

Trees to screen a cemetery

The story about the trees at the Hackett Oval, Hackett, ACT

Chris Mobbs, Chair, Hackett Community Association



Avenue of trees on east side of oval



Two rows of eucalypts and two rows of pines
Eucalyptus albens and *E. bicostata*, *Pinus radiata*



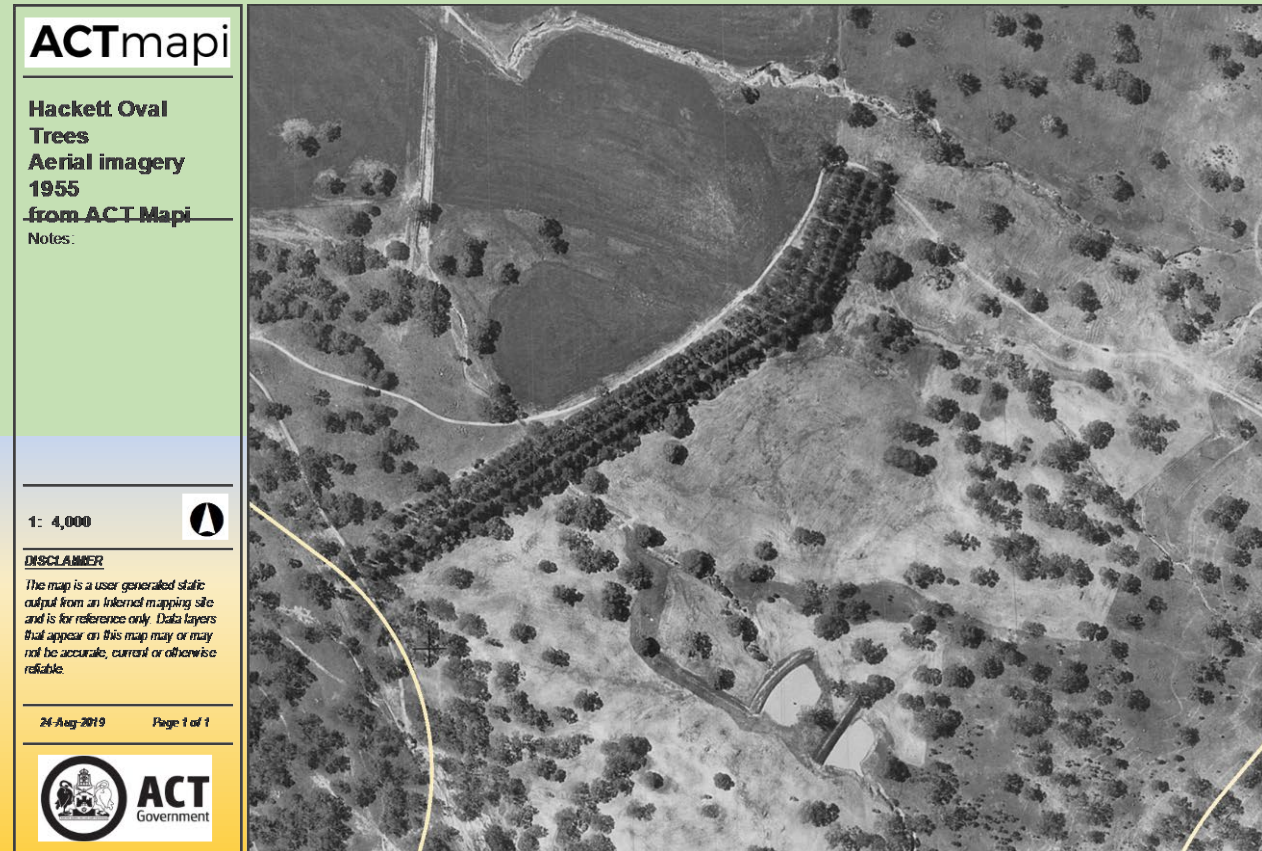
Hackett first developed in 1962

- The former National Capital Development Commission was established in 1957 with its role of planning and developing Canberra.
- Hackett was one of the first north Canberra suburbs it developed, along with Watson, Downer – they were gazetted in March 1960.
- In September 1961 the street names were gazetted and development commenced in 1962.



Why and when were they planted?

- The trees were here before the suburb.
- This 1955 aerial photo shows the trees were well established.



ACTmapi

Hackett Oval
Trees
Aerial imagery
1955 with cadstre
overlay
from ACT Mapi

1: 4,000



DISCLAIMER

The map is a user generated static output from an internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current or otherwise reliable.

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HCA book about Hackett published in 2018

Hackett: 50 years plus
Story of a North Canberra suburb



Hackett Community Association

The ACT Government had no records about their origin, though there were several possibilities:

- Plantings by Charles Weston - responsible for planting significant number of trees across Canberra from 1913-26 in his role as the officer in charge of afforestation e.g Haig Park.
- Part of the revegetation of Mount Majura in 1919-20. Most of this work involved planting of kurrajongs on the actual mountain.
- Wind break for the original aerodrome at Dickson - records held by the NAA make no reference to these trees.
- Plantings associated with the former CSIRO Research Station at Downer – records make no reference to these trees.

Early plans for cemeteries in Canberra

- One of the key agencies responsible for developing Canberra in the 1920s was the **Federal Capital Commission** which operated from 1925-1930.
- The Commission took advice from its Development Committee (FCDC).
- One of the tasks this Committee undertook was to identify sites suitable for future cemeteries.
- The files show that in 1928 the FCDC considered one on the south and one of the north side of Canberra.
- South side was developed first in 1936 (Woden Cemetery).
- North side was “to be held to meet future requirements and for a final review at some later date.”

FCDC meeting May 1928 Northern site

Trial holes were sunk and evidenced that the soil and decomposed rock in the subsoil would be suitable. The nature of the surrounding country also led to the conclusion that there would be no danger of ground water coming to the surface lower down. Its area has not been defined by survey, but the gross area would be approximately 60 acres (24ha).

“...please let me have a scheme and estimate for a plantation to screen the Cemetery from the normal City development...”

done this season.

With regard to Site "B", will you please let me have a scheme and estimate for a plantation to screen the Cemetery from the normal City development on the Northwest and Southwest flanks, both above and below the stormwater drain.

(Sd.) J. H. BUTTS
Chief Commissioner.
15th May, 1928.

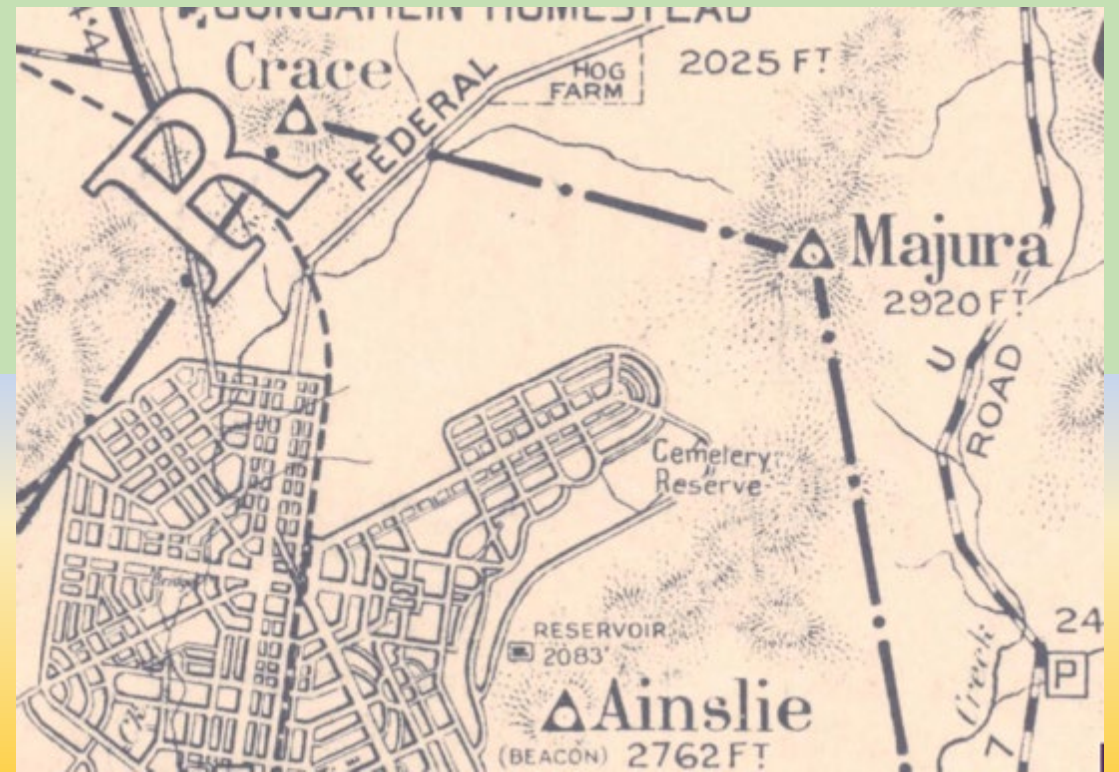
1938 Plan of Canberra showing north cemetery site and plantation

<https://mapsearch.nla.gov.au/?type=map&text=id:4657014-234026981-map>

Overlaid with current street map (by Graham Peters)



1950 revised version of 1929 map



Nominated place on the ACT Heritage Register

In 2022 the HCA submitted an application to have the trees included on the ACT Heritage Register.

In April 2023, the trees were listed as a “nominated” place.



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Dear Mr Mobbs

Nomination Application to the ACT Heritage Register

On 15 September 2022 the ACT Heritage Council received your nomination application for the Hackett Oval Trees (Hackett Section 12, Blocks 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15).

The merits and completeness of the application have been assessed and there are no grounds for dismissal. In accordance with section 29 of the *Heritage Act 2004* (the Act), the application has been accepted under delegation.

The Hackett Oval Trees are now listed as a ‘nominated’ place to the ACT Heritage Register and in the future will be assessed by the Council against the heritage significance criteria established under the Act. As the application has been accepted by the Council, the provisions of the Act apply.

Please note that acceptance of an application is a preliminary, threshold step and ought not to be taken as indicative of any particular outcome concerning the Council’s assessment of the application against the heritage significance criteria.

Should you have any queries with regard to this nomination please contact Richard Hekimian on 6207 8538 or heritage@act.gov.au

Yours sincerely,

Mary Clare Sweete Kelly
A/g Manager (Registrations), ACT Heritage (as delegate for)
ACT HERITAGE COUNCIL

14 April 2023

Canberra Tracks sign April 2023

Sign near bus stop Madigan St



Report about the trees

Available on the HCA website along with our book about Hackett

<https://hackett.asn.au>