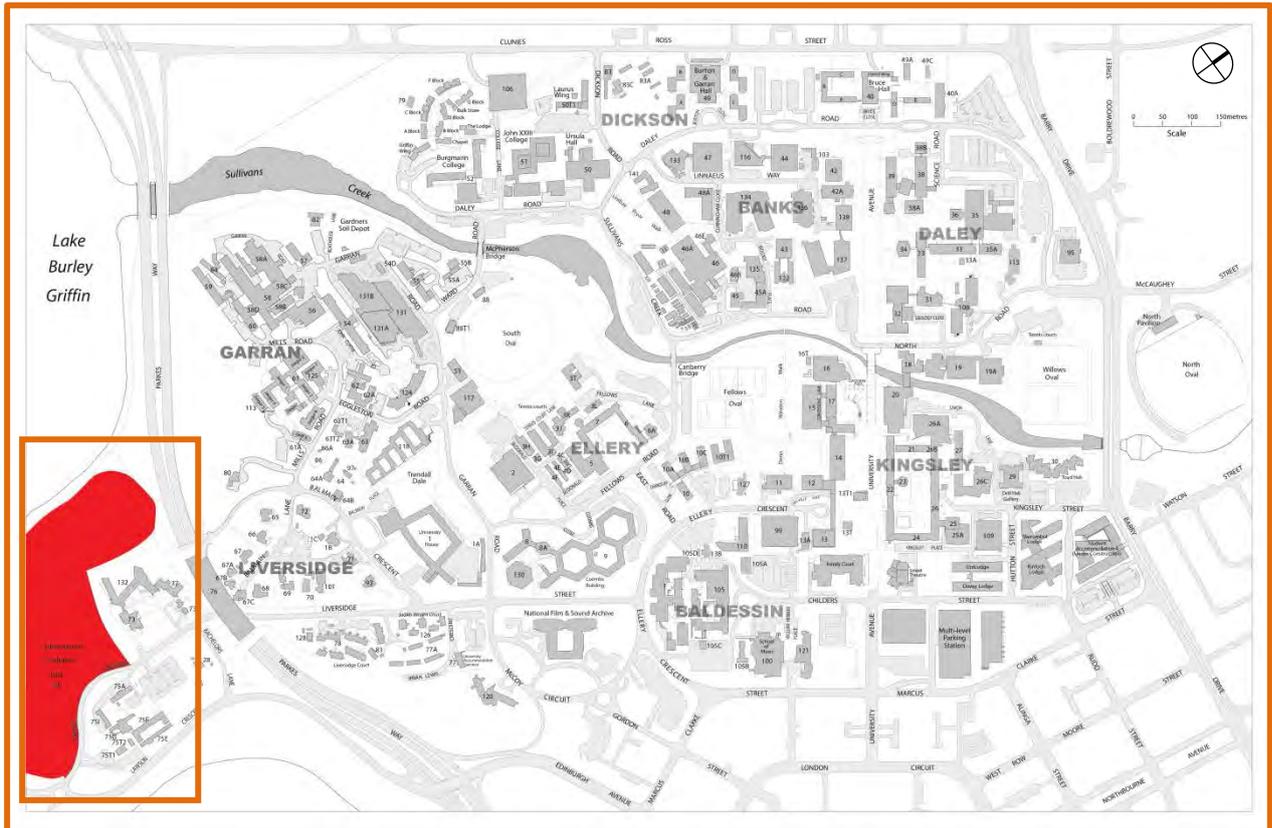


Figure 1: Location of study area within the ANU Acton Campus site.

Heritage Ranking	Grassy Woodland Communities— Exceptional —Meets criteria for Commonwealth Heritage List International Sculpture Park— Low —Does not meets criteria for Commonwealth Heritage List
Heritage Listing	The International Sculpture Park is not individually listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL). The grassy woodlands are not listed; however they are recognised and protected under the EPBC Act.
Condition—Date	The extant trees, landscape and sculptures in this study area continue to be maintained in good condition.
Relevant Documentation	The ANU Biodiversity Management Plan 2011, prepared by the ANU Biodiversity Officer, and the Acton Conservation Area Heritage Management Plan 2011, prepared by the ANU Heritage Officer.

Context of the Buildings

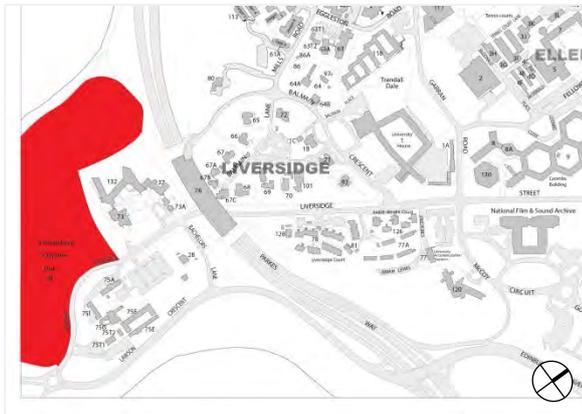


Figure 2: The International Sculpture Park in the context of the Liversidge Precinct.

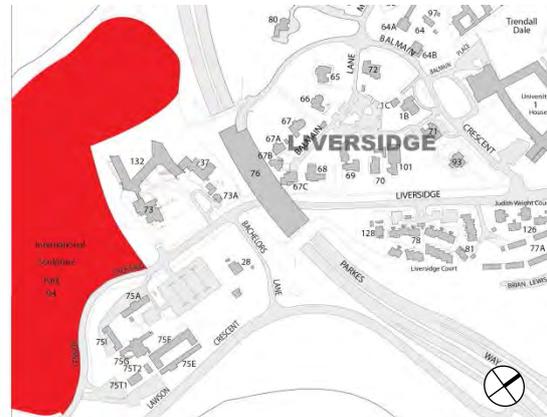


Figure 3: The International Sculpture Park in relation to Parkes Way and Lennox Crossing.

Brief Historical Overview

The International Sculpture Park is located at the southern end of the campus, adjacent to the National Museum of Australia. The lightly wooded grounds extend from the gardens of Old Canberra House to the Lake Burley Griffin shores. The Sculpture Park was an initiative developed by the ANU as a collaborative venture involving Visiting Artists in Residence of the Canberra School of Art Sculpture Workshop, with assistance from overseas cultural agencies, embassies and patrons, to showcase the works of local and international sculpture artist in a public, outdoor venue. Artistic direction for the venture was provided by Professor David Williams, Director of the Canberra School of Art. It was granted a construction licence in May 2000 and completed in two stages. The International Sculpture Park was completed in 2002 by Knox and Partners.

Very little remains of the pre-pastoral era of the Federal Territory in this area, however five patches of remnant grassy woodlands have been identified in the areas to the south and west of Old Canberra House and the Crawford School of Economics and Government on the Acton Peninsula. These patches correspond to the description of White Box- Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands, commonly known as box-gu, grassy-woodlands, which are listed as critically endangered ecological communities under EPBC Act 1999. This community also corresponds to the description of Yellow Box – Red Gum Grassy Woodland, which is listed as an endangered ecological community under the ACT Nature Conservations Act (NCA) 1980.

In its pre-1750 state, this ecological community was characterised by a ground layer dominated by tussock grasses, an over storey dominated or co-dominated by White Box, Yellow Box, Blakely's Red Gum and other gum species and a sparse or patchy shrub layer. The ACT contains the largest remaining remnants of these grasslands in good condition, reflecting significantly lower levels of stock grazing than surrounding areas. In terms of size, connectivity, diversity and condition, the ACT remnants are of the exceptional quality.

The grassland provides a range of habitat resources for native fauna, including tree hollows, grassland and canopy trees. The highest quality habitats on campus are found in these patches of remnant grassy woodland with a predominance of native species and high structural diversity.

The original boundary between the Acton and Springbank properties, pre-Federation, ran through this site (Approximately 200m west of Old Canberra House). A concrete boundary marker was rediscovered in 1970 by Jule Knight of the ANU Buildings and Grounds Division who planted a commemorative row of native *Callitris endlicheri* (Black Cypress Pine) along the boundary in 1985. Formation of the low rock wall that forms the lookout for the International Sculpture Park immediately over the boundary line in 2001 destroyed any remaining evidence of the concrete marker.

A row of *Eucalyptus mannifera* ssp. *Maculosa* (Brittle Gum) was planted along the original southern ring-road of Balmain Crescent. The road itself has been neglected and the landscape has overtaken the area, although traces of the road remain on the landscape and it is used as a walking trail by local residents and university occupants. The eucalypts planted along its length are in good condition, and are an important identifiable feature.

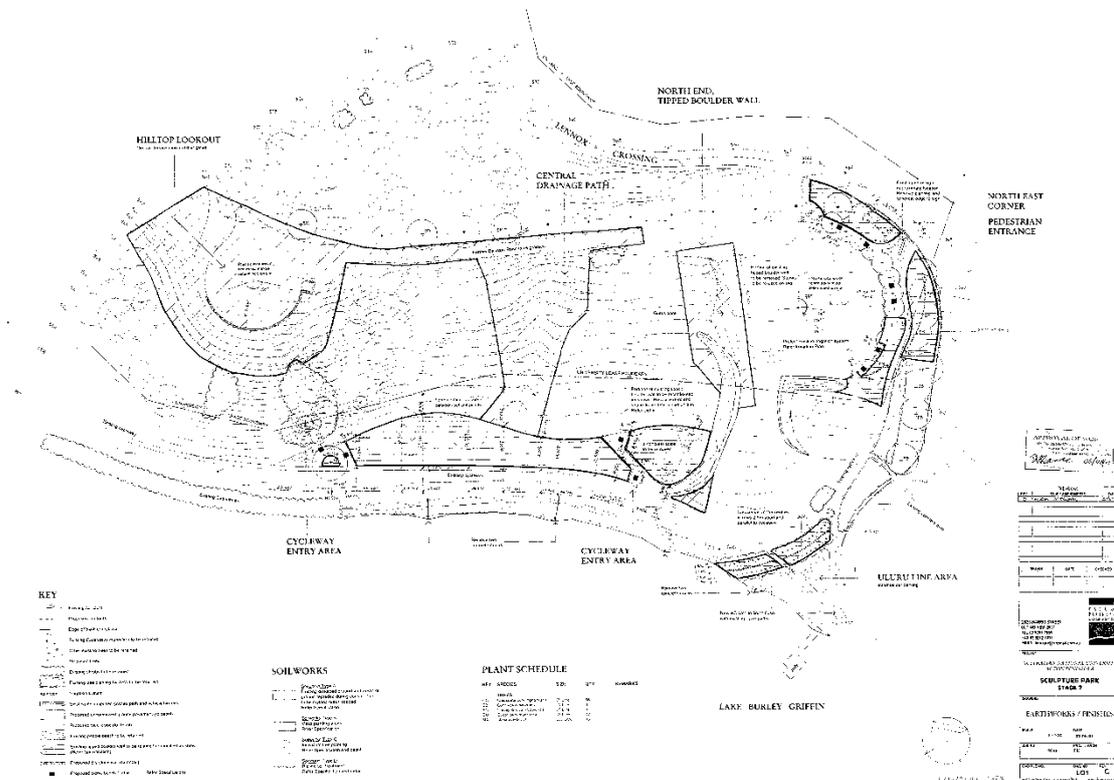


Figure 4: June 2001 earthworks and finishes for the Sculpture Park, created by Knox and Partners Landscape Architects (Source: ANU Drawing Office).

Description of the International Sculpture Park and Grassy Woodlands

Grassy Woodlands

The Acton campus contains identified threatened or vulnerable species and ecological communities that are listed for protection under the EPBC 1999 Act. It is also listed under the ACT NCA Act 1980 and the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1997.

Located to the south and west of the Old Canberra House zone, with curtilage defined by the southern boundary of the ANU campus to the south and west and the Old Canberra House zone to the north and east. This area is thoroughly examined in the recent ANU Biodiversity Management Plan. The area is not included on the CHL as part of the Acton Conservation Area.

The area is mostly characterised by a species-rich understorey of native tussock grasses, herbs and scattered shrubs, and the dominance, or prior dominance of White Box, Yellow Box, of Blakely's Red Gum eucalypts with an overstorey dominated by Yellow Box and Blakely's Red Gum. The tree cover is generally discontinuous and consists of widely-spaced trees of medium height in which the canopies are clearly separated. The dominant grasses are Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) and Snow Grass (*Poa sieberana*). This area is an important biodiversity corridor, stretching from Black Mountain to the end of the peninsula. Like much of the landscape of the ACT, that to the south of the Old Canberra House zone has been considerably disturbed by pastoral practices and more recent developments. Archival photographs of the 1950s and 1960s detail a spare landscape with less vegetation than today.

The corridor represents the single most valuable wildlife corridor on the ANU Acton Campus, hosting a substantial number of terrestrial and water bird species. This area of remnant grassland was identified prior to the recent development works for the Crawford School of Economics and Government at Old Canberra House. Species diversity is very high in the grassy woodlands, including the Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysm albicans var. tricolor*) and Chocolate Lily (*Dichopogon ssp.*).

They are an important habitat for a large number of animals, birds and reptiles, including rare and threatened species such as Superb Parrots (*Pottelii Swainsonii*) and Flying Foxes (*Pteropus ssp.*). Due to its proximity to human development, it is likely that

a range of exotic species utilise the study area periodically, including cats, dogs and foxes. Rabbits were observed on recent surveys. The management of these species will be important if the diversity of fauna and flora is to be maintained and enhanced.

International Sculpture Park

Set between the grassy woodlands, several sculptures are integrated into the landscape setting including 'Ngaraka: Shrine for the lost Koori' by Djon Mundine and Fiona Foley, Spirit levels by Christine O'Loughlin, Witness by Dadang Christanto and Arch of the sun by Lucia Pacenza.

Summary Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

Statement of Significance

The grassy woodlands are significant as the only extant examples of their kind in the central Canberra area, and are demonstrative of the pre-European landscape of the region. The grassy woodlands are significant as the only extant examples of their kind in the central Canberra area. The remnant White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum grassy woodlands and derived native grasslands are highly significant, as research estimates that less than 5% of such woodlands remain in a near-intact condition in Australia.

Criteria	Brief 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>The grassy woodlands are significant as the only extant examples of their kind in the central Canberra area, and are demonstrative of the pre-European landscape of the region.</p> <p>The Grassy Woodlands meet CHL criterion (a) for historic values.</p> <p><i>Attributes</i> Grassy woodlands</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 grassy woodlands are significant as the only extant examples of their kind in the central Canberra area. The remnant White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum grassy woodlands and derived native grasslands are highly significant, as research estimates that less than 5% of such woodlands remain in a near-intact condition in Australia.</p> <p>The Grassy Woodlands meet CHL criterion (b) for rarity values.</p> <p><i>Attributes</i> Grassy woodlands and their species diversity</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 remnant grassy woodlands of this area provide a significant resource for the scientific research, education, conservation and management of native threatened and vulnerable flora and fauna. They are the only remaining examples with such abundant biodiversity on the Acton campus and are rare in the ACT and Australia.</p> <p>The Grassy Woodlands meet CHL criterion (c) for scientific values.</p> <p><i>Attributes</i> Grassy woodlands and their species diversity</p>

Summary Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

<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 White Box – Yellow Box –Blakely's Red Gum grassy woodland patches are representative examples of extant pre-European woodlands. They represent a portion of what is believed to be only 5% of such remaining woodland in Australia.</p> <p>The existence of kangaroo grass in the area is significant as this species does not tolerate high levels of disturbance; therefore their presence signifies the site has not been highly disturbed in the past. This is unique, as the area was highly pastoralised in its pre-Canberra history.</p> <p>The Grassy Woodlands meet CHL criterion (d) for representative values.</p> <p><i>Attributes</i> Grassy woodlands and their species diversity including the existence of kangaroo grass.</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 Grassy Woodlands 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 Grassy Woodlands do not meet CHL 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 Grassy Woodlands do not meet CHL criterion (g) for social values.</p>

Summary Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

<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 Grassy Woodlands do not meet CHL criterion (h) for associative values.</p>
<p>(i) Indigenous The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.</p>	<p>The Grassy Woodlands do not meet CHL criterion (i) for Indigenous values.</p>

Photographs



Figure 5: View from the southern end of the Old Canberra House Garden towards the lake, with foreground of remnant White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands. (Source: Biodiversity Office 2011)



Figure 6: Christine O'Loughlin's 2001 *Spirit levels*, epoxy painted steel, Pyrex and acrylic tubing, toughened glass, which sits on Walter Burley Griffin's water axis facing the shore of the lake. (Source: Heritage Officer 2011)

Photographs



Figure 7: Anne Rochette's 2003 *Common food*, polished granite and cast concrete, sits beside the low rock wall of the International Sculpture Park lookout. (Source: Heritage Officer 2011)



Figure 8: The proximity of the Crawford School Building (No. 132) to the White Box- Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands to the southwest of Old Canberra House. (Source: Biodiversity Officer 2011)



Figure 9: The Chocolate Lily (*Dichopogon* ssp.), endemic to the White Box- Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands. (Source: Biodiversity Officer 2011)



Figure 10: An Early Nancy (*Wurmbea dioica*), a native flower used whose roots are a popular indigenous food source. (Source: Biodiversity Officer 2011)

Photographs



Figure 11: Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysm albicans* var. *tricolor*), a nationally endangered flower found in the White Box- Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands. (Source: Biodiversity Officer 2011)



Figure 12: Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), one of the dominant native grasses in the White Box- Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands. (Source: Biodiversity Officer 2011)

Management Issues

Constraints and Opportunities

Constraints arise from the identified heritage values of Grassy Woodlands and the requirement under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)* (EPBC Act) to conserve them. The grassy woodlands should be conserved wherever possible.

The Acton Grassy Woodlands are of exceptional significance and meet the EPBC Commonwealth Heritage criteria a) historic, b) rarity, c) scientific and d) representative. Elements of exceptional heritage value are generally associated with the ANU's development and must be retained and conserved. The tolerance for change level is generally low. Loss or alteration of individual elements that may have exceptional significance would significantly diminish the Commonwealth Heritage (or other) values of the ANU Acton campus.

The International Sculpture Park is of low heritage value and does not individually meet the threshold for Commonwealth Heritage Listing. Elements of low heritage value contribute to the significance of the Acton Campus but do not embody heritage values in their own right.

The **Tolerance for Change** heritage management tool, outlined in Section 7.6 of the ANU Action Campus Heritage Study 2012, will assist in conserving heritage values through a process of change. The International Sculpture Park & Acton Grassy Woodlands are able to tolerate a low level of change through development.

Opportunities arise from the identified heritage values of the grassy woodlands. The significance of the Acton Grassy Woodlands should be interpreted to maintain the historic and associational 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 attributes is proposed, interpretation and a heritage impact assessment would be a prerequisite according to EPBC Act requirements.

The International Sculpture Park and Woody Grasslands require management recommendations to be developed to provide specific guidance on the future management and interpretation of the area.

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 area should be carried out.
