

Study Item/ Area	Sullivans Creek
Acton Campus Precinct	Various
Building Nos. & Names	-

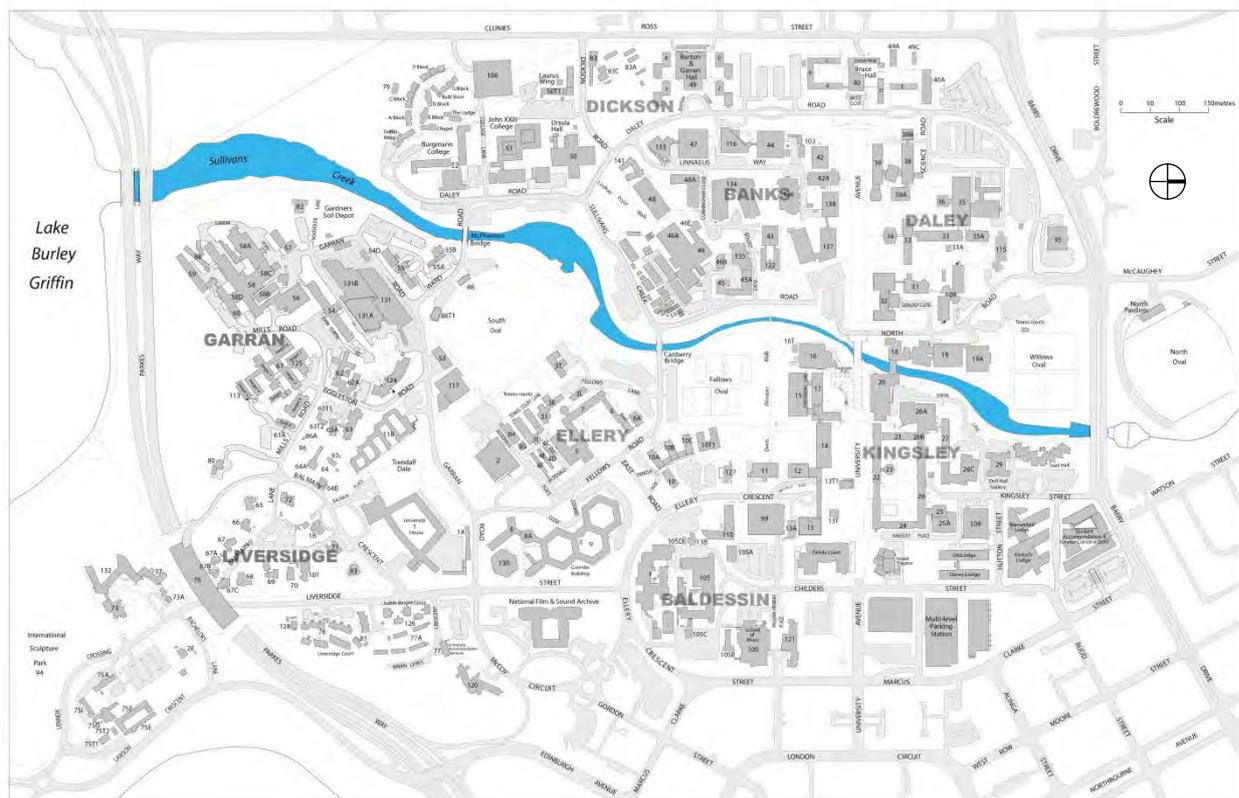


Figure 1: Location of study area within the ANU Acton Campus site.

Heritage Ranking	Sullivans Creek— Exceptional —Meets criteria for Commonwealth Heritage List
Heritage Listing	Sullivans Creek is not individually listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL). It is listed on the ANU Heritage Register (Place ID AC0040) as a significant place for the ANU.
Condition—Date	<p>The condition noted here is at October 2011. The Sullivans Creek area continues to be well maintained and is in good condition.</p> <p>Sullivans Creek pre-dates European occupation of the ACT region. The water course has been altered and manicured in parts. It is today essentially a stormwater drain for the north Canberra suburbs, yet supports significant biodiversity and joins with Lake Burley Griffin.</p>
Relevant Documentation	2003 Heritage Factsheet for Sullivans Creek has been prepared by the ANU Heritage Officer (http://heritage.anu.edu.au/index.php?pid=1229). It provides a historical overview of the development of the creek, along with a physical description and assessment of heritage values.

Brief Historical Overview

Indigenous people of the region used Sullivan's Creek and the adjoining Molonglo river as a primary resource corridor and freshwater source prior to the settlement of Europeans in the area.

The property of Springbank was one of the oldest land grants in the Limestone Plains area. The land was officially selected in 1831 by John Macpherson, who had lived on the site since 1829. By the early 1840s the homestead had grown to accommodate eleven people, including Macpherson's daughter, the first European child born in the region, and two assigned convict workers.. The land was divided into four individual properties, each under control of a different family, until William Sullivan bought all separate leases in 1889 for £5000.

The Commonwealth resumed the land after Sullivan died in 1911, only to lease the property to Charles Kaye in 1924. His sons George, Joseph and Gordon Kaye continued to farm the property and operated a booming dairy business until the house was demolished for the inundation of Lake Burley Griffin in 1961.

Sullivan's farm extended over a roughly rectangular area bounded by what is now University Avenue in the north, Clunies Ross Street to the west, the School of Art to the east and the Molonglo River to the south. Sullivans Creek, originally named Canberry Creek for the local Indigenous community, ran through the property. The water-line was embellished with willows, poplars and other exotic species that have since re-seeded along its length.

Exactly when the creek was named Sullivans Creek is unknown, but it is likely reflected in the ongoing presence of the Sullivan family and their importance to the growing Canberra community.

Over the past sixty years the ANU has gradually straightened and formalised Sullivans Creek. Professor Brian Lewis originally planned substantial works to the creek. In his site plans from 1950, Lewis removed a large loop around what is today the Chifley Library. Site plans from 1955 illustrate that the creek had been straightened, with site works completed by 1960. The loop curved from the northern side of Fellows Oval through to the western side of the Pauline Griffin Building, through the AD Hope Building and joining the creek-line again in the vicinity of Union Court. Two major stormwater drains in this section of the creek terminate at the location of the original end of the loop.

Lewis also proposed the formation of 'Middle Pond' between Macpherson Bridge and Canberra Bridge. This area was first widened in September 1960, with works to the reinforced walls and weir in 1963 and 1974. Other lengths of the creek were also verged with stone in the late 1970s.

Four bridges cross Sullivans Creek on the Acton campus. They include three vehicle/pedestrian bridges: Macpherson Bridge, Canberra Bridge and Union Court; and one pedestrian bridge located near the ANU Arts Centre. The earliest bridge is Canberra Bridge in the centre of the campus, formed in 1952. Union Court Bridge was formed above dry land while the loop of the original creek-line was removed, and the creek diverted to run under the bridge. Macpherson Bridge was formed in 1962-63 and the footbridge near the ANU Arts Centre was formed in 1965. A small plaque on the footbridge commemorates William Francis Roy, a technician working at Black Mountain tower who died in a bicycle accident on the bridge in 1991.

Australian National University

Acton Campus — Site Inventory

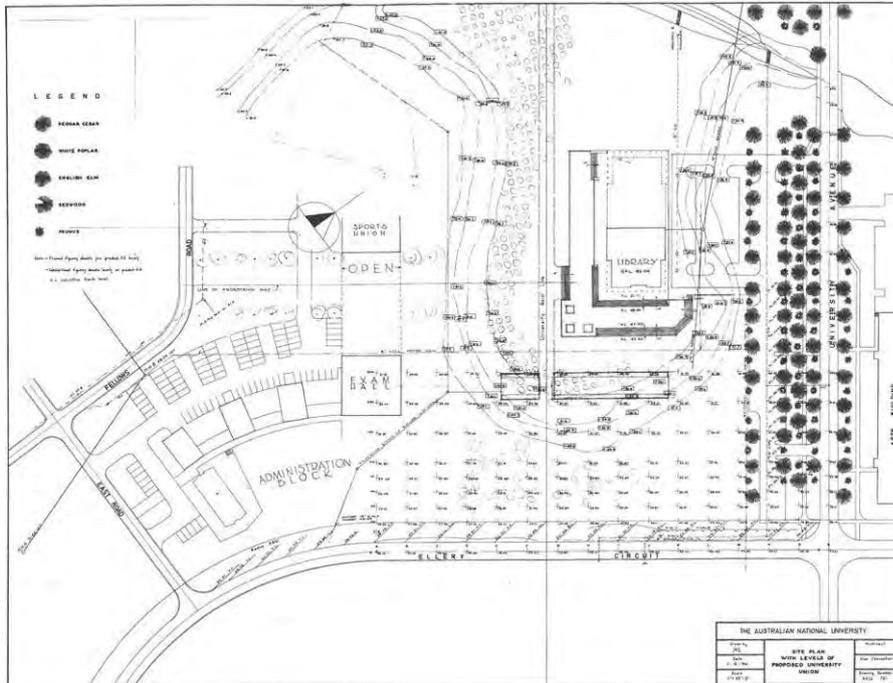


Figure 2: Sullivan's Creek was straightened in the University Union area and Chifley Library built on the high land of the original loop, ANU Architect's Office, 11 Oct 1961.



Figure 3: ANU campus with Sullivan's Creek, Nov 1961. Works to remove the loop can be seen above centre (Source: ANU Archives).

Description of Sullivans Creek

Sullivans Creek is a 13km long creek which drains 53 square km of both urban and rural land in the northern ACT before discharging into Lake Burley Griffin. The last 2km of the creek passes through the University at relatively low volumes, though heavy downpours can bring floods that threaten buildings, infrastructure and vegetation. While few buildings address the creek, landscapes and biodiversity corridors converge along its length, providing a habitat for native flora and fauna.

Sullivans Creek enters the campus through a gross pollutant trap beneath Barry Drive. A pond has been formed to the east of Willows Oval, the area recently refurbished when artificial turf was laid over the sports field in 2010. The student residence Toad Hall, constructed to the east side of the creek in 1974, was named by the first student residents for the landscape surrounding the building. The mature willows and eucalypt trees along a flowing water course reminded them of the setting of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*.

The creek meanders through typha reeds past a purpose-built deck in the beer garden of the University Bar, flows beneath University Union Bridge and on to Canberra Bridge at the terminus of Sullivans Creek Road and Fellows Road. This section is lined with poplars and willows, providing an open, treed landscape highly utilised by the University community. Mature Willow trees found along the north side of Fellows Oval demarcate the general location of the original loop in the water-line.

The creek widens at Canberra Bridge, to become 'Middle Pond' after a wier capped with pedestrian stepping stones. The original path of the creek appears to have run to the south of its current location, possibly adjacent to a remnant *Eucalyptus rubida* (Candle bark) that marked the boundary between the Acton and Springbank properties, located on Fellow's Road.

'Middle Pond' supports a wide variety of aquatic plants, including rushes and reeds, that in turn provide a habitat for significant fauna species. The gradual verges and habitat resources have made Middle Pond the primary amphibian breeding site on the Acton campus. Casuarina pines line the western side of the creek until it reaches Lake Burley Griffin, with some notable *Eucalyptus viminalis* (Manna gum) along the southeast side near south oval. A pedestrian path runs between tall lines of mature *Populus nigra* (Black poplars) planted by the University's first Professor of Botany, Professor Lindsay Pryor, in the 1950s.

The pedestrian path becomes a sealed bitumen bicycle path from the south of Macpherson Bridge to the the nexus of the creek and Lake Burley Griffin, lined by mature and semi-mature eucalypts and other natives. The once open grassy areas to the east have become the site of a carpark, archaeology test pits and giant solar panel dishes.

Ongoing ecological surveys have found that Sullivans Creek is one of two primary biodiversity corridors on the Acton campus (the other being the vegetation corridor linking Black Mountain Nature Reserve to Old Canberra House). The gross pollutant trap established by the ACT Government at Barry Drive does much to clean the water coming into the campus, with the vegetation along the creek further filtering the impurities until it reaches Lake Burley Griffin. Sullivans Creek supports native wildlife such as birds, possums, platypus, turtles, water rats and reptiles.

Summary Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

Statement of Significance

Sullivans Creek is significant for its historical associations with use and settlement of the Limestone Plains area, both pre and post european occupation. Indigenous communities have strong connections with Sullivans Creek as an important water source and resource corridor which supported past generations of Indigenous people in the region. European pastoral settlement utilised the water from the creek and the fertile land that the creek supported on the floodplains below Acton. Today Sullivans Creek is an important landscape element of the Acton campus.

The flora and fauna that Sullivans Creek supports is reflective of the native species found in abundance prior to European occupation. Species include those not often found in close proximity to a city CBD area. Sullivans Creek presents opportunities for scientific research of natural water courses, water filtration methods, biodiversity management and human health and safety operations.

Sullivans Creek, has strong historical association with the Sullivan family, especially William Sullivan and John Macpherson, the first pastoralist of the area, after whom the Macpherson Bridge is named. The Canberra Bridge is associated with the Indigenous inhabitants of the area, who named the area 'Canberry', the creek was originally referred to as Canberry Creek.

Summary Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

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>Sullivans Creek has historical associations with use and settlement of the Limestone Plains area. Indigenous communities have expressed associations with the creek, as well as the biodiversity that the creek supports. European pastoral settlement used the water from the creek and the fertile land that the creek created on the floodplains below Acton. Today Sullivans Creek is an important landscape element of the Acton campus.</p> <p>The flora and fauna that Sullivans Creek supports is representative of the native species found in abundance prior to European occupation. Species include those not often found in close proximity to a city CBD area.</p> <p>Sullivans Creek meets CHL criterion (a) for historic values</p> <p><i>Attributes</i></p> <p>The form and function of Sullivans Creek as a landscape element to the campus and source of biodiversity on the Acton campus.</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>Sullivans Creek does not meet 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>Sullivans Creek presents opportunities for scientific research of natural water courses, water filtration methods, biodiversity management and human health and safety operations.</p> <p>The creek is frequently used as a source of information for student projects which contribute to the knowledge bank about this unique biodiversity corridor, which is rare in a semi-urban context.</p> <p>Sullivans Creek meets CHL criterion (c) for scientific values</p> <p><i>Attributes</i></p> <p>The form of Sullivans Creek and the biodiversity it supports.</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>Sullivans Creek does not meet criterion (d) for representative values.</p>
<p>(e) Aesthetic The place has</p>	<p>Sullivans Creek is a significant part of the current campus landscape setting. It supports a wide array of fauna and flora that help to establish the Acton campus as an important landscaped area of the ACT and</p>

Summary Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

<p>significant heritage value because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.</p>	<p>the wider region. Aesthetic values must be demonstrated as being valued by the community to qualify for recognition on the CHL. At this stage, Sullivans Creek does meet this criterion because community appreciation of aesthetic value has not been formally tested. Sullivans Creek does not meet 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>Sullivans Creek does 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>Sullivans Creek has strong historical associations with the ANU and wider Canberra city area. The student residence Toad Hall was named for its proximity to the creek and environment the creek provides. The University Bar, University Union area, Fellows Oval, South Oval and other open areas take advantage of the creek's proximity, which provides a pleasant outlook. The presence of social values (strong or special attachment to the place by an identified community group) has not been formally tested. Sullivans Creek does not meet 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>Sullivans Creek has strong historic associations with the Indigenous and European pastoral period of the Limestone Plains. The Sullivan family, especially William Sullivan are strongly associated with the creek and the surrounding area and as such as the namesakes of the Creek. The Macpherson Bridge is named after John Macpherson, the first pastoralist of the area. The Canberry Bridge is associated with the Indigenous inhabitants of the area, who named the area 'Canberry', the creek was originally referred to as Canberry Creek. Sullivans Creek meets criterion (h) for associative values <i>Attributes</i> Historical elements of the development of Sullivans Creek and wider ACT region.</p>
<p>(i) Indigenous The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.</p>	<p>Indigenous communities have strong connections to the form and function of Sullivans Creek as an important water source and resource corridor which supported past generations of Indigenous people in the region. Sullivans Creek meets criterion (i) for Indigenous values <i>Attributes</i> Sullivans Creek as a source of fresh water and as a resource corridor for Indigenous communities.</p>

Photographs



Figure 4: Formation of the southern reaches of Sullivans Creek, December 3 1963. (Source: ANU Archives)



Figure 5: View southwest of Macpherson Bridge during construction (aka Ward Road Bridge), circa 1962. (Source: ANU Archives)



Figure 6: View north of Macpherson Bridge during construction, October 1962. (Source: ANU Archives)



Figure 7: Macpherson Bridge shortly after construction, February 1963. (Source: ANU Archives)

Photographs



Figure 8: Creating the stone verges along the creek, July 1963. (Source: ANU Archives)



Figure 9: The rear of Toad Hall student residence, early 1990s. (Source: ANU Archives)



Figure 10: View southwest of Middle Pond, 2010. (Source: ANU Heritage Office)



Figure 11: View northeast of Sullivans Creek near the ANU Arts Centre, 2010. (Source: ANU Heritage Office)

Photographs



Figure 12: Eastern Water Dragon, Sullivans Creek, March 16 2010. (Source: ANU Heritage Office)



Figure 13: Black swans with young, Sullivans Creek, October 11 2011. (Source: ANU Heritage Office)

Management Issues

Constraints and Opportunities

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

Sullivans Creek is of exceptional heritage value and meets the EPBC Commonwealth Heritage criteria a) historic, c) scientific, h) associative and i) Indigenous. 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 **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. Sullivans Creek is able to tolerate a low level of change through development whereby the historic, scientific, associative and Indigenous attributes and characteristics are conserved and interpreted.

Opportunities arise from the identified heritage values of Sullivans Creek. The history of Sullivans Creek should be interpreted to maintain the historic and associative values of significant attributes identified in the assessments above.

Recommendations

Sullivans Creek should be nominated to the Commonwealth Heritage List and a Heritage Management Plan should be prepared to guide the best practice conservation and management of the heritage values.

Referral to the current Biodiversity Management Plan for the campus is required when preparing advice for alterations to Sullivans Creek.

If development is proposed in or nearby Sullivans Creek a heritage impact assessment would be a prerequisite according to EPBC Act requirements.

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