



ACT Heritage Council

Entry to the ACT Heritage Register

Heritage Act 2004

20072. Whitley Houses

Section 23 Blocks 6, 11 and 12

GRIFFITH

Section 10 Block 4

BRADDON

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Conservation Requirements (including Specific Requirements), as defined under the *Heritage Act 2004*, that are contained within this document are taken to be Heritage Guidelines applying to this place or object, as the case may be.

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72. Whitley Houses, Griffith and Braddon [V217]¹

Location

The 'place' is a stylistically linked group of dwellings that comprise the remaining Inter-War Functionalist houses in Canberra (including their curtilage) that were designed as public housing by the then Works Branch of the Department of the Interior. The location of the dwellings is described as District of Canberra Central, Division of Griffith Section 23 Blocks 6, 11 and 12 Division of Braddon Section 10 Block 4 as identified in Figure 72 and indicated on the Territory Plan Map by the Heritage Places Register Overlay H72.

Features Intrinsic To The Heritage Significance Of The Place

The features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the 'place' and which are to be conserved are:

- a) The original scale, form and fabric of the four dwellings listed above.
- b) The setting of the places that enables their style and form to be appreciated.

Statement Of Significance

The following interpretations shall apply in respect of this listing:

Modernism

A general name given to the architectural design style which espoused functionalism, technology and the consequent elimination of applied historical embellishment.

Functionalism

An aspect or subset of Modernism evident in the 1920s and 1930s. Adherents of Functionalism felt that designed objects should be 'functional' above all else, and/or that form should follow function. Characteristics of the 'functionalist style included clean lines, disassociation from styles of the past, simple geometric shapes, light colours, large glass areas, often with horizontal emphasis.

The Whitley Houses constructed in Section 23 Griffith and Section 10 Braddon in 1939 were among the first government designed and built single-storey detached houses in the Functionalist style in Australia. The designs of the houses reflect an important aspect of the taste of the period between the Depression and the Second World War, by demonstrating the emergence of Modernism as an appropriate style for mass housing. The style was innovative when compared with other government housing designed in Australia at the time.

These houses are collectively significant examples of the Inter-War Functionalist Style of architecture and are notable as the work of the architect Cuthbert Whitley. The design characteristics include asymmetrical massing of simple geometric shapes, plain surfaces, flat roofs concealed behind parapets and metal-framed windows in horizontal bands, giving a streamlined effect. The painted houses in Griffith and the red face brick building in Braddon highlight stylistic variations. The houses have been recognised as being of significance by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

The Whitley houses are a valuable embodiment of a phase of Canberra's early planning architecture. They represent the consolidation and acceptance of the 'modernist' ethic both in private and Government spheres; and they connect to the private work of Canberra architects Malcolm Moir, Heather Sutherland and Kenneth Oliphant by attempting to 'mainstream' this style as part of the public housing movement. Given the iconic role of public housing in Canberra, the use of Functionalist styling clearly demonstrates the forward-looking approach taken by the Works Branch under Whitley.

These houses contribute to an understanding of the stylistic influences, personalities, bureaucratic structures and architectural talents that worked together to create Canberra and construct one of the World's more significant 20th century cities.

The houses are important for their strong association with the talented architect Cuthbert Whitley. Their

¹ [V217: Added to Heritage Places Register Number 72 12/03/2004 (Variation Number 217)]

design indicates his unfulfilled intentions for Canberra's government housing after 1939 to be stylish and modern. The presence of an existing house in Braddon and three houses in Griffith assists an understanding of Canberra's planning and development just prior to the war.

Specific Requirements

In accordance with s.54 (I) of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991, the following specific requirements are identified as essential to the conservation of the heritage significance of the 'place'. These specific requirements implement the following primary conservation policy for the 'place':

The intrinsic features of the four Whitley houses, including their original form, fabric and scale, should be managed in a manner appropriate to conserving their significance as Inter-War Functionalist style public housing. The historical and architectural integrity of the designated Whitley houses is to be retained and conserved.

i) Building including alterations and additions

- a) Alterations and additions to the Whitley Houses should closely match the original details, materials, and finishes for key elements including roofing, capping, downpipes, hood details, wall finishes and details, window types, materials and sill details and door treatment. Existing steel-framed windows shall be retained. Double-glazing of existing windows to control sound and heat may be permitted. Removal of later additions or accretions, in order to reinstate original details is encouraged.
- b) Development adjacent to any of the Whitley houses may be permitted provided any such development is sympathetic in scale, style and character to the dwellings. The Indicative Building Envelope Plans at Figures 72.a - c apply as guidelines.
- c) Development adjacent to the Whitley houses shall retain a substantially open landscape setting, with planting in the vicinity of the houses limited to a type and scale that emphasises the style and form of the buildings to be appreciated.
- d) Notwithstanding the Residential Land Use Policy, subdivision or consolidation of blocks (including Unit Title subdivision) may be permitted.

ii) Demolition

- a) The demolition of the identified Whitley houses shall only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where
 - the building is so structurally unsound as to be beyond reasonable economic repair, and/or
 - the existing condition of the building poses a significant health or safety risk that is beyond reasonable economic repair.

Any application must include a professional structural, health or other assessment that clearly validates the need for demolition.

- b) Where in the opinion of the Authority, neglect of an identified dwelling has contributed to the dwelling becoming structurally unsound so as to necessitate total demolition, redevelopment of the site shall not exceed the gross floor area of the identified dwelling. Additions to the replacement dwelling shall not be permitted within three years of completion of the replacement dwelling.

Figure 72: Whitley Houses, Griffith

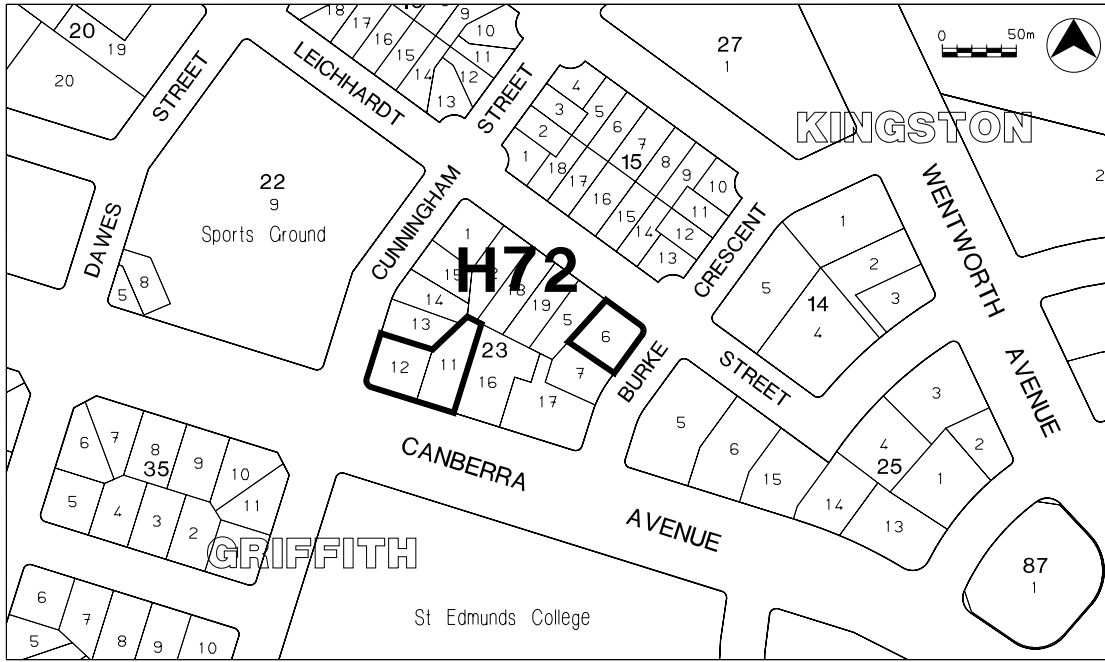
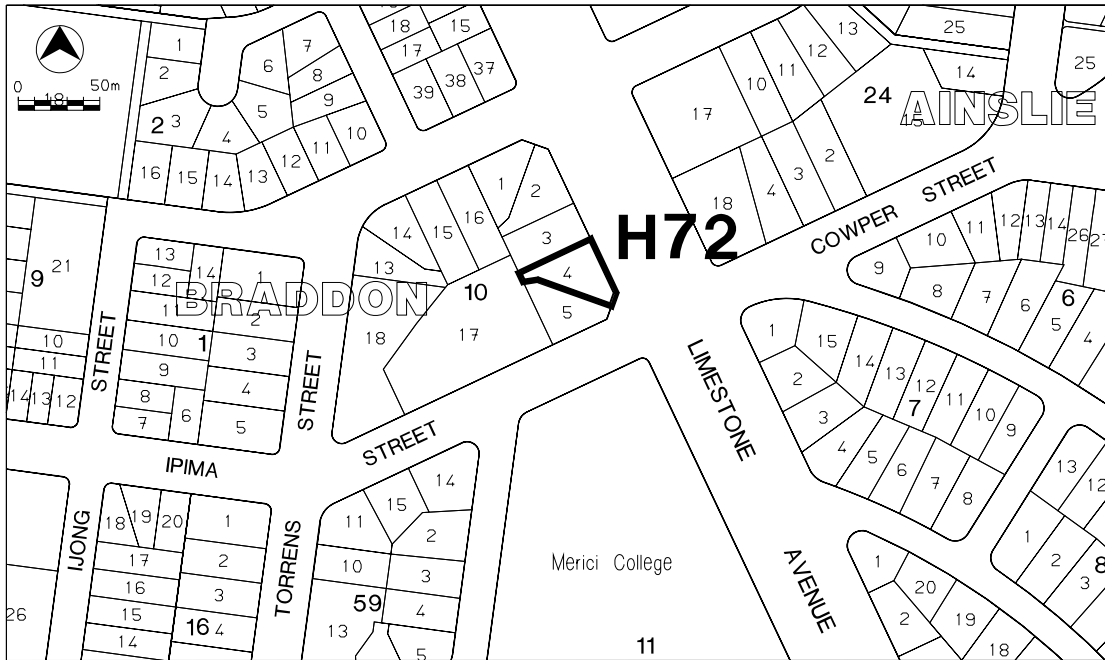


Figure 72: Whitley Houses, Braddon



Indicative Building Envelope Plans

FIGURE 72A: BLOCK 11, 12 SECTION 23 GRIFFITH

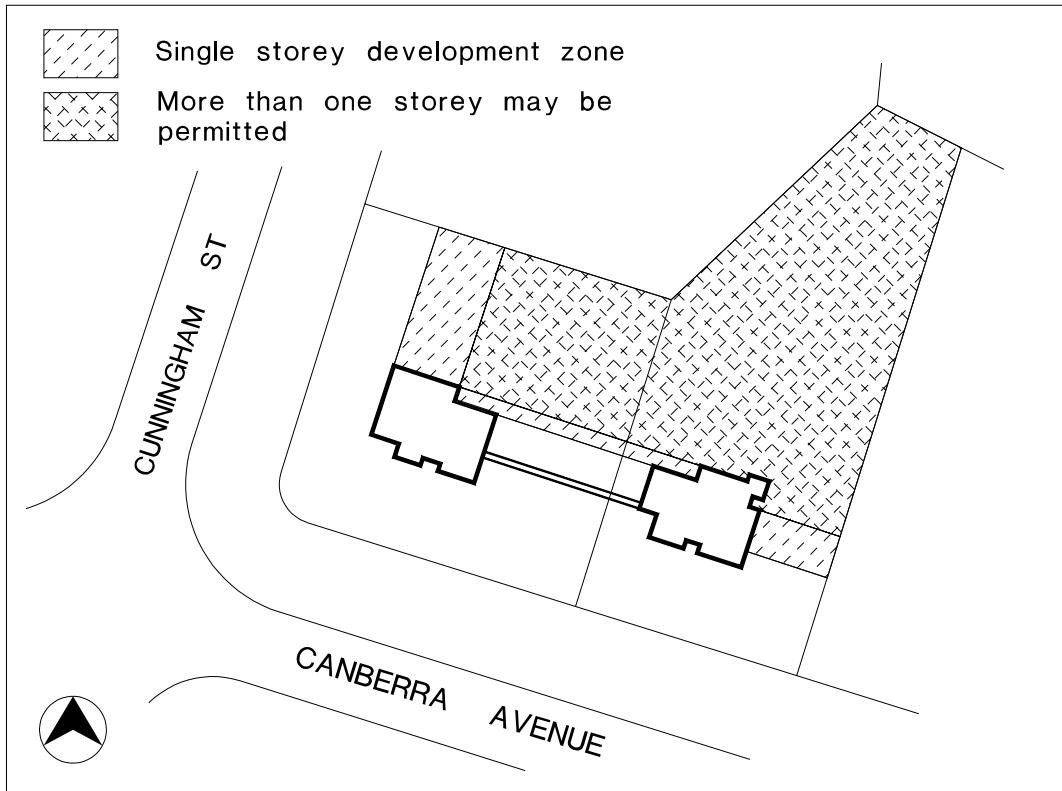


FIGURE 72B: BLOCK 6 SECTION 23 GRIFFITH

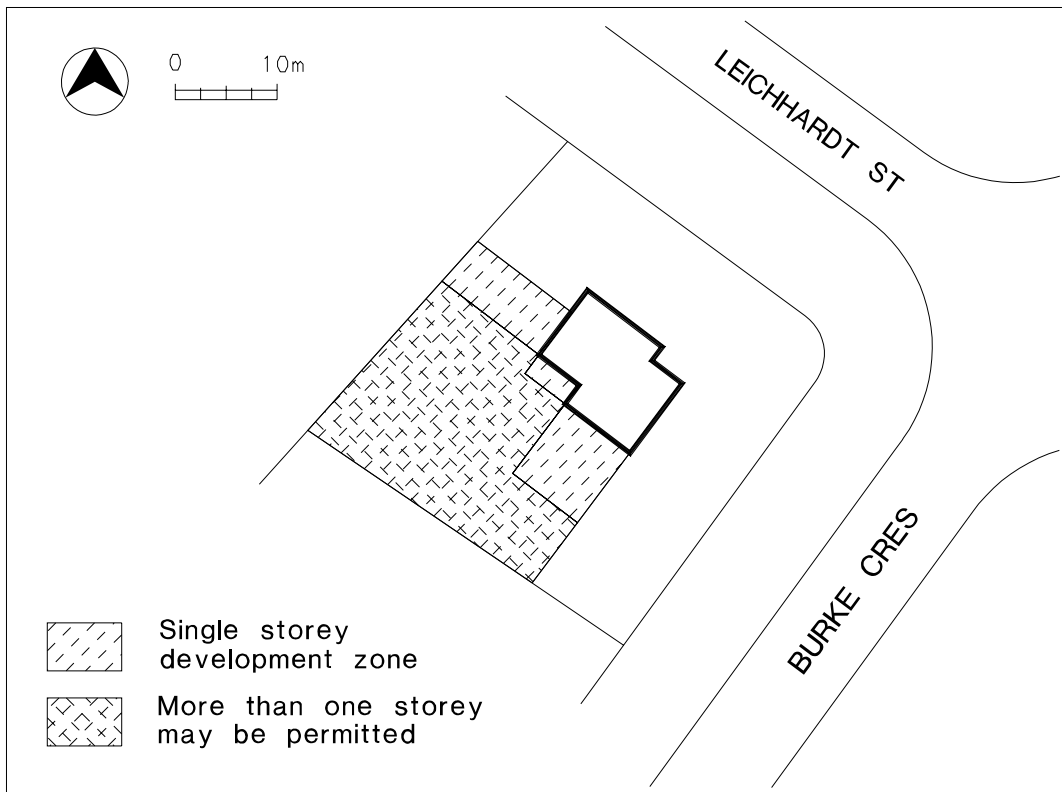


FIGURE 72C: BLOCK 4 SECTION 10 BRADDON

