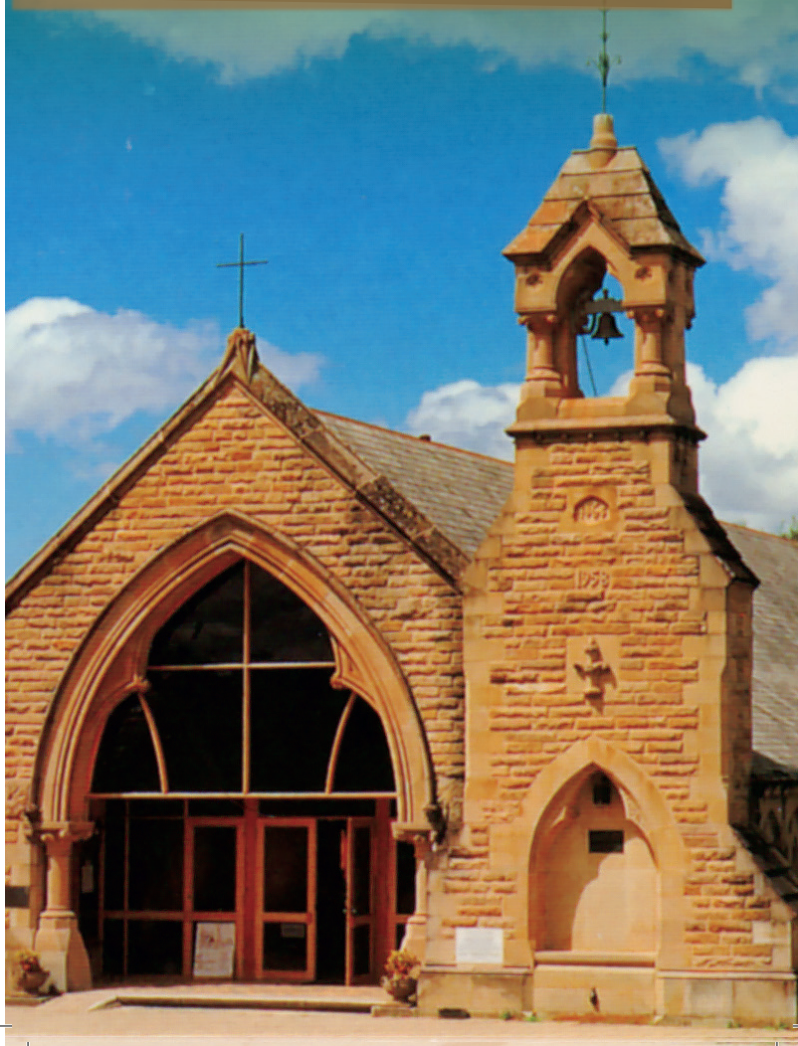
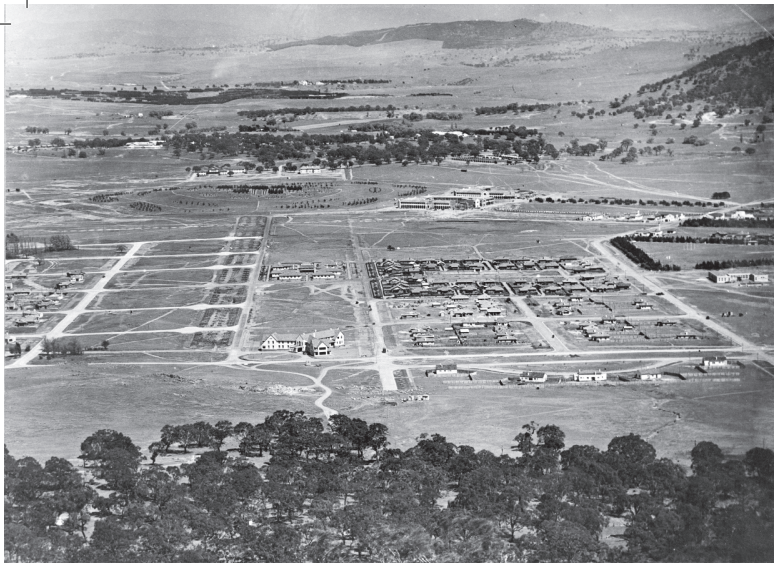


📍 Ngannawal Country

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Ainslie





View from Mount Ainslie towards Civic, 1927 [National Archives of Australia: A1200, L83794]

 See map in centre spread

The tour is about 5 km. Stops are numbered from Limestone Avenue near Ainslie Avenue and Quick Street but may be followed in any order and in parts. It is also suited to a combination of walking and driving.

Optional additional walks can be undertaken in the Mount Ainslie Nature Reserve, including sections of the Canberra Centenary Trail.

The tour adjoins the *Braddon* tour and touches on the *Reid* and *Campbell-Russell* tours, brochures also published by the National Trust (ACT).

Public toilet facilities with disabled access are available at the Edgar Street parkland near the Ainslie shops (stop 7) and at Haig Park.



Denotes Canberra Tracks sign at sites for more information



Site listed on the ACT Heritage Register or the National Heritage List and/or the Australian Institute of Architects Register of Significant Architecture. There are National Capital Authority signs at some sites.

Ainslie

The North Canberra suburb of Ainslie is bounded to the north by Phillip Avenue, to the west by the arc of Majura Avenue and Limestone Avenue, to the south by Quick Street, and to the east by a line in the foothills of Mount Ainslie.

The suburb is named for James Ainslie, a Scot, who was employed by Robert Campbell in 1825 to drive a flock of sheep from Bathurst to look for suitable grazing land. He established 'Pialligo', later 'Duntroon', estate before returning to Scotland in 1835.

The name Ainslie originally encompassed a larger area of the fledgling capital, taking in today's suburbs of Ainslie, Braddon and Reid. Today's Ainslie was then called North Ainslie and Reid was South Ainslie. In September 1928, three Divisions were gazetted – Ainslie, Braddon and Reid.

Ainslie was designed along Garden City principles and is reported to include the purest adaptation of those principles in Australia. Ainslie is home to **three heritage precincts** – the Alt Crescent, Corroboree Park and Wakefield Gardens precincts.

The curvilinear street pattern appears to derive from Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffins' original plan for Canberra. The streets are named after pioneers and legislators. A few draw on the area's Aboriginal heritage.

A number of roads and buildings from the early 1920s carry the name Ainslie but are now in adjoining suburbs. Ainslie Avenue separates Braddon and Reid. Ainslie schools, the Hotel Ainslie (now the Mercure Hotel) and 'Ainslie Cottages' housing precinct are in Braddon. The site of the original Ainslie Post Office is now in Reid and Ainslie Village is in Campbell.

Most of the tour is within the north-western corner of the original 4,000-acre land grant received by Robert Campbell in 1825 as part compensation for the loss of one of his ships while under government contract. This portion included all of Mount Ainslie and the site chosen for 'Duntroon' homestead.

1 Ainslie Volcanics Grassland

At the intersection of Limestone Avenue and Quick Street are remnants of Yellow Box–Blakely's Red Gum woodland and natural temperate grassland. It is adjacent to the Mount Ainslie Nature Reserve, which is protected under the ACT *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.

The area is also noted for nearby outcrops of Ainslie Volcanics. This significant rock type in the Canberra landscape forms a line of elevated lands from Mount Ainslie through Mount Majura and Gooroo Hill to shape the northern ACT–NSW border. These are the oldest volcanic rocks in the district, formed from material that erupted in a dense volcanic cloud in the Early Silurian period (c. 428–424 million years ago).

The stone has been used in early Canberra buildings, including the walls of St John's Church, Reid, and workers' cottages in 'Duntroon' estate.

In the late 1920s a vehicle track led from the grassland to a picnic area giving access to four lookouts along a pathway to the lookout at the summit of Mount Ainslie. These were completed in the 1930s as an unemployment relief project during the Great Depression. It would be another 40 years before a public road to the summit was built.

At the end of Quick Street is Ainslie Village and Ainslie Lodge, used to address housing shortages from immediately post-World War II. They are now part of a social housing complex for people with complex needs.

2 Limestone Avenue

The line of Limestone Avenue was clearly identified from early versions of the Griffins' plan for Canberra. Its orientation was closely aligned with a section of the old Queanbeyan–Yass Road, from about Wakefield Avenue to Elder Street. In the 1920s this was Canberra's first 'presentation avenue', to be landscaped with the assistance of community organisations and businesses.

In 1928, as a gift to the young city, the Australian Natives' Association (ANA), whose membership was drawn from non-Aboriginal Australian-born men (women weren't admitted until 1964) and which had played a role in the establishment of the national

capital, began planting an avenue of eucalypts and kurrajongs along the Limestone Avenue median strip.

To mark the ends of the planted area, in 1931–32 the ANA installed a **pair of Art Deco benches** on the median strip, one where Quick Street meets Limestone Avenue and the other where Grimes Street meets Limestone Avenue (stop 12).

Walk north along Limestone Avenue and on the right is Alt Crescent.

3 Alt Crescent Housing precinct



Alt Crescent houses under construction [NAA: A3560, 2377]

Alt Crescent was not part of the Griffins' original design. It was the work of Sir John Sulman, head of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee which was formed shortly before the departure of the Griffins. Sulman favoured the design principles of the English Garden City movement.

The planned opening of the provisional Parliament House in 1927 provided the impetus to build accommodation for government staff and construction workers.

Sulman broke up the line of housing on Limestone Avenue by creating a shallow crescent to curve around a public garden, flanked by cypress trees. The landscaping is associated with Charles Weston, Canberra's first superintendent of Parks and Gardens.

The Alt Crescent Housing precinct was the first in what is now Ainslie. It was designed to house Federal Capital Commission (FCC) founding staff. Five different designs were built in brick by the end of 1927, and more in 1937. The architecture reflects elements of Georgian and English Arts and Crafts styles. A few houses in Alt Crescent contain elements of the FCC designs.

Continue north along Limestone Avenue, turn right at Chisholm Street then left at Lister Crescent to Corroboree Park (~350m).

4 Corroboree Park and Housing precinct



Aboriginal peoples used this area for gatherings. One multi-trunked yellow box was termed the 'Corroboree Tree', hence the name Corroboree Park. Corroborees continued here into the late 19th century.

For many years the area was known for a 'clump of trees', shown as 'red gum' in a 1915 map, and conspicuous in an otherwise largely clear landscape. James Ainslie reputedly camped under these trees in 1825 while looking for grazing land for Robert Campbell's sheep.

The semi-circle of the park was created about 1925. The first stage of the Corroboree Park Housing precinct dates from 1926.

The precinct is bounded by houses in Limestone Avenue and Chisholm, Paterson and Cowper Streets, and encloses Lister, Higgins, Toms and Hargreaves Crescents and Drake, Grimes, Lewis and part of Baker Streets, and the curve of Corroboree Park.

Most of the timber cottages are 'artisan dwellings' built for FCC staff. One was occupied until 1931 by the Canberra Social Service Association, established to advocate for social and community facilities for the young community.

The first 30 timber cottages were sited in Paterson Street; two designs, reversed and with different street setbacks, and all with verandahs and iron roofs formed to resemble tiles.

Most of the cottages around Corroboree Park and along the crescents were designed under FCC architect Robert Casboulte in 1926–27 in the Georgian Revival style. Most were symmetrical in design, with tiled roofs and multi-paned windows. Some had arched openings and weatherboards textured to resemble stonework.

Over the past century, the park has supported a range of community groups and activities. The **North Canberra Girl Guides Hall** in the small wedge-shaped

reserve facing Lister Crescent opposite Corroboree Park was a later addition in 1950.

The **Corroboree Park Community Centre** was one of Canberra's earliest meeting places. The adjoining timber building was moved here in 1931 after serving as the Masonic Temple, Acton, in the early 1920s and then as the school at the Russell Hill settlement (in now Campbell). The facilities here have been used for activities such as church services, dances, boxing, a children's library and youth radio club.

Two courts were built by voluntary labour in 1928 for the (then) North **Ainslie Tennis Club** (established in 1927), with another built in 1945. The 1930 clubhouse (paid for by the government) was replaced in 1957. In the 1930s the club organised tree planting for unemployment relief, adding 500 trees to the park. A Canberra Tracks sign tells more of its story.



Corroboree Park playground working bee, 1926 [NAA: A3560, 840]

Other developments in the park included the **children's playground** from 1926 and, later, a basketball court, cricket pitch, irrigation, car parking and picnic facilities.

The **Ainslie Church of Christ** is at the corner of Limestone Avenue and Grimes Street. It was designed by Melbourne architect Harry Norris. The manse and hall were built in 1953 and the church in 1959 in the Post-War Ecclesiastical style.

At the tennis club corner, continue along the Corroboree Park road and turn left at Campbell Street to stop 5 (~300m).

Phillip Avenue

Ainslie

Cowper Street

8

7

9

10

11

Foveaux Street

5

Toms Crescent

4

12

Leslie Street

Limestone Avenue

Chisholm Street

3

2

Quick Street

1

Ainslie Avenue

Campbell High School



A stylized map of the Ainslie area in Canberra, Australia. The map features a network of roads in shades of purple and brown, with 'Duffy Street' labeled on the left. A large green area represents 'Mount Ainslie', with its name written in a light blue font. In the bottom left, a cluster of white squares represents a residential area, and a green area below it is labeled 'Remembrance Nature Park'. A white pin with the number '6' is placed on the map. An orange box contains the title 'Ainslie', and a white box below it contains a numbered list of 12 points of interest.

Ainslie

- 1 Ainslie Volcanics Grassland
- 2 Limestone Avenue
- 3 Alt Crescent Housing precinct
- 4 Corroboree Park and Housing precinct
- 5 Bus shelter, Campbell Street
- 6 Proposed Monash Drive
- 7 Ainslie shops
- 8 Wakefield Gardens Housing precinct
- 9 Beaufort House, 25 Cowper Street
- 10 Bus shelter
- 11 All Saints Anglican Church
- 12 Australian Native Association bench

5 Bus shelter, Campbell Street

The shelter in Campbell Street near Foveaux Street was built around 1950 in timber (due to post-World War II material shortages) with a concrete floor and corrugated iron roof. This Class D bus shelter is one of only seven remaining and is the only one in Ainslie.

Bus shelters were designed to be portable if routes or levels of demand changed.

The walk to the foothills of Mount Ainslie can be taken by turning right at Foveaux Street and crossing Duffy Street (~400m).

Alternatively, continue along Campbell Street, turn right at Cox Street and past Panda Reserve to the Ainslie shops.

6 Proposed Monash Drive

The suburb of Ainslie is dominated by Mount Ainslie.

At the end of Foveaux Street, across Duffy Street, a bridge across the drain leads to the Mount Ainslie foothills. The drain was installed in the 1920s to protect the city from sediment washing down from the mountain.

Ainslie would have been very different if Monash Drive had been constructed. Walter Burley Griffin's 'Statutory Plan for Canberra' (gazetted in 1925) showed a road running along the base of Mount Majura and Mount Ainslie, linking Canberra's northern suburbs with the city. The Commonwealth Government gazetted this road as 'Monash Drive' in 1956.

This was to be a north-south arterial road, from Antill Street, north Hackett, along the western foothills of Mount Ainslie, cutting through the nature reserves, to intersect with Fairbairn Avenue, Campbell. Its perceived impact on Hackett, Ainslie and Campbell drew strong community opposition. The National Capital Authority has agreed to removing Monash Drive from the National Capital Plan, subject to traffic and impacts analysis from the ACT Government that it is no longer required.

A short incline leads to a good walking track behind the houses to Fisher Street (~450m to just past the footbridge) and on to Fisher Place.

Alternatively, Duffy Street leads northwards to Fisher Place park. Cross Fisher Place park (or walk along Hassall Street), turn right at Ebden Street and left at Wakefield Avenue to the Ainslie shops (~400m).

7 Ainslie shops



Mason's Cash Store, Ainslie shops, 1952 (now Edgar's Inn)
[NAA: A7973, INT349]

The original city design did not include shops at Ainslie. The distance from available shops and limited transport options led to community pressure for retail outlets close by. This finally bore fruit and building began on the first shops post-World War II in 1948.

A landmark among the shops, the Ainslie IGA supermarket is an institution in Canberra. It has been family-owned and operated by the Xyrakis family since 1963.

The parkland includes old oak trees and public artwork that was inspired by the suburb's connection with the nature reserve and its own exotic trees. The artwork involved extensive community consultation and participation.

'Habitat' is a group of bronze sculptures on recycled turpentine wharf pilings, the work of Martin Moore and commissioned in 2010. The sculptures portray local native fauna interacting with acorns that reflect the oak trees, with several connected by 'talking tubes'. A subsequent commission resulted in three 'racing' snails, their rather lowly nature compensated by their size and glow-in-the-dark snail 'trails'. Two of the sculptures are shown on the back cover.

Walk behind the Ainslie shops to Wakefield Avenue.

8 Wakefield Gardens Housing precinct



The Wakefield Gardens Housing precinct is bounded by Tyson, Bonney, Foveaux and Ebden Streets.

Within the precinct are Wakefield Gardens, behind the Ainslie shops, and an area bounded by Cowper, Suttor, Cox and O'Connell Streets. This area was part of Griffin's plan of 1918, later modified by the creation of pocket parks at each corner and the 'village green' of Wakefield Gardens at its heart. Take time to admire the houses in the precinct.

The oldest houses in the precinct were built from 1925 to 1929 by the FCC and private builders to accommodate lower income public servants and workers involved in the construction of the provisional Parliament House.

From Wakefield Avenue turn left along Cowper Street for ~400m.

9 Beaufort House, 25 Cowper Street



To address the post-World War II housing shortages for returned Service personnel, refugees and migrants, the Commonwealth Government looked to prefabricated housing as the way of the future.

In 1947, a three-bedroom Type 4 'Beaufort Home' was built as a demonstration property. An example of the Post-War Melbourne Regional style of architecture, it is notable for its steel framing and roof, and large windows on three sides to catch the sun. It was designed by Arthur Baldwinson, one of Australia's first prominent modernist architects, and other staff at the Beaufort bomber factory, including Russian-born architect Anatol Kagan. The factory had been converted to meet peacetime housing needs. The innovative housing designs involved factory-produced interchangeable components, enabling modular design variations at an accessible purchase price.

Prefabricated steel components and built-in furniture were delivered from Melbourne to Cowper Street and the house was finished in nine days. When it went on display, visitors included Prime Minister Ben Chifley.

Despite high demand, only 23 Beaufort homes were built. The production of prefabricated steel houses ceased in 1948 due to a shortage of steel.



Prime Minister Ben Chifley at the newly built Beaufort House, 1947

[NAA: A292, C23639]

Beaufort House is one of the few remaining houses of this type and is the only example in Canberra. It has remained largely intact.

Other post-war houses in Canberra had wartime connections. Numerous 'Tocumwals' were built in Ainslie. These had been used at the Tocumwal NSW air force base in World War II and some 200 were dismantled and transported to Canberra by truck in the late 1940s. The first batch was erected in Ainslie, the first house in Cowper Street. The basic design included weatherboard and fibro sheeting, and no ceilings or internal linings. The shells were refitted as houses in six variants, and are recognised for their wide verandahs, high-pitched roofs and red brick chimneys. Most were set up in O'Connor.

Another style was the three-bedroom prefabricated timber Riley Newsum cottages, imported from Britain. They were modified for Australian conditions, shipped in crates and, once the foundations were laid, it took 12 workers one week to erect each house.

From 1951 to 1955 more than 500 Riley Newsum houses were erected in Canberra. Sixteen were built in a group in the western arm of Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie. Most have since been extensively modified.

10 Bus shelter

The shelter in Cowper Street near Cox Street dates from 1937 and was built as a terminus. The T-shape structure on a concrete slab has battened timber walls, now painted cream, and a hipped green corrugated iron roof.

This is one of two remaining Class C shelters, both in Ainslie (the second is in Officer Crescent near Hawdon Street).

Continue along Cowper Street to Bonney Street (~150m).

11 All Saints Anglican Church

All Saints Anglican Church is a sandstone structure designed by Colonial Architect James Barnet.

The building was built in 1868–69 as Haslams Creek Cemetery Station (later renamed Receiving Station No.1) at Rookwood Necropolis, receiving trains transporting bodies and mourners for funeral rites at the cemetery. The Gothic Revival style united the traditional arts of stone carving and gothic forms with then-modern rail transport technology.



Rookwood Receiving Station No. 1, c. 1870s [All Saints Anglican Church, Ainslie]

The station became redundant in 1948 as motor transport replaced funeral trains, fell into disrepair and the roof of the building was destroyed by fire.

In 1957, the Reverend Ted Buckle of the Ainslie parish bought the stonework for £100. The building was dismantled, each stone numbered, and 782 tons of stonework in 83 semi-trailer loads transported to Ainslie. The cost of transport and reconstruction was more than £5,000.

The heritage-listed mortuary building at the city end of the line still stands in Redfern near Central Station.

After arriving in Canberra, the railway station was converted for use as a church from 1959. The architect was Wes Pierce and the builder Stanley Taunton, a parishioner whose previous experience was only in brick and timber. He believed he would be 'guided by an angel' to deliver the Rev. Buckle's vision for the church.

The practice of salvage and adaptive reuse is a feature of the church. The ends through which funeral trains had previously passed were enclosed.

The bell tower was relocated to the opposite side. The bell was originally used on a locomotive that ran on the Newnes (or Wolgan Valley) railway line, NSW. A wall plaque shows that it was presented to the church by the NSW Steam Tram and Railway Preservation Society.

Two stained glass windows were imported from England. One was originally a memorial to World War I servicemen in St Clement's in Attercliffe, Sheffield, reshaped to fit the All Saints arch; the other is from the 12th century St Margaret's in Bagendon, Gloucestershire. Carved stone angels adorn the arch.

The rare 1857 Bishop & Starr pipe organ was bought by the church in 1988 from Wealdstone Baptist Church in Harrow, England, and refitted electronically. Stonework from No.3 station at Rookwood Cemetery was used to create the sanctuary, altar, pulpit and font.

Turn left from Cowper Street into Limestone Avenue and past Henty Street to return to the Ainslie Volcanics Grassland (stop 1 [~400m]).

12 Australian Native Association bench

The Art Deco bench on the median strip where Limestone Avenue meets Grimes Street is one of two installed by the ANA in 1931–32 to mark the end of the planted area along Limestone Avenue. The other is at stop 2.

You can link to the Braddon tour from Haig Park or from the Hotel Mercure Canberra at Ainslie Avenue.

Martin Moore, Habitat, 2010. Bronze, marine turpentine. Ainslie shops [artsACT]

Front cover: All Saints Anglican Church, Ainslie [All Saints Anglican Church]

Visit Ainslie to discover one of Canberra's oldest suburbs. With Mount Ainslie as its backdrop, it is shaped by stories of Aboriginal peoples, early European pastoral settlement, the Griffins' plans for the national capital, Garden City planning and adaptive re-use of buildings.



Ainslie

2026



Published by the National Trust of Australia (ACT)
(02) 6230 0533 | info@nationaltrustact.org.au

www.nationaltrustact.org.au

The National Trust acknowledges Mark Butz for the development of this brochure.

Design by Studio Outside and Rosanna Horn Design

Supported by



The National Trust produced this brochure with support and funding from the ACT Government.