



**GML**  
HERITAGE

Report prepared for Major Projects Canberra, ACT  
Government  
October 2021

**Commonwealth Avenue  
Landscape Heritage  
Advice**

## Acknowledgement of Country

*At GML we acknowledge that we work and live on the land of the First Australians. We know that this land was never ceded, and we respect the rights and interests of Australia's first people in land, culture, and heritage. We acknowledge their Elders past and present and support the concepts of voice, treaty, and truth in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.*

## Report Register

The following report register documents the development and issue of the report entitled Commonwealth Avenue Landscape Heritage Advice, undertaken by GML Heritage Pty Ltd in accordance with its quality management system.

Job Number	Issue Number	Notes/Description	Issue Date
18-0678G	1	Draft Report	13 August 2021
18-0678G	2	Final Report	1 October 2021

## Quality Assurance

GML Heritage Pty Ltd operates under a quality management system which has been certified as complying with the Australian/New Zealand Standard for quality management systems AS/NZS ISO 9001:2016.

The report has been reviewed and approved for issue in accordance with the GML quality assurance policy and procedures.

## Copyright

Historical sources and reference material used in the preparation of this report are acknowledged and referenced at the end of each section and/or in figure captions. Reasonable effort has been made to identify, contact, acknowledge and obtain permission to use material from the relevant copyright owners.

Unless otherwise specified or agreed, copyright in this report vests in GML Heritage Pty Ltd ('GML') and in the owners of any pre-existing historic source or reference material.

## Moral Rights

The authors assert their Moral Rights in this work, unless otherwise acknowledged, in accordance with the Part IX of the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth). Moral rights include the attribution of authorship, the right not to have the work falsely attributed and the right to integrity of authorship.

## Right to Use

GML grants to the client for this project (and the client's successors in title) an irrevocable royalty-free right to reproduce or use the material from this report, except where such use infringes the copyright and/or Moral Rights of GML or third parties

We acknowledge and respect the inherent rights and interests of the First Nations in Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to be acknowledged and attributed for their contribution to knowledge but also respect their rights to confidentiality. We recognise our ongoing obligations to respect, protect and uphold the continuation of First Nations rights in the materials contributed as part of this project.

**Cover Image:** Commonwealth Avenue and the National Triangle viewed from above Capital Hill, 1974. (Source: National Archives of Australia, Item ID 11720652)

# Executive Summary

GML Heritage Pty Ltd (GML) has been engaged by the ACT Government/Major Projects Canberra to prepare heritage advice to contribute to the development of the Commonwealth Avenue Landscape Structure Plan (CALSP).

The purpose of this report is to provide the ACT Government and relevant stakeholders with information on the heritage values of Commonwealth Avenue and establish a series of heritage recommendations and principles which can be used to guide landscape design planning for Commonwealth Avenue, and inform other relevant future works. It provides a comprehensive baseline for heritage considerations for the avenue, independent of current or future infrastructure or development proposals for the place. It is intended that this advice will guide the landscape structure design proposal developed in the CALSP, ensuring it incorporates heritage considerations into its design parameters and conclusions.

Commonwealth Avenue runs from City Hill to Capital Hill across Lake Burley Griffin. However, as a heritage place it is more than just a piece of transport infrastructure. The avenue and its location, setting, vistas and plantings all come together to make a complex place which can be described as the Commonwealth Avenue landscape.

This report provides an understanding of the designed cultural landscape of Commonwealth Avenue, the National Triangle, and Canberra's Central National Area. It identifies the statutory context for the avenue, and provides an overview of its historical development. The report provides information on listed and identified historic, Indigenous and natural heritage values relevant to the avenue, and identifies significant views and vistas. This analysis forms the basis of a series of conclusions about the Commonwealth Avenue landscape, which are the basis for heritage principles, goals and recommendations for the management of the avenue.

This report finds that:

- The National Triangle is a designed urban cultural landscape of symbolism, formality and ceremony.
- There has been one design intent for Commonwealth Avenue, implemented and interpreted by different custodians over time. Current and future custodians, as well as those making changes to the avenue, should make design choices informed by its heritage values, which will conserve and celebrate these values for future generations.
- The development of the CALSP and future planning for the avenue should be informed by the heritage principles, goals and recommendations in this report.
- Further work should be undertaken to address identified gaps in the heritage context of Commonwealth Avenue, including comprehensively assessing the avenue's heritage significance, consulting with the community to determine community-held cultural, social and symbolic heritage values, and obtaining detailed tree and landscape data to comprehensively understand their association with the avenue's heritage values and guide future planting.



# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background and Purpose.....	1
1.2	Study Area.....	2
1.3	Methodology.....	3
1.3.1	<i>Limitations and Assumptions</i> .....	4
1.3.2	<i>Key Terminology</i> .....	4
1.4	Relevant Documentation.....	5
1.5	Authorship and Acknowledgements.....	5
1.6	Endnotes .....	6
<b>2</b>	<b>Statutory Context</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	Introduction.....	7
2.2	Heritage Act 2004 (ACT).....	7
2.3	Planning and Development Act 2007 (ACT) .....	8
2.4	Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 (Cth) .....	8
2.4.1	<i>National Capital Plan</i> .....	8
2.5	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) .....	11
2.5.1	<i>Protected Heritage Matters</i> .....	11
2.5.2	<i>Approvals and ‘Controlled Actions’</i> .....	13
2.6	Endnotes .....	13
<b>3</b>	<b>Historical Context</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1	Introduction.....	14
3.2	Historic Timeline of Commonwealth Avenue Development.....	14
3.3	Detailed History of Commonwealth Avenue .....	16
3.3.1	<i>Natural History and Aboriginal Cultural Landscape</i> .....	16
3.3.2	<i>Phase 1: 1912–1921—Griffin Planning</i> .....	17
3.3.3	<i>Phase 2: 1921–1926—Weston and Federal Capital Advisory Committee Implementation</i> .....	20
3.3.4	<i>Phase 3: 1926–1944—Depression, Interwar and World War II</i> .....	22
3.3.5	<i>Phase 4: 1944–1958—Lindsay Pryor Planning</i> .....	23
3.3.6	<i>Phase 5: 1958–1988—National Capital Development Commission</i> .....	25
3.3.7	<i>Phase 6: 1988–Present—National Capital Authority and ACT Government</i> .....	28
3.4	Endnotes .....	29
<b>4</b>	<b>Heritage Values</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	31
4.2	Historic Heritage Values.....	31
4.2.1	<i>Listed and Nominated Heritage Places</i> .....	31
4.2.2	<i>Other Identified Historic Heritage Values</i> .....	33
4.3	Views Analysis .....	35
4.4	Indigenous Heritage Values .....	42
4.5	Natural Heritage Values .....	43

4.5.1	<i>Geology</i> .....	44
4.5.2	<i>Vegetation and Plantings</i> .....	44
4.5.3	<i>Biodiversity and Habitat</i> .....	45
4.6	Gaps in the Heritage Context.....	46
4.7	Endnotes .....	47
<b>5</b>	<b>Heritage Advice</b>	<b>49</b>
5.1	Background .....	49
5.2	Historical Analysis Findings .....	49
5.3	Heritage and Design Principles.....	51
5.4	Heritage Goals and Recommendations .....	52
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>54</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>55</b>
	Appendix A	
	<i>Relevant Heritage Places and Values</i>	
	Appendix B	
	<i>Commonwealth Avenue Natural Heritage Review</i>	

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Purpose

GML Heritage Pty Ltd (GML) has been engaged by Major Projects Canberra (MPC), ACT Government, to provide heritage advice on the development of the Commonwealth Avenue Landscape Structure Plan (CALSP).

The CALSP is intended to provide a guiding framework for the future landscape structure and management of the avenue. Light Rail Stage 2 is proposed to extend southwards from the current Stage 1 terminus on to London Circuit and then to Commonwealth Avenue, continuing across Commonwealth Avenue Bridge and along the avenue to State Circle.

Commonwealth Avenue is a key feature of the National Triangle and Central National Area of Canberra, part of a sensitive urban and cultural heritage landscape. The avenue is not individually heritage listed, but is associated with multiple listed and nominated heritage places, including the Commonwealth Heritage listed (CHL) Parliament House Vista, ACT Heritage registered City Hill, and Commonwealth and National Heritage nominations for 'National Land Roads' and 'Canberra: the Planned National Capital'. Commonwealth Avenue and associated heritage listings are protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act), which protects heritage on Commonwealth land and National Heritage places. Commonwealth Avenue is also regulated under the National Capital Plan (NCP), which ensures Canberra and the ACT is planned and developed in accordance with its national significance, and provides a planning framework that is considered when making works approval decisions.<sup>1</sup> Both the EPBC Act and the NCP include development approval processes for activities affecting the matters they protect.

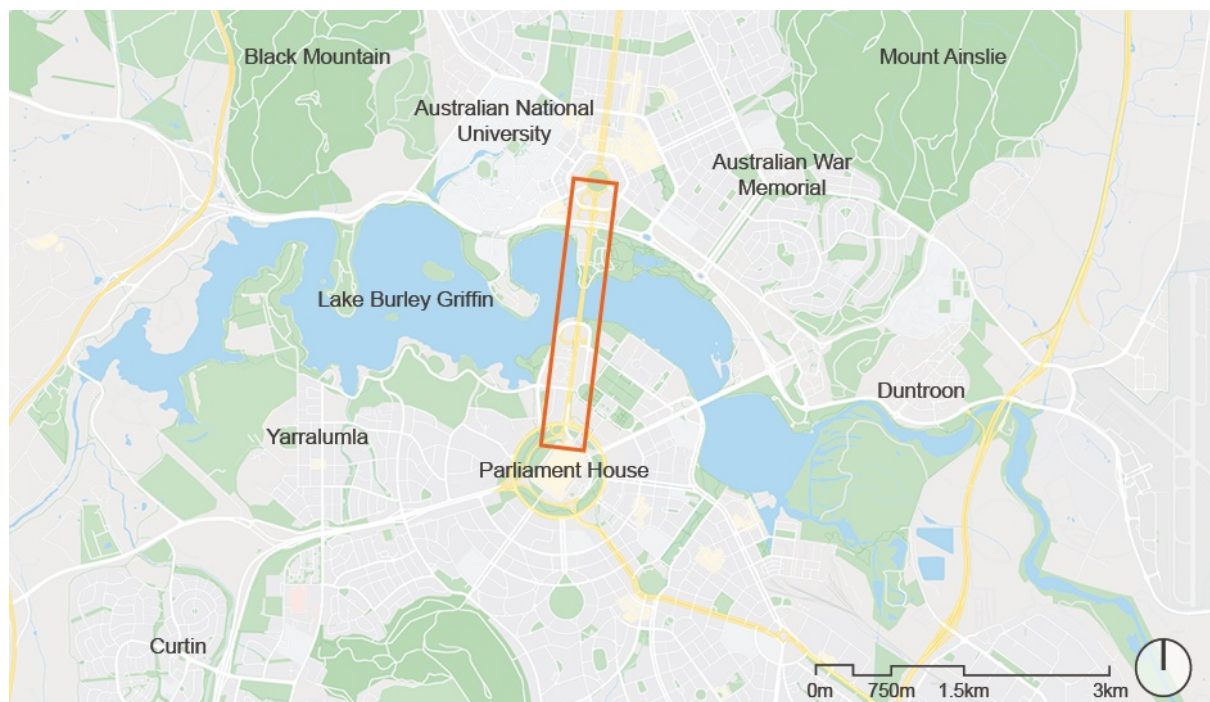
As a prerequisite for obtaining works approval for any light rail works on the avenue, the National Capital Authority (NCA) requested the development of a 'landscape proposal' for the length of Commonwealth Avenue. Understanding the heritage context of the Commonwealth Avenue landscape is essential to ensuring any landscape design and major development decisions conserve and strengthen the avenue's cultural significance, and mitigate impacts that may arise. Similarly, the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, in its inquiry into Commonwealth and Parliamentary approvals for the proposed stage 2 of the ACT light rail project, emphasised that 'the importance of preserving the heritage and character of the Central National Area and the Parliamentary Zone cannot be overstated', and that the removal of trees in particular be met with an appropriate landscaping strategy that maintains these heritage values.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of the CALSP is to meet the NCA's request to establish a landscape proposal for Commonwealth Avenue that addresses landscape design, plantings and kerb and median configuration. The CALSP intends to be consistent with the design principles and functional requirements of both the Territory and Commonwealth.

This report has been prepared to provide heritage advice which will be incorporated into the development of the CALSP. The advice is to support the CALSP in establishing an approach to the management and planning of the Commonwealth Avenue landscape that is underpinned by heritage significance.

## 1.2 Study Area

Commonwealth Avenue is a major thoroughfare linking northern and southern Canberra. The avenue is located within the Central National Area of Canberra (see Figure 1.1). It is an integral component of Canberra's designed urban landscape, and one of three original and major components of the Griffin Plan, forming the western edge of the National Triangle. Although outside the study area, the area of the complete National Triangle is relevant context for the analysis undertaken in this report.



**Figure 1.1** Location of Commonwealth Avenue within Canberra. (Source: Google Maps with GML overlay)

The study area of this report comprises the Commonwealth Avenue landscape, being the length of Commonwealth Avenue from City Hill to Capital Hill, from its intersection with Vernon Circle to its termination at Parliament Drive, and including Commonwealth Avenue Bridge (See Figure 1.2). The study area includes the width of the avenue and its associated curtilage, including intersections along the avenue, and the verges and related landscape elements to its immediate east and west.



**Figure 1.2** Aerial image showing the study area for this report as well as the related setting of the avenue.  
(Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)

## 1.3 Methodology

This report provides heritage advice on the Commonwealth Avenue landscape, to provide guidance for the development of the CALSP as well as other subsequent design and planning decisions for the avenue.

A review of relevant existing information, including design documentation and previous heritage studies, was undertaken to provide heritage context for the site. Additional research was conducted on heritage listings associated with the study area, on heritage nominations and in relevant databases.

Consultation with MPC and Jane Irwin Landscape Architecture (JILA) occurred regularly and provided information about the scope and nature of the CALSP. GML also met regularly with MPC and JILA as part of the research and development of the advice provided in this report, ensuring the advice provides useful assistance for addressing key issues in the CALSP, such as road alignment, avenue planting, pedestrian access and significant views. GML, MPC and JILA also engaged with the NCA throughout the process of developing the CALSP and this heritage advice. Key findings of GML's research and analysis have been tested with the NCA to ensure the advice developed addresses the NCA's needs and priorities.

Drawing on this research and consultation, this report identifies the key heritage values of the study area, and provides principles, goals and recommendations to conserve and manage these heritage values. These recommendations inform the development of the CALSP, and can contribute to planning for the Light Rail Stage 2 project and any other activities which may affect the Commonwealth Avenue landscape.

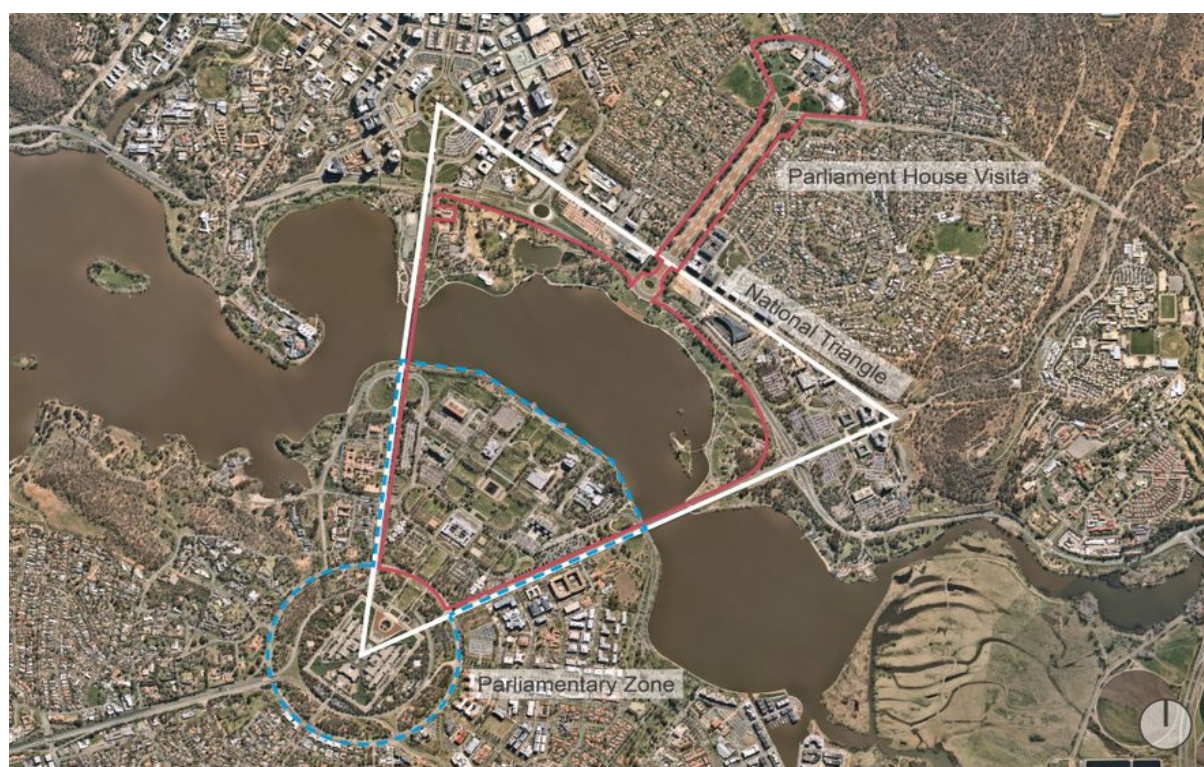
### 1.3.1 Limitations and Assumptions

This heritage advice has been prepared based on information and material available to GML about the draft CALSP from MPC and JILA. Advice on a finalised CALSP is not within the scope of this report.

This report provides high level advice on the Commonwealth Avenue landscape, and does not constitute a formal heritage impact assessment, which will be prepared at a later stage.

### 1.3.2 Key Terminology

Key Term	Definition used in this report
Central National Area	Designated Area Precincts 1–15 and Canberra Airport as identified as the Central National Area in the National Capital Plan. <sup>3</sup>
National Triangle	The area in central Canberra bound by Commonwealth, Kings and Constitution Avenues.
Parliamentary Zone	Capital Hill and the southern extent of the National Triangle to the southern edge of Lake Burley Griffin.
Griffin Plan	The three main plans produced by the Griffins—the 1911/1912, 1913 and 1918 plans—together with a range of other Griffin texts which complement this primary material.



**Figure 1.3** Aerial image showing the location and boundaries of the National Triangle, Parliamentary Zone and Parliament House Vista. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)

## 1.4 Relevant Documentation

The following reports and documents were reviewed as part of this project:

- ‘Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra’, Duncan Marshall et al, 2014;
- ‘Commonwealth Avenue Bridge Heritage Assessment’, GML, prepared for Major Projects Canberra and the National Capital Authority, September 2020;
- ‘Canberra: the Planned National Capital—National Heritage Place EPBC Act Referral Guidelines (Draft)’, Australian Government, Department of Environment, 2012;
- ‘Lake Burley Griffin Heritage Assessment’, GML, prepared for the NCA, October 2009;
- ‘Canberra Light Rail – City to Woden: Preliminary Heritage Advice’, GML, prepared for Transport Canberra, April 2019;
- ‘City to Woden Light Rail – Commonwealth Avenue Bridge Comparative Bridge Options Analysis Report’, Arup + Hassell, prepared for Major Projects Canberra, August 2019;
- ‘National Capital Plan’, National Capital Authority, April 2021;
- ‘Tree Management Policy’, National Capital Authority, May 2021;
- ‘Kings and Commonwealth Avenues Draft Design Strategy’, National Capital Authority, 2017;
- *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* (the Burra Charter)—the Burra Charter and the associated series of Practice Notes provide a best practice standard for managing cultural heritage places in Australia; and
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) Significant Impact Guidelines for National Heritage places (Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance) and Commonwealth Heritage places (Significant Impact Guidelines 1.2 – Actions on, or impacting upon, Commonwealth land and actions by Commonwealth agencies)—these provide overarching guidance on determining whether an action is likely to have a significant impact on a matter protected under the EPBC Act.

## 1.5 Authorship and Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by GML Heritage with the assistance of Griffin Associates Environment Pty Ltd. GML gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Major Projects Canberra, the National Capital Authority, and JILA in the development of this report.

## 1.6 Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> National Capital Authority 2021, *National Capital Plan*, Australian Government, p 9.
- <sup>2</sup> Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, 2018, *Commonwealth Approvals for ACT Light Rail Commonwealth and Parliamentary Approvals for the Proposed Stage 2 of the Australian Capital Territory Light Rail Project—Report*, Commonwealth of Australia, <[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/National\\_Capital\\_and\\_External\\_Territories/Lightrail/Report](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Capital_and_External_Territories/Lightrail/Report)>, pp x, 57.
- <sup>3</sup> National Capital Authority 2021, *National Capital Plan*, Australian Government, pp 45, 46.

## 2 Statutory Context

### 2.1 Introduction

Heritage places and objects in the ACT are protected under Territory and/or Commonwealth legislation. This section provides an overview of the Territory and Commonwealth legislation relevant to the Commonwealth Avenue landscape.

The provisions of relevant legislation have been taken into account when preparing heritage advice as part of this report.

### 2.2 Heritage Act 2004 (ACT)

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage places and objects in the ACT are protected under the *Heritage Act 2004* (ACT) (Heritage Act). The legislation establishes a system for recognising, registering and conserving natural and cultural heritage places and objects, including Aboriginal places and objects, in the ACT—the Heritage Council and the Heritage Register. Amendments made to the Heritage Act, passed on 25 September 2014, formally adopted the HERCON (Heritage Convention) criteria for assessing heritage significance.

ACT Heritage registration means that a place or object:

- is of heritage significance to the people of the ACT and enriches understanding of the ACT's history and identity;
- is legally protected under the Heritage Act, including the application of heritage guidelines; and
- requires advice by the ACT Heritage Council on development issues to improve conservation outcomes.

Places on the ACT Heritage Register may have directions about their conservation outlined in a heritage guideline which will determine how development is governed. Heritage guidelines directly affect the advice given by the ACT Heritage Council for development approval. They are a statutory instrument and are made subject to a public consultation process under the Act. Section 27 of the Heritage Act requires that a function under the Act that relates (whether directly or indirectly) to the conservation of a place or object must be exercised in accordance with any applicable heritage guidelines.

A Statement of Heritage Effect (SHE) is required under the Heritage Act for any proposed activity that is likely to diminish the heritage significance of the place. It is required by the ACT Heritage Council in its consideration of relevant information when assessing a development application. Potential impacts from a future development are assessed and mitigation measures are addressed through the preparation of a SHE. Measures are identified to mitigate any adverse impacts and ensure protection of heritage significance.

## 2.3 Planning and Development Act 2007 (ACT)

The *Planning and Development Act 2007* (ACT) provides a planning and land development framework for the ACT. It stipulates and regulates the functions of the Planning and Land Authority in the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate—Planning (EPSDD).

The Planning and Land Authority is the primary authority for planning and development in the ACT, with statutory roles performed under the *Planning and Development Act 2007* and the Territory Plan 2008 (the Territory Plan). The Planning and Land Authority advises the ACT Government on land, planning and building policy.

For listed heritage places and objects in the ACT, which may be impacted by planning developments, the Planning and Land Authority seeks advice from the ACT Heritage Council under the provisions of the ACT Heritage Act. It also gives development approval.

## 2.4 Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 (Cth)

### 2.4.1 National Capital Plan

The *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* (PALM Act) establishes the requirements for the National Capital Plan (NCP) and its administration by the National Capital Authority (NCA).

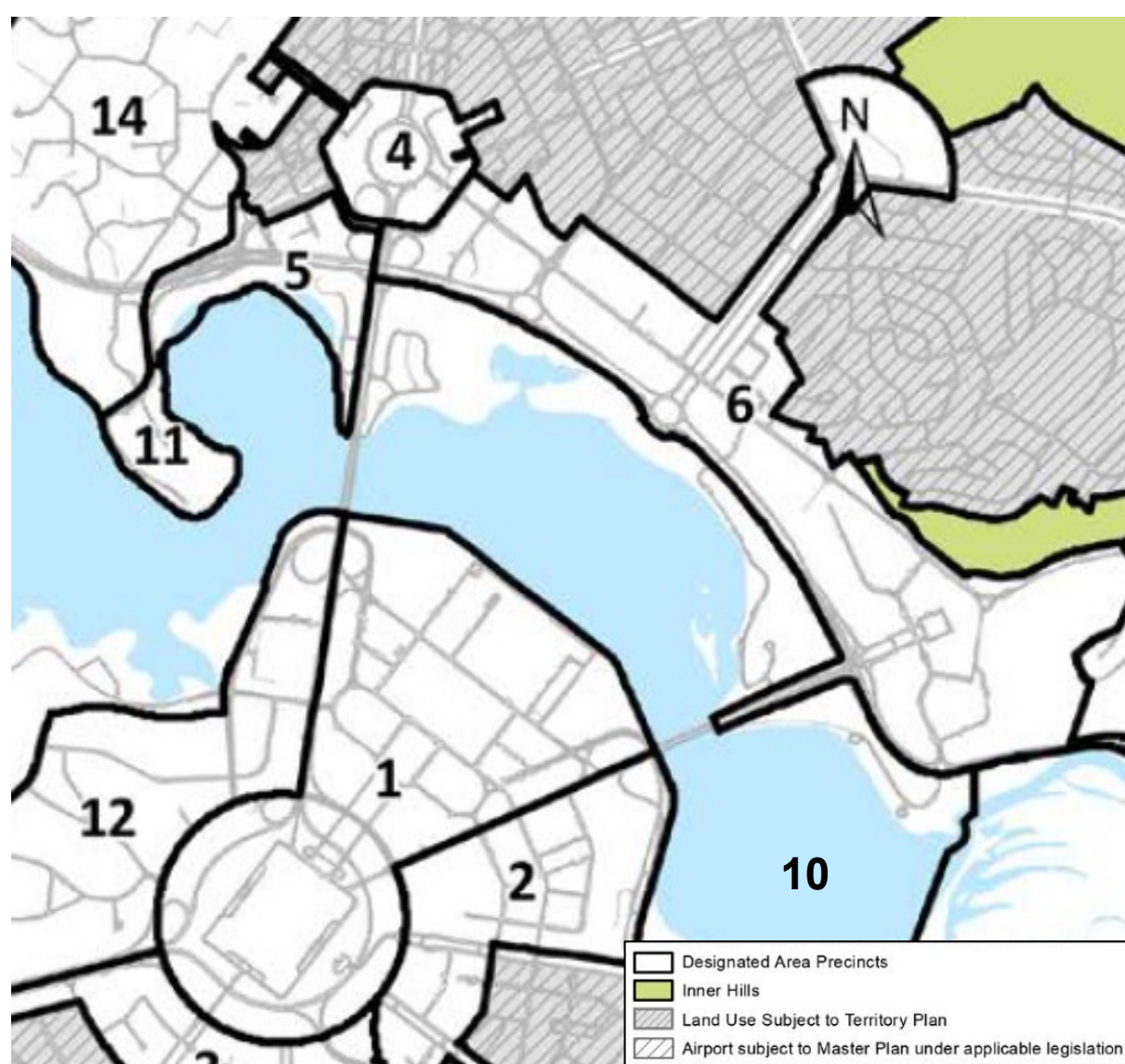
The aim of the NCP is to ensure that ‘Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance’.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note that the terminology ‘national significance’ in the NCP has a different statutory meaning to ‘National Heritage value’, or significance as defined by EPBC Act; this is discussed further in Section 2.5. The NCP definition of ‘key matters of national significance’ specific to Canberra includes:

- *The pre-eminence of the role of Canberra and the Territory as the centre of National Capital functions, and as the symbol of Australian national life and values.*
- *Conservation and enhancement of the landscape features which give the National Capital its character and setting, and which contribute to the integration of natural and urban environments.*
- *Respect for the key elements of the Griffins’ formally adopted plan for Canberra.*
- *Creation, conservation and enhancement of fitting sites, approaches and backdrops for national institutions and ceremonies as well as National Capital uses.*
- *The development of a city which both respects environmental values and reflects national concerns with the sustainability of Australia’s urban areas.*<sup>2</sup>

The NCP specifies areas of land that have ‘special characteristics of the National Capital’ to be Designated Areas. These areas can be located on Commonwealth/National Land or Territory Land. The NCA has responsibility for determining detailed planning policy and the provision of Works Approval to ensure development is consistent with the NCP.<sup>3</sup> Designated Areas are divided into a series of precincts with detailed conditions of planning, design and development—Precinct Codes and General Codes—outlined for each precinct.<sup>4</sup>

The Commonwealth Avenue landscape study area is within the following Designated Areas precincts: Parliamentary Zone (1); City Hill (4); West Basin (5); Constitution Avenue and Anzac Parade (6); Lake Burley Griffin and Foreshores (10), and Main Avenues and Approach Routes (within multiple Designated Areas).



**Figure 2.1** Extract of Designated Areas under the National Capital Plan in the study area. (Source: National Capital Authority, National Capital Plan)

The NCP contains a series of policies and principles that are relevant to each of these areas. Objectives or principles relevant to the Commonwealth Avenue landscape are extracted and summarised in the following table.

**Table 2.1** Extract of Key Principles from NCP for Designated Areas.

Zone Precinct Code	Key Principles
Parliamentary Zone (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Parliamentary Zone will be given meaning as the place of the people accessible to all Australians.</li> <li>• It will reflect the political and cultural role of Australia’s Capital, federation and Australian democracy, the achievements of individual Australians, the diversity of Australia and unique qualities of creativity and craftsmanship.</li> <li>• It must have a sense of scale, dignity and openness and a cohesive and comprehensible layout.</li> <li>• The zone should:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– welcome people</li> <li>– celebrate Australian history and society</li> <li>– represent Australian excellence</li> <li>– emphasise the importance of the public realm</li> <li>– make access easy and open</li> <li>– reinforce the integrity of the visual structure.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
City Hill Precinct (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and promote the City Hill Precinct as the preeminent heart of the City.</li> <li>• The design, amenity and environmental quality of the precinct should result in an accessible, attractive, high quality and distinctive centre, consistent with its location at one point of the National Triangle, the major organising element of the Central National Area.</li> <li>• Development must command the highest standards of urban design, sustainability, exemplary architecture and social inclusion, reflecting the character of the National Capital.</li> <li>• The City Hill Precinct must complement and actively relate to, and integrate with, the existing and future structure of the rest of the City.</li> </ul>
West Basin Precinct (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance Commonwealth and Edinburgh Avenues as important physical, visual and symbolic links of Canberra.</li> <li>• Reinforce Commonwealth Avenue, a significant approach route and vista to Parliament House, as a corridor of activity, leading pedestrians from the city into the Parliamentary Zone.</li> </ul>
Constitution Avenue and Anzac Parade Precinct (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A formal treatment should be applied to the main avenues including Constitution, Kings and Commonwealth Avenues, as well as Parkes Way. Continuous street trees should define the pattern of major and minor streets.</li> <li>• Develop a built environment which demonstrates design excellence.</li> </ul>
Lake Burley Griffin and Foreshores Precinct (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and develop Lake Burley Griffin and Foreshores as the major landscape feature unifying the National Capital’s central precincts and the surrounding inner hills and to provide for National Capital uses and a diversity of recreational opportunities.</li> </ul>
Main Avenues and Approach Routes Precinct (Multiple)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and enhance the identity of the approaches to the Central National Area as roads of national significance and, where relevant, as</li> </ul>

Zone Precinct Code	Key Principles
	<p>frontage roads for buildings which enhance the National Capital function and as corridors for a possible future inter-town public transport system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that works within the road reservations are carried out to the highest standards, by maintaining and enhancing landscaping, and by facilitating the flow of traffic as far as possible.</li> <li>• Reinforce and, where possible, express the integrity of the Griffin Plan's visual structure by strengthening the geometry and form of main avenues, vistas and public spaces.</li> <li>• Improve the urban design and streetscape qualities of the Main Avenues as approaches to the Central National Area.</li> </ul>

In accordance with Section 10(2) of the PALM Act, the NCP sets out special requirements for the development of any area (not being a Designated Area) that are desirable in the interests of the National Capital.<sup>5</sup> Areas of Commonwealth/National Land and Territory Land may both be subject to 'Special Requirements'.

The study area includes an area of Territory Land that is subject to Special Requirements under the NCP— the City Centre. The NCP contains a series of policies and principles that are relevant to each of these areas with applicable objectives or principles to the Commonwealth Avenue landscape reproduced below:

**Section 4.25—City Centre**

*City Centre's continued development should recognise its metropolitan significance and role, achieve a satisfactory relationship between City Centre and other development and features of the Central area, and meet the following principles:*

- a. Future development and redevelopment in City Centre should aim both to reinforce City Centre's role as the prime metropolitan centre, and contribute to a diverse, lively and attractive character.*
- b. The design of buildings and the amenity and environmental quality of the main public spaces should result in an accessible, attractive, high quality and distinctive centre consistent with City Centre's role as the major metropolitan centre and its location at one point of the National Triangle, Griffin's major organising element of the Central National Area.<sup>6</sup>*

## 2.5 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)

### 2.5.1 Protected Heritage Matters

The EPBC Act is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation. A principal object of the EPBC Act is 'to provide for the protection of the environment, especially those aspects of the environment that are matters of national environmental significance'.<sup>7</sup> The EPBC Act provides a streamlined environmental assessment and approvals process, and provides for the protection and management of important natural and cultural places.<sup>8</sup> It is administered by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE).

Protected matters under the EPBC Act are the nine matters of national environmental significance (MNES); the environment on Commonwealth land, and the environment in general, from actions by Commonwealth agencies.<sup>9</sup>

As the study area includes and is adjacent to Commonwealth-owned land and areas listed and nominated to the Commonwealth Heritage List and National Heritage List, the relevant provisions of the EPBC Act apply to the project.

### **National Heritage Places**

The National Heritage values of National Heritage places are a matter of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act.

The EPBC Act establishes the National Heritage List (NHL). The NHL comprises places that have been assessed as having 'outstanding' heritage value to the nation against the criteria established in the EPBC Act. National Heritage places may be in any jurisdiction and owned or controlled by any parties.

Nominated NHL places are not MNES protected under the EPBC Act. However, the objects of the EPBC Act include promoting the principles of ecologically sustainable development.<sup>10</sup> These include the precautionary principle that a lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing a measure to prevent degradation of the environment where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage. In accordance with this principle, the heritage values of nominated NHL places have been identified as relevant heritage considerations as part of this report.

The study area does not include any listed National Heritage places. There are three nominated NHL places within the study area – see Section 4.2.1 for further discussion.

### **Commonwealth Heritage Places and Heritage Values on Commonwealth Land**

The definition of 'environment' in the EPBC Act includes the heritage values of places, defined as including a place's 'natural and cultural environment having aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance, or other significance, for current and future generations of Australians'.<sup>11</sup>

Under this definition, all heritage values on Commonwealth land or impacted by the actions of a Commonwealth agency are a protected matter under the EPBC Act, whether listed or otherwise identified.

To assist in identifying heritage on Commonwealth land, the EPBC Act establishes the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL). The CHL comprises those places owned or controlled by the Commonwealth that have been assessed as having 'significant' heritage values against the criteria established under the EPBC Act. Section 341Y of the EPBC Act requires Commonwealth Heritage places to be managed in accordance with the Commonwealth Heritage management principles, as set out in Schedule 7B of the EPBC Regulations.

Heritage values may occur in the environment on Commonwealth land without being included in the CHL, for example these values may be identifiable in nominations for Commonwealth and National Heritage places.

Section 2.4.4 of the NCP states that the NCA will consider all heritage places in Designated Areas as Commonwealth Areas for the purposes of protecting the environment in the manner currently afforded

under the EPBC Act, unless they are managed by the ACT Government and included in the ACT Heritage Register.<sup>12</sup>

The study area includes Commonwealth Heritage places and other identified heritage values. See Section 4. for further discussion.

## 2.5.2 Approvals and ‘Controlled Actions’

Under the EPBC Act, anyone taking an action which is likely to have a significant impact on a protected matter must refer the action to the Minister for the Environment for approval. Proponents are required to undertake a self-assessment to determine whether impacts are likely to be significant. As discussed above, protected matters relevant to this project are the National Heritage values of National Heritage places, and heritage values on Commonwealth land.

The Minister for the Environment decides whether a referred action requires approval under the EPBC Act. If the Minister decides a proposal is not likely to have a significant impact (‘non-controlled action’) it may proceed without further approvals. If the action is likely to have a significant impact, it is subject to further assessment and approval under the EPBC Act (‘controlled action’). The Minister may also decide that a proposed action is not likely to be significant if undertaken in accordance with a particular manner (‘non-controlled action – particular manner’) or is clearly unacceptable.

The ACT Government has submitted two referrals relevant to this project, EPBC 2019/8582 – City to Commonwealth Park, and EPBC 2019/8491 – Commonwealth Park to Woden Light Rail Project, ACT. The first project was determined to be a controlled action, with the controlling provisions as listed threatened species and communities and the environment on Commonwealth land. The second project was determined to be a controlled action, with the relevant controlling provisions being National Heritage places, listed threatened species and communities, and the environment on Commonwealth land.

## 2.6 Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> National Capital Authority 2021, *National Capital Plan*, Australian Government, p 9.
- <sup>2</sup> National Capital Authority 2021, *National Capital Plan*, Australian Government, p 12.
- <sup>3</sup> Australian Government/National Capital Authority, ‘Designated Areas’, viewed 22 July 2020, <<https://www.nca.gov.au/planning-heritage/about-planning-act/designated-areas>>.
- <sup>4</sup> National Capital Authority 2021, *National Capital Plan*, Australian Government, p 44.
- <sup>5</sup> National Capital Authority 2021, *National Capital Plan*, Australian Government, p 43.
- <sup>6</sup> National Capital Authority 2021, *National Capital Plan*, Australian Government, pp 240.
- <sup>7</sup> *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth), s 3.
- <sup>8</sup> Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, ‘About the EPBC Act’, viewed 22 July 2020, <<https://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/about>>.
- <sup>9</sup> Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, ‘Glossary’, viewed 22 July 2020, <<http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/about/glossary#significant>>.
- <sup>10</sup> *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth), s 3.
- <sup>11</sup> *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth), s 528.
- <sup>12</sup> National Capital Authority 2021, *National Capital Plan*, Australian Government, p 17.

# 3 Historical Context

## 3.1 Introduction

The design, form and landscape of Commonwealth Avenue has undergone a number of changes over time. An understanding of the historical landscape provides context to the heritage significance of the avenue, including revealing significant features which have been retained or lost.

## 3.2 Historic Timeline of Commonwealth Avenue Development

The table below outlines a summary timeline of the development of Commonwealth Avenue, followed by a detailed history and images of the avenue’s development. The timeline has been divided into phases, established based on key events or transitions in the management and development of Canberra and the Commonwealth Avenue landscape.

**Table 3.1** Timeline of Key Events in Commonwealth Avenue Development.

Phase	Date	Key Event
<b>Phase 1</b> Griffin Planning	<b>1911</b>	Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin prepare their original plan for Canberra for submission to the Australian Federal Capital Competition.
	<b>1912</b>	The Griffins’ winning competition design entry for Canberra is selected.
	<b>1913</b>	Walter Burley Griffin visits Canberra for the first time and prepares the updated 1913 ‘Preliminary Plan’.
		Charles Weston commences role as Officer in Charge of Afforestation, Canberra, working with Walter Burley Griffin as Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction.
	<b>1913–1921</b>	Range of ‘Griffin Plans’ are developed in association with Department of Home Affairs and Department of Works.
	<b>1918</b>	The 1918 Griffin Plan is prepared and signed by Griffin as the Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction.
<b>Phase 2</b> Weston and FCAC Implementation	<b>1920</b>	The Griffins depart Canberra. Commonwealth Avenue is constructed in a preliminary form. <sup>1</sup>
	<b>1921</b>	Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC) is established. Weston is appointed as Director of City Planning and Superintendent, Parks and Gardens.
	<b>1921–1926</b>	Weston undertakes a series of planting projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1921 City Hill;</li> <li>• 1922 Commonwealth Avenue (south side);</li> </ul>

Phase	Date	Key Event
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1924 Hotel Canberra;</li> <li>1924 Capital Hill (Capitol Hill); and</li> <li>1925 Commonwealth Avenue Bridge embankment (demolished 1960s).</li> </ul>
	1925	Federal Capital Commission (FCC) is established. 1925 Gazetted Plan is made under the <i>Seat of Government (Administration) Act 1924</i> (Cth) to formalise the Griffin Plan.
Phase 3 Depression and WWII	1926–1937	Alexander Bruce serves as Superintendent of Parks and Gardens.
	1937–1944	John Peace Hobday serves as Superintendent of Parks and Gardens.
Phase 4 Lindsay Pryor Planning	1944–1958	Lindsay Pryor serves as Director of Parks and Gardens.
Phase 5 NCDC Era	1958–1981	National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) management of Commonwealth Avenue (and all of Canberra).
	1963	Commonwealth Avenue Bridge opens.
	1964	Filling of Lake Burley Griffin is completed and the lake is officially opened.
	1965	Southern cloverleaf interchange is constructed.
	1969	Commonwealth Avenue/Parkes Way overpass opens.
	1971	Capital Circle is constructed.
	1974	Capital Hill is confirmed by the <i>Parliament Act 1974</i> (Cth) as the site for the 'new' Parliament House.
	1981	Construction of the Australian Parliament House commences.
	1984	The ramp from Commonwealth Avenue to Parliament House is constructed.
	1988	Parliament House is opened by Queen Elizabeth II.
	1988	Self-government of the ACT commences. NCDC is still in place for the management of Designated Areas and national land under the NCP.

Phase	Date	Key Event
Phase 6 NCA and ACT Government	1988– present	National Capital Authority (NCA) and ACT Government management of Commonwealth Avenue

## 3.3 Detailed History of Commonwealth Avenue

### 3.3.1 Natural History and Aboriginal Cultural Landscape



**Figure 3.1** 'View from Limestone Hill called Campbell's Hill, New South Wales, March 1832, Robert Hoddle'. This view has been identified as likely from Mount Pleasant, looking over the future site of Canberra. (Source: National Library of Australia, <<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-136984548>>)

Before European settlement and development of the area, the site of Commonwealth Avenue was a natural environment of open woodland, surrounding the Molonglo River. Records from the early phase of colonisation indicate that the landscape of the Molonglo Valley was flanked by open grassy woodland and extensive grasslands that provided habitat for a large variety of animals.

Aboriginal people have occupied the Molonglo Valley surrounding the site of Government House for over 25,000 years. The Aboriginal people of this region travelled seasonal routes in response to the availability of natural resources.<sup>2</sup> Evidence from hundreds of camp sites has been found across the ACT, and large quantities of artefacts have been recorded along parts of the Molonglo River floodplain

prior to the inundation that formed Lake Burley Griffin, as well as on the foothills of Black Mountain, Mount Ainslie and Capital Hill.<sup>3</sup>

In the vicinity of the site of Commonwealth Avenue, historical records discuss a camp site near the Duntroon sand quarry on the southern side of the Molonglo River. This site has now been covered by Lake Burley Griffin.<sup>4</sup> A number of Aboriginal sites have been recorded around Black Mountain, a sacred place for the Aboriginal people of the area.<sup>5</sup> Mount Ainslie also served as a sacred place of cultural business. These hills were important landscape markers of trails, tracks and places associated with the sacred site on what is now Capital Hill and the location of the Molonglo Valley.<sup>6</sup>

Early settlers recorded that there were Aboriginal corroboree sites near the entrance to the Australian National Botanic Gardens, another where the first Canberra racecourse was constructed (now submerged under West Basin), and one at the old Duntroon Dairy.<sup>7</sup>

Numerous local records written by white settlers refer to the continuing importance of the Molonglo River to the Aboriginal groups who coexisted with white settlers during the early pastoral phase of land use.<sup>8</sup> However, in a little over 50 years from initial contact there was rapid depopulation and a marked disintegration of traditional ways of life.<sup>9</sup> This was substantially accelerated by the impact of European diseases, which may have included the smallpox epidemic in 1830, influenza, and a severe measles epidemic by the 1860s.<sup>10</sup> By the 1850s the traditional Aboriginal economy had been largely replaced by an economy based on European commodities and supply points. Reduced population, isolation from the most productive grasslands, and the destruction of traditional social networks meant that gradually the region's Aboriginal culture and economy was centred on white settlements and properties.<sup>11</sup>

Despite late-nineteenth-century reports of the reduction in Aboriginal population numbers, the Ngunawal and Ngambri people of the Canberra region have continued to live in the area and maintain strong cultural connections to their land.

### 3.3.2 Phase 1: 1912–1921—Griffin Planning



**Figure 3.2** Detail of the Griffins' 1913 Preliminary Plan of Canberra, showing Commonwealth Avenue. Note orientation with north oriented to the right on map. (Source: National Library of Australia, <<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-230041959>>)

After Federation in 1901, the Yass–Canberra district was selected as the site of the new Federal Capital for Australia in 1908. Government officials were tasked with establishing a plan for a new city, and submissions were invited from around the world. In 1912 Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahoney Griffin won the international design competition for Canberra, and Griffin was appointed the Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction in October 1913.<sup>12</sup>

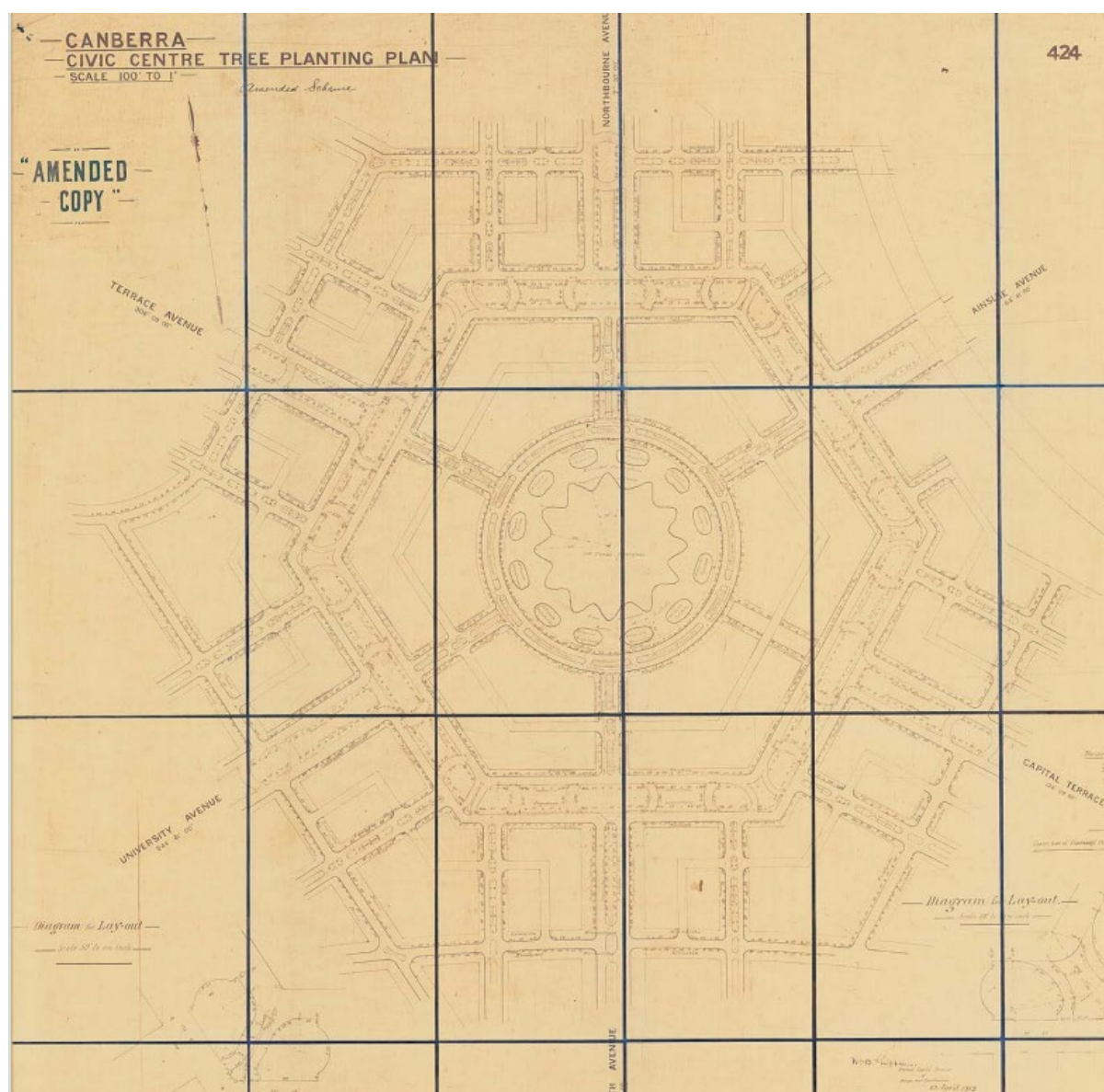
The Griffins intended the National Triangle to provide the focus for the seat of Government. Commonwealth Avenue was a key element of creating this designed landscape feature, framing its edges and serving as an access point into the Triangle. When preparing the design, Walter Burley Griffin stated:

*Avenues connecting the two municipal centres with each other and with the executive apex of the federal group form together a triangular circuit connecting the Government departments and recreation groups and connect the Capital, University and Military Groups.<sup>13</sup>*

Commonwealth Avenue was to serve as a connector between the Civic Centre and the Capitol—the Avenue had a defined form and function, with associated north–south vistas. The Griffins initially planned for commercial and residential activity along the boulevard, and designed narrower land plots along the avenue accordingly.

The Griffins did not outline detailed planting proposals in their planning for the avenue. The explanatory report prepared with the 1913 Preliminary Plan is open to interpretation as to whether they intended to rely on landscaping to create compositions.<sup>14</sup>

Walter Burley Griffin did, however, prepare a detailed planting plan for Civic Place in 1919 (Figure 3.3). This plan shows planting around City Hill and along the verge and median of a short section of Commonwealth Avenue up to City Hill. It suggests the use of native flora on the avenues.



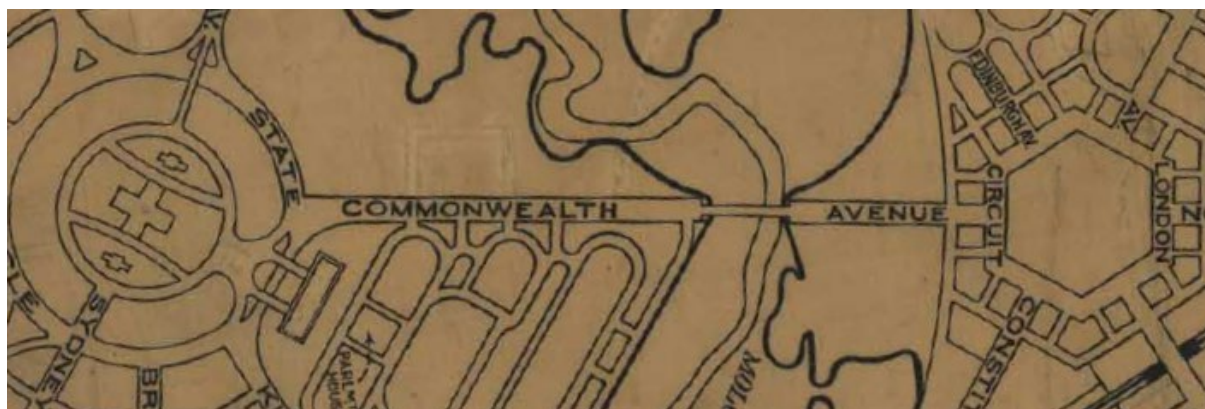
**Figure 3.3** The 1919 ‘Civic Centre tree planting plan’ prepared by Walter Burley Griffin, showing the arrangement of streets and planting for City Hill and surrounds. (Source: *The Griffin Legacy*, National Capital Authority, p 69)

Griffin’s proposed planting for City Hill was immediately controversial, as the Chief Surveyor was sceptical whether the evergreen, native trees chosen were suitable for the Canberra environment.<sup>15</sup> An independent review was taken of Griffin’s plant selection by Joseph Maiden, Director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens. Maiden was critical of the chosen species as not being suitable to the Canberra environment.<sup>16</sup> Charles Weston was asked to design alternative planting. Weston’s updated design included deciduous trees which gave a ‘spring and summer colour effect with adequate summer shade’.<sup>17</sup> This reflected the community preferences at the time for visual enjoyment of spring and autumn colour mixed with dark greens.<sup>18</sup> Weston’s new plan maintained the idea of verge and median planting, and generally implemented the layout of Griffin’s planting, with cypresses framing radiating views down the Griffins’ six planned avenues, including Commonwealth Avenue from City Hill to Capital Hill, and six elliptical groups of spring-flowering trees. However, the road layout of City Hill as

constructed never fully reflected the 1919 base plan which Griffin worked from, further limiting any possibility of implementing Griffin’s drawings.

Walter Burley Griffin continued to face difficulties working with the bureaucrats of the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Works, and in 1920 the Griffins left Canberra with the creation of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC).

### 3.3.3 Phase 2: 1921–1926—Weston and Federal Capital Advisory Committee Implementation



**Figure 3.4** Detail of 1925 Gazetted Plan of Canberra showing Commonwealth Avenue. (Source: National Archives of Australia, <<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/DetailsReports/ItemDetail.aspx?Barcode=8210018&isAv=N>>)

After the Griffins’ departure the Government confirmed the Griffin Plans from 1913–1918 through the establishment of the 1925 Gazetted Plan, under the 1924 Seat of Government Act. This plan retained the form and function of the Griffins’ Commonwealth Avenue, but the smaller plots of a commercial boulevard disappeared, as did the more densely developed design for an urban City Hill based around a ‘town square’ centre.

The FCAC moved away from Griffin’s more built-up vision of Canberra towards a ‘Garden City’ style. For example, Hotel Canberra was established within a large, landscaped plot, reflecting Garden City principles.<sup>19</sup>



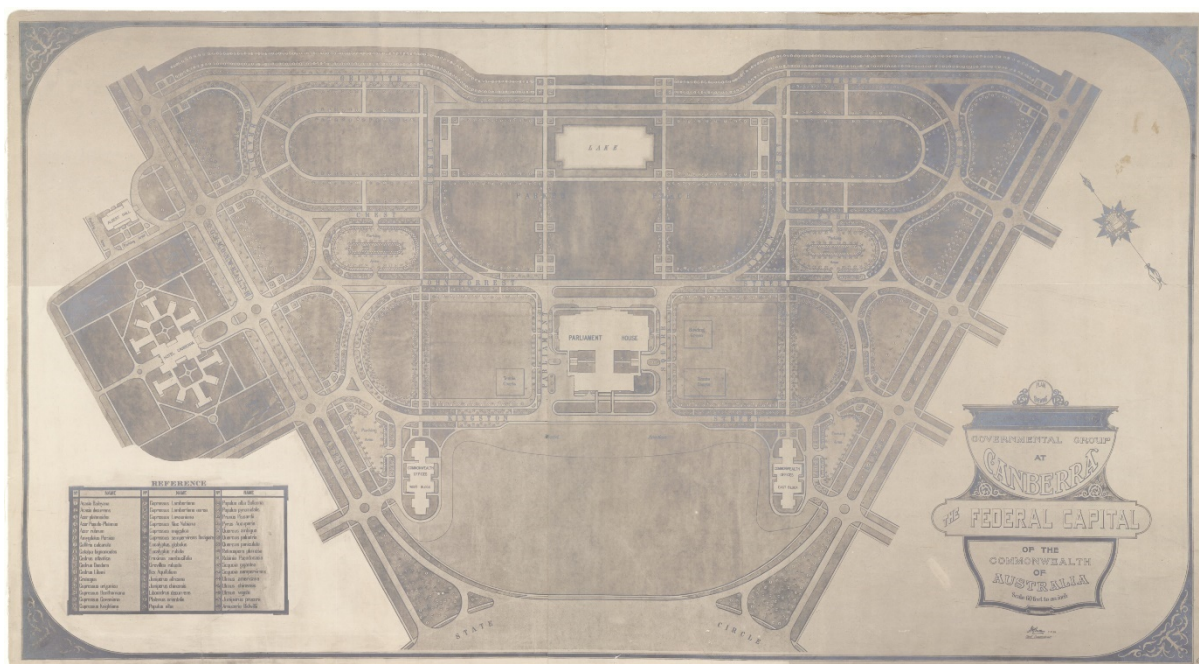
**Figure 3.5** A 1928 aerial image of Hotel Canberra (now the Hyatt Hotel) on Commonwealth Avenue, showing the recent plantings designed by Charles Weston. (Source: National Archives of Australia, <<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/DetailsReports/ItemDetail.aspx?Barcode=3238612&isAv=N>>)

The FCAC decided that the first priority should be planting the southern end of Commonwealth Avenue to protect the Parliamentary Administrative Area from wind.<sup>20</sup> Weston was appointed Director of City Planning and Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in 1921. When planting the southern end of the avenue in 1922, Weston established a formal avenue effect which was suitable to Griffin's proposed road geometry, with rows of tall, evenly spaced trees which created a strong defining visual effect along the verges and median. The close staggered spacings and evergreen planting were probably also chosen for effective wind amelioration.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the southern end of Commonwealth Avenue, Weston undertook a number of other significant planting projects. These included the planting of City Hill (1921), Capital Hill and Hotel Canberra (1924), and the Parliamentary Gardens Zone (1925/26).

Within the Parliamentary Gardens, the location and design of plantings was influenced by John Murdoch, Chief Architect. The design created formally shaped grassed vistas and 'outdoor rooms', including at the intersections of Commonwealth Avenue and the Parliamentary Zone. Murdoch requested Lombardy poplars as sentinels at key intersections.<sup>22</sup> However, Weston planted larger trees more densely than Murdoch wanted. This provided greater wind protection, and the chosen evergreens meant that the visual effect of the planting would appear much quicker than (for example) more widely spaced evergreen and deciduous trees.<sup>23</sup>

In 1928 a plan was prepared which demonstrated the planting of the Parliamentary Zone as implemented by Weston.



**Figure 3.6** 1928 plan showing the permanent planting implemented by Weston in the Parliamentary Zone. (Source: National Library of Australia, <<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-230044722>>)

In his planting of Commonwealth Avenue and the other major avenues, Weston was influential in establishing the lasting landscape structure of Canberra as a city, despite changes to the species he chose over time. He retired as Director of Parks and Gardens in 1926.

### 3.3.4 Phase 3: 1926–1944—Depression, Interwar and World War II



**Figure 3.7** Detail of the 1927 Federal Capital Commission Map of Canberra, showing Commonwealth Avenue. (Source: National Library of Australia, <<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-230039898>>).

During the Depression and interwar period there was limited funding and staff for major projects. Alexander Bruce was Superintendent of Parks and Gardens from 1926 to 1937, with John Peace Hobday in the role from 1937 to 1944.

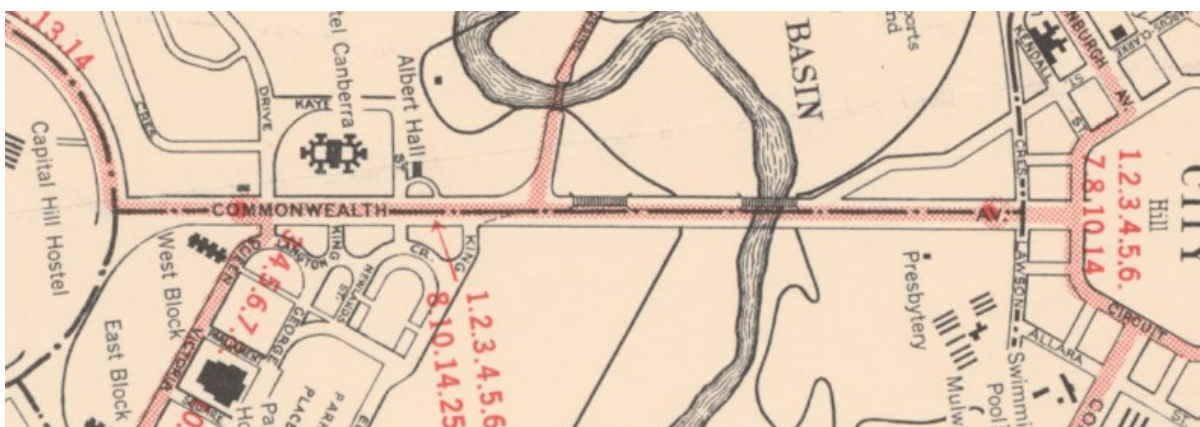


**Figure 3.8** Detail of a 1930 aerial image of Canberra, showing the early development of Commonwealth Avenue. (Source: Archives ACT, <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/archivesact/6239052092/>>)

The planting work that occurred in this period was mainly of a maintenance nature. From 1929 onwards Bruce planted beds of roses in the median and verges of Commonwealth Avenue,<sup>24</sup> but all supplementary plantings, including the roses, were removed from the 1940s onwards.

The road alignment of Commonwealth Avenue did not change notably in this phase.

### 3.3.5 Phase 4: 1944–1958—Lindsay Pryor Planning



**Figure 3.9** Detail of a 1957 map of Canberra omnibus routes, showing Commonwealth Avenue. (Source: National Library of Australia, <<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-233330594>>)

After the war Lindsay Pryor was appointed as Director of Parks and Gardens and commenced major planting activities around Canberra. However, Pryor did not make notable changes to the Weston-era plantings on Commonwealth Avenue's south end. He noted when planning for Canberra's avenues in 1949 that the Avenue was substantially developed.<sup>25</sup> Pryor did make some changes, retaining and thinning as necessary the Chinese Elms and cedars on Commonwealth Avenue. Pryor also planted native and exotic shrubs and trees in the grassy paddocks around London Circuit in 1955.

As can be seen from the above 1957 map of the avenue, the road geometry remains substantially the same as intended in the original Griffin Plans.



**Figure 3.10** Detail of a 1950 aerial image of Commonwealth Avenue, showing southern (top) and northern (bottom) sections of the avenue. (Source: ACTmapi)

By 1950, Weston’s planting structure for the southern end of Commonwealth Avenue was highly established, and intact. As can be seen at Figure 3.10, the formality and symmetry of the plantings on the southern end of the avenue, and the manner in which they emphasise the avenue’s geometry, is clear. The aerial image also reveals a more strongly defined southern end of the avenue, while the northern side of the avenue is yet to take up a more formal aligned geometry.

### 3.3.6 Phase 5: 1958–1988—National Capital Development Commission



**Figure 3.11** Detail of a 1961 aerial of Commonwealth Avenue, showing southern (top) and northern (bottom) sections of the avenue. (Source: ACTmapi).

The National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) was established in 1958, in a period of significant change for Commonwealth Avenue. The NCDC had strong design intentions to create Canberra as a modern, growing city which had an atmosphere worthy of the national capital. It sought to implement the original Griffin Plan design intent for Commonwealth Avenue, as interpreted by the organisation. Putting this into practice, the NCDC undertook road and engineering works, as well as planting and landscape design changes.

Vernon Circle was constructed in 1960. Following this, the construction and opening of the current Commonwealth Avenue Bridge in 1963 and the filling of Lake Burley Griffin in 1963–64, together were a starting point for major change to the avenue. These works finally created a strong northern side to the avenue, but also were focused on addressing traffic needs. The NCDC stated in 1965:

*the completion of the bridges across the lake has firmly established Kings and Commonwealth Avenues. Here the landscaping proposals provide for the further definition of these avenues by tree planting which extends to the slopes of Capital Hill and the approaches to the bridges. The existing planting on the median strips between the bridges and State Circle detracts from the simplicity and the effectiveness of the avenues and for this reason replacement of these trees at the end of their normal life is undesirable.*

The NCDC also noted that:

*trees and shrubs are, in fact, the matrix necessary to merge all the elements of city building into the total Canberra scheme. In the central areas tree planting is important not only to help frame and define the avenues and vistas but also to achieve a smooth transition between engineering works such as the lake, roads, bridges and the architectural works, and to relate all these to the natural landscape of the surrounding hills.<sup>26</sup>*

The NCDC intended to line Commonwealth and Kings Avenues with deciduous trees, to give a seasonal effect to the avenues, creating a visual contrast with the evergreen land axis and proposed evergreen planting on the three terminating points of the National Triangle. In 1965 it removed original cedars from along the outside edge of each Commonwealth Avenue carriageway and replaced these with English Elms, chosen for their height.<sup>27</sup>

Also in 1965, the cloverleaf interchange at the southern end of Commonwealth Avenue Bridge was built to reduce congestion of cars entering the Parliamentary Zone. The surrounding roads, such as Langton Crescent, were subsequently realigned, and by 1968 the Griffin Plan entryway intersection to the Parliamentary Zone on the eastern side of Commonwealth Avenue just south of Albert Hall had been removed for the creation of a carpark for the Treasury Building. The associated Weston-era plantings were also removed. While balanced with similar changes to Kings Avenue, these alterations changed the form and road geometry of the Griffin Plan's Parliamentary Zone, reinforced by Weston's planning.



**Figure 3.12** Detail of a 1968 aerial image of Commonwealth Avenue, showing southern (top) and northern (bottom) sections of the avenue. (Source: ACTmapi)

Between 1968 and 1972 further significant changes happened under the NCDC. Capital Circle was opened in 1971, requiring the construction of an overpass over State Circle, and in November 1969 Weston-era cedars and other trees were removed to create the overpass. At this time the NCDC also discussed removing all median trees along Commonwealth Avenue to 'open up a formal vista between City Hill and Capital Hill'.<sup>28</sup> However, later historic aerials suggest this plan was abandoned, possibly in the face of public opposition. By 1972 a second Griffin intersection into the Parliamentary Zone, opposite Hotel Canberra, had also been closed, removing another element of the Griffins' planned road geometry and further degrading the Weston-era plantings around this intersection.

On the northern end of the avenue, Parkes Way was constructed, bringing with it bridges to carry Commonwealth Avenue over Parkes Way and London Circuit (opened in 1969), and new northern cloverleaves.<sup>29</sup> New plantings were added to both sides of Commonwealth Avenue between Parkes

Way and Albert Avenue to frame the avenue. However, the NDC did not plant on the median of the northern side of the avenue. This choice was consistent with its statements on maintain an open, simple and effective vista, but also resulted in a difference in planting between the northern and southern sides of the avenue.



**Figure 3.13** Detail of a 1972 aerial image of Commonwealth Avenue, showing southern (top) and northern (bottom) sections of the avenue. (Source: ACTmapi)

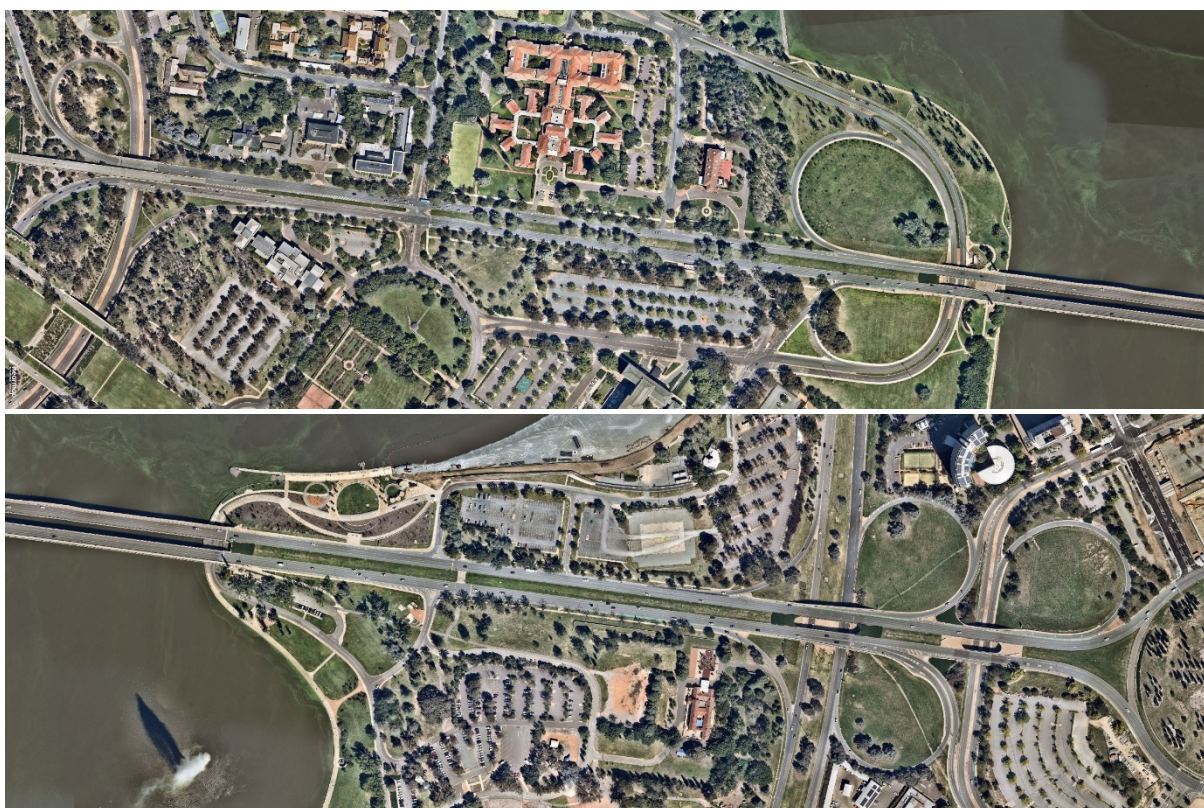
Construction of the new Australian Parliament House commenced in 1981, resulting in further changes at the southern end of Commonwealth Avenue. In 1984 work commenced on a road ramp that rises from the median of the avenue to Parliament Drive and the House itself. This ramp resulted in the removal of the next bank of Weston-era plantings, between the Canadian High Commission and Coronation Drive. The NDC had done some replanting along the southernmost end of the avenue verge by this time, but on a new alignment from the Weston-era rows. Parliament House was opened in 1988 by Queen Elizabeth II.



**Figure 3.14** The southern end of Commonwealth Avenue with Parliament House under construction, 1985. (Source: ACTmap)

The construction of an additional cloverleaf in the north-western corner of the Commonwealth Avenue–London Circuit overpass intersection resulted in the degradation and disappearance of elliptic plantings established by Weston on City Hill, below Vernon Circle. While historic aerials demonstrate that the condition of these plantings had been waning over time (and on the northern half of City Hill, had been fully removed by the construction of the Legislative Assembly and Court precincts), the elliptical plantings on the southern half of City Hill had nevertheless persisted until this time.

### 3.3.7 Phase 6: 1988–Present—National Capital Authority and ACT Government



**Figure 3.15** 2021 aerial image of Commonwealth Avenue showing southern (top) and northern (bottom) sections of the avenue. (Source: Nearmap)

Following the introduction of self-government in the ACT, the NCDC was abolished, and its responsibilities were divided between the ACT Government and a new National Capital Planning Authority, now the National Capital Authority.<sup>30</sup> The National Capital Planning Authority published the first National Capital Plan in December 1990, designed to ensure that Canberra and the ACT are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance. The ACT Government's responsibility had a greater focus on Canberra as a city, rather than representing the Commonwealth's interests in it as a national capital.<sup>31</sup> Management of Commonwealth Avenue is shared between the ACT Government and the NCA. The NCA and ACT Government have continued to manage Commonwealth Avenue in accordance with its overarching form and function in the landscape.

### 3.4 Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Fitzgerald, A, ed, 1983, *Canberra's Engineering Heritage*, Canberra Division, the Institute of Engineers, Australia, p 14.
- <sup>2</sup> Wright, WD 1923, *Canberra*, John Andrew & Co, Sydney, p 58.
- <sup>3</sup> Flood, J 1990, *The Riches of Ancient Australia*, Queensland University Press, University of Queensland, p 297.
- <sup>4</sup> Lovell Chen Architects and Heritage Consultants 2009, Government House Heritage Management Plan, prepared for the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General, p 41.
- <sup>5</sup> Wally Bell, pers comm, 21 October 2011.  
Australian National University, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Trail', <[https://services.anu.edu.au/files/guidance/Aboriginal\\_Heritage\\_Trail2.pdf](https://services.anu.edu.au/files/guidance/Aboriginal_Heritage_Trail2.pdf)>, p 16.
- <sup>6</sup> Wally Bell, pers comm, 21 October 2011.
- <sup>7</sup> Bluett, WP 1954, 'The Aborigines of the Canberra District at the Arrival of the White Man', a paper read to the Canberra & District Historical Society, 29 May 1954.  
Gammage, B 2011, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, p 279.
- <sup>8</sup> Shumack, S 1967, *An Autobiography or Tales and Legends of Canberra Pioneers*, Canberra, ANU Press.  
Gillespie, LL 1984, *Aborigines of the Canberra Region*, LL Gillespie, Campbell, ACT.  
Gillespie, LL 1992, *Ginninderra, Forerunner to Canberra*, LL Gillespie, Campbell, ACT.
- <sup>9</sup> Officer, KLC 1989, 'Namadgi Pictures: The Aboriginal Rock Art Sites Within the Namadgi National Park, ACT', report to ACT Administration, Heritage Unit, and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.
- <sup>10</sup> Flood, J 1980, *The Moth Hunters: Aboriginal Prehistory of the Australian Alps*, ALIAS Press, Canberra.  
Butlin, N 1983, *Our Original Aggression: Aboriginal Populations of Southeastern Australia 1788–1850*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
- <sup>11</sup> Officer, KLC 1989, 'Namadgi Pictures: The Aboriginal Rock Art Sites Within the Namadgi National Park, ACT', report to ACT Administration, Heritage Unit, and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.
- <sup>12</sup> National Capital Authority 2021, 'History of the NCA', viewed 6 August 2021 <<https://www.nca.gov.au/about-the-NCA/who-we-are/history-nca>>
- <sup>13</sup> The Canberra Plan – The Problem (paper for British Association for the Advancement of Science, August 1914, in National Capital Authority 2004, *The Griffin Legacy*, Australian Government p 54.
- <sup>14</sup> Gray, J 2009, 'T.C.G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturist and Arboriculturist', Doctor of Environmental Design Thesis, University of Canberra, p 142.
- <sup>15</sup> Gray, J 2009, 'T.C.G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturist and Arboriculturist', Doctor of Environmental Design Thesis, University of Canberra, p 135.
- <sup>16</sup> Gray, J 2009, 'T.C.G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturist and Arboriculturist', Doctor of Environmental Design Thesis, University of Canberra, p 137.
- <sup>17</sup> Gray, J 2009, 'T.C.G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturist and Arboriculturist', Doctor of Environmental Design Thesis, University of Canberra, p 138.

- <sup>18</sup> Gray, J 2009, 'T.C.G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturist and Arboriculturist', Doctor of Environmental Design Thesis, University of Canberra, p 144.
- <sup>19</sup> Reid, P 2002, *Canberra Following Griffin: A Design History of Australia's National Capital*, National Archives of Australia, p 160.
- <sup>20</sup> Gray, J 2009, 'T.C.G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturist and Arboriculturist', Doctor of Environmental Design Thesis, University of Canberra, p 168.
- <sup>21</sup> Gray, J 2009, 'T.C.G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturist and Arboriculturist', Doctor of Environmental Design Thesis, University of Canberra, p 168.
- <sup>22</sup> Gray, J 2009, 'T.C.G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturist and Arboriculturist', Doctor of Environmental Design Thesis, University of Canberra, p 177.
- <sup>23</sup> Gray, J 2009, 'T.C.G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturist and Arboriculturist', Doctor of Environmental Design Thesis, University of Canberra, p 177, 178.
- <sup>24</sup> Gray, J 2009, 'T.C.G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturist and Arboriculturist', Doctor of Environmental Design Thesis, University of Canberra, p 209.
- <sup>25</sup> Hince, B 1994, 'A Pryor Commitment: Canberra's Public Landscape 1944–1958', Master of Science Thesis, Australian National University, p 105.
- <sup>26</sup> National Capital Development Commission, 1965, *The Future Canberra*, Angus and Robertson, pp 45, 46.
- <sup>27</sup> 23 August 1965, 'Sidewalk supervisor: A new plan for the planting of trees', *Canberra Times*, p 8.
- <sup>28</sup> Davidson, G 28 November 1969, 'Avenue trees may go for "formal vista"', *Canberra Times*, p 1.
- <sup>29</sup> 5 June 1969, 'Bridge to open', *Canberra Times*, p 8.
- <sup>30</sup> National Capital Authority, 'History of the NCA', viewed on 11 August 2021 <<https://www.nca.gov.au/about-the-NCA/who-we-are/history-nca>>
- <sup>31</sup> Reid, P 2002, *Canberra Following Griffin: A Design History of Australia's National Capital*, National Archives of Australia, p 325.

## 4 Heritage Values

### 4.1 Introduction

The landscape of Commonwealth Avenue is integral to many heritage listings and values within the Central National Area, as well as having heritage value in its own right. Understanding the heritage significance of Commonwealth Avenue is key to planning for change.

The following discussion of heritage context identifies heritage listings and other relevant heritage values which together establish a complete understanding of the heritage significance of the Commonwealth Avenue landscape.

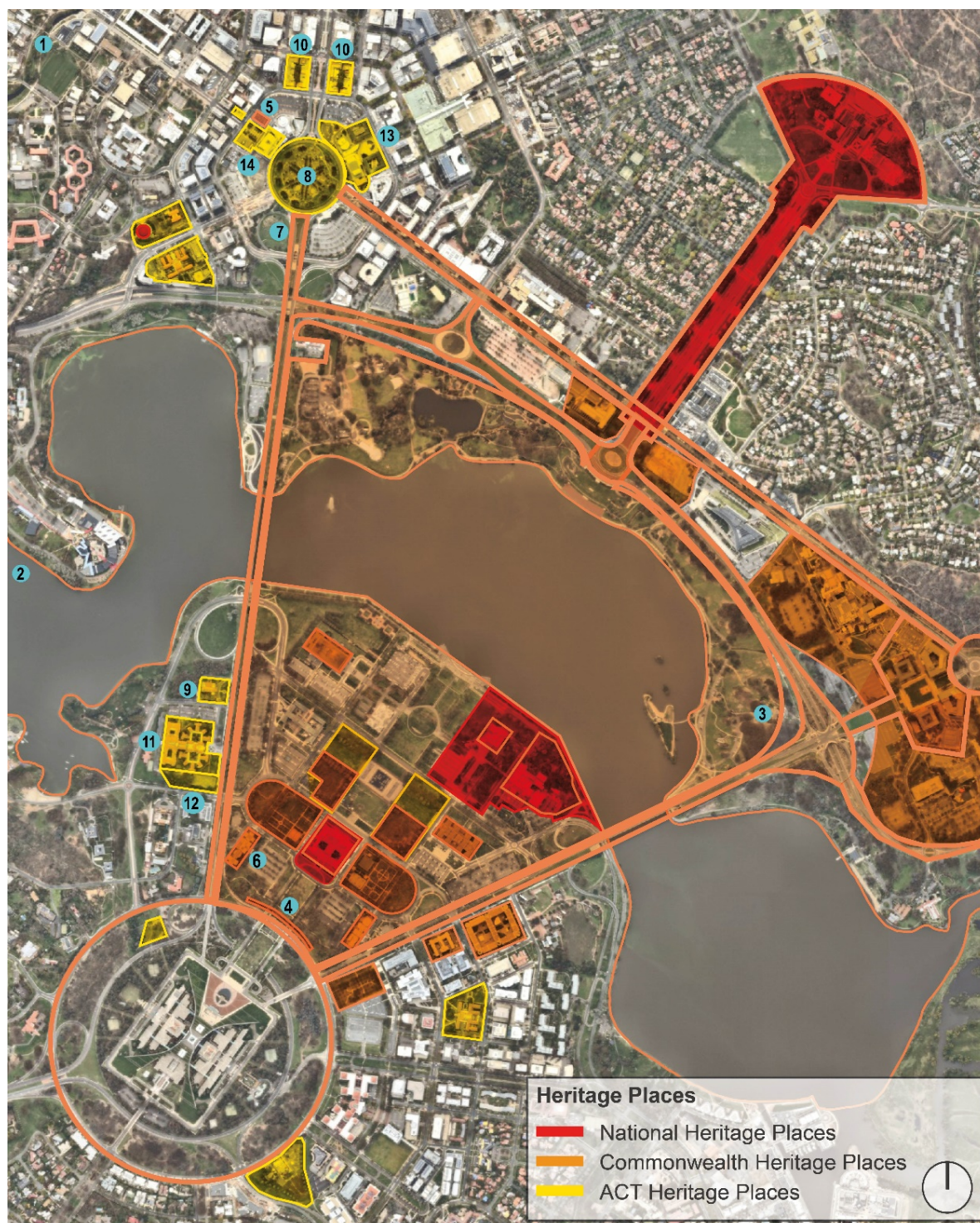
### 4.2 Historic Heritage Values

#### 4.2.1 Listed and Nominated Heritage Places

Within the vicinity of Commonwealth Avenue there are a number of places which are included on or nominated to statutory heritage registers, including the NHL, CHL and ACT Heritage Register. Fourteen of these places located within or adjacent to the study area have heritage values particularly relevant to Commonwealth Avenue.

These 14 places are identified in Figure 4.1 and Table 4.1. Appendix A provides summaries of the heritage values/significance of each place and key attributes.

Together, these listed and nominated heritage places contribute to the heritage significance of Commonwealth Avenue. The avenue sits within a complex heritage landscape with many layers of significance, including cultural and natural values which have social, historic, aesthetic and research value, as well as associations with significant people and events.



**Figure 4.1** Map showing listed and nominated ACT, Commonwealth and National Heritage places in and around Commonwealth Avenue. Numbered places are those identified in Table 4.1 below. Note: this map does not show the boundary of 'Canberra: The Planned National Capital' NHL nomination. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)

**Table 4.1** Listed and Nominated ACT, Commonwealth and National Heritage Places Relevant to Commonwealth Avenue.

No.	Place Name	Register	Status/Place ID
1	Canberra: The Planned National Capital	National Heritage List	Nominated
2	Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands	National Heritage List, Commonwealth Heritage List	Nominated
3	Parliament House Vista	Commonwealth Heritage List	Listed Place
4	State Circle Cutting	Commonwealth Heritage List	Listed Place
5	Reserve Bank of Australia	Commonwealth Heritage List	Listed Place
6	West Block and Dugout	Commonwealth Heritage List	Listed Place
7	National Land Roads (covering Commonwealth Avenue, Capital Circle and State Circle)	Commonwealth Heritage List	Nominated
8	City Hill	ACT Heritage Register	Registered Place
9	Albert Hall	ACT Heritage Register	Registered Place
10	Sydney and Melbourne Buildings	ACT Heritage Register	Registered Place
11	Hotel Canberra	ACT Heritage Register	Registered Place
12	Canberra Croquet Clubhouse and Lawns	ACT Heritage Register	Registered Place
13	The Civic Square Precinct	ACT Heritage Register	Registered Place
14	Law Courts Precinct	ACT Heritage Register	Nominated

#### 4.2.2 Other Identified Historic Heritage Values

In addition to places listed on or nominated to statutory heritage registers, there are other identified historic heritage values in the study area.

##### Parliament House and Surrounds

Parliament House and Surrounds was nominated to the National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists in 2004. The Australian Heritage Council assessed that Parliament House was found to have outstanding heritage value against all National and Commonwealth Heritage criteria. In March 2021 the Minister for the Environment chose not to include Parliament House and Surrounds on the National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists. However, as per the Australian Heritage Council assessment the place continues to have nationally significant heritage values, as a national icon of democracy. Parliament House is an exceptional creative and technical achievement in the way the

architecture integrates with the landscape in completing the central Canberra City order, culminating the pyramidal terminus of the Parliamentary Triangle, and expressing Griffin's concept for a Capitol that symbolises democracy.<sup>1</sup> Parliament House's heritage values are outlined in detail in Appendix A.

### **Commonwealth Avenue Bridge**

Commonwealth Avenue Bridge—an individual feature of the Commonwealth Avenue landscape—was assessed against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria in 2020 in preparation for light rail works.<sup>2</sup>

While the Bridge is not currently included on the Commonwealth Heritage List, the assessment found heritage values under Commonwealth Heritage criteria. Commonwealth Avenue Bridge is appreciated by the Canberra community both as a feature in its own right, and in relation to the wider designed landscape setting of Lake Burley Griffin.

In addition, Commonwealth Avenue Bridge was found to have heritage significance against other criteria, including for its historic value as part of the development of Canberra and its technical engineering achievement. Commonwealth Avenue Bridge's heritage values are outlined in detail in Appendix A.

### **Central National Area Heritage Landscape**

The Central National Area of Canberra, particularly the National Triangle, is a designed cultural heritage landscape comprised of many heritage places and precincts, both listed and unlisted.

Together, multiple places and features in central Canberra such as the Parliamentary Zone, the National Triangle, City and Capital Hills, Lake Burley Griffin, roads and green spaces, and views and vistas all come together to create a culturally significant landscape with highly integrated heritage values.

The implementation of the Griffins' plan for the development of Canberra as the national capital is physically represented by the historic character of the designed landscape in the Central National Area.

The historic layer of the NCDP planning through the 1950s to the 1970s is also represented in the landscape. This period has in the past been less well-researched than the Griffin, FCAC and FCC eras.

Most of the study area physically demonstrates characteristics that are fundamental to, and representative of, the NCP. It also aligns with the designed cultural landscape noted in the Canberra – The Planned National Capital nomination.

Examples include:

- the 'National Triangle', a representative and symbolic demonstration of Australian national life and values;
- landscape features which give the national capital its character and setting, and which contribute to the integration of natural and urban environments;
- key elements of the Griffins' formally adopted plan for Canberra;
- the creation, conservation and enhancement of fitting sites, approaches and backdrops for national institutions and ceremonies as well as national capital uses; and

- the unique purpose, setting, character and symbolism of Australia's national capital.<sup>3</sup>

### 4.3 Views Analysis

The views and vistas associated with the Commonwealth Avenue landscape are an important element of its cultural significance. These views and vistas have been created as part of the careful design of Canberra as a city in the landscape. The Griffin Plan used the natural topographical features of City Hill and Capital Hill to create a vista which reveals and emphasises the landscape connection between terminating points of the National Triangle. Other significant views also contribute to the cultural landscape of Commonwealth Avenue.



Key views and vistas have been identified and analysed. This identification and analysis is informed by the listed and identified heritage values discussed in Section 4.2, as well as other relevant material including the Parliament House Vista Heritage Management Plan, Old Parliament House Gardens Heritage Management Plan, and the Kings and Commonwealth Avenues Draft Design Strategy.

The identified significant views and vistas are:




- City Hill to Capital Hill vista;
- views along Commonwealth Avenue when travelling north and south;
- Commonwealth Avenue Bridge views;
- views from key public vantage points—Red Hill, Black Mountain and Mount Ainslie; and
- views into the Parliamentary Zone from Commonwealth Avenue intersections.



Table 4.2 lists these key views and provides analysis and further detail on their significance.


**Table 4.2** Analysis of Key Identified Views and Vistas.




Key View	Commentary	Images
<p><b>City Hill to Capital Hill</b></p>	<p>The vista from City Hill to Capital Hill is highly significant. It establishes the landscape connection between the two hills as terminating points of the National Triangle, as designed in the Griffin Plan. The vista is historically, aesthetically and socially significant, as well as being a technical/design achievement.</p> <p>The avenue and associated vista are primarily created by landscape design and plantings, rather than built structures. Weston’s City Hill cypress plantings frame views along Griffin’s six radial avenues, as do the formal avenue plantings on the southern side of the avenue.</p> <p>Weston’s City Hill plantings emphasise the views down the avenue, rather than views from City Hill towards the lake or inner hills. The vista is presented primarily as a formal confined view from the key viewing locations of City Hill and Capital Hill.</p>	 <p><b>Figure 4.2</b> Commonwealth Avenue from City Hill looking south towards Parliament House, 2014. (Source: Wikimedia, &lt;<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Commonwealth_Avenue,_Canberra,_from_City_Hill.jpg">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Commonwealth_Avenue,_Canberra,_from_City_Hill.jpg</a>&gt;)</p>  <p><b>Figure 4.3</b> Commonwealth Avenue from Capital Hill looking north towards City Hill, 2013. (Source: Mark Ehr, Flickr &lt;<a href="https://www.flickr.com/photos/70917233@N00/276767766/">https://www.flickr.com/photos/70917233@N00/276767766/</a>&gt;)</p>

Key View	Commentary	Images
<p><b>Views along Commonwealth Ave when travelling north and south</b></p>	<p>The views available of the lake, surrounding landscape and inner and outer hills when travelling along the length of Commonwealth Avenue are significant. The designed landscape that provides a setting for Canberra gives the sense of a ‘city within a landscape’, with the lake playing a role as the central ornament in the landscape and a visual connector between the north and south sides of the city.</p> <p>Travelling along Commonwealth Avenue by foot or in a vehicle provides views of the parklands, the setting of distant mountains, and partial, passing views of Lake Burley Griffin. These progressively open up to wider, uninterrupted views of the lake and broader landscape at the approaches to the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge. The transition between the formal avenue view and the more open lake views which commence as one approaches Commonwealth Avenue Bridge grounds Commonwealth Avenue in the National Triangle landscape.</p> <p>The experiential and transitioning views along the avenue create a sense of connection between different elements of the Central National Area, including Commonwealth Avenue, Civic and the Parliamentary Zone. The avenue therefore balances confined, formal views from the City Hill and Capital Hill viewing locations with more open horizontal landscape views along the avenue.</p>	 <p><b>Figure 4.4</b> Commonwealth Avenue looking south from north side of Lake Burley Griffin. (Source: Google Street View)</p>  <p><b>Figure 4.5</b> Commonwealth Avenue looking north from south side of Lake Burley Griffin. (Source: Google Street View)</p>

Key View	Commentary	Images
<p><b>Commonwealth Ave Bridge views</b></p>	<p>The views to and from Commonwealth Avenue Bridge to landscape and built features have social and aesthetic heritage significance. As people approach the bridge from its northern and southern ends and then cross over, views are open, changing and experiential, with the centre of the bridge giving expansive 360° views across the lake. These views overlap with the identified significant views when travelling north and south along Commonwealth Avenue.</p> <p>Aesthetic characteristics of the bridge itself include its simple, low-profile and streamlined form, with vertical pylons defining the ends/entry.</p> <p>Its position as a horizontal landscape feature within the visual setting of Lake Burley Griffin, with a backdrop of national institutions and distant hills/mountains is important, as is its location and alignment in defining one arm of the National Triangle and providing symmetry with the Kings Avenue Bridge.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>These characteristics can be viewed and appreciated from multiple locations, including Regatta Point, the National Museum, City and Capital Hills. They also include westerly views from Henry Rolland Park and glimpses from Parkes Way.</p> <p>From the bridge, views to surrounding landscape features such as the lake, the Captain Cook Memorial Jet and the Brindabella ranges are important. The bridge provides a staging point for views to local landmarks such as the National</p>	 <p><b>Figure 4.6</b> Commonwealth Avenue Bridge looking east towards the National Carillon and Kings Avenue Bridge. (Source: Google Street View)</p>  <p><b>Figure 4.7</b> Commonwealth Avenue Bridge looking west towards Black Mountain. (Source: Google Street View)</p>  <p><b>Figure 4.8</b> View of Commonwealth Avenue Bridge looking north-east from the National Museum of Australia cafe. (Source: The Museum Cafe, &lt;<a href="https://the-museum-cafe.business.site/#gallery">https://the-museum-cafe.business.site/#gallery</a>&gt;)</p>

Key View	Commentary	Images
	<p>Museum and National Carillon, the National Triangle and its built elements, and surrounding local peaks such as Black Mountain.</p>	 <p><b>Figure 4.9</b> Commonwealth Bridge viewed from Commonwealth Park on the northern side of Lake Burley Griffin. (Source: Jim Hoffman, 2018, &lt;<a href="https://www.flickr.com/photos/95684057@N06/40055664583">https://www.flickr.com/photos/95684057@N06/40055664583</a>&gt;)</p>
<p><b>Views from key public vantage points—Red Hill, Black Mountain and Mount Ainslie</b></p>	<p>Commonwealth Avenue is a key element which frames the National Triangle. The Triangle is visible as a landscape feature from key lookouts such as Red Hill, Black Mountain and Mount Ainslie. Visibility of the Central National Area, the National Triangle and Parliamentary Zone, Parliament House, Lake Burley Griffin and the inner hills is significant from these locations.</p> <p>The characteristics of the Canberra landscape are appreciated for their aesthetic value from these specific viewing points by the community.</p> <p>Commonwealth Avenue helps the community identify the National Triangle in the landscape from these viewing points. Avenue planting, a strong road alignment, the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, and the avenue’s visual</p>	 <p><b>Figure 4.10</b> Parliament House Vista from Mount Ainslie, with Commonwealth Avenue to the right of Parliament House. (Source: Wikimedia, 2005 &lt;<a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Canberra.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Canberra.jpg</a>&gt;)</p>

Key View	Commentary	Images
	<p>symmetry with Kings Avenue all contribute to giving the avenue a defined structure in the landscape, creating and maintaining its position in the vista.</p>	 <p><b>Figure 4.11</b> View from Red Hill towards Parliament House. (Source: TripAdvisor &lt;<a href="https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g255057-d3535426-i131193499-Red_Hill_Lookout_Cafe_Bar-Canberra_Australian_Capital_Territory.html">https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g255057-d3535426-i131193499-Red_Hill_Lookout_Cafe_Bar-Canberra_Australian_Capital_Territory.html</a>&gt;)</p>  <p><b>Figure 4.12</b> View of Central National Area from Black Mountain, with Commonwealth Avenue in middle-ground of image. (Source: Wikimedia Commons, 2009 &lt;<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Canberra_From_Black_Mountain_Tower.jpg">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Canberra_From_Black_Mountain_Tower.jpg</a>&gt;)</p>

Key View	Commentary	Images
<p><b>Views into the Parliamentary Zone from Commonwealth Avenue intersections</b></p>	<p>The viewing windows into the Parliamentary Zone from Commonwealth Avenue at key intersections have heritage significance as historical features of the Griffin Plan for the Zone, and as aesthetic and technical characteristics of the designed urban landscape.</p> <p>Historically, there were five intersections into the Parliamentary Zone from Commonwealth Avenue. These helped emphasise the experience of entering the Parliamentary Zone.</p> <p>The road and footpath alignments along with tree plantings created important vistas to and past key buildings, establishing landscape spaces, enclosing the Gardens Precinct, defining the original Griffin Plan and linking elements in the Parliamentary Zone.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>Significant changes to the road configurations over time and the loss of sentinel trees have degraded the historic condition of both the road alignments for these intersections and their associated views. The intersection at Coronation Drive best maintains its historic road alignment.</p>	 <p><b>Figure 4.13</b> Detail of 1961 aerial image of Commonwealth Avenue, showing intersections with King Edward Terrace, Newlands Street, and King George and Queen Victoria Terraces. (Source: ACTmapi)</p>  <p><b>Figure 4.14</b> View of Coronation Drive intersection looking east into the Parliamentary Zone. (Source: Google Street View)</p>  <p><b>Figure 4.15</b> View looking east into the Parliamentary Zone opposite Hotel Canberra entrance, the location of a historical intersection. (Source: Google Street View)</p>

## 4.4 Indigenous Heritage Values

Aboriginal people have occupied Canberra and the surrounding region for more than 20,000 years, demonstrated by archaeological dates at Birrigai rock shelter in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.<sup>6</sup> The landscape of the central Canberra area continues to be part of a broader cultural landscape of significance to Canberra's Aboriginal community. As outlined in the *Ask First* guidelines, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the primary source of information on the values of their heritage and how it is best conserved.<sup>7</sup> The active participation of Aboriginal communities in the identification, assessment and management of their heritage is integral to the effective protection of Indigenous heritage values.<sup>8</sup> GML has undertaken a review of existing documentation and consulted with Aboriginal community representatives on the Commonwealth Avenue landscape.

In 2012 an Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment was undertaken for the NCA Commonwealth Heritage assessment of roads on National Land. The database search and literature review undertaken as part of this investigation indicated no Aboriginal heritage sites recorded as occurring within the Commonwealth Avenue study area.<sup>9</sup> The field survey also did not identify any Aboriginal sites within the area. Additionally, Commonwealth Avenue has been assessed as part of previous studies for the Capital Metro, ACT Light Rail Russell Extension project prepared by GML in 2015 and an Aboriginal Heritage Desktop Study undertaken for the Canberra Light Rail Stage 2 Project, prepared by RPS Group in 2018.<sup>10</sup> These and other studies have identified areas of archaeological potential including the area around Capital Hill, the Aboriginal Tent Embassy and within landscapes along the Molonglo River which have now been submerged.

Within the wider region, the Commonwealth Avenue landscape is situated between Black Mountain to the west, Mount Ainslie and Mount Pleasant to the east, and Red Hill to the south. Aboriginal heritage sites have been recorded within the vicinity of these landscape features, as well as at the Australian National University around Sullivans Creek, on Acton Ridge and along the banks of the Molonglo River prior to the establishment of Lake Burley Griffin. These landscape features were key focal points of Aboriginal occupation and have previously been identified as significant Aboriginal places.

The area of Commonwealth Avenue has been disturbed from its original state by repeated changes to the landscape such as the construction of roads (including the avenue itself) and buildings, the establishment of Lake Burley Griffin and planting of the area. Consultation with the Aboriginal community—Ngunawal and Ngambri representatives—has confirmed that Commonwealth Avenue itself is not a place of Aboriginal cultural significance, but the general landscape was, and continues to be, of significance to them. The Aboriginal community have not ceded sovereignty to the lands in the ACT region. The Ngunawal people are widely recognised by ACT Government agencies as the Aboriginal occupants of the land, while the Ngambri people maintain that the traditional occupation of this area by the Aboriginal people is attested to in the adaptation of the name Canberra from the word Kamberri, which in itself was derived from Ngambri.

GML met with Wally Bell, Buru Ngunawal Aboriginal Corporation, on 28 July 2021 to discuss the CALSP and the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the study area. Mr Bell stated that Ngunawal representatives have undertaken extensive survey work within the study area previously, and that these surveys as well as ACT Heritage listings provide information on sensitive sites in the area. Mr Bell discussed how Kurrajong (Capital) Hill was an important meeting ground, used for large ceremonies, while Black Mountain was used for smaller meetings. Aboriginal people would travel across the river plain along the edge of Capital Hill towards Red Hill, following the landscape for travel

routes while using Capital Hill for specific ceremonial occasions. Aboriginal cultural heritage sites associated with Capital Hill include significant cultural trees which remain on the western side of the hill, as well as sites associated with a creek which ran from Capital Hill into the Molonglo River off Stirling Ridge, close to the current location of the Chinese Embassy. Stirling Ridge was used extensively by Aboriginal people and many cultural sites remain on the ridge and in Stirling Park; however, the creek has now been obscured by the construction of Parliament House and development in Yarralumla. Mr Bell also noted that Capital Hill was the location of important ochre sites.

Mr Bell emphasised that Aboriginal cultural heritage exists alongside but separate to the European heritage of the Commonwealth Avenue landscape. It must be considered holistically, rather than as a series of discrete sites or objects.

GML also met with Paul House, Mirrabee, on 28 July 2021 to discuss the CALSP and the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the study area. Mr House referred to evidence of the Ngambri's long-term presence and spiritual association with the Canberra region, including records that establish the origin of the name Canberra as coming from the original name Ngambri for both the place and its people.<sup>11</sup> Mr House stated that Ngambri people lived and camped on Kurrajong (Capital) Hill, which was a location of important ceremonial sites and resources, including red and yellow ochre and a natural creek which sprang from the hill. These sites were obscured or destroyed with the development of the hill, including the construction of Parliament House, and the breakdown of lore associated with these impacts has cultural consequences for the community. Mr House also discussed how Ngambri people lived and worked throughout the study area during the early development of Canberra. Historical records and community knowledge reveal Ngambri ancestors living and working in the areas of Yarralumla, Namadgi and Queanbeyan, among others. Ngambri people such as Joseph Roderick 'Roddy' Williams worked on the construction of early Canberra buildings, including Old Parliament House and East and West Block—they were involved in the development of the avenue and Parliamentary Zone from its early establishment in the twentieth century.

Mr House emphasised that the area of Commonwealth Avenue is first and foremost a First Nations landscape, and that any understanding of the story of the avenue must be consistently underpinned by this acknowledgement. He noted that the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the area is one where all features are connected, rather than one which can be divided into historical phases.

Consultation with Mr House also addressed how broader planning for the Commonwealth Avenue landscape can provide an opportunity to acknowledge, respect and honour Aboriginal cultural heritage, through truth-telling and reclaiming Country. Interpretation was identified as having a role to play in this work, but it must be done in a way which supports the Aboriginal community in telling their story, and Mr House noted that this is particularly important due to the social and political prominence of the National Triangle. These opportunities could also include the use of native plants as part of any works in the study area, and dual naming or renaming of Commonwealth Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue Bridge.

## 4.5 Natural Heritage Values

As outlined in the Australian Natural Heritage Charter, natural heritage comprises:<sup>12</sup>

*... the natural living and non-living components, that is, the biodiversity and geodiversity, of the world that humans inherit. It incorporates a range of values, from existence value to socially-based values.*

More specifically, the Charter defines 'natural heritage' as:

- *natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which demonstrate natural significance*
- *geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas that constitute the habitat of indigenous species of animals and plants, which demonstrate natural significance, and/or*
- *natural sites or precisely-delineated natural areas which demonstrate natural significance from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.*<sup>13</sup>

While Commonwealth Avenue is a highly altered planned cultural landscape, some elements of natural heritage significance exist within the study area, contributing to its heritage values. These elements have been identified in previous surveys and were also investigated in May 2021 by GML Heritage as part of the preparation of this report.

#### **4.5.1 Geology**

State Circle Cutting is an exposed rock face of natural heritage significance that commences part-way along the slip lane to State Circle on the south-east end of Commonwealth Avenue. It was exposed between 1969 and 1971, likely as part of roadworks to State Circle and Capital Hill.<sup>14</sup> The natural heritage values for State Circle Cutting are recognised on the CHL (see Section 4.2.1 and Appendix A). The removal of Camp Hill in 1987 to create a clear view north from the forecourt of new Parliament House diminished the cutting by removing its upper tier, and the cutting needs condition monitoring and upkeep, noting there is also potential for vibrational damage. The cutting is an individually listed heritage site; however, its location and the fact that it was exposed as part of works to Commonwealth Avenue, State Circle and Capital Hill shows that it has strong connections to the surrounding Commonwealth Avenue landscape and that the management of the landscape may have implications for its heritage values.

#### **4.5.2 Vegetation and Plantings**

The vegetation and plantings in and around Commonwealth Avenue have varying degrees of potential heritage significance.

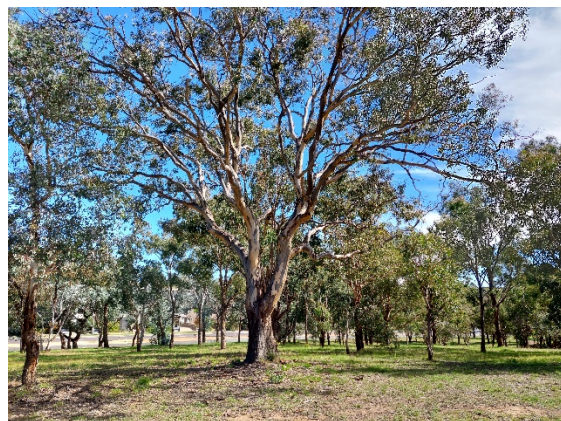
The Commonwealth Heritage values assessment of Commonwealth Avenue undertaken in the ‘Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra Commonwealth Heritage Assessments’ report prepared for NCA found that the verges and median strips of the avenue did not comprise a vegetation community of natural heritage significance.<sup>15</sup> These areas were found to have ‘a considerable invasion of exotic grasses and, in most cases, extensive plantings of shrubs and trees that are exotic to the original vegetation’.<sup>16</sup>

On and around State Circle at the southern end of Commonwealth Avenue, greater potential for natural heritage significance has been identified, and investigation by Griffin Associates Pty Ltd in May 2021 revealed that there are relics of original vegetation scattered around State Circle.

Two old trees characteristic of the original canopy vegetation—Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and Blakely’s Red Gum (*E. blakelyi*)—have been identified next to the Melbourne Avenue extension, as has the potential for other relict. *E. melliodora* trees near the intersection of State Circle and Kings Avenue.



**Figure 4.16** *Eucalyptus melliodora* along Melbourne Avenue between State and Capital Circles. (Source: Griffin Associates, 2021)



**Figure 4.17** *Eucalyptus blakelyi* along Melbourne Avenue between State and Capital Circles. (Source: Griffin Associates, 2021)

As representatives of the vegetation community before settlement, which is itself an endangered ecological community under the EPBC Act, these trees have natural heritage value which should be taken into account in any planning for Commonwealth Avenue and its surrounding landscape.

More generally, a diversity of native canopy species, landscape forms, and planting ages on Capital Hill between State and Capital Circles indicates different landscape themes and planning, potentially reflecting successive approaches of different horticulturalists responsible for Canberra. Charles Weston undertook many trial plantings throughout Canberra to confirm the suitability of different species, and some plantings could date from this era, for example a small copse of Maiden's Gum (*Eucalyptus maidenii*) to the south of Parliament House.

Further investigation of these plantings could identify whether they are associated with specific planting schemes, and provide more information on their natural or cultural heritage significance.

Previous surveys have identified a high likelihood of endangered Button Wrinklewort (*Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides*) in the Commonwealth Avenue landscape, though information on their location is generalised. ACTmapi database information suggested occurrence of Button Wrinklewort in an area between Capital Circle and Parliament Drive, but targeted investigation in May 2021 did not indicate any of the plant was present in this location. The species is unlikely to contribute to natural heritage values along the avenue, but any identified occurrences could be relevant.

### 4.5.3 Biodiversity and Habitat

Previous surveys of the Commonwealth Avenue landscape have identified habitat of the critically endangered Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*) in and around the avenue. This includes in the cloverleaves and median of the intersection of Parkes Way and Commonwealth Avenue, between Commonwealth Avenue and Commonwealth Park on the northern side of Lake Burley Griffin, and in virtually all grassed areas not covered by eucalypt canopy in the lands between State Circle and Capital Circle.<sup>17</sup>

These surveys indicate a wide distribution of Golden Sun Moth populations, but in sub-optimal modified habitat. The value of the existence of a population of natural significance in a substantially modified habitat is recognised by the Australian Natural Heritage Charter. The habitat and population of the Golden Sun Moth in this area requires monitoring to confirm its sustainability and to ensure an

ongoing understanding of its natural significance and status as a natural heritage place. Repeated surveys in successive years are required to confirm and delineate habitat areas. Permanent shading of Golden Sun Moth habitat, for example from tree planting or the construction of new buildings, could impact its quality, and this risk should be considered in any planning decisions for the avenue. This is reflected in the conditions of EPBC Act approval for the Light Rail Stage 2A project, which require the project to take measures that ensure ‘no permanent shading associated with any structures and tree plantings will impact on the rehabilitation areas’, which are the south-eastern cloverleaf and the median of Parkes Way east of the Commonwealth Avenue overpass.

## 4.6 Gaps in the Heritage Context

The study area has been extensively assessed for heritage significance over time. In preparing this preliminary heritage advice, this report has identified remaining gaps in information for the ‘heritage context’ of the study area. Further information would address these gaps and provide the basis for comprehensive heritage advice and impact assessment for subsequent phases of the CALSP and the Light Rail Stage 2 project.

Gaps identified at this reporting stage include:

- Lack of a formal listing for the Central National Area—There is a nomination of the area to the NHL (which is not publicly available) but a decision on this assessment has not been made. This means there is no specific policy or overarching heritage management policy for protecting or managing change to the ‘designed cultural landscape’ of the Central National Area.
- Lack of a formal heritage assessment of Commonwealth Avenue—Commonwealth Avenue has not been assessed as an individual heritage place against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria. The NCA has previously assessed the potential Commonwealth Heritage values of a number of roads on national land in central Canberra in the *Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra* report, prepared in 2014. This report provides some context to the heritage significance of Commonwealth Avenue, noting Kings and Commonwealth Avenues are assessed together and likely to meet multiple heritage criteria for listing. However, the report had limited scope, with outstanding questions in relation to developing a detailed understating of the creation and evolution of the roads and associated plantings, the social and aesthetic values of the roads, and whether the avenues should be considered on their own for heritage listing or as part of a larger area (eg: the Parliament House Vista, Parliamentary Zone or National Triangle).<sup>18</sup> Other parts of Commonwealth Avenue’s heritage significance could also be further explored, such as the NDC era changes to the road layout and landscape. Further assessment of the heritage values of Commonwealth Avenue, including community-held social and aesthetic values, would provide a comprehensive understanding of the heritage significance of the Avenue, which in turn would guide future activities and change.
- Lack of formal heritage assessment of State and Capital Circles—Similarly, a comprehensive heritage assessment for State and Capital Circles has not been undertaken, with the same outstanding issues and gaps in knowledge that would assist in would guide future activities and change to these major roads on national land.

- Comprehensive understanding of trees on Commonwealth Avenue—A general understanding of the planting landscape of Commonwealth Avenue has been established; however, a more comprehensive record of the mature and significant heritage trees in the Commonwealth Avenue landscape would be valuable to guide species selection and planting decisions going forward. This information on the age, species and character of trees may be available to the NCA. It is important for future heritage investigation and heritage impact assessments to be able to access this as a single compiled document.

## 4.7 Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Australian Heritage Database, 'Parliament House and Surrounds', < [http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place\\_detail;place\\_id=105740](http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;place_id=105740)>.
- <sup>2</sup> GML Heritage, *Commonwealth Avenue Bridge Heritage Assessment*, report prepared for Major Projects Canberra and the National Capital Authority, September 2020.
- <sup>3</sup> National Capital Authority 2021, *National Capital Plan*, Australian Government, p 12.
- <sup>4</sup> GML Heritage, *Commonwealth Avenue Bridge Heritage Assessment*, report prepared for Major Projects Canberra and the National Capital Authority, September 2020, p 53.
- <sup>5</sup> Context 2015, *Old Parliament House Gardens Precinct Heritage Management Plan*, report prepared for National Capital Authority, p 59.
- <sup>6</sup> Osbourne, T 2016, 'New dating shows 25,000 years of history at Birrigai rock shelter in ACT', ABC News, 4 April 2016, updated 5 May 2016, viewed 5 May 2020 <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/specials/curious-canberra/2016-04-04/new-research-shows-human-occupation-in-act-extends-25,000-years/728813>>.
- <sup>7</sup> Australian Heritage Commission, *Ask First: A Guide to Respecting Indigenous Heritage Places and Values 2002*, Canberra, p 6.
- <sup>8</sup> Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000, Part 20, Schedule 7B, Commonwealth Heritage Management Principles.
- <sup>9</sup> Duncan Marshall, C B, Navin Officer Heritage Consultants and Dr Warren Nicholls 2014, Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra, report prepared for National Capital Authority, p 136.
- <sup>10</sup> GML Heritage 2015, *Capital Metro, ACT Light Rail-Russell Extension-Heritage Impact Assessment*, report prepared for Parsons Brinckerhoff on behalf of Capital Metro Agency.  
RPS 2018, Canberra Light Rail Stage 2 Environmental Aboriginal Heritage Study, report prepared for Transport Canberra and City Services.
- <sup>11</sup> Jackson-Nakano, A. n.d., Ngambri Ancestral Names for Geographical Places and Features in the Australian Capital Territory and Surrounds. Published by Ann Jackson-Nakano and Associates, p 27.
- <sup>12</sup> Australian Heritage Commission 2002, *Australian Natural Heritage Charter: For the Conservation of Places of Natural Heritage Significance*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra.
- <sup>13</sup> Australian Heritage Commission 2002, *Australian Natural Heritage Charter: For the Conservation of Places of Natural Heritage Significance*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra, Art 1.1.
- <sup>14</sup> Duncan Marshall, Phil Creaser and Douglas Partners 2013, State Circle Cutting Heritage Management Plan, report prepared for the National Capital Authority, p 16.
- <sup>15</sup> Duncan Marshall, C B, Navin Officer Heritage Consultants and Dr Warren Nicholls 2014, Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra, report prepared for National Capital Authority, p 136.
- <sup>16</sup> Duncan Marshall, C B, Navin Officer Heritage Consultants and Dr Warren Nicholls 2014, Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra, report prepared for National Capital Authority, p 136.
- <sup>17</sup> Canberra Light Rail – Stage 2: Ecological Constraints Assessment. Draft Report by Biosis prepared for RPS Australia Asia Pacific, August 2017.

Canberra Light Rail Stage 2B Golden Sun Moth Surveys, Draft Report by Arup prepared for Major Projects Canberra, June 2020.

- <sup>18</sup> Duncan Marshall, C B, Navin Officer Heritage Consultants and Dr Warren Nicholls 2014, Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra, report prepared for National Capital Authority, pp 2, 4.

# 5 Heritage Advice

## 5.1 Background

The CALSP provides an opportunity to conserve, manage and present the heritage significance of the Commonwealth Avenue landscape, as well as listed and identified heritage places within and adjacent to the study area. The planning and design approaches proposed in the CALSP also have the potential to impact the Commonwealth Avenue landscape generally. These impacts may be direct or indirect; cumulative, temporary and permanent; reversible or irreversible; visual, physical, social and cultural. Both the CALSP and other planning for Commonwealth Avenue should be carefully managed and informed by an understanding of the landscape's heritage significance.

The historic development and cultural heritage significance of the landscape investigated and presented in this report has been established through analysis of the multiple heritage places and values in the study area. Gaps in the baseline heritage data have also been identified. This analysis has led to conclusions about the heritage significance of Commonwealth Avenue, as well as the development of goals and recommendations which in turn form the basis for overarching heritage principles to guide planning going forward.

## 5.2 Historical Analysis Findings

Analysis of the historical development and cultural heritage significance of Commonwealth Avenue has established a number of key findings.

*The National Triangle is a designed urban cultural landscape of symbolism, formality and ceremony.*

- The elements and attributes of the National Triangle, both tangible and intangible, come together to create a cultural landscape which is greater than the sum of its parts.
- The Griffins design used the topography of the landscape for the urban design and layout of the city, and landscape design elements such as lakes and trees to create Canberra as a city in the landscape. These interconnected design choices were intended to give Canberra a sense of symbolism, formality and ceremony appropriate to its function as the national capital.

*Urban design, road layout and tree plantings, as well as key views and vistas, all contribute to the avenue's heritage significance.*

- Key elements of Commonwealth Avenue come together to make up its significant symbolism, function and aesthetic character.
- The symbolic avenue of the Griffin Plan is upheld by its design and road layout. Its location and function as a strong, formal axis in the landscape has endured and confirmed the avenue's importance as a designed feature within the Central National Area.
- The avenue's verge and median tree plantings contribute to defining its status, emphasise its form and function, and frame key views. The trees are historically important in themselves, particularly those associated with Weston's early planting work in Canberra, but also have social significance to the community for their aesthetics and function.

- Views and vistas are an aesthetically, socially and technically important part of the Commonwealth Avenue landscape.
- Views analysis shows that the vista from Capital Hill to City Hill is significant as a confined view, giving formality to the avenue, but that it transitions at the approaches to the bridge to a similarly important open view of the lake and inner and outer hills. These views help ground Commonwealth Avenue within its broader setting, as a city in the landscape. Smaller historical view windows also existed into the Parliamentary Zone looking east from intersections which existed along the southern end of the avenue, but only one of these important viewing experiences, from Coronation Avenue, remains.

*There has been one design intent for Commonwealth Avenue, implemented and interpreted by different custodians over time.*

- The Griffins' vision of a designed city in the landscape is seen in the historical phases of the avenue. Commonwealth Avenue was intended to be a symbolic, formal avenue, which framed the National Triangle, served as gateway to Canberra and the National Triangle, and had both a civic and national function for public and ceremonial access.
- Custodians of the avenue after the Griffins such as Charles Weston, the FCAC and the NCDC all understood this fundamental design intent, but took steps to manage it in accordance with their own interpretation of the Griffins' vision.
- Weston emphasised Commonwealth Avenue's function as a boulevard which frames the National Triangle and Parliamentary Zone by delivering a strong, highly planted formal avenue. The NCDC had design intentions to create Canberra as a modern, growing city, which was expanding and developing, while still delivering an approach to town planning worthy of the national capital. For the NCDC, Commonwealth Avenue's role as an access route was important to this, as was its effectiveness in connecting elements of the city, emphasised with a simpler planting scheme.
- By referring to the Griffin Plan and interpreting its principles through design philosophies of the time, custodians of the avenue have created historical layers which together contribute to the heritage significance of the landscape. Both the Griffins' designs and the evidence of later phases of the avenue are historically important.
- The ongoing management of the avenue, with an understanding of its heritage values as well as its current planning and sustainability needs, continues this legacy of Commonwealth Avenue as a living heritage place.

*Landscape planning should seek to strengthen the symbolism, ceremony and formality of the avenue through its layout, roads, trees and framing views, and public access to the Parliamentary Zone.*

- Current and future custodians of the avenue should make design choices informed by its heritage values which will conserve and celebrate these values for future generations.
- Decisions about landscape planning in the CALSP and through other processes should seek to strengthen Commonwealth Avenue's identified heritage values and attributes.

## 5.3 Heritage and Design Principles

To address the findings of the historical analysis of Commonwealth Avenue, the following overarching heritage and design principles have been identified to provide clear guidance for decision-making about the avenue's future management and development.

### Heritage and Design Principles

1. Recognise, retain and enhance the **symbolism, ceremony and formality** of Commonwealth Avenue through appropriate design, aesthetic, scale and materials.
2. Retain and draw on Commonwealth Avenue's **ceremonial and symbolic importance as an entrance** to the Parliamentary Zone and integral link connecting the Commonwealth and Territory functions of Canberra.
3. Reinforce and draw from the **underlying geometry and symbolism** of the Central National Area, and the National Triangle, ensuring that Commonwealth Avenue is complementary with Kings Avenue and Constitution Avenue to define a sense of place.
4. Maintain and support Commonwealth Avenue's **function as a major and active** boulevard within Canberra and the Central National Area.
5. Retain significant **views and vistas**.
6. Retain and strengthen the **historic and landscaped character** of Commonwealth Avenue and its nature as a wide tree-lined boulevard.
7. Retain and enhance ready **public access** to and from Commonwealth Avenue.
8. Improve pedestrian and cyclist **amenity and safety**, to encourage active **transport and access** to the Parliamentary Zone.
9. Create optimal conditions for tree planting, to support the **long-term health of Commonwealth Avenue**.
10. Contribute to National Capital Authority policy targets to **increase tree canopy cover** to 40%.

Note: Significant views and vistas referred to at Principle 5 are identified at Section 4.3.

## 5.4 Heritage Goals and Recommendations

Specific heritage goals and recommendations, informed by the heritage and design principles, should guide the design choices and parameters of the CALSP. The goals and recommendations outlined below respond to key sensitivities in the landscape which are relevant to the scope of the CALSP, and ensure opportunities to strengthen the heritage values of the avenue can be maximised when undertaking any planning for Commonwealth Avenue.

Goals	Key Heritage Values	Recommendations
Acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal cultural significance of the place.	<p>Historical, social and spiritual significance of the Aboriginal cultural landscape to the Aboriginal community.</p> <p>Historic and cultural significance of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites from prior to and during the existence of Commonwealth Avenue.</p>	<p>Conserve, restore and enhance the cultural heritage of the Aboriginal cultural landscape Commonwealth Avenue is within, including at Capital Hill, key landscape features and Aboriginal heritage sites and artefacts.</p> <p>Include the Aboriginal cultural significance of the broader Canberra area and Commonwealth Avenue's presence in the landscape when making decisions for the avenue.</p> <p>Understand and communicate the Indigenous heritage values of the cultural landscape Commonwealth Avenue is within to the community.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Aboriginal community, take opportunities to engage in truth-telling and sharing Aboriginal stories in the management of the avenue, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare Aboriginal cultural heritage interpretation materials for use on Commonwealth Avenue.</li> <li>• Consider dual naming or renaming of Commonwealth Avenue and/or Commonwealth Avenue Bridge.</li> <li>• Incorporate native Australian species into planting of the avenue.</li> </ul>
Celebrate, interpret and conserve the heritage significance of the avenue.	<p>Historic and symbolic significance of Commonwealth Avenue – development of Canberra; symbolism within a designed landscape.</p> <p>Creative/technical significance of the avenue as an urban design achievement.</p> <p>Aesthetic importance to the central national area.</p> <p>Socially significant place for all Australians.</p> <p>Association with significant people.</p>	<p>Retain, restore and enhance the strong linear avenue, the physical and symbolic connection between Capital and City Hill, and the associated plantings of Commonwealth Ave.</p> <p>Take into account the heritage significance of the entire National Triangle (including balance with Kings Avenue) when making decisions.</p> <p>Avoid unnecessary changes to significant attributes.</p> <p>Take opportunities to recover or interpret significant historical landscape elements, such as the historical southern-side intersections entering into the Parliamentary Zone.</p> <p>Understand and enhance the community-held social heritage significance of the avenue.</p>

Goals	Key Heritage Values	Recommendations
<p>Ensure landscape planting supports the heritage significance of the avenue</p>	<p>Historic and symbolic significance of Commonwealth Avenue – development of Canberra; symbolism within a designed landscape.</p> <p>Association with significant people.</p>	<p>Create a formal avenue effect through alignment of trees and species selection which gives a consistent, defined character along the avenue in keeping with Commonwealth Avenue’s heritage values, guided by the NCA Tree Management Policy.</p> <p>Retain the historically significant Weston-era trees for their ability to demonstrate the historical development of the avenue, and avoid removal of other existing trees unless necessary.</p> <p>Where removal is necessary, incorporate new plantings consistent with the original configuration and visual effect of significant trees, and complementary to the existing species.</p>
<p>Protect and strengthen key views.</p>	<p>Creative/technical significance of the avenue as an urban design achievement.</p> <p>Aesthetic importance to the central national area.</p>	<p>From City Hill and Capital Hill deliver a formal, defined vista with landscape design and plantings.</p> <p>Ensure median plantings complement the visual links between City Hill and Parliament House, supporting without obscuring the central vista.</p> <p>Enable a transition from the defined north–south vista to the open views of the Lake and inner and outer hills at the launches to the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge.</p>
<p>Strengthen access to the Parliamentary Zone</p>	<p>Socially significant place for all Australians.</p>	<p>The Parliamentary Zone has strong and special associations with the broad Australian community. On the southern side of the avenue, visibility and pedestrian access to the Zone should be strengthened, taking design and landscape opportunities to do this.</p> <p>Recovering or interpreting the historical southern-side road intersections may provide opportunities to identify entrances into the Zone, and would reinstate the historical Griffin Plan geometry of these designed entrances.</p>

## 6 Conclusion

The Commonwealth Avenue landscape is part of the nationally significant Central National Area of Canberra. A central element of the Griffin Plan with important historical phases and heritage values, it is a designed cultural landscape which should be conserved and managed for present and future generations.

As next steps in the management of Commonwealth Avenue and implementation of this report, the ACT Government (Major Projects Canberra) and the NCA should:

- use the Heritage and Design Principles (Section 5.3) and Heritage Goals and Recommendations (Section 5.4) to inform ongoing work on the CALSP;
- seek opportunities to reinforce, strengthen and conserve the heritage values of Commonwealth Avenue;
- undertake further work to address the identified gaps in the heritage context, including:
  - formally assessing the heritage significance of Commonwealth Avenue against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria as a shared project with the ACT Government and the NCA;
  - consulting with the community and/or targeted stakeholders, including Aboriginal heritage organisations, to determine community-held cultural, social and symbolic heritage values of the avenue; and
  - applying the NCA’s Tree Policy and obtaining tree and landscape data, including available mapping, analysis of the trees, significant heritage plantings, avenues of trees and groupings of trees in the study area to comprehensively understand their association with the listed and identified heritage values of multiple heritage places noted in this report.

These steps will build on the outcomes and findings of this report going forward, responding to the needs of the NCA, the findings of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, and the heritage significance of the avenue.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

Relevant Heritage Places and Values

## Appendix B

Commonwealth Avenue Natural Heritage Review



## **Appendix A—Relevant Heritage Places and Values**

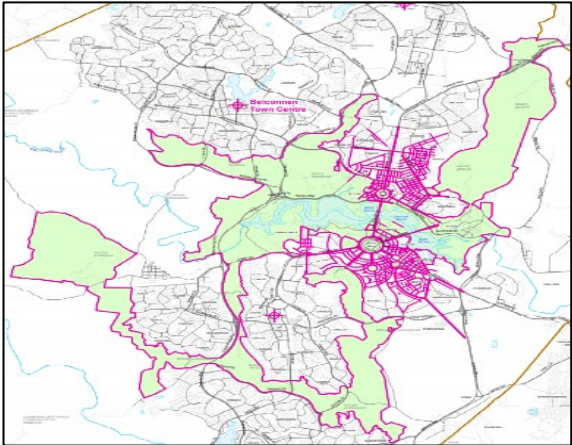
## National and Commonwealth Heritage Listed Places and Values

This Appendix covers listed and nominated National and Commonwealth Heritage places relevant to the project study area. Information has been excerpted from citations listed in the Australian Heritage Database unless otherwise noted and does not include the full citations. Some particularly relevant key features and attributes have been emphasised in bold text throughout.

### Canberra: the Planned National Capital

Nominated National Heritage place (Place ID: 106100/106074)

Note: This nominated place is the outcome of the combination of several similar nominations to the National Heritage List. Also known as Canberra – Central National Area and Canberra and Surrounding Areas.


Location	Identified National Heritage Values (taken from Australian Heritage Council NHL Assessment)	Attributes Relevant to the Project
 <p>Canberra: The Planned National Capital nomination boundary map (Source: &lt;<a href="https://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/organisations/australian-heritage-council/national-heritage-assessments/canberra">https://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/organisations/australian-heritage-council/national-heritage-assessments/canberra</a>&gt;)</p>	<p>a) Events and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canberra has symbolic and physical importance as the nation's seat of government and a planned capital city conceived at Federation and consistently developed within a tightly controlled planning system for nearly a century.</li> <li>• It is also significant for its role in the history of Australia's evolving democracy.</li> </ul> <p>e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canberra is important in exhibiting an ensemble of designed urban landscapes and settings that display the national capital and project its status, function and significance as the national capital. These features are valued highly by the Canberra and Australian communities for their aesthetic appeal.</li> </ul> <p>f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canberra demonstrates a high degree of creative and technical achievement in town planning, urban design and urban</li> </ul>	<p>a) Events and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associative values with place as a whole, and key locations such as Parliament House.</li> </ul> <p>e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public parklands with their broader setting elements that form the basis for the popular presentation of the city as a garden-like city and as a city in the landscape.</li> <li>• View from the top lookout on Mt Ainslie, particularly south along the Land Axis.</li> <li>• View from the top lookouts on Black Mountain, particularly east along the Water Axis towards the National Triangle.</li> <li>• View from the top lookout on Red Hill across the Central National Area to Black Mountain on one side and Mt Pleasant on the other.</li> <li>• Open, expansive views across Lake Burley Griffin from the parklands and lake edge.</li> <li>• Views of national buildings in a parkland setting within the Parliamentary Triangle.</li> </ul>

Location	Identified National Heritage Values (taken from Australian Heritage Council NHL Assessment)	Attributes Relevant to the Project
	<p>horticulture. Its ensemble of planned city features demonstrating successive twentieth century urban design and planning approaches adds up to a showcase of outstanding value to the nation.</p> <p>g) Social Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canberra has special association with Australians as the nation's capital and seat of the federal democracy. Canberra also has a special association for Indigenous Australians as the place where significant progress has been made towards Indigenous rights and reconciliation.</li> </ul> <p>h) Significant People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canberra has special associations with the lives and works of Prime Ministers and Governors-General of Australia as a group and individual town planners Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View of the Australian Parliament House as the focal point at the end of a tree-lined boulevard, as seen when travelling towards Parliament House along Commonwealth Avenue and Kings Avenue.</li> <li>• Views of Lake Burley Griffin from Commonwealth Avenue—partial, passing views of Lake Burley Griffin are important for their value in establishing the lake as the principal 'ornament' of the city's national area and a key design feature visually linking the north and south sides of the city.</li> </ul> <p>f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Griffins' use of topography in the arrangement of the early city and its layout in accordance with its two principal axes—the Land and Water axes.</li> <li>• The use of geometry in the layout and organisation of the early city. The physical expression of the Griffins' geometry is legible in the 1925 gazetted road layout including the use of the semicircles, circles, the hexagonal shape of London Circuit, the use of radial road patterns, the use of topography to establish principal road alignments and the formation of the Parliamentary Triangle (by Commonwealth, Kings and Constitution Avenues).</li> <li>• The tree-lined boulevards of King Edward and King George Terraces, and Commonwealth, Kings and Constitution Avenues with their associated visible terminal axis features including Parliament House and City Hill (including its landscaped park).</li> </ul>

Location	Identified National Heritage Values (taken from Australian Heritage Council NHL Assessment)	Attributes Relevant to the Project
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of Lake Burley Griffin as a design element linking the dispersed elements of the city.</li> <li>• City 'ornaments' including the Captain Cook Jet, the National Carillon and night lighting display in the Parliamentary Triangle and along the water edge of Lake Burley Griffin.</li> <li>• The planned nature of the city—its design and plantings.</li> <li>• The compact layout of the early city reflecting public transport considerations. The 1925 gazetted road layout indicates the size and layout of the early city.</li> <li>• The high proportion of tree planting in the public domain within the central national area of Canberra.</li> <li>• The application of high standards of urban design in the Parliamentary Triangle and along Anzac Parade.</li> </ul> <p>g) Social Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central National Area, and key locations such as Parliament House.</li> </ul> <p>h) Significant People</p> <p>Associative value with place as a whole, both Parliament Houses, Governor General's residence and grounds and Prime Minister's Lodge and grounds.</p>

## Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands


Nominated National and Commonwealth Heritage Place (Place ID: 105230)

Location	Heritage Values Summary from Heritage Assessment (Taken from heritage assessment prepared for NCA) <sup>1</sup>	Attributes Relevant to the Project
 <p>Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands CHL Nomination Boundary. (Source: &lt;<a href="https://environment.gov.au/heritage/laws/public_documents/pubs/105230_map_nomination_20201125.pdf">https://environment.gov.au/heritage/laws/public_documents/pubs/105230_map_nomination_20201125.pdf</a>&gt;)</p>	<p>a) Events and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important for its association with the creation of the national capital and subsequent phases of national development.</li> </ul> <p>b) Rarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A unique and creative aspect of Australia's most successful urban plan.</li> <li>• The study area possesses research potential relating to the study of the history and development of urban design, water engineering and key practitioners in this area.</li> </ul> <p>d) Representativeness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represents the characteristics of the City Beautiful/Garden City Movement, associated with the design of the lake, and International Modernism, associated with its construction, its edge treatments and features, including the bridges.</li> </ul> <p>e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valued by Australians and Canberrans for views, as a setting to national institutions and its formal and organic contributions to the landscape.</li> </ul> <p>f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An essential component of the Griffin Plan, to link and unify the axes and vistas of the plan to the underlying landform of the place.</li> </ul> <p>g) Social Value</p>	<p>a) Events and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lake as a whole including all features: its edge treatments, the Captain Cook Water Jet, bridges, dam and islands, and its relationship to the geometry of Griffin's plan for Canberra.</li> </ul> <p>b) Rarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lake as a whole including all features: its edge treatments, the Captain Cook Water Jet, bridges, dam and islands, and its relationship to the geometry of Griffin's plan for Canberra.</li> </ul> <p>c) Research Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lake Burley Griffin in its landscape context—the overall form of the lake is evidence of the intact geometry and concepts of the Griffin Plan.</li> <li>• The edge treatments of the lake, including the bridges, as evidence of the overlay of modernist discourses upon the original plan.</li> </ul> <p>d) Representativeness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lake in its landscape and urban context.</li> </ul> <p>e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The presence of the lake in views of and within central Canberra, and the availability of views from publicly accessible locations.</b></li> </ul>

Location	Heritage Values Summary from Heritage Assessment (Taken from heritage assessment prepared for NCA) <sup>1</sup>	Attributes Relevant to the Project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant to communities for its landmark value, as a symbol of Canberra and as an iconic cultural landscape symbolic of local identity.</li> </ul> <p>h) Significant People Associated with important groups and individuals involved in the creative and technical aspects of the lake's design and construction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managed parkland settings with opportunities for passive and active recreation.</li> </ul> <p>f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lake as a whole and all its elements including foreshore plantings, bridges, its relationship to the land axes, the designed foreshore parklands and important foreshore developments.</li> </ul> <p>g) Social Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal design elements that are seen as part of the Griffin design.</li> <li>• <b>The presence of the lake in views of and within central Canberra.</b></li> </ul> <p>h) Significant People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lake as a whole, including all its designed and engineered elements.</li> </ul>

## Parliament House Vista


Commonwealth Heritage Place (Place ID: 105466)

Location	Heritage Values Summary	Attributes Relevant to the Project
 <p>Parliament House Vista Commonwealth Heritage place (also showing Australian War Memorial and Anzac Parade National Heritage Place). (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<p>a) Events and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The central national area of Canberra is strongly associated with the history of politics and government in Australia and the development of Canberra as the Australian National Capital.</li> </ul> <p>e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual impact of the extensive open sweeping vista along the land axis that can be experienced in two directions, the designed axes set within natural features of forested hills, patterns and textures of architectural massing accentuated by planned open spaces, water planes and tree plantings that are arranged across the area.</li> <li>The Vista's visual drama with its ability to engage viewers in the visual perspective of the sweeping vista to the terminal features.</li> </ul> <p>f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant for symbolic representation of the democratic interchange between the people and their elected representatives and its use of the natural landforms to generate a strong planning geometry.</li> <li>The Vista, incorporating the central national area, is the core of the most ambitious and most successful example of twentieth century urban planning in Australia.</li> </ul> <p>g) Social Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong and special associations with the broad Australian community because of its social values as a symbol of Australia and the federal government.</li> </ul>	<p>a) Events and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The concentration of buildings, parklands and gardens that support Commonwealth parliamentary and governmental activity as well as, to some extent, national cultural life, such as Old Parliament House and Curtilage, East Block Government Offices, the National Library of Australia, the High Court of Australia and the Aboriginal Embassy site.</li> </ul> <p>e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The extensive vista along the land axis</b>, the forested hills, patterns and textures of architectural massing accentuated by planned open spaces, water features and tree plantings, artworks, the terminal features plus the interplay of scale and texture in the designed landscape.</li> </ul> <p>f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>whole of the vista</b>, including all elements and features contained within it, as well as the natural wooded hills beyond.</li> </ul> <p>g) Social Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memorial features including sculptures, plaques, commemorative trees, water features and gardens. Also, recreational landscape spaces and gathering spaces in which the community may demonstrate.</li> </ul> <p>h) Significant People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>whole of the vista</b>, its planned layout, and the view from the top of Mount Ainslie which illustrates the realisation of Marion Mahony Griffin's perspective drawing.</li> </ul>

Location	Heritage Values Summary	Attributes Relevant to the Project
	<p>h) Significant People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The central national area has a special association with its designers—Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin; chief architect of the Commonwealth Government—John Smith Murdoch; Superintendent of Parks, Gardens and Afforestation—Thomas Charles Weston; and notable NCDC planners—Sir John Overall, Peter Harrison and Paul Reid.</li> </ul>	


## West Block and Dugout

Commonwealth Heritage Place (Place ID: 105428)

Location	Heritage Values Summary	Attributes Relevant to the Project
 <p>West Block and Dugout Commonwealth Heritage Place. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<p>a) Events and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important for its association with Federation, as part of Provisional Parliament House group.</li> </ul> <p>b) Rarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group of government buildings is uncommon. Only one similar formal grouping exists in Australia, the Commonwealth and State offices group in Brisbane, also designed by John Smith Murdoch.</li> </ul> <p>e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The unpretentious style of the building with its low horizontal massing, the role of the building as part of a group linked by architectural style and function, and the contribution of the group as a feature of the designed landscape of the Parliamentary Triangle, are significant aesthetic qualities.</li> </ul> <p>f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Block is a significant component of the Parliament House Secretariat group, which also includes East Block and the Provisional Parliament House.</li> </ul> <p>h) Significant People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has associations with the formative days of the National Library, the relocation phase of the Federal Capital, the planning and architecture of John Smith Murdoch and Walter Burley Griffin, and the evolution of federal government administration in Canberra.</li> </ul>	<p>a) Events and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the <b>original form and fabric</b> of West Block, and of the Dugout.</li> </ul> <p>b) Rarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>location and appearance</b> of West Block in <b>relation to the group and Parliamentary Triangle and the Land Axis</b>.</li> </ul> <p>e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The external <b>form and appearance</b> of building, plus its <b>landscaped setting</b>, especially in <b>relation to the Parliamentary Triangle</b>.</li> </ul> <p>f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>appearance and location</b> of the building plus its <b>designed landscape in relation to the group</b> and the Parliamentary Triangle</li> </ul> <p>h) Significant People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The original form and fabric of the building.</li> </ul>


# State Circle Cutting

Commonwealth Heritage Place (Place ID: 105733)

Location	Heritage Values Summary	Attributes Relevant to the Project
 <p data-bbox="203 759 752 815">State Circle Cutting Commonwealth Heritage Place. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<p data-bbox="824 376 1093 400">a) Events and Processes</p> <ul data-bbox="824 413 1357 552" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="824 413 1357 552">• The unconformity at the Cutting is a significant geological feature, and along with the nearby Capital Hill feature it provides keys to the interpretation of the ancient geological landscape in the Canberra region.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="824 563 920 587">b) Rarity</p> <ul data-bbox="824 600 1308 652" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="824 600 1308 652">• The place is one of the few sites that exposes the Early Silurian unconformity.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="824 663 1066 687">d) Representativeness</p> <ul data-bbox="824 700 1357 783" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="824 700 1357 783">• The site is a geological benchmark site for the Early to Mid-Silurian age of the Canberra region.</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="1391 376 1883 429">(Note: attributes are not individually defined by value.)</p> <ul data-bbox="1391 442 1924 552" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1391 442 1924 552">• The <b>whole cutting</b>, located immediately adjacent to traffic lanes in State Circle at Capital Hill between Commonwealth Avenue and Kings Avenue.</li> </ul>


## Reserve Bank of Australia

Commonwealth Heritage Place (Place ID: 105396)

Location	Heritage Values Summary	Attributes Relevant to the Project
 <p>Reserve Bank of Australia Commonwealth Heritage Place. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<p>d) Representativeness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One of three buildings in the precinct demonstrating the Stripped Classical style of architecture linked by a landscape plaza also expressing a geometric minimalist style. The sculptural work in the Reserve Bank demonstrates the sculptural styles of the times and the role of art to adorn public places.</li></ul> <p>e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The elegance of the building's minimalist design style links it harmoniously with the precinct. Its location, as visually subservient to the former Law Courts building, enhances the Court's projection of authority and dignity. The Reserve Bank contributes enframement to the visual axis of the Black Mountain vista.</li></ul> <p>e) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Important as a major component of the Law Courts Precinct, which contributes to Canberra's townscape as a terminating point for University Avenue at City Hill.</li></ul>	<p>d) Representativeness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The building's Stripped Classical style demonstrated by the features noted above. Also the sculptural work of Gerald and Margo Lewers.</li></ul> <p>e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Its harmony within the precinct resulting from style, scale, form, colour and materials plus its visual relationship to the axis of the Black Mountain vista.</li></ul> <p>f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The building's designed relationship to the Law Courts Precinct.</li></ul>

## National Land Roads


Nominated Commonwealth Heritage Place (Place ID: 106324)



Location	Heritage Values Summary (From 'Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra Commonwealth Heritage Assessments' report prepared for NCA in 2014. <sup>2</sup> )	Attributes Relevant to the Project
 <p>Nomination boundary for National Land Roads (note: Dunrossil Drive not shown). (Source: Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra, Duncan Marshall, 2014)</p>	<p>a) Events and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commonwealth and Kings Avenues are significant as an integral and major part of Walter Burley Griffin's 1911 plan for the national capital, and their realisation is associated with the evolution of the cultural landscape of the nation's capital.</li> <li>Commonwealth and Kings Avenues are two of the three major avenues defining the edges of the National Triangle and the initial design of the national capital is a highly significant part of Australia's and Canberra's history.</li> </ul> <p>b) Rarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commonwealth and Kings Avenues are significant, being relatively rare as original and major parts of Griffin's design representing two sides of his planned National Triangle.</li> <li>Commonwealth and Kings Avenues help to demonstrate the planning of a national capital which is an uncommon aspect of Australia's cultural history.</li> </ul>	<p>Attributes that embody the heritage values of Commonwealth and Kings Avenues have not been formally specified in the heritage assessment; however, the following relevant attributes have been distilled from the information provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The siting, alignment and width of Commonwealth and Kings Avenues.</b></li> <li><b>Plantings—layout and mix of native and exotic species.</b></li> <li>Use of Commonwealth Avenue as a major thoroughfare linking the Barton Highway/Federal highway/Northbourne Avenue in the north with the roads to Woden (Adelaide Avenue) and Canberra Avenue and south to Cooma and the Monaro region.</li> <li><b>Views north and south along Commonwealth Avenue.</b></li> </ul> <p>The <b>visual</b> and spatial relationship of <b>Commonwealth Avenue with Kings and Constitution Avenues.</b></p>


Location	Heritage Values Summary (From 'Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra Commonwealth Heritage Assessments' report prepared for NCA in 2014. <sup>2)</sup> )	Attributes Relevant to the Project
	<p>c) Research Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cultural landscape of the national capital, including Commonwealth and Kings Avenues, is significant from a research aspect in providing, through an examination of records and landscape elements, information and an understanding of the landscaping of the capital's cultural landscape.</li> </ul> <p>d) Representativeness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commonwealth and Kings Avenues are significant as good examples in Canberra of an important type of landscape—wide tree-lined avenues—which are an important feature in Canberra's planning and landscape.</li> </ul> <p>f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commonwealth and Kings Avenues are significant as major parts of a landscape/urban design that <b>represented a paradigm shift in urban planning in Australia.</b></li> <li>Commonwealth and Kings Avenues are an <b>integral part of the designed national capital, acclaimed for its design excellence</b>, which is of importance in the history of Australia and its capital city.</li> </ul> <p>h) Significant People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commonwealth and Kings Avenues have special associations with Walter Burley Griffin and Charles Weston, both persons of importance in Australia's cultural history.</li> </ul>	



## ACT Heritage Register Places


Places listed or nominated to the ACT Heritage Register relevant to the project. Note that information has been excerpted from the ACT Heritage Register unless otherwise cited.

Place Name/Location/ID	Summary Citation	Attributes Relevant to the Project
<p><b>City Hill (Registered No. 20002)</b></p>  <p>City Hill ACT Heritage place. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Hill represents an important element of urban design and is an integral component of the Griffin Plan. It is a generating point for the major avenues of Civic and its plantings provide visual corridors for those avenues.</li> <li>• Aesthetically, City Hill provides an important landscaped open space within the Central Business District and enables views of the key topographical elements of the city to be seen from the hill.</li> <li>• The verticality created by the trees and flagpole forms a landmark for the city.</li> <li>• Plantings have historical significance due to their association with Thomas Charles Weston, Superintendent of Parks and Gardens.</li> <li>• City Hill is also of local historical significance because of its association with the first visit of a reigning British monarch to Canberra.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All grassed areas.</li> <li>• <b>Axial plantings of <i>Cupressus sempervirens</i> 'Stricta'</b>;</li> <li>• <b>11 oval shaped groups of <i>Cupressus sempervirens</i> 'Stricta'</b>;</li> <li>• <b>all groups of <i>Pinus radiata</i> between the axial plantings</b>;</li> <li>• <b>plantings of <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i></b>; and</li> <li>• the metal flagpole in its existing location.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Melbourne and Sydney Buildings (Registered No. 20032)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The buildings are good examples of the Inter-War Mediterranean style.</li> <li>• The Melbourne and Sydney Buildings were the earliest major developments in Civic, and are commercial buildings, associated with the early development of Canberra.</li> <li>• The buildings were based on design principles set by prominent architect, J S Sulman and the design work was finalised by J H Kirkpatrick.</li> <li>• The Melbourne and Sydney Buildings have played and continue to play a role as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exterior façade of the Melbourne and Sydney Buildings;</li> <li>• remaining original interiors;</li> <li>• central courtyards and remaining internal lightwells; and</li> <li>• London Plane trees (<i>Platanus × acerfolia</i>) in the interior courtyards of both buildings.</li> </ul>

Place Name/Location/ID	Summary Citation	Attributes Relevant to the Project
 <p>Melbourne and Sydney Buildings ACT Heritage place. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<p>landmarks in Civic. They provided a focus in establishing the early character and scale of the city's retail and business area, and they dominated development in Civic from the 1920s until the late 1950s.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Melbourne and Sydney Buildings' design and details exhibit particular aesthetic characteristics, which were inherent in the original design and are valued by the community today.</li> <li>• The London Plane trees are rare large specimens of their species in the ACT.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Albert Hall (Registered No. 20070)</b></p>  <p>Albert Hall ACT Heritage Place. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prime example of public architecture of the foundational federal capital era of 1911 to 1939. As with Old Parliament House, Albert Hall expresses the aim for a distinctive architectural character for Canberra equal to its role as the national capital.</li> <li>• Aesthetic significance is embodied in the architecture, the landscape and the interior design of the place. Embodies the early life of the federal capital, a life characterised by community involvement in civic events, and in the national and community life of the early capital.</li> <li>• Publicly constructed place of gathering for the federal and local community of Canberra. It is notable as one of a number of halls constructed within the early federal capital.</li> <li>• A landmark adjacent to the Parliamentary Triangle and the thoroughfare from City Hill to Parliament House.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the <b>Albert Hall, including original exterior</b> elements;</li> <li>• <b>two Atlantic cedars</b> (<i>Cedrus atlantica</i>) to the east of the hall;</li> <li>• the remaining elements of the <b>former rose garden</b>;</li> <li>• the sun dial and pedestal to the east of the hall;</li> <li>• <b>the three Pinus sp. and three London plane trees</b> (<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>) to the south of the hall;</li> <li>• the <b>historical boundary</b> of the Albert Hall as shown on the attached site plan;</li> <li>• the <b>adjacent landscape and its historical setting, including views and vistas to the former Hotel Canberra, Lake Burley Griffin and Commonwealth Avenue</b>;</li> </ul>


Place Name/Location/ID	Summary Citation	Attributes Relevant to the Project
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the <b>road verges and plantings</b> contained therein to the east, west and south of Block 1 Section 39 Yarralumla; and</li> <li>the <b>original entrance loop road</b> from Commonwealth Avenue.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Canberra Croquet Clubhouse and Lawns (Registered No. 20001)</b></p>  <p>Canberra Croquet Clubhouse and Lawns ACT Heritage Place. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Croquet Club operated as a 'women only' sporting club from 1928 to 1975. This club was one of the few early social focal points for women associated with parliamentarians and government officials.</li> <li>The clubhouse and lawns contribute to the historic streetscape along Commonwealth Avenue, which includes the architecturally important Hyatt Hotel Canberra and Albert Hall.</li> <li>The croquet lawns are intrinsic to the landscape setting of the Hotel Canberra. The design of the club house and associated structures reflects the Federal Capital Architecture style of the adjacent hotel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>the croquet lawns;</b></li> <li><b>the clubhouse;</b></li> <li><b>the furniture fixtures and fittings</b> around the lawn; and</li> <li>those <b>trees within the property</b> boundary proposed for listing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hotel Canberra (Interim Listing) (Registered No. 20090)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Hotel Canberra has historical, social and architectural significance relating to the early years of Canberra's development.</li> <li>Built as the first hostel (Hostel No. 1), it formed part of the early visual and social fabric of the developing city.</li> <li>One of a number of buildings designed by the Commonwealth Architect JS Murdoch in the Garden-Pavilion style peculiar to Canberra.</li> <li>It exemplifies the design attributes of the Federal Capital at that time, in particular the garden city concept of Walter Burley Griffin.</li> <li>It is important for its contribution to an understanding of early Canberra architecture. The plan and elevation of the building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the central building and its interior;</li> <li>the associated pavilions and courtyards; and</li> <li><b>the garden setting.</b></li> </ul>

Place Name/Location/ID	Summary Citation	Attributes Relevant to the Project
 <p data-bbox="203 643 795 699">Hotel Canberra ACT Heritage Place. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<p data-bbox="880 260 1346 339">combine with the architectural detailing to produce a building complex of considerable aesthetic appeal.</p> <ul data-bbox="824 355 1346 435" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The garden design by Thomas Weston still retains much of the original plantings and layout.</li> </ul>	
<p data-bbox="203 746 501 770"><b>The Civic Square Precinct</b></p>  <p data-bbox="203 1177 757 1233">Civic Square Precinct ACT Heritage Place. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<ul data-bbox="824 754 1368 1137" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant for social and cultural values as an important central location and open space for public use, celebrations and cultural events and for expressions of democratic freedoms through protest.</li> <li>• Significant for its planning and design that put the people ahead of built scale by providing an open contemporary and accessible space for them.</li> <li>• The framing of the square by the North and South Buildings designed by Yuncken Freeman and the podium and Canberra Theatre Centre to the west is significant.</li> </ul>	<ul data-bbox="1400 754 1928 1313" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic Square Precinct including open space, the outer square formed by the vertical sides of the buildings, landscaping and amenities that are suitable for passive recreation, water features, hard paving, lighting and steps/large landing looking out over the Square.</li> <li>• Ainslie Place including landscaping and amenities suitable for passive recreation and create a sense of enclosure at a human-scale.</li> <li>• The North and South Buildings; Canberra Theatre Centre.</li> <li>• <b>City Hill—Mount Ainslie axis as evidenced by symmetry and balance of features on either side of the axis;</b> and maintaining open space along the axis so as not to restrict views and movement along the axis.</li> </ul>

Place Name/Location/ID	Summary Citation	Attributes Relevant to the Project
<p data-bbox="197 260 436 284"><b>Law Courts Precinct</b></p>  <p data-bbox="197 695 703 751">ACT Law Courts ACT Heritage Place. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<ul data-bbox="824 272 1368 703" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The precinct is significant as a comparatively rare and successful example of twentieth century civic design incorporating three buildings which differently express the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical style, to a National Capital Development Commission masterplan and control drawings.</li> <li>• The contribution of the precinct to Canberra's townscape is noteworthy and the siting of the buildings gives due prominence especially to the Law Courts which closes the vista along University Avenue at City Hill.</li> <li>• All the buildings contribute to the scale and proportions of the square, and provide unity in use of materials and detailing.</li> </ul>	<ul data-bbox="1400 272 1921 539" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Features of the buildings which demonstrate Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical style.</li> <li>• Siting, scale, materials, detailing and spatial arrangement of buildings within the Precinct.</li> <li>• <b>Vista along University Avenue terminating with the Law Courts of the Australian Capital Territory building.</b></li> </ul>


## Other Identified Historic Heritage Places

### Parliament House and Surrounds

Location	Identified Historic Heritage Values	Attributes Relevant to the Project
 <p>Parliament House and its surrounds, defined by blue line. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)</p>	<p>(b) Rarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rare in Australia in the way it is incorporated with the natural and designed landscape and for its success in integrating a building complex of such magnitude as an earth sheltered construction.</li> </ul> <p>(e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Siting of Parliament House on Capital Hill places it at the central location of Griffin's design and symbolically at the centre of the nation.</li> <li>Parliament House has been successfully integrated into Walter Burley Griffin's concept for central Canberra and in particular his Land Axis.</li> <li>The building's design was specifically chosen because of its compatibility with and sensitivity to Griffin's plan. This was done by in effect incorporating the building into Capital Hill, thus respecting Griffin's principle that the landscape should be the dominant element in his plan for the city.</li> </ul> <p>(f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High degree of creative and technical achievement for the way it integrates with the landscape in completing the central Canberra City order and building a strong relationship to Griffin's radiating road pattern; culminating the pyramidal terminus of the Parliamentary Triangle with a visual interpretation of form that echoes the form of Griffin's Capitol; addressing and being a feature of the Land Axis; and expressing Griffin's concept of a publicly</li> </ul>	<p>b) Rarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The whole building.</li> </ul> <p>(e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>entire complex and its visibility from locations in Canberra.</li> </ul> <p>(f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location and form on Capital Hill.</li> <li>Relationship with Griffin's radiating road pattern.</li> <li>Position on the Land Axis.</li> <li>Public accessibility.</li> <li>Landscaped gardens and setting.</li> </ul>

Location	Identified Historic Heritage Values	Attributes Relevant to the Project
	<p>accessible Capitol above the government to symbolise democracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The landscaped gardens that surround Parliament House create an important setting that fulfils a design aesthetic of the building rising from native bush land, a major feature of views of the building and a reflection of the Griffin concepts for the 'Capitol'.</li> </ul>	

## Commonwealth Avenue Bridge

Location	Identified Historic Heritage Values	Attributes Relevant to the Project
 <p>Commonwealth Avenue Bridge within its setting in Commonwealth Avenue and Lake Burley Griffin. (Source: Nearmap with GML Overlay, 2019)</p>	<p>(a) Events and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historically significant for its development by the NCDC as part of the Lake Burley Griffin Scheme and represents a significant part of Canberra's planning history, landscape design and development.</li> <li>Important for its design and engineering significance within Australia.</li> </ul> <p>(b) Rarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A rare example in Australia of a precast, post-tensioned, concrete bridge, embodying multi-web box segments.</li> <li>The bridge is rare for its design to have a symbolic pride of place in the national capital as part of the Lake Burley Griffin Scheme and for the integration of lighting within the handrail and parapet of the bridge in terms of bridge design within Australia.</li> </ul> <p>(c) Research Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates the advancement of structural engineering and bridge construction in Australia, particularly in the shift in material from steel to prestressed concrete in major bridge construction, and in the early use of digital computing in the design and structural analysis of its post-tensioned concrete superstructure.</li> </ul> <p>(d) Representativeness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representative of early development of segmented and prestressed concrete bridges in Australia, and of a class of design in modern bridges characterised by long slender spans, and a 'smooth-lined' and 'uncluttered' approach.</li> </ul> <p>(e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p>	<p>(a) Events and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the bridge's location and symbolic function in the national capital; and</li> <li>the concrete bridge construction.</li> </ul> <p>(b) Rarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the precast post-tensioned structure;</li> <li>complex multi-webbed box segments;</li> <li>aesthetically and architecturally sleek lines, as seen from different viewing points; and</li> <li>pioneering lighting integrated into the bridge design.</li> </ul> <p>(c) Research Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the whole bridge; and</li> <li>the bridge in its wider landscape setting.</li> </ul> <p>(d) Representativeness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the whole bridge, for its segmented and prestressed concrete construction; and</li> <li>the bridge, in conjunction with Kings Avenue Bridge, in its wider landscape setting.</li> </ul> <p>(e) Aesthetic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>simple, unadorned, and streamlined form, low-profile design, concrete materials and light colour;</li> <li>vertical pylons defining the 'ends/entry';</li> <li>aluminium railings with integrated strip lighting for night-time illumination;</li> <li>location and alignment—defining one arm of the National Triangle and providing symmetry with Kings Avenue Bridge;</li> <li>pedestrian/bicycle accessibility;</li> <li>openness around the bridge;</li> </ul>

Location	Identified Historic Heritage Values	Attributes Relevant to the Project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly valued by the Canberra community for its distinctive qualities and architectural design which complements the designed surrounding landscape setting.</li> <li>• Elegant and simple design of the bridge is appreciated both as a feature in its own right and as part of the broader designed landscape of the Central Canberra.</li> <li>• Valued as a key element in Canberra's design and planning and its visually distinctive and iconic qualities.</li> <li>• The views to and from the bridge, both during the day and night, are widely enjoyed and valued by the Canberra community.</li> </ul> <p>(f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates a high degree of creative and technical achievement in Canberra's building and development by the NCDC in the 1960s, and more generally in Australia's progress in the Post World War II period.</li> <li>• It was the first prestressed concrete bridge to employ multi-webbed precast box segments and is a very early example of the use of digital computers in bridge design and to analyse, and compute the structure and stress, influencing the physical design.</li> </ul> <p>(g) Social Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valued by the Canberra community as a key element within Canberra's designed landscape and planning, that supports movement around the city and brings the community together through public and private experiences.</li> <li>• An important landmark within Canberra and is a key part of the National Sorry Day march route.</li> </ul> <p>(h) Significant People</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• views to and from Commonwealth Avenue Bridge; and</li> <li>• context and visual setting of Lake Burley Griffin, national institutions, lakeside parklands and distant hills/mountains.</li> </ul> <p>(f) Creative or Technical Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the whole bridge, particularly multi-webbed precast box segments.</li> </ul> <p>(g) Social Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• social and cultural association for a substantial part of the Canberra community;</li> <li>• public accessibility (pedestrian and bicycle) and function;</li> <li>• location and alignment in Canberra's designed landscape;</li> <li>• design of Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, including all components which make up its form, scale, materials and colours;</li> <li>• visual setting comprising Lake Burley Griffin, national institutions, surrounding lakeside parklands, and hills/mountains; and</li> <li>• regular route for National Sorry Day march.</li> </ul> <p>(h) Significant People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Avenue Bridge and its landscape context.</li> </ul>

Location	Identified Historic Heritage Values	Attributes Relevant to the Project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="786 268 1339 488">Important for its association with the NCDC plus well-known international and national identities from the engineering and architecture profession of the time, including the engineering design firm G. Maunsell and Partners, the architectural firm W. Holford and Partners, and Australian construction firm, M.R Hornibrook Pty Ltd.</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> GML Heritage 2009, *Lake Burley Griffin Heritage Assessment – Final Report*, report prepared for the National Capital Authority.

<sup>2</sup> Duncan Marshall, C B, Navin Officer Heritage Consultants and Dr Warren Nicholls 2014, *Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra*, report prepared for National Capital Authority.

## **Appendix B—Commonwealth Avenue Natural Heritage Review**

# NATURAL HERITAGE REVIEW – COMMONWEALTH AVENUE LANDSCAPE STRUCTURE PLAN

## Light Rail 2B Stage Route: Commonwealth Avenue and Eastern State Circle

### Natural Heritage

Places of Natural Heritage are defined in the Australian Natural Heritage Charter (Australian Heritage Commission, 2002)<sup>1</sup>, Article 1, as sites or areas with associated natural features of *biodiversity*, *geodiversity* and *ecological processes* which demonstrate *natural significance*.

Natural significance is determined on the basis of the importance of the natural features for their existence value or for present or future generations, in terms of their scientific, aesthetic and life-support value.

The recognition of 'existence value' is an important distinction in the valuing of environmental features as natural heritage because it sets out that natural significance does not need to be justified on the basis of the role or service which a natural system or feature provides, but solely that it exists. This is a different approach than that of environmental impact assessment wherein the potential loss or damage to a natural system or entity is assessed by the effect of that loss (e.g. on other systems, the scientific data pool, living amenity, etc.)

Natural heritage value can pertain to a place whether or not it is included on a Territory, Commonwealth or National heritage list. These lists set criteria which qualify a place of natural heritage value for listing and nomination processes which select for the varying levels of significance. A place not on any heritage list may still have notable natural heritage value but has either not been through the nomination process or its value is below the threshold for inclusion.

Two further articles in the Australian Natural heritage Charter are relevant to the natural heritage values of the 2B Stage route:

- *Article 13: Some introduced elements may need to be considered as part of the ecosystem. Some may contribute permanently to the natural significance of the place. Others may need to be retained until a condition of sustainable integrity can be achieved.*
- *Article 14: Some remnants of natural ecosystems that have suffered degradation may never recover their natural integrity but nevertheless may have natural significance that should be conserved.*

### Background and Method

This preliminary identification and assessment of the natural heritage values on or adjacent to the Light Rail 2B Stage route will contribute to the Landscape Masterplan project. It is part of a desk-top investigation and compilation of heritage values of multiple heritage places in the study area, and will provide 'baseline data' for a 'Preliminary Heritage Advice' report.

The desktop heritage investigation looks at a number of sources, including recent environmental and biodiversity reports on the route, examination of historical imagery and aerial photos to chart landscape change over the locations, and databases of the Australian Heritage Council and ACT government. The findings from the main recent sources are set out below in Part 1. This is followed in Part 2 by a Review and Discussion section which is informed by the consultant's knowledge of the

natural heritage of the locality and limited field reconnaissance aimed at checking observations and findings in the sources.

## **PART 1 - Desktop Appreciation of Natural Heritage Issues**

### **Source 1: Commonwealth Heritage List: State Circle Cutting, State Ccl, Parkes, ACT, Australia (Listed Place 03/06/2005)<sup>2</sup>**

The State Circle cutting is an exposed rock face on the northern side of State Circle between Commonwealth Avenue and Kings Avenue, Parkes. The statement of significance in the listing includes its ranking by the Geological Society of Australia as being of high significance as an outstanding exposure of an important folding event. State Circle Cutting is an important locality for the interpretation of the early geology of the Canberra region.

The geological relationships revealed by its excavation in the early 1970's led to a major re-assessment of Ordovician and Silurian geology of the Canberra region, and led to the recognition of the Quidongan Movement as a significant tectonic event in southeast New South Wales. The place is one of the few sites that exposes the Early Silurian unconformity.

A note of caution is included in the condition assessment of the cutting:

*In the 33 years since its excavation, the cutting has suffered relatively little damage. However, a combination of natural weathering, the vibrations created by the high volume traffic flow on State Circle, and, to a lesser extent, the removal of rock samples by the public, has resulted in the partial destabilization of the outcrop. The accumulation of loose material at the base of the rock face provides evidence for this.*

### **Source 2: Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra (Duncan Marshal et al, 2014)<sup>3</sup>**

In this report the heritage assessments were undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) and the guidelines identifying commonwealth Heritage Values and Establishing a Heritage Register (Australian Heritage Council 2010). It covers a larger area than the Light Rail Extension 2B Stage route. Only those areas relevant to the 2B Stage route are described here.

#### *State Circle*

The road verge of State Circle includes the Commonwealth Heritage listed State Circle Cutting, a geological feature. At the time of the report, no new assessment has been undertaken for the cutting, and no information about the cutting is included in this assessment (given that it is already listed). The 2014 report noted that a heritage management plan is currently being prepared for the cutting.

The report notes that most of the road verges and median strips around State Circle support vegetation in varying states of alteration and manicure from the original vegetation which existed prior to European arrival. It concludes that these verges and median strips do not support a vegetation community of any significant natural heritage value, since they have a considerable invasion of grasses and, in most cases, extensive plantings of shrubs and trees that are different from the original vegetation. In the cases where plantings have been of species that are local to the region, this is not sufficient to give the place a natural heritage value sufficient to meet the criteria to the required threshold level. Hence, these places have been evaluated as not reaching the threshold level required to meet the present Commonwealth Heritage Criteria.

However, a section of the verge opposite the South African High Commission was found to contain approximately 0.85 ha of the Critically Endangered Yellow Box – Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodlands. The report concluded that the place qualifies as a listed ecological community for the Critically Endangered Yellow Box – Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands community under the EPBC Act Policy Statement on White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely’s Red Gum grassy woodlands and derived native grasslands (Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities 2006). This site is also identified as the habitat of the Endangered plant *Rutidosia leptorrhynchoides* (Button Wrinklewort), in the EPBC Act List of Threatened Flora and the ACT’s *Nature Conservation Act 1980* (Environment ACT 2006). During the inspection on 19 February 2012 no *Rutidosia* plants were identified. However, this site must be considered to be a possible habitat for this Endangered Species.

The report made the following conclusions against the Commonwealth Heritage List criteria:

a) Events, Processes	The State Circle woodland is significant in demonstrating the processes involved in the development of woodlands and the associated grasslands in Australia. The plant community is also important in demonstrating the life cycle of the woodland and associated grassland species. The Yellow Box – Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands have significant value against Criterion (a).
b) Rarity	It is important as a representative example of a rare and critically endangered ecological plant community and as the habitat for the Endangered plant <i>Rutidosia leptorrhynchoides</i> (Button Wrinklewort), as listed under the EPBC Act. The Yellow Box – Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands have significant value against Criterion (b).
c) Scientific	The State Circle woodland is important from a research aspect in providing information and understanding of the processes involved in the historic development of woodlands and associated grasslands in Australia. The Yellow Box – Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands have significant value against Criterion (c).
d) Characteristic values	It is important as a botanically distinct, identified ecological community. This plant community demonstrates the principal characteristics of a rare class of Australia’s natural places. The Yellow Box – Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands have significant value against Criterion (d).
f) Technical achievement	The use of native plantings for the road verges is also significant in the context of the overall development of the landscape of the national capital. Early plantings in Canberra tended to use exotic trees, and the evolution to the use of native trees is reflected in the circles.

### *Commonwealth Avenue*

The report found that the vegetation on the verges and median strips of Commonwealth Avenue do not comprise a community of any significant natural heritage value. The plantings are predominantly exotic and do not have Commonwealth Heritage values for natural heritage when tested against the Commonwealth Heritage Criteria. The report examines the notable cultural and historic heritage values of the exotic plantings.

---

**Source 3: Nomination to the Commonwealth Heritage List: National Land Roads, Commonwealth Ave, Parkes, ACT, Australia. ID 106324<sup>4</sup>**

The nomination concentrates on cultural heritage, but also includes the northwest quadrant of State Circle as natural heritage. This area is described as a narrow strip (approximately 0.85 ha) of Yellow Box – Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands, along State Circle which is immediately adjacent to a slightly larger example (approximately 1.7 ha) of the same habitat. There is vigorous regrowth of the two dominant overstorey eucalypt species as well as some of the understorey species. The overstorey species are *E. melliodora* and *E. blakelyi* with occasional trees of *E. bridgesiana* and *Acacia rubida*. The report assessed its condition as better than average when compared to many other examples of this particular community. The presence of woodland habitat to the east leading into Stirling Park, in similarly good condition and having the same plant community, means that there is a high potential for continued regeneration of native species.

No natural heritage values for Commonwealth Avenue are included in the nomination.

---

**Source 4: Canberra Light Rail – Stage 2: Ecological Constraints Assessment. Draft Report by Biosis prepared for RPS Australia Asia Pacific, August 2017<sup>5</sup>**

Biosis Pty Ltd was commissioned by RPS Australia Asia Pacific (RPS) to conduct an ecological constraints assessment, to determine the potential impacts to biodiversity from the construction of the Stage 2 of the Canberra Light Rail (LRS2). This report informed a Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the project. The project extends from Civic to Parliamentary Triangle, along Commonwealth Avenue and south along Adelaide Avenue and Yarra Glen to Woden. Only the findings for the segments pertaining to 2B Stage route (Commonwealth Avenue and State Circle to Adelaide Avenue) are reported on here.

This report does not directly address natural heritage. It focuses on ecological constraints to proposed developments as part of the environmental impact assessment process. However, information on the natural significance of the natural environment are relevant to the consideration of natural heritage

The specific route(s) considered in this report was along Commonwealth Avenue and around Capital Circuit, with an option through the Parliamentary Triangle. Since this was an ecological assessment, it focussed on areas where native species predominated.

The reports findings of ecological constraints along the 2B Stage route are as follows:

Proposed alignment options	Vegetation type along alignment	Floristic composition	Ecological constraint
<b>Along Commonwealth Avenue (Design section 100)</b>			
Commonwealth Ave - Eastern extent	Woodland	Canopy: Southern Blue Gum <i>Eucalyptus bicostata</i> , Red Ironbark <i>E. sideroxylon</i> , Snow Gum <i>E. pauciflora</i> , Ribbon Gum <i>E. viminalis</i> . Mid-storey: Non existent Groundcover: Bare ground/leaf litter	Medium

<b>Between State Circle and Capital Circuit: (Design section 200)</b>			
Commonwealth Ave to Capital Cir through to Adelaide Ave	Woodland (poor condition)	Canopy: Snow Gum, Ribbon Gum. Mid-storey: Non existent Groundcover: Bare ground/leaf litter	Medium

For the Parliamentary Triangle option, the report only found ecological constraints at the junction of Sydney Avenue and the eucalypt stand between State Circle and Capital Circuit:

<b>Proposed alignment options</b>	<b>Vegetation type along alignment</b>	<b>Floristic composition</b>	<b>Ecological constraint</b>
<b>Parliamentary Triangle (Design section 300 'option')</b>			
Sydney Ave joining Capital Cir	Grassy woodland (poor condition)	Canopy: Ribbon Gum, Red Ironbark, Broad leaved peppermint <i>E. dives</i> , Brittle Gum <i>E. mannifera</i> , Yellow box <i>E. melliodora</i> . Mid-storey: Cootamundra wattle <i>Acacia baileyana</i> . Groundcover: Snow grass <i>Poa sieberiana</i> .	Medium

In its review of threatened species and communities drawn from an ACTmapi database search, the report found a 'high' likelihood of Button wrinklewort (*Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides*) occurring along the 2B Stage route in Open Woodland, Grassland and Urban Vegetation, and a 'medium' likelihood of the Striped legless lizard and Golden sun moth.

The report's preliminary conclusion was that, for the whole Stage 2 of the light rail (which includes the 2B Stage routes), the project is unlikely to significantly impact upon any EPBC Act and NC Act listed threatened ecological communities, flora or fauna species provided that areas of high constraints are avoided and construction in areas of medium ecological constraint should be minimised to the fullest practicable extent.

---

**Source 5: Commonwealth Park to Woden Preliminary Environmental Assessment: Biodiversity. Draft Report by Biosis prepared for Major Projects Canberra, July 2019<sup>6</sup>**

This study builds on the Biosis desktop and rapid field based ecological assessments (Biosis 2017) to determine the potential impacts to biodiversity from construction activities associated with the project. It focussed on the amended 2B Stage Route, which goes along Commonwealth Ave, around State Circle, and then south along Adelaide Avenue and Yarra Glen to Woden.

## Findings

### 1. Vegetation Communities

The vegetation was assessed and categorised into vegetation communities within the study area, in accordance with the Survey guidelines for determining lowland vegetation classification and condition in the ACT (CPR 2012). Three vegetation communities were identified within the 2B Stage route but these did not meet the criteria of any native ACT vegetation communities. These are listed below and shown on Figure 1.1. (An additional vegetation community, Kangaroo Grass Tableland Moist Tussock Grassland, was identified. This patch is outside the area which is the subject of the Landscape Masterplan. It is located just north of the proposed works along Adelaide Avenue, in between Adelaide Avenue and Guilfoyle Street).

<b>Modified Grassland</b>	
<b>Location</b>	On the median strips and edges of roads.
<b>Description</b>	Modified grasslands are identified as mown/landscaped areas of mixed native and exotic grasses. The underlying soils are highly modified and disturbed, lacking characteristic properties associated with natural landscapes. Modified grasslands occurred in areas with less than 10% tree canopy cover and an absent or reduced shrub layer. The typical groundcover species included Kikuyu <i>Pennisetum clandestinum</i> , African Lovegrass, Chilean Needle Grass <i>Nassella neesiana</i> , and Plantain <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> .  Golden Sun Moth were recorded throughout areas of modified grassland within the study area.
<b>Threatened ecological community</b>	This community does not meet the criteria for <i>Natural Temperate Grassland</i> based on the high percentage of exotic perennial groundcover.
<b>Urban Vegetation – Planted Native</b>	
<b>Location</b>	Areas of planted native vegetation are common throughout the study area, particularly in the vicinity of the Parliamentary zone.
<b>Description</b>	Planted native urban vegetation communities are not considered 'native vegetation' as defined under the NC Act. Despite the dominance of local native species, this community is highly modified and species compositions are considerably different to those classified under the NC Act.  Common tree species included Yellow Box <i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i> , Blakely's Red Gum <i>Eucalyptus blakelyi</i> , Argyle Apple <i>Eucalyptus cinerea</i> , Brittle Gum <i>Eucalyptus mannifera</i> , Silvertop Ash <i>Eucalyptus sieberi</i> , Ribbon Gum <i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i> , Apple Box <i>Eucalyptus bridgesiana</i> and Red Ironbark <i>Eucalyptus sideroxylon</i> . Southern Blue Gum <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> , a non-endemic native species was also common throughout the study area.
<b>Condition</b>	This community was recorded in moderate condition and provides valuable habitat for a range of local flora and fauna in an otherwise fragmented, urbanised landscape.
<b>Urban Vegetation – Planted Exotic</b>	
<b>Location</b>	This vegetation community was commonly located in built up areas and along major road verges.



Figure 1.1 Vegetation classification along the 2B Stage route from Biosis 2019.

## 2. Threatened Flora and Fauna

Targeted surveys were undertaken for EPBC Act and NC Act listed biota previously identified as having a medium or greater likelihood to occur within the study area (Biosis 2017).

Flora:

- Button Wrinklewort *Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides* (Endangered, EPBC Act and NC Act). Confirmed as flowering at the Australian National Botanic Gardens at time of survey.
- Canberra Spider Orchid *Caladenia actensis* (Critically Endangered, EPBC Act and Endangered, NC Act).
- Hoary Sunray *Leucochrysum albicans* var. *tricolor* (Endangered, EPBC Act). Confirmed as flowering at the Australian National Botanic Gardens at time of survey.
- Snake orchid *Diuris lanceolata* (Endangered, EPBC Act).
- Erect Pepper-cress *Lepidium pseudopapillosum* (Vulnerable, EPBC Act).

Fauna:

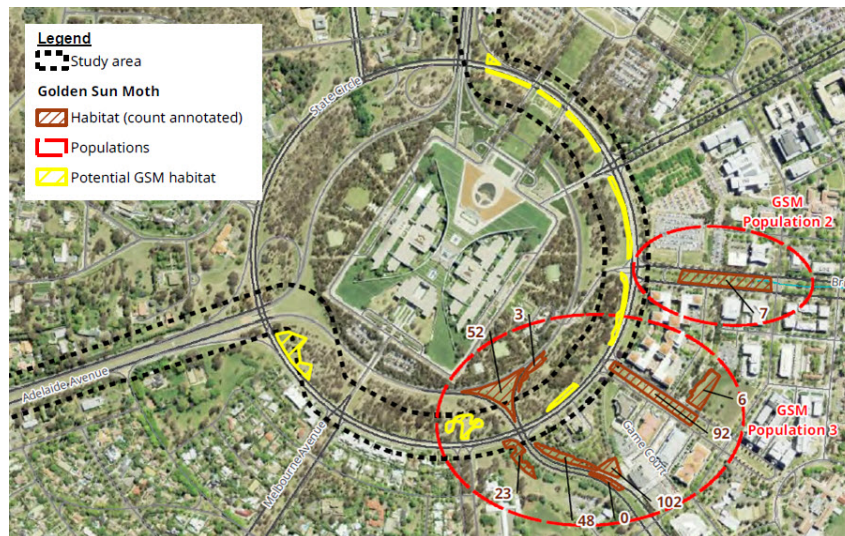
- Golden Sun Moth *Synemon plana* (Critically Endangered, EPBC Act and Endangered, NC Act).

Targeted surveys for the above species were undertaken along the proposed corridor in areas identified as most suitable to support threatened flora. This included areas that exhibited minimal recent disturbance and included unmown areas. Scattered records of Button Wrinklewort occur adjacent to the study area and as such resolving the occurrence of this species within the study area was a focus of the targeted surveys. Targeted surveys were completed at each plot/transect location and in additional areas exhibiting native diversity.

No threatened flora species were identified within the study area. The survey effort and timing of survey is considered adequate to confirm the absence of threatened flora within the study area.

A total of 334 individual Golden Sun Moths were encountered during targeted surveys conducted in the CP2W study area, with higher densities observed along Canberra Avenue and Sydney Avenue. Following the survey, geographical assessment of the study area was undertaken to quantify the areas of habitat deemed suitable for Golden Sun Moth. This assessment resulted in a total of 3.02 hectares of Golden Sun Moth Habitat identified within the study area.

An additional field assessment conducted in vegetation patches around State Circle, conducted on 11 March 2019, resulted in the identification of a further 1.19 hectares of Golden Sun Moth habitat.



**Figure 1.2** Findings of Golden Sun Moth targeted surveys from Biosis 2019.

No suitable habitat for Striped Legless Lizard was identified during the field assessments as the study area lacked habitat features commonly utilised by the species as shelter including structurally complex native grasslands dominated by tussock-forming grasses over ground with soil cracks and lightly embedded rocks or woody debris.

In summary, the report found that:

- No threatened ecological communities occur within the study area.
- No threatened plant species were recorded within the study area during any of the field assessments. Given the results of the completed desktop and field assessments, it is considered highly unlikely that any threatened flora species occur within the study area.
- The habitat provided by the open woodland was not linked to any threatened fauna however, the modified grasslands across the study area were found to support three separate populations of Golden Sun Moth.

As the Golden Sun Moth is listed under the EPBC Act, an SIC assessment against the *Matters of National Environmental Significance: Significant impact guidelines 1.1* (CoA 2013a) for the EPBC Act were undertaken. Based on this assessment, referral to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Energy under the EPBC Act was recommended.

---

**Source 6: Canberra Light Rail - Commonwealth Park to Woden Preliminary Environmental Assessment, Report by RPS Group prepared for Major Projects Canberra, July 2019<sup>7</sup>**

This assessment report used the findings of the 2019 Biosis biodiversity report to conclude for the 2B Stage route as follows:

The Study Area was originally vegetated by Southern Tableland Grassy Woodland and was substantially cleared for European settlement and used for agriculture. During the building of Canberra,

plantings have occurred with native and non-native species. Some of these plantings were strategic to provide improved aesthetics as well as to provide wind breaks and to stabilise the soil.

The field surveys by Biosis identified that the alignment has the following vegetation communities:

- Modified grasslands.
- Urban vegetation (exotics).
- Urban vegetation (planted natives).

While a review of published ecological records that identified one endangered ecological community (EEC), five threatened plant species, and two threatened animal species have the potential to occur in the Study Area, field studies confirmed that:

- neither EEC nor any threatened plant species are present in the Study Area;
- the only threatened animal species present in the Study Area is the Golden Sun Moth, which is critically endangered, and found:
  - on Sydney Avenue, between the National Circuit and State Circle;
  - on Canberra Avenue, including its intersection with State Circle;
  - potential golden sun moth habitats within State Circle.

The assessment also noted that there is vegetation in the Study Area comprising a mix of maintained verged and amenity-planted trees that provide suitable habitat for common native flora and fauna. This vegetation habitat remains important to natural ecological processes of the area and region, but it is not listed or protected.

The assessment proposed to address the risks posed by potential impacts to these values by:

- developing reasonable and feasible design solutions to avoid, otherwise minimize and manage impacts on golden sun moth habitat;
- realizing design solutions to minimize vegetation, tree and shrub loss to the Project;
- determining if any lost values need 'offsetting' and planning for this; and
- developing construction management solutions to protect ecological values in the corridor, focused on tree protection, management and clearing.

---

**Source 7: Canberra Light Rail Stage 2B Golden Sun Moth Surveys, Draft Report by Arup prepared for Major Projects Canberra, June 2020<sup>8</sup>**

This report presents the findings of targeted surveys for Golden Sun Moth within the Commonwealth Park to Woden alignment and Mitchell Depot expansion area (the Stage 2B Light Rail footprint). The study builds upon the results of previous investigations completed for the project including the reports reviewed above:

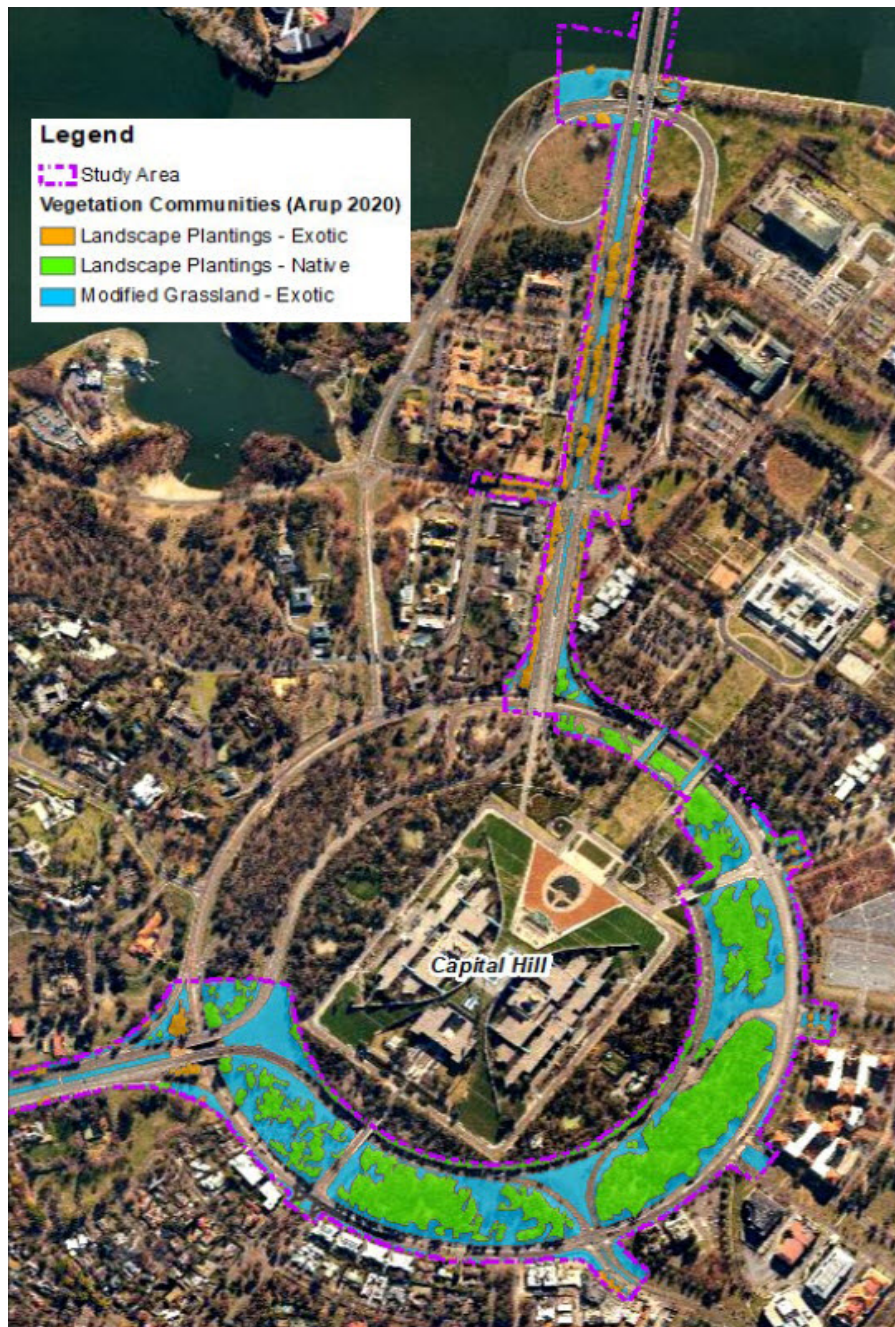
- City to Woden light Rail – Preliminary Environmental Assessment: Biodiversity State Circle Draft Report (Biosis, 2019)

- City to Woden Light Rail – Ecological constraints assessment (Biosis, 2017).

Along the 2B Stage route, four vegetation communities were identified; exotic grassland, native landscape (tree) plantings, exotic landscape (tree) plantings, and Kangaroo Grass moist tussock grassland. (The Kangaroo Grass moist tussock grassland is not part of the 2B Stage route considered by the Landscape Masterplan.) The remaining three communities were described as follows:

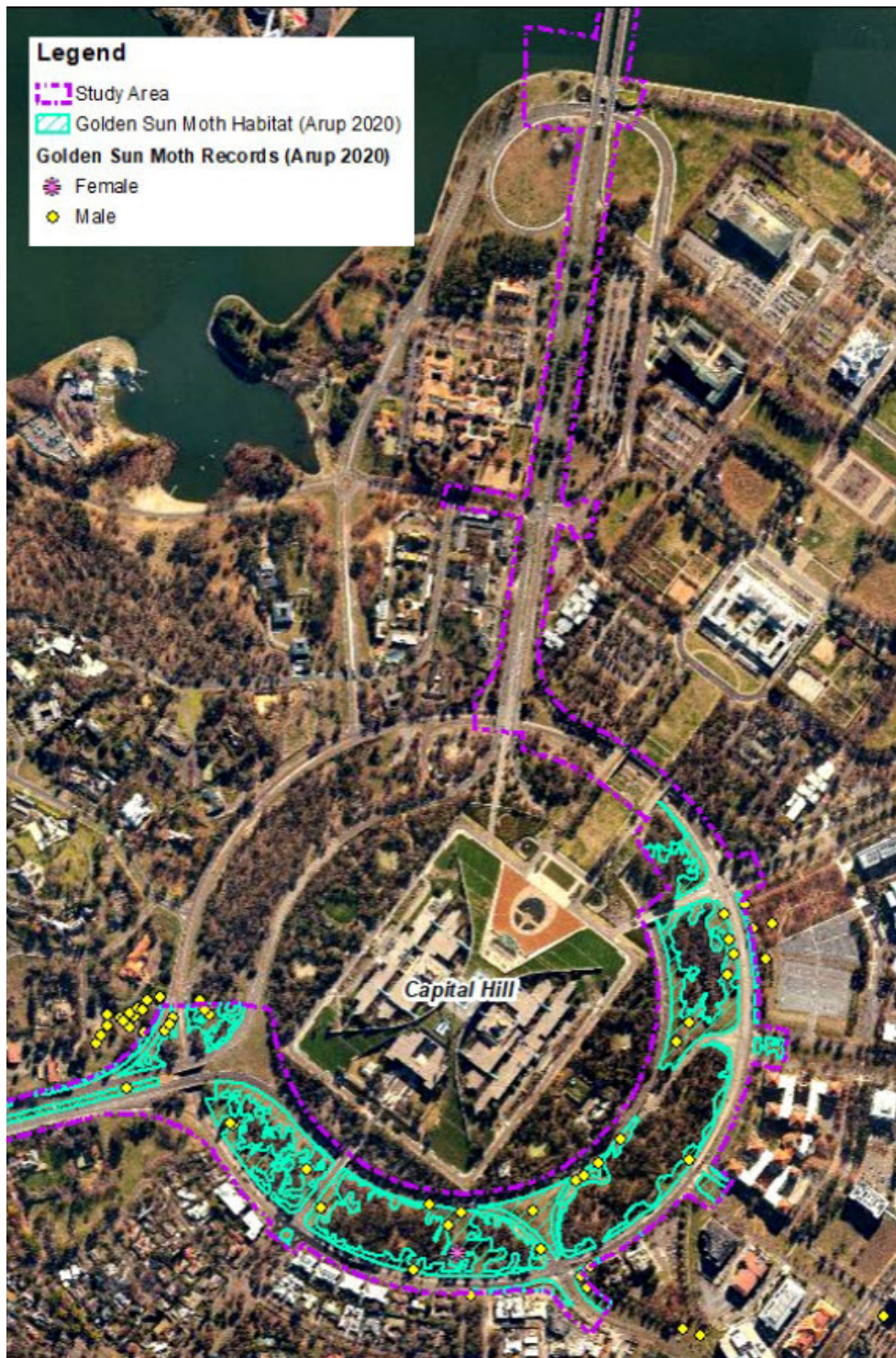
Vegetation Community	Description
<b>Exotic Grassland</b>	<p>This vegetation community occurred within roadside verges and medians throughout the Stage 2B alignment. Vegetation was characterised by a dominance of exotic grasses within the understorey and a general lack of canopy and shrub layers.</p> <p>The groundlayer was dominated by perennial grasses including Chilean Needle Grass <i>Nassella neesiana</i>*, Phalaris <i>aquatica</i>* and/ or Green Couch <i>Cynodon Dactylon</i>* and Dallis Grass <i>Paspalum dilatatum</i>*. Goose Grass <i>Eleusine tristachya</i>* and African Lovegrass <i>Eragrostis curvula</i>* were also dominant in some areas within the Stage 2B alignment. Native perennial grasses including <i>Rytidosperma</i> sp. were generally rare (&lt;3%). Dominant exotic annuals observed throughout included Squirrel tail Fescue <i>Vulpia bromoides</i>* and <i>Bromus</i> sp.* with some exotic forbs including Storksbill <i>Erodium</i> sp., Capeweed <i>Arctotheca calendula</i>*, <i>Trifolium</i> sp.*, Flatweed <i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>* and Ribbon Plantain <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>*.</p> <p>Better condition patches were observed on the eastern side of Commonwealth Avenue, adjacent to Langton Crescent. These patches supported a greater diversity of native grasses and/ or forbs including the Slender Speargrass <i>Austrostipa scabra</i>, Short Wallaby Grass <i>Rytidosperma carphoides</i>, Red-leg Grass <i>Bothriochloa macra</i>, Kangaroo Grass <i>Themedia triandra</i>, Windmill Grass <i>Chloris truncata</i> and/ or Tufted Bluebell <i>Wahlenbergia communis</i>.</p>
<b>Landscape Plantings- Exotic</b>	<p>This vegetation community comprised exotic plantings including scattered trees or planted avenues. Observed species included Monterey Pine <i>Pinus radiata</i>*, English Elm <i>Ulmus procera</i>*, Poplar Tree <i>Populus</i> spp., Honey Locust <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>*, Claret Ash <i>Fraxinus oxycarpa</i>* Ussurian Pear <i>Pyrus ussuriensis</i>* and Pin Oak <i>Quercus palustris</i>. Shrubs were uncommon and the ground layer was generally dominated by exotic grasses including Chilean Needle Grass, Squirrel tail Fescue and <i>Bromus</i> sp.</p>
<b>Landscape Plantings – Native</b>	<p>This vegetation community generally comprised scattered Southern Blue Gum <i>Eucalyptus bicostata</i>, Argyle Apple <i>Eucalyptus cinerea</i>, Narrow-leaved Black Peppermint <i>Eucalyptus nicholii</i> and River Oak <i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i> plantings. Shrubs were uncommon and the ground layer was dominated by exotic grasses including Chilean Needle Grass.</p>

\* exotic species



**Figure 1.3** Vegetation classification along the 2B Stage route from Arup 2020.

Approximately 16.77ha of Golden Sun Moth habitat was confirmed within the study area within areas supporting exotic grassland (Figure 1.4). Habitats were generally low quality, dominated by Chilean Needle Grass and/or supporting a very low component of larval food plants. Golden Sun Moth populations were recorded within the Stage 2B alignment including habitats within State Circle and Adelaide Avenue. A total of 437 Golden Sun Moth were recorded during targeted surveys across all three populations within the study area.



**Figure 1.4** Findings of Golden Sun Moth targeted surveys from Arup 2020.

The report identified works associated with the proposal which may impact Golden Sun Moth habitats within the study area. These included:

- Direct clearing of habitats to support construction activities

- Habitat fragmentation and isolation through the creation of breaks in habitat of more than 200m or the placement of structures between ground level and one metre height.
- Habitat degradation associated with potential changes in stormwater quality and flow, soil compaction, increased shading, increased biomass during construction and operation.
- Species mortality including loss of larvae within cleared habitats.

According to the *Significant impact guidelines* for the critically endangered Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*): EPBC Act policy statement 3.12 (DEWHA,2009), there is a real chance or possibility of a significant impact on the Golden Sun Moth where an action would result in:

- The loss, fragmentation or degradation of more than 0.5ha of habitat within a large or contiguous habitat area (>10ha);
- Any loss, fragmentation or degradation of habitat within a small or fragmented habitat area (<10ha); or
- Fragmentation of a population through the introduction of a barrier to dispersal.

The report therefore concluded that impacts associated with the proposal will exceed DEWHA (2009) impact thresholds for small and fragmented habitats and are likely to have a significant impact on Golden Sun Moth. The proposal is likely to trigger approval requirements under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) and should be referred to the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE).

---

**Source 8: ACTmapi (<https://actmapi.act.gov.au/> - accessed 20/04/2021)**

ACTmapi is the ACT Government's interactive mapping service that allows analysis of ACT spatial data. ACTmapi data is normally updated daily, and displays the most up to date cadastral information for the Australian Capital Territory. The current layers from all ACT government databases which are relevant to natural heritage include: Heritage; Threatened flora; Threatened fauna; Rare and important plants, Threatened ecological communities; and ACT Registered Trees.

For the 2B Stage route, only a spatially generalized occurrence of Button wrinklewort (*Rutidosia leptorrhynchoides*) and a 'rare plant' (no data provided) are mapped – with threatened invertebrates (Golden sun moth and Canberra Raspy cricket) and ACT Grassland community off the route around the intersection of Sydney Avenue and National Circuit.



## **PART 2 - Review and Discussion, GML Heritage May 2021**

### ***Source 1: Commonwealth Heritage List: State Circle Cutting, State Ccl, Parkes, ACT, Australia (Listed Place 03/06/2005)***

The natural significance of this geodiversity place is high, meeting the threshold for inclusion on the CHL in five criteria (processes, rarity, research, characteristic values; and significant people).

The cautionary note in the listing about the rock crumbling damage due to vibration from traffic highlights a potential impact from light rail construction and operation.

### ***Source 2: Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra (Duncan Marshal et al, 2014)***

This report is for the identification, assessment and nomination of heritage values and thus addresses the requirements of the guidelines for *Identifying Commonwealth Heritage Values and Establishing a Heritage Register* (Australian Heritage Council 2010). It focuses primarily on the planning, layout, landscaping and cultural plantings which were either part of the original layout or added subsequently to frame vistas or accentuate features and symmetries.

The only places of natural heritage value identified in the Commonwealth Avenue/State Circle project area was the Commonwealth Heritage listed State Circle Cutting (a geological feature) and the Critically Endangered Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands adjacent to the north-western portion of State Circle which the report contends meets most of the criteria for inclusion on the CHL. The 2B Stage route does not include the western half of the State Circle and will not affect this woodland remnant. However, it will traverse State Circle near the geological feature exposed in the cutting so this is a point of potential conflict with a significant natural heritage place.

### ***Source 3: Nomination to the Commonwealth Heritage List: National Land Roads, Commonwealth Ave, Parkes, ACT, Australia. ID 106324***

This nomination is solely based on the Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land report (Source 1) and deals predominantly with cultural and historic heritage values. Its natural heritage elements are therefore limited to the geological cutting, which is already on the Commonwealth Heritage List, plus the endangered box/gum woodland community on the uphill side of the north-western quadrant of State Circle and the potential for an endangered plant, Button wrinklewort, to be present within it, which is outside the 2B Stage route.

No other natural heritage values are included in the nomination and no new information is provided.

### ***Source 4: Canberra Light Rail – Stage 2: Ecological Constraints Assessment. Draft Report by Biosis prepared for RPS Australia Asia Pacific, August 2017***

The role of this report was to provide technical advice on ecological constraints at the preliminary stages of the 2B route planning and impact assessment. It is a desktop survey which shows an incomplete appreciation of the extent of native landscape plantings (rather than ecological communities), which would have become apparent with field survey. It identified two 'vegetation types' along the current 2B Stage route as medium ecological constraints. However, these areas are planted natives – a mix of local and non-local species – and offer only low to minimal ecological constraints.

The report correctly identifies a 'medium' likelihood of the occurrence of the Golden Sun Moth in the project area.

**Source 5: Commonwealth Park to Woden Preliminary Environmental Assessment: Biodiversity. Draft Report by Biosis prepared for Major Projects Canberra, July 2019**

This report, from the same consultant firm as Source 4, focussed on field data collection and targeted surveys for threatened species. It identified and assessed the condition of three vegetation communities along the 2B Stage route (with one other significant community outside the scope of the landscape masterplan). The three communities are: Modified grassland; Urban vegetation – planted native; and, Urban vegetation – planted exotic.

In the modified grasslands around State Circle and adjoining street intersections the report found three separate populations of Golden sun moths in a habitat area of 3.02 ha and a further 1.19 ha of indicated habitat based on similarities with the confirmed habitat. This finding was consistent with Bios' findings in its 2017 survey of Golden sun moths in the very modified grasslands within the cloverleaves and median of the intersection of Parkes Way and Commonwealth Avenue on the Light Rail 2A Stage route.

**Source 6: Canberra Light Rail - Commonwealth Park to Woden Preliminary Environmental Assessment, Report by RPS Group prepared for Major Projects Canberra, July 2019**

This preliminary environmental assessment (PEA) is an appendix to the referral to the Minister for the Environment of the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Energy to assist in determining whether the Project is a controlled action under the EPBC Act and the appropriate method for assessing the environmental impacts.

The assessment identifies the presence of Golden sun moth populations and habitats in parts of the modified grasslands and addresses it as a matter of national environmental significance (NES) due to its listing as an endangered species under the EPBC Act. However, the assessment did not consider any natural heritage values. The CHL listing of the State Circle cutting is grouped in the report under historic heritage sites, with the result that the concept of natural heritage does not arise. The report recognizes only risks to listed historical and Indigenous heritage sites, with only a passing reference to 'landscape character' at risk from indirect impacts to views and amenity.

**Source 7: Canberra Light Rail Stage 2B Golden Sun Moth Surveys, Draft Report by Arup prepared for Major Projects Canberra, June 2020**

This report was commissioned by the Major Projects Group of the ACT Government to confirm and expand on the status of Golden sun moths and the habitats they use in the light rail project area. It presents the findings of targeted Golden sun moth surveys undertaken by Arup from 30 October 2019 to 17 January 2020 for the 2B Stage route footprint.

The report recognizes the same three vegetation communities along the 2B Stage route as previous surveys reviewed here (exotic grassland; landscape plantings – exotic; and landscape plantings – native). It maps more extensive Golden sun moth sightings and habitat areas than previous surveys. The habitat areas cover virtually all grassed areas not covered by eucalypt canopy in the lands between State Circle and Capital Circle.

**Source 8: ACTmapi (<https://actmapi.act.gov.au/>)**

The generalized mapping of many biodiversity elements, with large spatial buffers, limits the usefulness of this database for identifying baseline values. The indicated occurrence of Button wrinklewort has been investigated in targeted surveys reviewed above and not found. Similarly, the targeted surveys found no species of threatened flora with a likelihood of occurring in the area. So,

although the ACTmap made reference to a rare plant centred on an area between Capital Circle and Parliament Drive which requires clarification, it is unlikely to contribute to natural heritage values on the route.

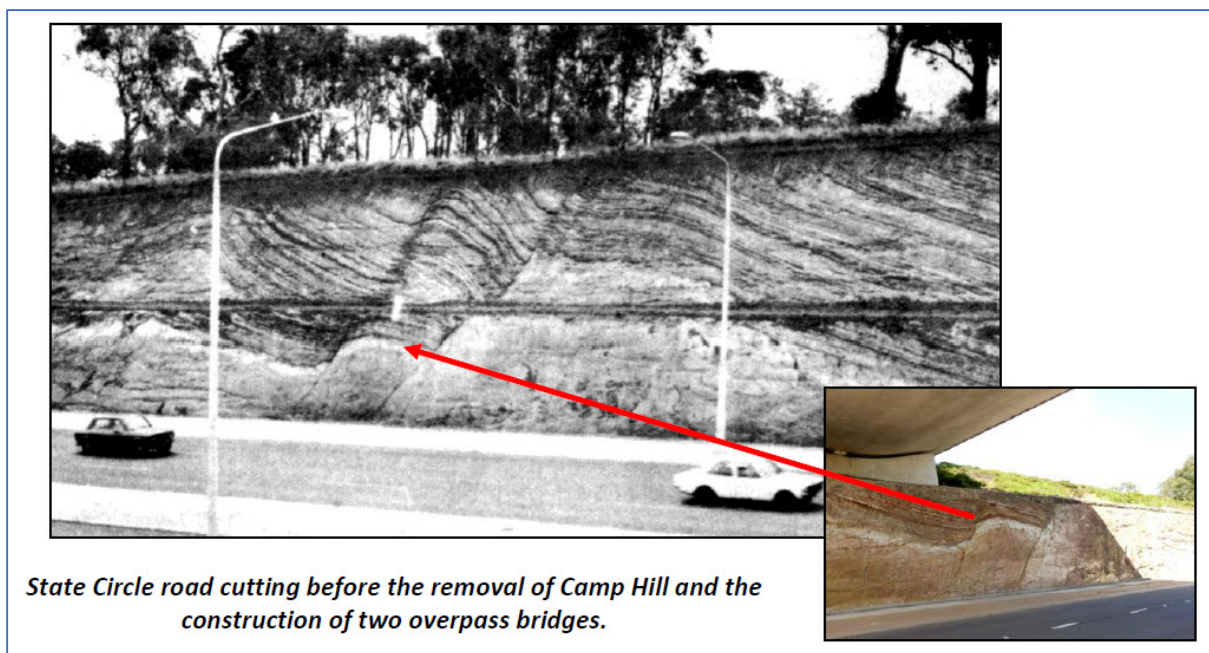
---

On the basis of the review of sources and initial reconnaissance of the area to confirm findings, the following elements of natural heritage pertain to the 2B Stage route.

### **State Circle Cutting**

The sole place of natural heritage significance which is recognized by its inclusion in Commonwealth or Territory heritage lists is the geological exposure in the State Circle cutting.

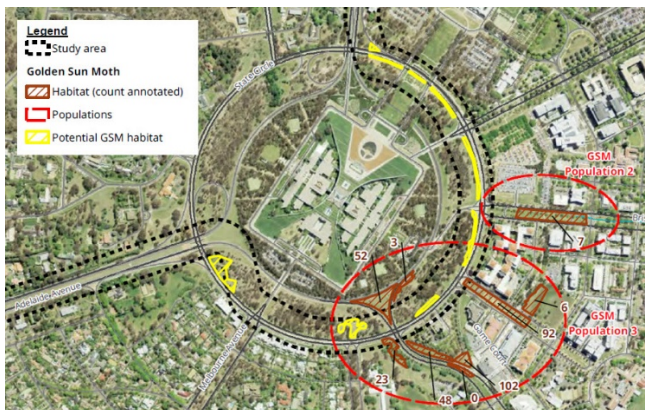
While its natural heritage status is assured by its inclusion on the CHL, both the listing and a report by the Geological Society of Australia make it clear that there has been a diminution of the place by the removal of Camp Hill in 1987 to enable a clear view from the forecourt of the new Parliament House to the old Parliament House and across Lake Burley Griffin. Both reports note the need for condition monitoring and upkeep management and the CHL listing notes the potential for vibration damage.



**Figure 2.1** Original state of cutting before the removal of Camp Hill. (Source: GSA, ACT Division, 2013)

### **Golden sun moth populations and habitat**

The distribution of Golden sun moths and habitat areas differ between the two targeted surveys (Biosis 2019 and Arup 2020). This is expected – repeated surveys in successive years will chart how the sun moths utilize different parts, or more or less, of the available habitat depending on local conditions. Repeat surveys are required to confirm and delineate habitat areas.



**Figure 2.2** Golden Sun Moth findings from Biosis 2019.



**Figure 2.3** Golden Sun Moth findings from Arup 2020.

In this case the habitat is modified grassland which is not an optimal habitat environment. The surveys for the 2A route made the same findings – of wide distribution of local Golden sun moth populations in sub-optimal habitat.

A combination of the two surveys should be taken as the current indicator of Golden sun moth distribution, and the extent of its grassland habitat.

In considering the natural heritage value of the Golden sun moth habitat areas in the GML Heritage Impact Assessment for the 2A Stage route<sup>9</sup>, the following conclusion was made. It also applies to the 2B Stage route habitats:

*The surviving grassed areas comprise mixed native and exotic grasses. The findings of successive surveys found high densities of Golden sun moth within the modified grassland vegetation.*

*The Golden Sun Moth is listed as critically endangered under the EPBC Act and therefore a matter of national environmental significance (NES) requiring referral to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Energy under the Act. NES matters are indicators of natural heritage value. The value of the existence of a population of natural significance in a substantially modified habitat is recognized by the Australian Natural Heritage Charter and will require monitoring – including repeat survey to confirm the population's sustainability in this location.*

The natural heritage represented by the Golden sun moth habitat in modified grassland vegetation will require careful attention during the planning and construction management of the Stage 2B route to avoid or minimize habitat loss.

### **Relics of Previous Vegetation**

There are relics of original vegetation scattered among the 'Landscape Plantings – Native' community around State Circle. Our initial reconnaissance has identified two old trees characteristic of the original canopy vegetation (*Eucalyptus melliodora* and *E. blakelyi*) next to the Melbourne Avenue extension (see Figures 2.6 and 2.7) and potential for other relic *E. melliodora* trees near the intersection of State Circle and Kings Avenue.

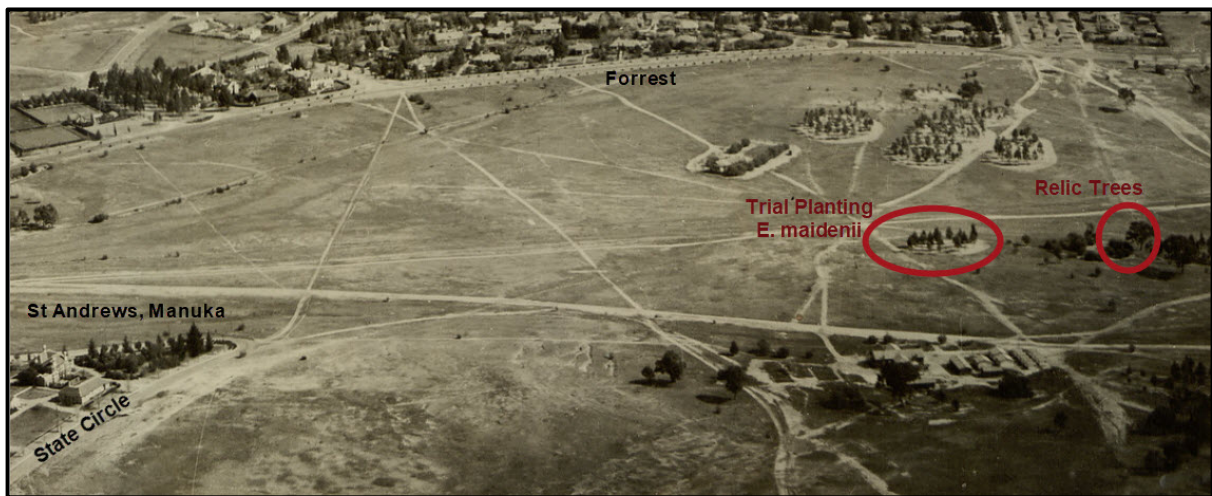


**Figure 2.4** *E. melliodora* along Melbourne Avenue between State and capital Circles.



**Figure 2.5** *E. blakelyi* along Melbourne Avenue between State and capital Circles.

It is unlikely that these trees would meet the threshold for inclusion on the CHL. However as representative of the vegetation community before settlement, which is itself an endangered ecological community under the EPBC Act, they have natural heritage value and warrant the employment of effort and resources to avoid their destruction or damage to them.



**Figure 2.6** 1942 oblique aerial photo looking south, showing *E. maidenii* trial planting area and relic trees. (Source: ANL Photo Library via Trove)



**Figure 2.7** 1944 vertical aerial photo showing *E. maidenii* trial planting area and relic trees. (Source: ANL Photo Library)

### **'Landscape Plantings – Native' community**

As this area refers to landscape plantings it cannot be considered as primarily a natural heritage place but rather, as the discussion below points out, potentially a place or places of cultural heritage – although the level of significance of that cultural heritage will require assessment. The concentration of native, and often local species in the landscape plantings between State and Capital Circles also means that fauna habitats will have been created, but the targeted surveys reviewed here have found no threatened flora or fauna species among the native plantings.

The descriptions of the native tree plantations between State Circle differ between surveys. This is because species have been recorded along selected transects rather than from inventories of the

whole area. The species lists in the reports therefore are not wrong, they are just incomplete. Even if the canopy species lists from the different reports are combined, they will not capture the diversity of canopy species and growth forms of the native plantings.

Initial reconnaissance of the area has found two aspects of the native plantings which have not previously been examined in the literature, and which require more attention to assess their heritage values:

1. A large diversity of native canopy species, landscape forms, and planting ages indicate different landscape themes and planning - potentially reflecting successive approaches of the influential team of horticulturalists and landscape planners responsible for Canberra's bush setting.
2. A significant example of special planting in this area, noted during initial reconnaissance, is a small copse of Maiden's gums (*Eucalyptus maidenii*) adjacent to the southern quadrant of State Circle. These date from isolated trial plantings of 12-13 plants probably in the late 1930s. At this time, Weston was conducting trial plantings in many areas of Canberra to confirm the suitability of various species in different locations. The experimental planting is shown in Figures 2.6 and 2.7 above in the 1940s and in Figure 2.8 below as it appears today.



**Figure 2.8** Mature *Eucalyptus maidenii* trees adjoining the southern part of State Circle between Hobart and Melbourne Avenues.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Australian Heritage Commission 2002, Australian Natural Heritage Charter for the conservation of places of natural heritage significance, 2nd Edition, Environment Australia, Canberra.
- <sup>2</sup> Australian Heritage Database, State Circle Cutting, State Ccl, Parkes, ACT, Australia (Listed Place), ID 105733.
- <sup>3</sup> Marshall D, C Betteridge, Navin Officer Heritage Consultants and W Nicholls 2014, Commonwealth Heritage Assessments for Certain Roads on National Land in Central Canberra, report prepared for the National Capital Authority.
- <sup>4</sup> Australian Heritage Database, Nomination to the Commonwealth Heritage List: National Land Roads, Commonwealth Ave, Parkes, ACT, Australia. ID 106324
- <sup>5</sup> Biosis 2017, Canberra Light Rail – Stage 2: Ecological Constraints Assessment, draft Report prepared for RPS Australia Asia Pacific
- <sup>6</sup> Biosis 2019, Commonwealth Park to Woden Preliminary Environmental Assessment: Biodiversity. draft report prepared for Major Projects Canberra
- <sup>7</sup> RPS Group 2019, Canberra Light Rail - Commonwealth Park to Woden Preliminary Environmental Assessment, report prepared for Major Projects Canberra
- <sup>8</sup> Arup 2020, Canberra Light Rail Stage 2B Golden Sun Moth Surveys, draft report prepared for Major Projects Canberra
- <sup>9</sup> City to Commonwealth Park Light Rail Heritage Impact Assessment, GML Heritage report prepared for ACT Government/Major Projects Canberra, September 2020