

PRECUSORS TO MODERNISM

1920-1939 BETWEEN THE WARS

Eric Martin AM

Eric Martin
& Associates
ARCHITECTS



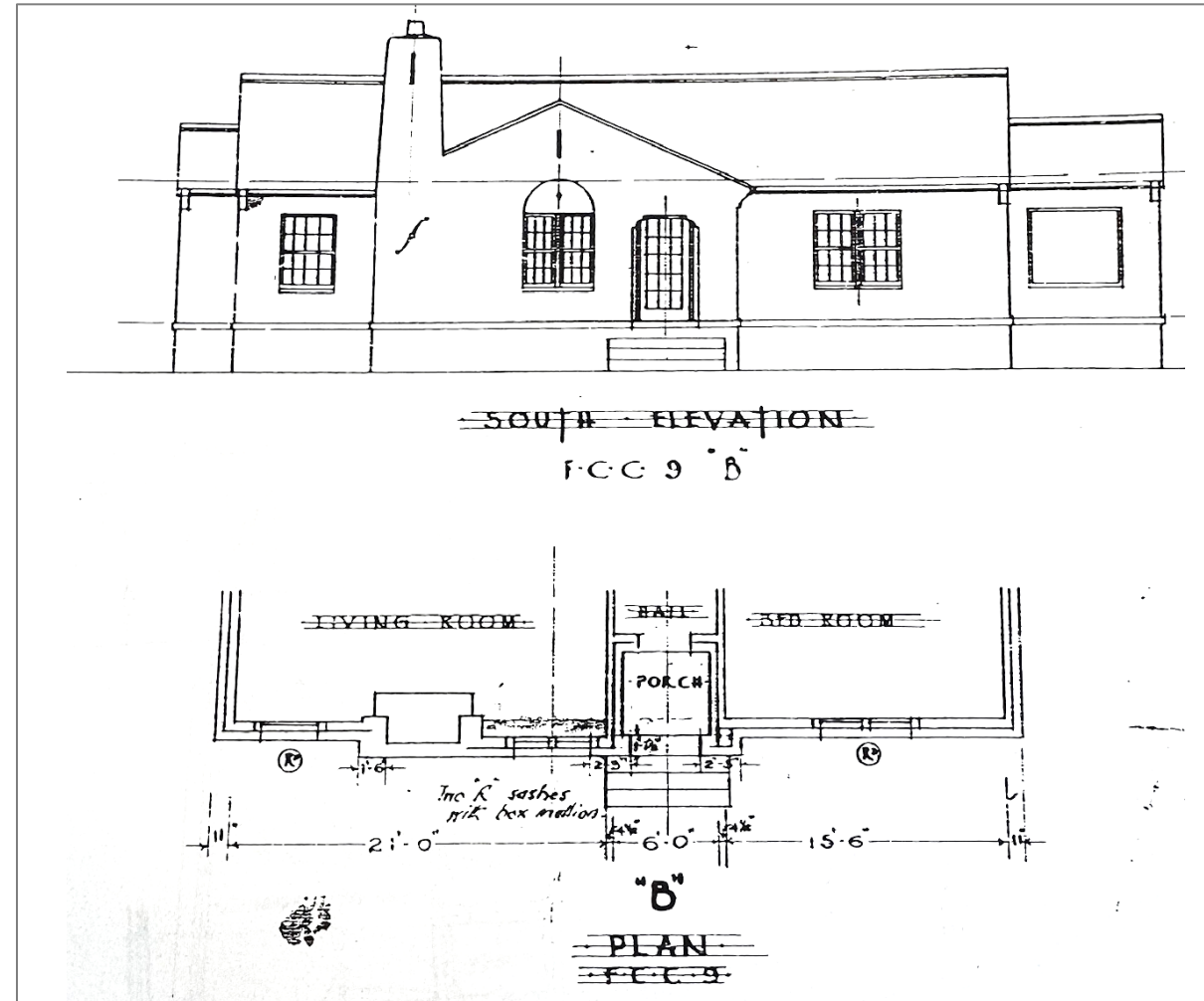
architecture | access | heritage

THE ISSUE

SPIRIT OF THE TIME

It is claimed that there was a 'trend of the interwar period towards the subtle or minimal decoration as a precursor to Modernism' in reference to the Federal Capital Commission (FCC) housing for Canberra.

Apart from being designed prior to the 1950's how do Canberra's FCC dwellings show elements towards Modernism. What led to these major shifts and changes in style, materials and even conservation? And what was the result?



MODERNISM

WHAT IS MODERNISM?

Modernism is a late 19th – to mid -20th-century cultural, artistic, and literary movement characterized by a conscious break from traditional styles, beliefs, and conventions. Spurred by industrialization, urbanization, and the trauma of World War I, it focused on experimentation, subjectivity, and finding new forms of expression to represent modern life.

“Modernism was not conceived as a style but a loose collection of ideas... which largely rejected the styles that came before it”

At the core of Modernism lay the idea that the world had to be fundamentally rethought.



Drawing, Edward McKnight Kauffer, 1934, England. Museum no. E.3770-2004. Copyright Victoria and Albert Museum, London

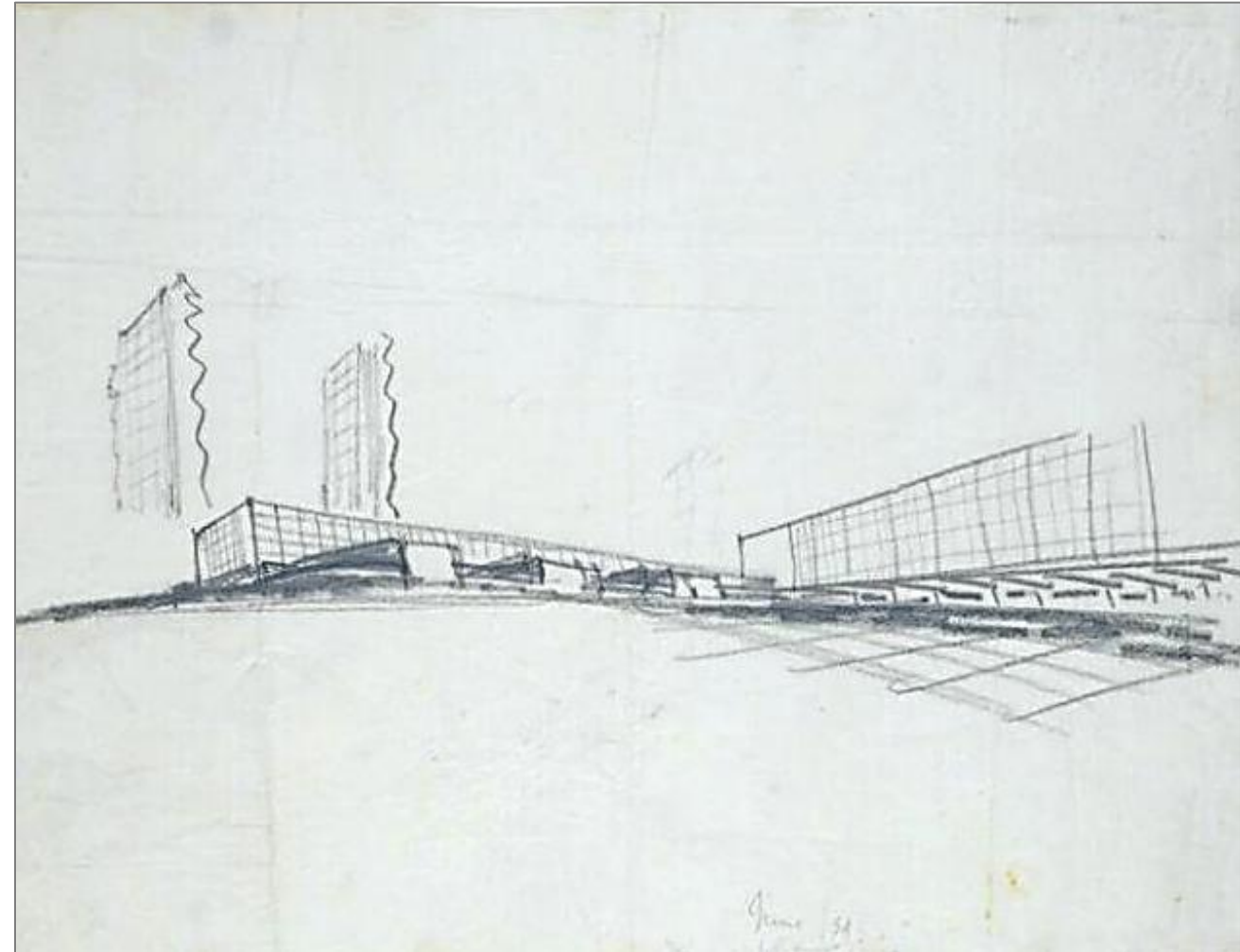
ARCHITECTURE

ARCHITECTURE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Architects and designers set out to reinvent these forms for a new century.

Europe had been ravaged by repressive political structures and glaring social inequalities. Tackling economic inequality became central to the Modernist agenda and many architects devoted their energies to housing. Affordable housing was one of the most urgent needs of the inter-war period. Designers and architects such as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Erich Mendelsohn and Walter Gropius developed model housing estates in an attempt to resolve the housing crisis.

In their drive to transform society, Modernist architects set out to industrialise the building process. New construction techniques and the use of materials such as steel, concrete and glass would reduce costs and allow for mass-production.

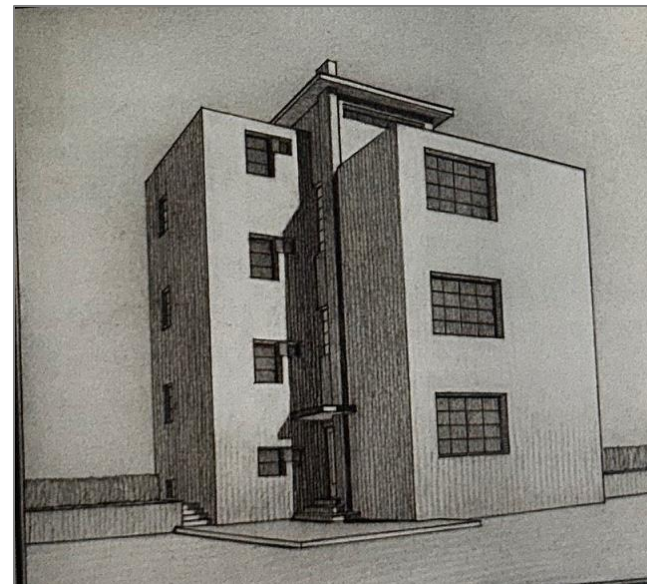
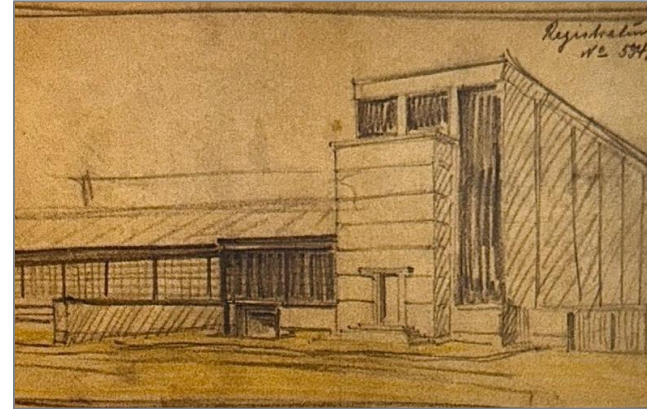


Design for White City housing scheme, drawing, Eric Mendelsohn, 1934, UK. Museum no. E.677-1993. Copyright Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

INFLUENCES

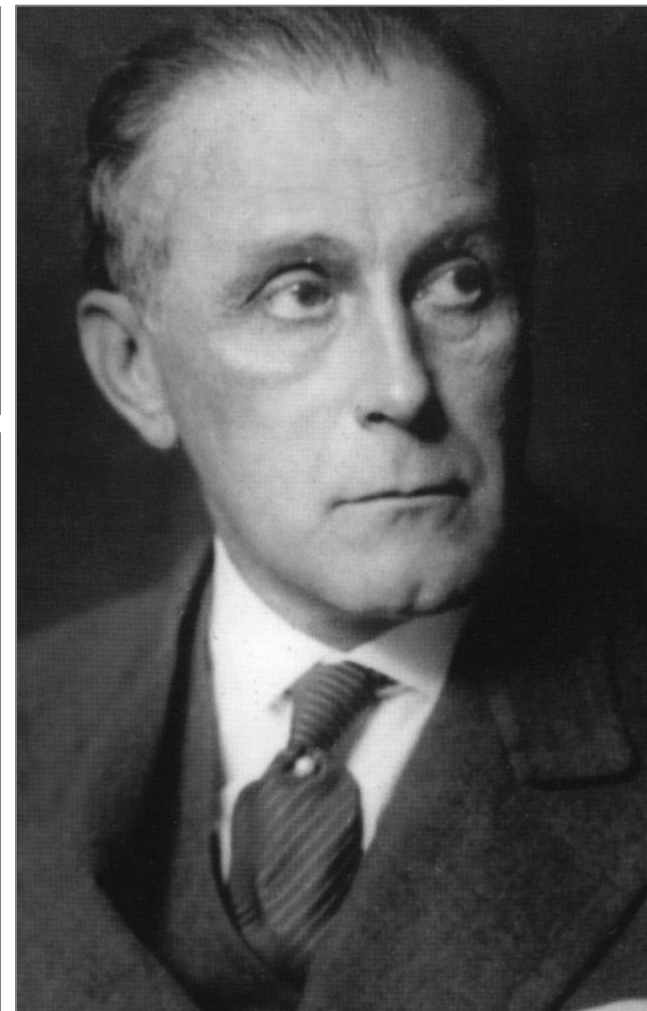
WORLD SCENE

- The Exhibition of Decorative Fine Arts in Paris, 1925, explored the impact of Art Deco (1910-1939) on cities, including Australia.
- Bauhaus



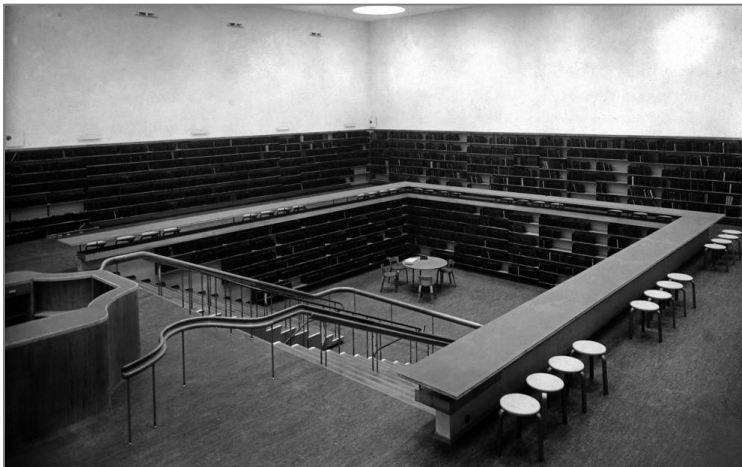
Right: Bauhaus Style, Modernist Poster
Bottom left: Belgian Pavilion; architect, Victor Horta
Top left: Grand Palais: Salle d'Honneur and staircase; architect, Charles Letrosne

Adolf Loos



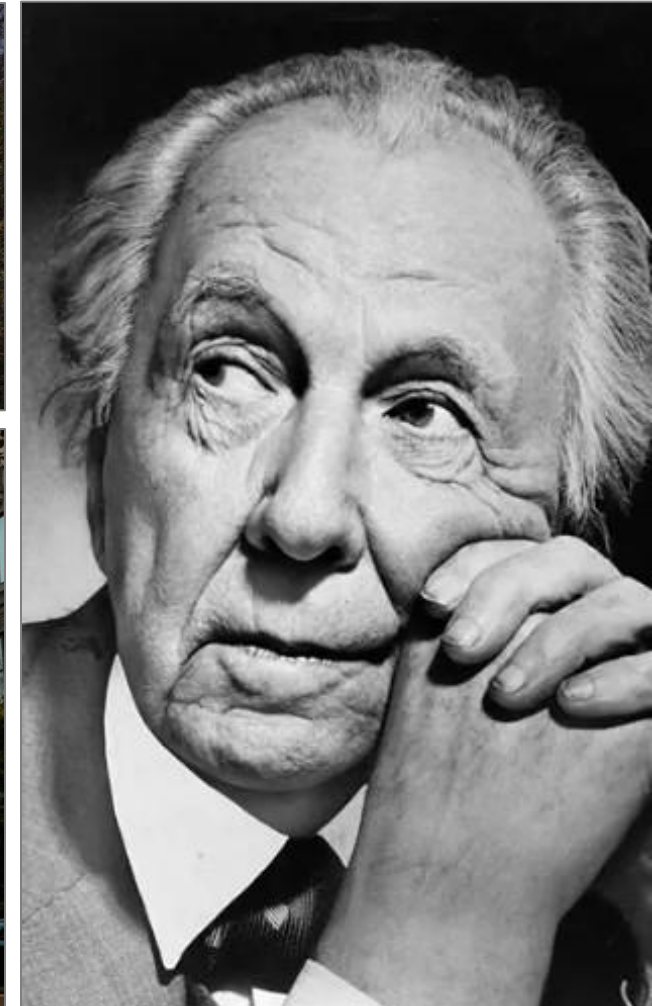
Right: Adolf Loos Photograph
Mid Top: Villa Müller, 1930
Mid Bottom: Looshaus, 1911
Left: Steiner House, 1910

Alvar Aalto



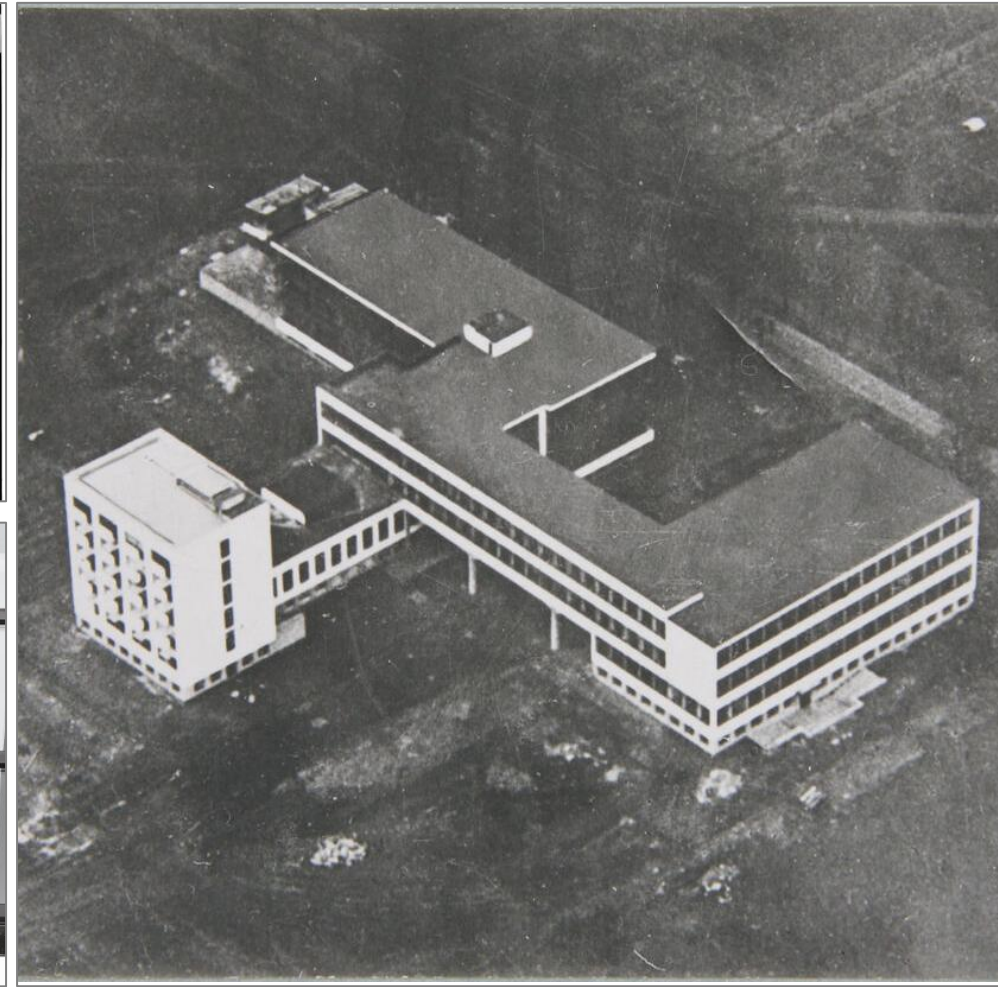
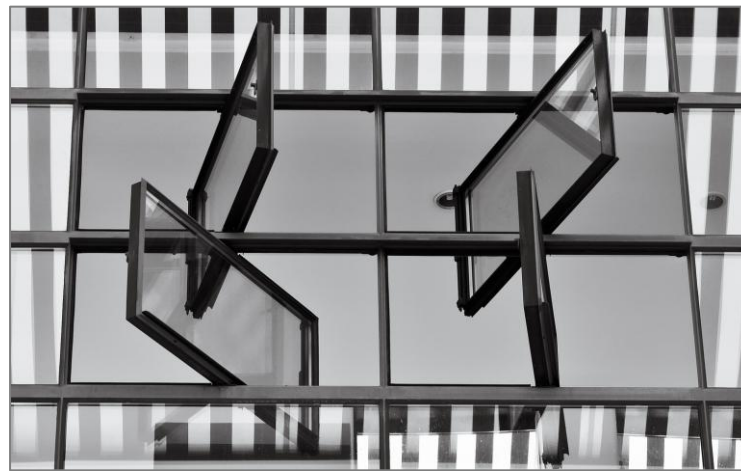
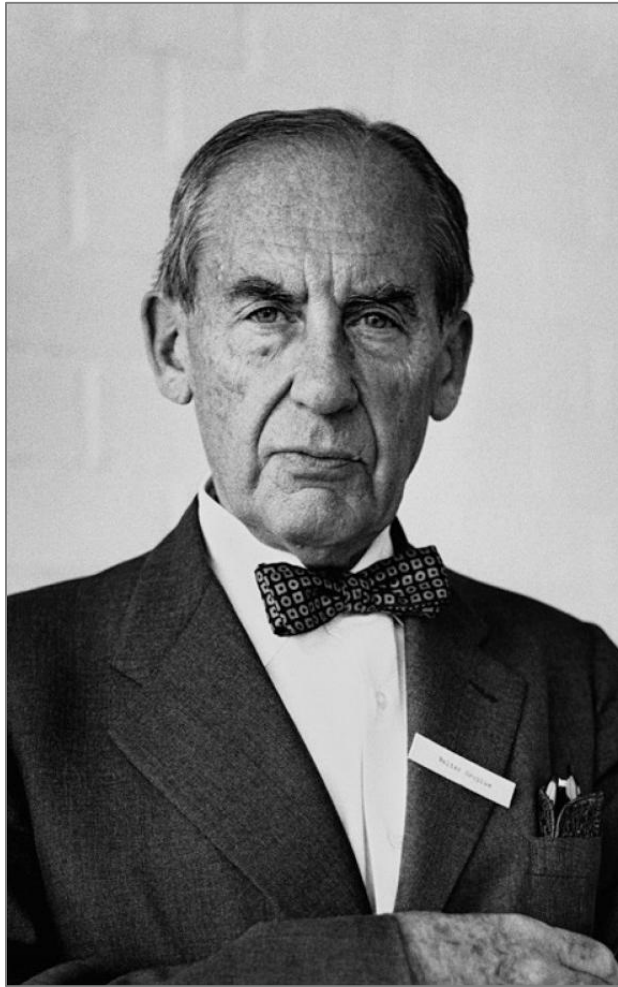
*Top Left: Viipuri Library, Vyborg
Bottom Left: Säynätsalo Town Hall, Finland
Middle: Alvar Aalto Photograph
Right: Paimio Sanatorium, Finland*

Frank Lloyd Wright



Left: Robie House, 1910
Top Mid: Fallingwater, 1935
Bottom Mid: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1943
Right: Frank Lloyd Wright Photograph

Walter Gropius

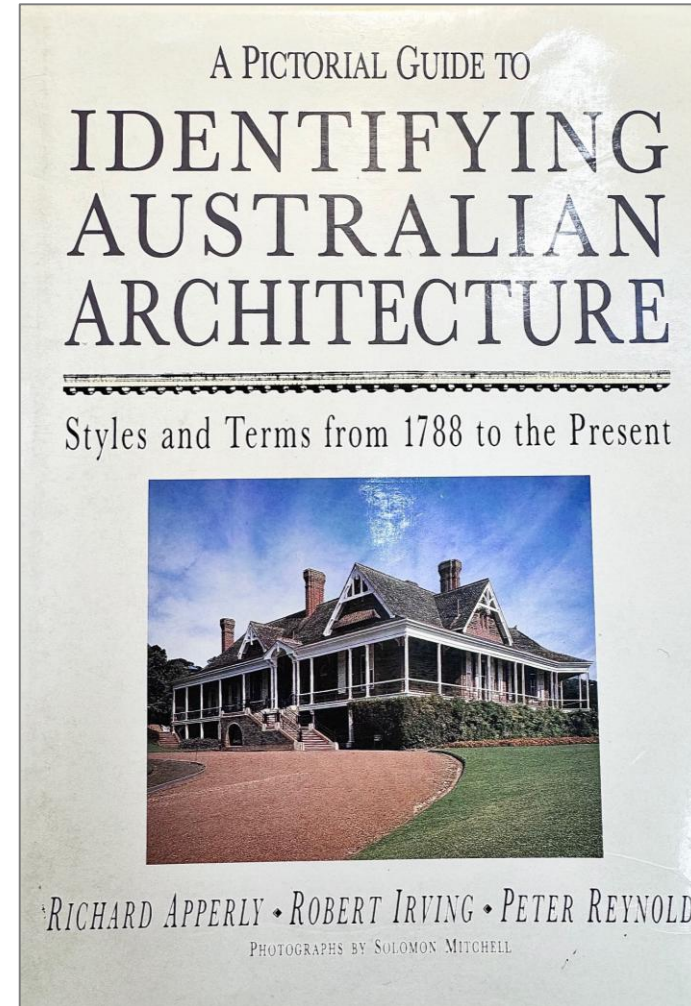


Left: Walter Gropius Photograph
Top Left: Bauhaus-Building, Dessau. Interior
Top Right: Gropius House. Stairwell
Bottom Mid: Fagus Factory
Right: Bauhaus Building, Dessau, 1925-1926 Aerial view

INFLUENCERS FROM FEDERATION PERIOD

STYLES IN AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTURE FROM c. 1890 TO c. 1915

- Academic Classical
- Free Classical
- Filigree
- Anglo-Dutch
- Romanesque
- Gothic
- Carpenter Gothic
- Warehouse
- Queen Anne
- Free Style
- Arts and Crafts
- Bungalow



THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

STYLES IN AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTURE 1920-1940

- Georgian Revival
- Academic Classical
- Free Classical
- Beaux-Arts
- Stripped Classical
- Commercial Palazzo
- Mediterranean
- Spanish Mission
- Chicargoesque
- Functionalist
- Art Deco
- Skyscraper Gothic
- Romanesque
- Gothic
- Old English
- California Bungalow

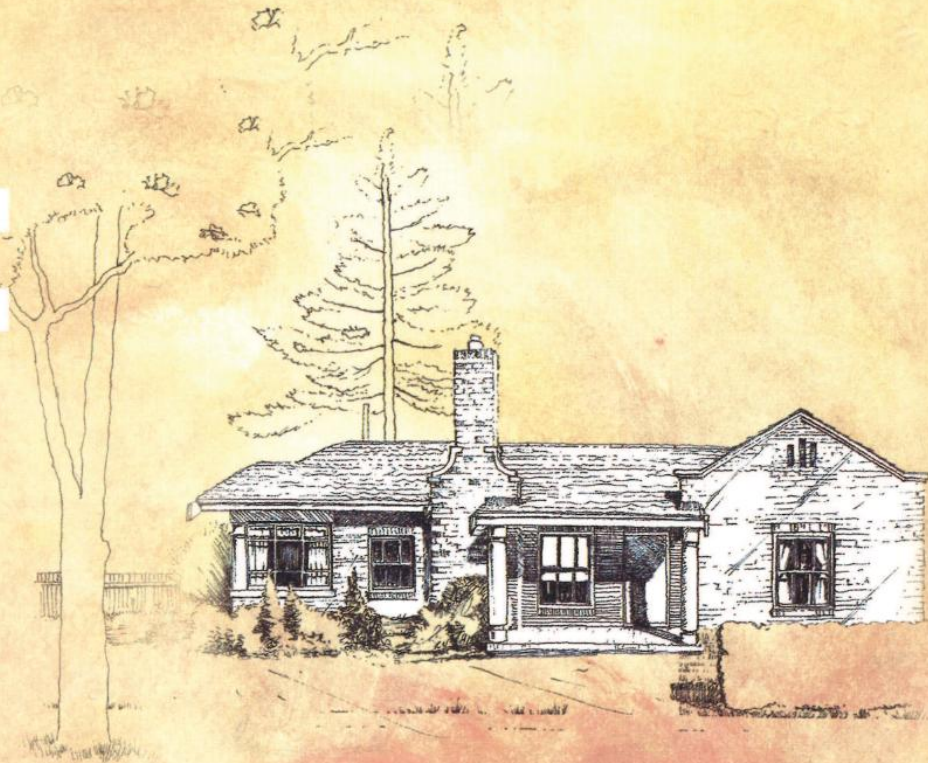
MODERNIST HOUSES IN ACT

THEMATIC HERITAGE STUDY

- Provides a useful background but focuses on post-WW2



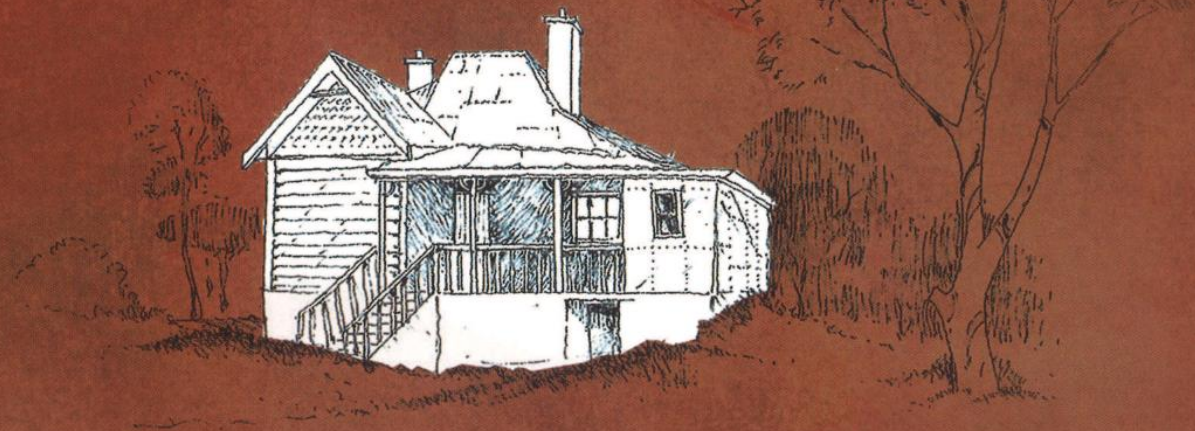
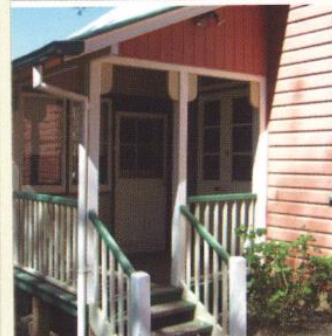
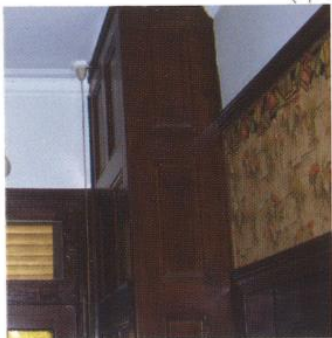
WHAT HOUSE IS THAT?



A guide to the Australian Capital Territory's Housing Styles

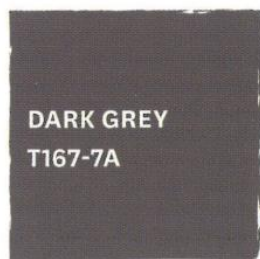
FEDERATION BUNGALOW STYLE IN CANBERRA'S FIRST PERIOD

1913-1924



Government housing constructed 1913-1924 prior to the approved plan of Canberra is located in Acton, Yarralumla and Braddon. The Acton houses, primarily located in Liversidge Street and Balmain Crescent, were modest timber houses for senior officials associated with establishment and management of the formative phase of Canberra. The houses were mainly symmetrically planned and had small porches or verandahs and some Georgian Revival style characteristics including windows, portico and verandahs.

The brick houses in Yarralumla were for the Canberra Brickworks' staff and those in Braddon were laid out in the first neighbourhood of Griffin's 1918 plan. These are located between Currong and Elimatta Streets, and were mainly constructed in 1921-4 to a c1918 design.



DARK GREY
T167-7A



RUST
T173-5SR



FOREST
GREEN
T174-7MBC



BEIGE
T174-3W



PALE
CREAM
T20-1W

EXTERIOR

- Walls: Face brick or wide painted or stained weatherboards
Sometimes brick piers and/or brick base
- Roofs: Pitched corrugated metal or terracotta tiles
- Windows: Small rectangular timber casement or double hung with small panes, usually with a vertical proportion

INTERIOR

- Plain skirtings and architraves dark stained
- Panelled doors, dark stained
- Walls generally painted but sometimes walls had dark stained timber or wallpaper to picture rails
- Flat fibrous plaster ceilings broken into panels by dark timber battens and timber cornices

GARDEN

- These gardens were minimalist with mainly open dryland grass, cyprus trees beside drives and small garden beds of lilac, iris, violets, unca, agapanthus, photinia and privet. Back yards had fruit trees and vegetable gardens. Hedges were along the street frontages.

COLOURS

External

- Walls Darker colours such as grey, rust
- Windows Forest green or beige
- Doors Pale cream

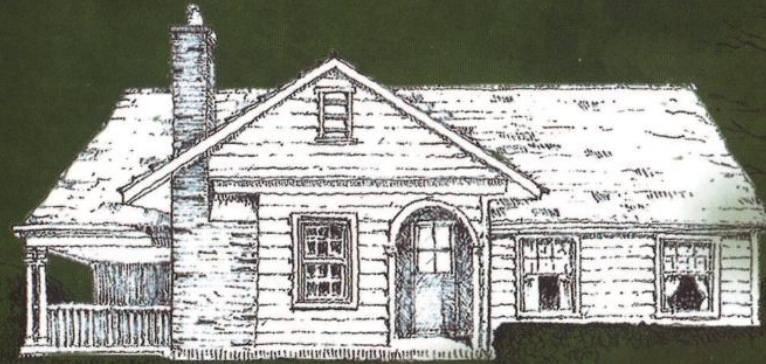
Internal

- Cream walls White ceilings and upper section of walls
- Dark stained timber

Notes A detailed colour scheme for Edwardian Houses 1900-1915 (which is similar) is in *Colour Schemes for Old Australian Houses* by Evans, Lucas & Stapleton.
No 16 Lennox Crossing retains its original colour scheme.

FEDERAL CAPITAL - ARTISAN TIMBER COTTAGES

1924-1930



Government houses constructed in the 1920s for the emerging Canberra were generally grouped into three types reflecting socio-economic conditions. The Artisan Timber Cottages were considered the cheapest group and are represented by a range of timber houses, primarily located in Ainslie. They were relatively small, mainly symmetrically planned, timber weatherboard cottages. They included small porches or verandahs.



MID GREY



FOREST
GREEN
T174-7MBC



BEIGE
T174-3W



PALE
CREAM
T20-1W

EXTERIOR

- Walls: Painted timber weatherboards
- Roofs: Pitched corrugated metal, metal tiled or terracotta tiled
- Windows: Timber framed, double hung with either margined glazing or 6-light upper sashes and single light lower sashes

INTERIOR

- Plain splayed skirting and architraves sometimes dark stained but generally painted
- Panelled doors, usually stained
- Walls generally painted
- Flat fibrous plaster ceilings broken into panels by dark timber or painted timber battens and timber cornices

GARDEN

- These gardens were minimalist with mainly open dryland grass, cyprus trees beside drives and small garden beds of lilac, iris, violets, unca, agapanthus, photinia and privet. Back yards had fruit trees and vegetable gardens. Hedges were along the street frontages.

COLOURS

External

- Walls Mid colours including grey
- Windows Forest green or beige
- Doors Pale cream

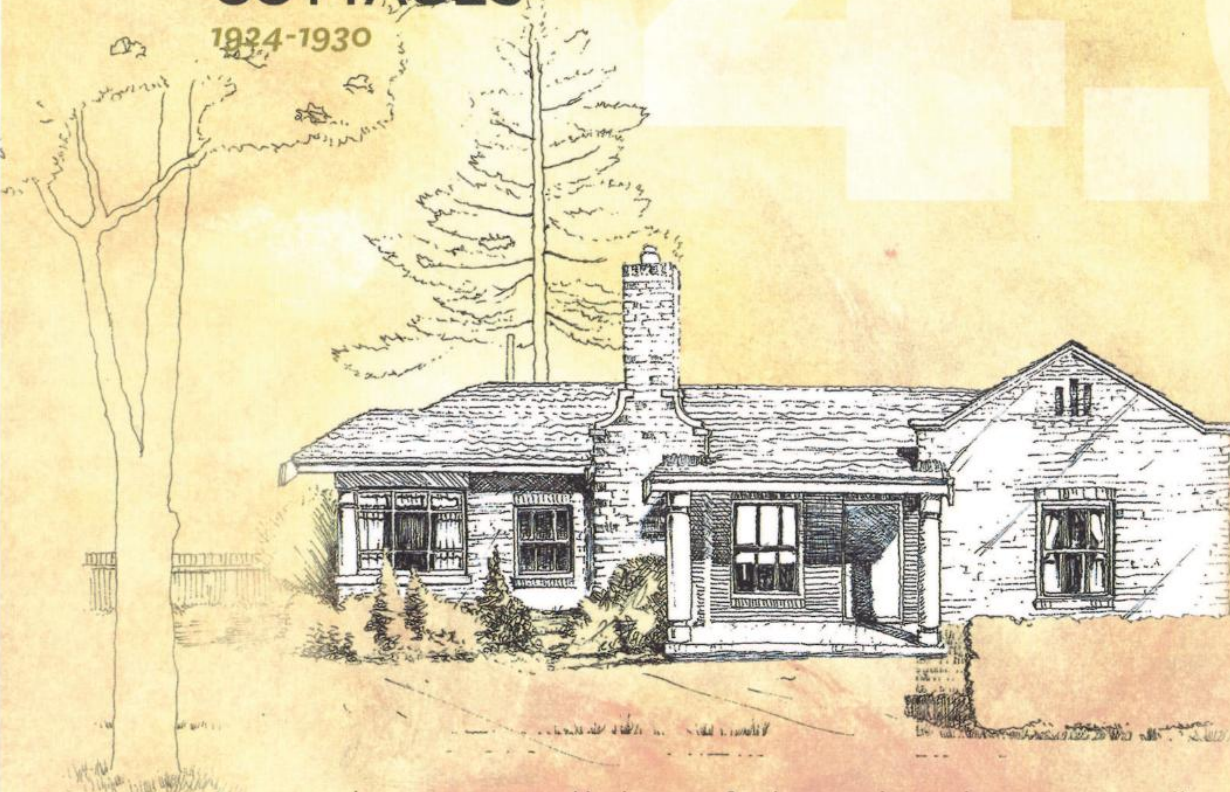
Internal

- Cream walls
- White ceiling and upper section of wall
- Dark stained timber

Notes A detailed colour scheme for the 1915-1930 houses is in *Colour Schemes for Old Australian Houses* by Evans, Lucas & Stapleton.

FEDERAL CAPITAL - MID PUBLIC SERVICE MASONRY COTTAGES

1924-1930



Government houses constructed in the 1920s for the emerging Canberra were generally grouped into three types reflecting socio-economic conditions. The Masonry Cottages were to accommodate the bulk of the public servants being brought to Canberra to service the Commonwealth Government. It is the largest grouping of this period and is represented by a range of standard designs in Braddon, Reid, Barton, Griffith and Kingston. They were designed for the Federal Capital Commission (FCC) by its own architects under Rolland and Casboulte.

The houses were modest sized, of red brick or roughcast render with terracotta tiled roofs. They included small porches and small verandahs with a chimney featuring on one external wall.





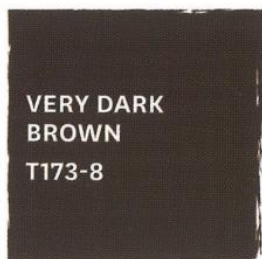
OCHRE
T173-3A



FOREST
GREEN
T174-7MBC



BEIGE
T174-3W



VERY DARK
BROWN
T173-8



EAU DE NIL
T98-3W



PALE
CREAM
T20-1W

EXTERIOR

- Walls: Face red brick or roughcast render
- Roofs: Pitched terracotta tiled
- Windows: Timber framed, double hung with usually six light upper sash and single light lower sash

INTERIOR

- Plain splayed skirtings and architraves, sometimes dark stained
- Panelled doors, usually stained
- Walls generally painted, but sometimes dark panelled
- Flat fibrous plaster ceilings broken into panels by dark timber or painted timber battens and timber cornices

GARDEN

- The gardens included a cottage garden to the front including plants such as lilac, iris, violets, unca, agapanthus, photinia and privet with small lawn areas.
- Back yards had fruit trees and vegetable gardens with some lawn areas. Hedges were along the street frontages. Hedge plants were contoneaster, ligustrum ovatafolium (hedge privet), lanicera (honeysuckle), euomyrus japonica (spindle tree), pyracantha yurinanensis and viburnum tinus.

COLOURS

External

- Walls Red face brick or earthy ochre tones for painted render
- Windows Forest green or beige
- Doors Pale green or dark brown

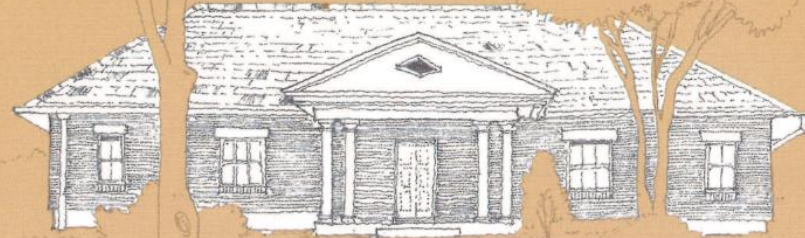
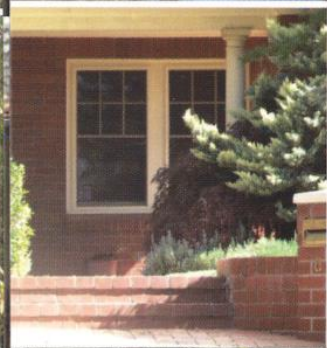
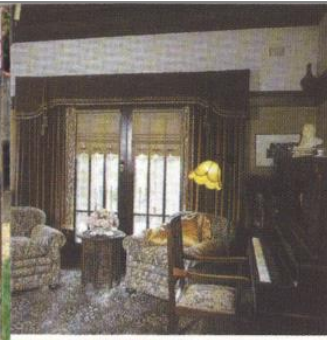
Internal

- Pale colour walls where painted or dark timber panelling
White ceilings and upper section of walls. Dark stained timber

Notes A detailed colour scheme for 1915-1930 houses is in *Colour Schemes for Old Australian Houses* by Evans, Lucas & Stapleton.

FEDERAL CAPITAL - HIGHER LEVEL PUBLIC SERVICE AND PRIVATE MASONRY COTTAGES

1924-1930



Housing constructed in the 1920s for the emerging Canberra was generally grouped into three types reflecting socio-economic conditions. The first houses designed specifically for senior public servants are in Forrest and came from a competition for the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC) in 1923 won by architects Oakley, Parkes and Scarborough.

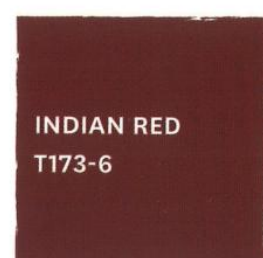
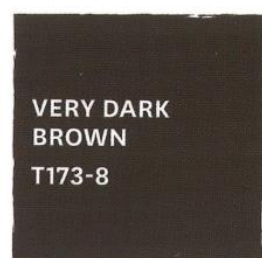
These larger houses were located in Forrest and Red Hill and were for senior public servants, officers & private citizens. The designs were reflective of Georgian revival and Mediterranean Styles.

Georgian Revival. This style recreated characteristics of the Old Colonial Georgian style: clarity, simplicity

and well-proportioned symmetrical fenestration with simplified classicism, such as simple portico, smaller loggia and modest string courses. Emphasis was placed on a central entrance and red brick walls.

Mediterranean. This style was derived from houses around the Mediterranean Sea, with more informal massing, stuccoed surfaces and rounded openings compared with Georgian Revival houses.

Both styles had similar characteristics and were traditionally red brick, sometimes stucco finish, with terracotta tiled roofs. Some designs had porches with columns, arched openings, a mix of red brick bases and stucco above.



EXTERIOR

- Walls: Red brick or stucco (roughcast) finish generally but, some had weatherboards
- Roofs: Pitched terracotta tiled
- Windows: Relatively small rectangular timber framed double hung windows. Usually with 6 pane sashes, particularly in upper sashes

INTERIOR

- Rendered walls painted
- Fibrous plaster ceilings with cover strips (often of stained timber) and modest cornices
- Stained timber bevelled edge skirting and architraves and often a picture rail
- Stained timber floor with rugs

GARDEN

- English cottage garden with some formal layout such as a central path. Drive strips to a rear (detached) garage. Grass used extensively which was dryland as irrigation systems were not available. Annuals and perennials and often a feature tree. Flowers included roses and dahlias. Front hedges (no fence) often photinia or cypress. Back gardens regarded as private, less formal with emphasis on productivity with fruit and vegetables.

COLOURS

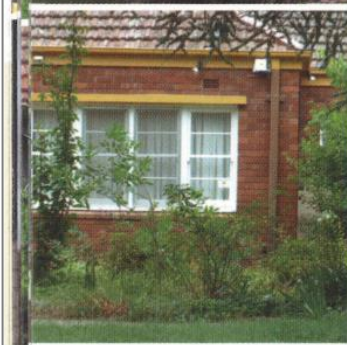
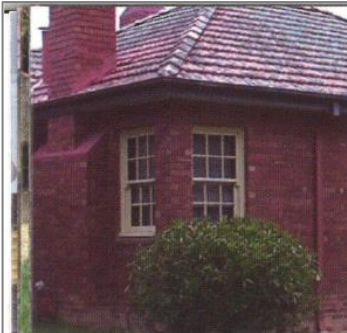
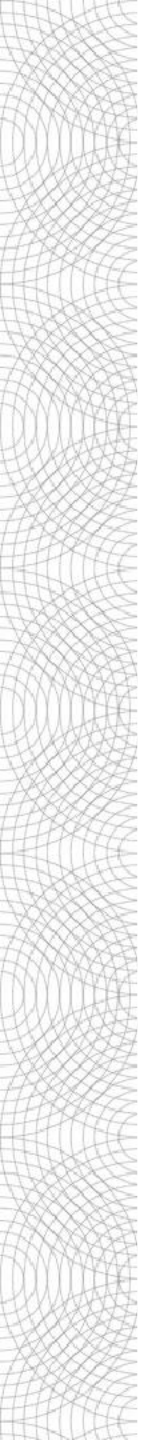
External

- Earthy colours such as cream, ochre, buff, dark brown, medium greens with sometimes black and Indian red tones. Dark timber stains for windows and doors with pale creams, pink, blue internally. Stained timber floors with centre rugs. Internal wall colours soft tones of cream, buff, pale blue, manila. True white was rarely used externally.

Internal

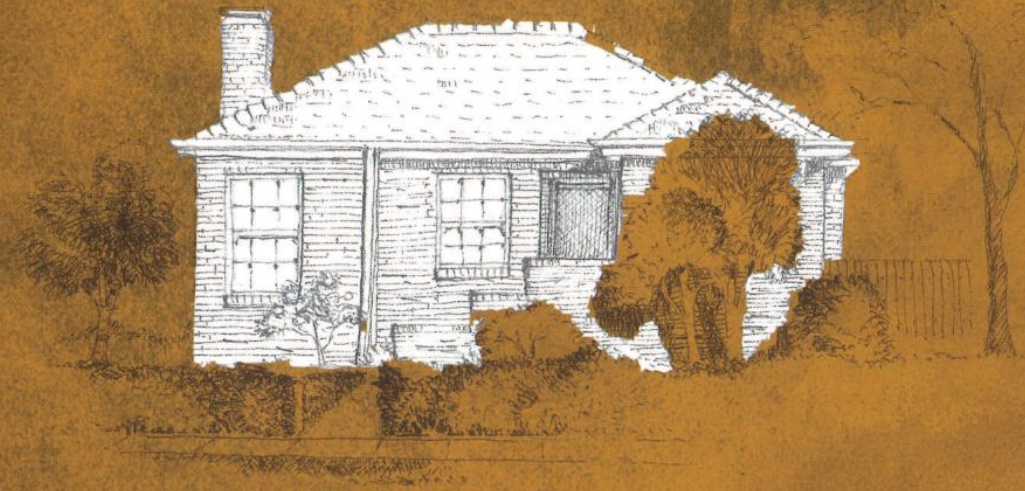
- Colour schemes rarely comprised more than 3 colours

Notes *Calthorpes' House is the best example of the style including interiors and garden. Sample colour scheme: Walls: pale ochre - Doors shutters, fascia: brown - Window eaves: sand Alternative - Walls: off white/cream - Windows: deep indian red - Doors, gutters: straw - Window, fascia: buff - Eaves: lichen Peter Cuffley's book on Australian Houses of the Twenties and Thirties details exterior, interior, garden plus renovation and extensions including colours.*



INTER-WAR GEORGIAN REVIVAL

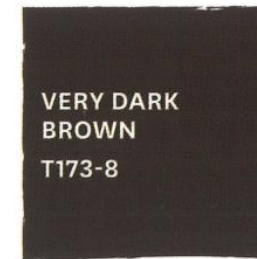
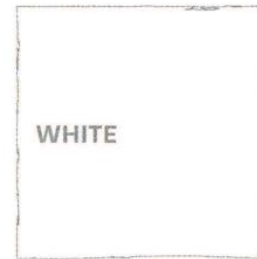
1925-1945



After the initial phase of the 1920s, growth slowed and the supply of houses for Canberra's public service was under the control of the Department of Home Affairs (1930-32) then the Department of the Interior (DOI).

They were designed by EH Henderson and are best represented in Griffith with some infilling of the other existing suburbs of the time, such as Reid.

The houses were of modest size, mainly symmetrically planned and mainly red face brick with small porches.



EXTERIOR

- Walls: Red face brick
- Roofs: Pitched terracotta tiled
- Windows: Timber framed, usually multi-paned sashes

INTERIOR

- Plain splayed skirtings, stained
- Panelled doors, stained
- Walls – painted with dark stained details and panelling
- Flat fibrous plaster ceilings – painted

GARDEN

- The garden included cottage garden to the front, usually with a hedge to the street, with a selection of plants and small lawn areas
- Back yards had smaller vegetable gardens and some fruit trees and lawn areas

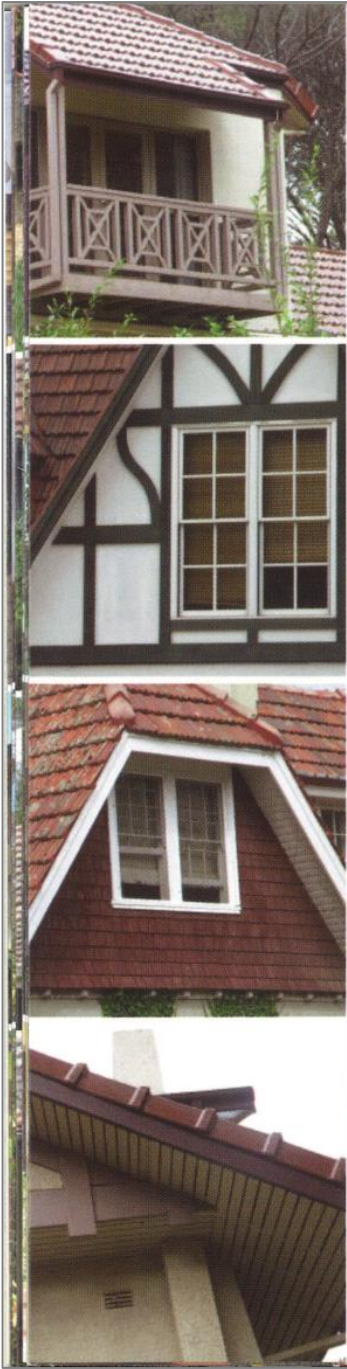
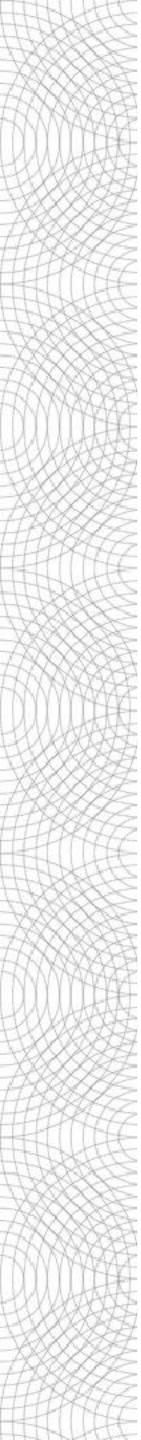
COLOURS

External

- Walls Red face brick
- Windows Beige, ochre or light stain
- Doors Painted

Internal

- Painted white above panelling
- White ceiling
- Dark stained timber trim



ARTS AND CRAFTS AND OLD ENGLISH

1925-1945



Canberra has some privately built houses which are late examples of the Federation Arts and Crafts style and a few in the Inter-War Old English style, while others are not clearly in either style.

The principal characteristics of the Arts and Crafts style are a conspicuous roof, prominent eaves, exposed rafters, roughcast walling and tall chimneys. Characteristics of the Old English style are asymmetrical massing, gables with decorative barge-boards and imitation half-timbering.



BEIGE
T174-3W

PALE
CREAM
T20-1W

WHITE

MISSION BROWN
T173-8

EXTERIOR

- Walls: Roughcast or face brick with imitation Old English having half timbering to upper walls or gables
- Roofs: Steep pitched terracotta tiled
- Windows: Timber framed double hung or casement, often with lead lights

INTERIOR

- Panelled walls, usually painted but sometimes stained
- Beams defined in dark stained timber
- Large fireplaces

GARDEN

- The gardens were cottage gardens with paving in panels meandering through selected plants such as sunflower, hollyhocks, foxgloves, rosemary and lavender
- The rear garden usually retained a small vegetable garden and some fruit trees in lawn

COLOURS

External

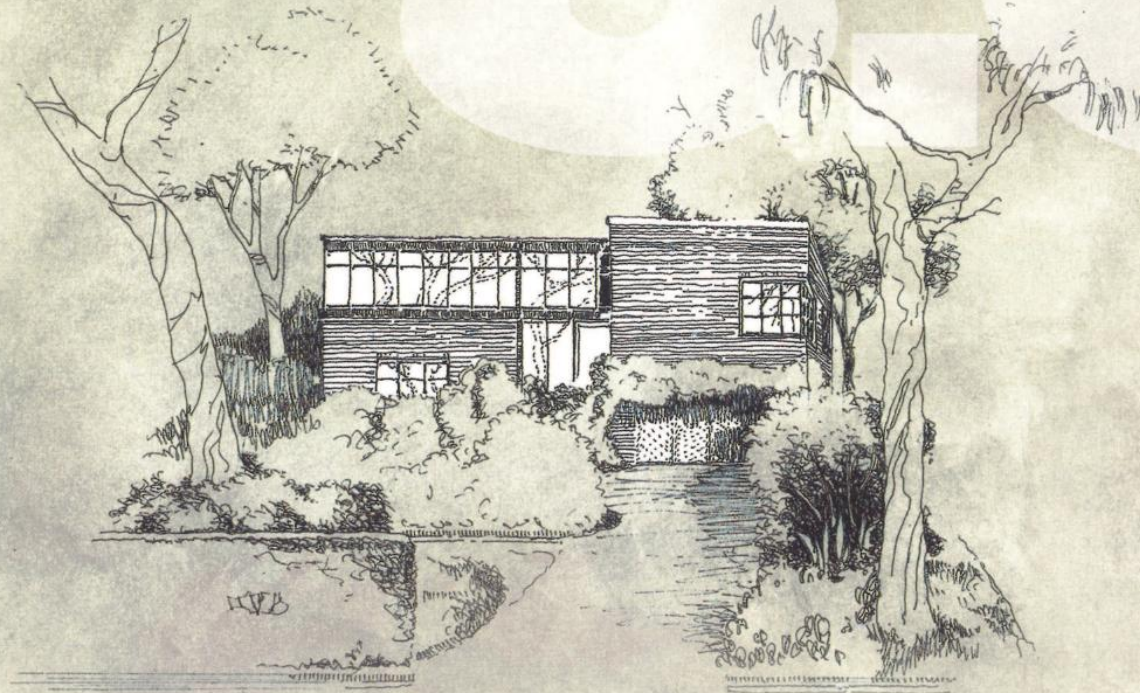
- Walls Dark face brick and white or light earth coloured painted infill
- Windows & Doors Varied from dark to light colours, frequently in contrast to the background

Internal

- Walls Light colour (white) with dark timber details.
- Ceiling Fibrous plaster white with dark features (eg beams)
- Timber Details Dark stain

INTER-WAR FUNCTIONALIST OR EARLY MODERN

1930-1945



Modernism is characterised by simple bold geometric shapes with little or no ornamentation. It included larger open areas with larger windows and newer materials such as steel windows and flat metal tray roofs.

In 1937 the Forrest Fire Station houses and the architect Moir's own house (1936) were the beginning of modern housing in Canberra. Some examples from government housing are the Griffith 'butterfly houses' but the better examples were by private architects such as Moir and Sutherland and Dirk Bolt. Houses are scattered through Griffith, Deakin, Campbell, Braddon, Dickson, Turner and O'Connor. House designs had squarish proportions, tending to the horizontal.



CHARCOL GREY
T170-8A

EAU DE NIL
T98-3W

CANARY
T13-8A

OFF WHITE
T175-1W

BURNT ORANGE
T30-8G

EXTERIOR

- Walls: There was a range of materials including brick and render, usually arranged in rectilinear geometric shapes. Feature elements were sometimes included using materials such as stone in angular detail. Occasionally bold curved elements including windows, projecting concrete elements or entry stair were added
- Roofs: Flat or low pitched metal deck
- Windows: Wall to wall, floor to floor windows in timber or steel frames were common. But sometimes blank walls had small, often circular windows

INTERIOR

- Open plan with dining, kitchen, living areas often open to each other
Painted flat plaster walls with minimal cornices
- Simple small or sometimes no architraves and skirting in stained or painted timber
- Plasterboard ceilings painted
- Thin brick surrounds to fireplaces

GARDEN

- Large areas of lawn with narrow perimeter garden beds
- Low garden walls often in stone
- Concrete wheel strips for driveways often in simple bold curved form
- Use of exotic plants such as palm, ficus, yuccas and rock gardens
- Garage an integral part of the house
- Back yard designed for entertaining

COLOURS

External

- Usually white, black grey but also some stronger colour such as lemon yellow, charcoal grey, turquoise

Internal

- Internally colours were white, off white, cream but also some strong colours such as canary, burnt orange, salmon and eau-de-nil

Notes Peter Cuffley's book on *Australian Houses of the Twenties and Thirties* details exterior, interior, garden plus renovations and extensions including colours.

1921-1938

GOVERNMENT HOUSING IN THE ACT

- 1921-1925: Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC)
The Department of Works and Railways
- 1922: Competition won by Oakley and Parkes in Forrest
- 1925-1930: The Federal Capital Commission (FCC)
- 1930-1938: Dept of Home Affairs and the Interior

FCAC 1921-1925

JOHN SULMAN ARCHITECT



FCAC cottages around Doonkuna Street, 1926. Type B7 on the left.

7

BRADDON HOUSING PRECINCT

Braddon, 1921-27

Federal Capital Advisory Committee
& Federal Capital Commission

The Commonwealth Government appointed the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC) in 1921 to build sufficient facilities to enable Parliament and essential public servants to move from Melbourne to Canberra—finally achieved in 1927. Private enterprise was unenthusiastic about building houses; government had to fill the void.

Under the leadership of architect and town planner, John Sulman—who designed the Melbourne and Sydney Buildings at Civic—the FCAC began building permanent houses for workers at existing construction camps such as the power house (Kington) and the brickworks at Westridge, and at new sites like Blandfordia (Forrest) and Ainslie. They adapted plans by William Foggitt which had been built by the Department of Works and Railways at Littleton Village in Lithgow, New South Wales.

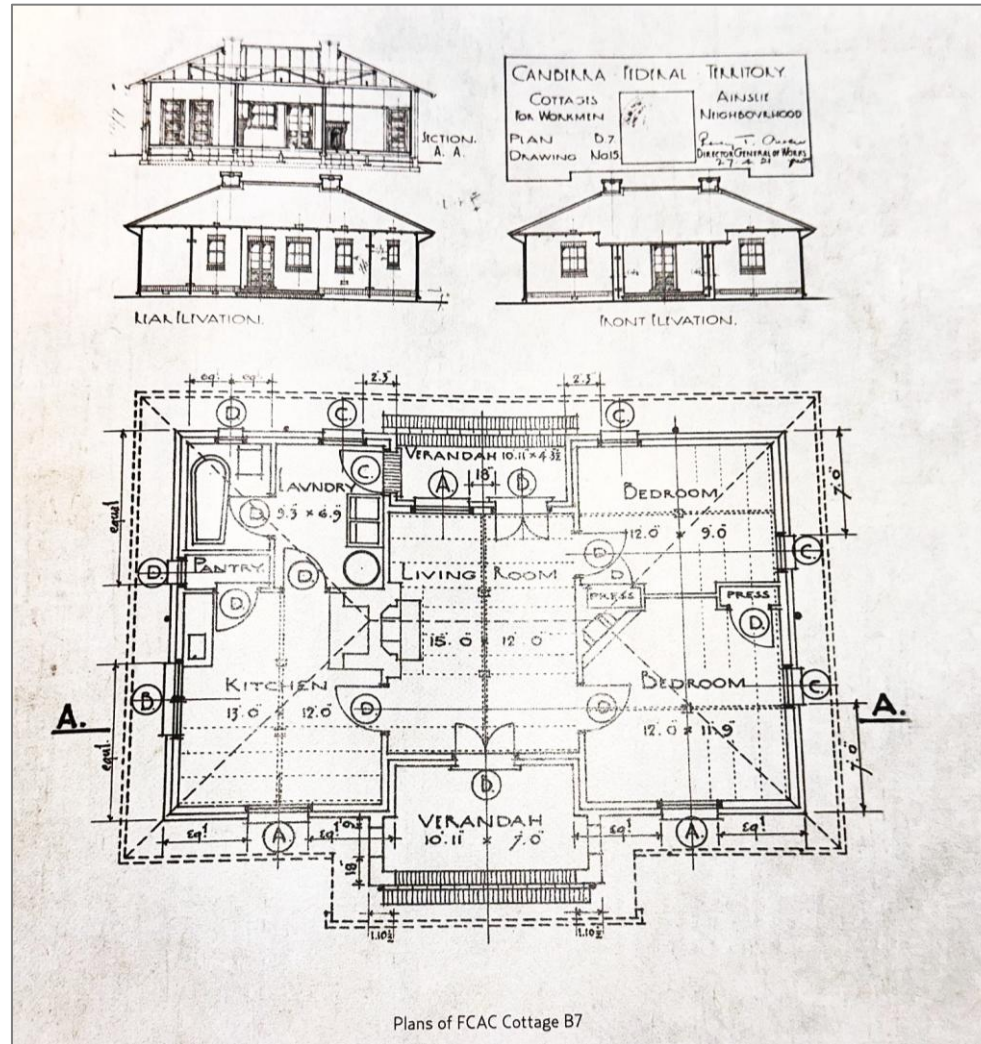
The Ainslie houses became the first housing subdivision in Canberra, on 48 blocks bounded by Currong, Donaldson, Elimatta and Batman Streets. Due to their proximity, the houses were known originally as the Civic Centre Cottages of No. 1 Division, No. 1 Neighbourhood. In 1928 Ainslie was split into Ainslie, Braddon and Reid, and the subdivision is now known as the Braddon Housing Precinct.

Griffin's 1916 plan for Canberra, which provided for residential areas based on the international Garden City movement, aimed to create healthy working and living

environments for urban residents, well suited to the climatic conditions of Canberra. Griffin refused an invitation to join the FCAC and this precinct is the only one completed substantially to his concept. Sulman modified it by moving the parks from the rear of the houses to the front of those facing Doonkuna Street. Tennis courts and a playground were later built in the parks.

The first 32 houses were erected by 1925 for lease to civil servants on modest incomes and skilled tradesmen and workers in responsible positions like foremen, in line with Griffin's plan for precincts delineated into socio-economic groups. Detached and single storey, they were simple but attractive brick cottages with hipped roofs and front porches. As with other Canberra homes built in the 1920s, any garages were set to the back. Hedges, provided and maintained by the government, replaced front fences to enhance Canberra's standing as a 'garden town'. Services were placed to the rear, allowing streets to become avenues of trees free of power lines.

In 1925, the Federal Capital Commission (FCC) replaced the FCAC. Within two years, the Commission built the remaining 16 houses using different designs by its chief architect, Henry Maitland Rolland. These were the 'standard type home' designs that had appeared in the FCC's 1926 booklet, *Canberra: General Notes for the Information of Public Servants*. More standard designs were developed over the next decade.



Plans of FCAC Cottage B7

FCC 1925 -1930


H.M ROLLAND CHIEF ARCHITECT

TYPES OF HOUSES

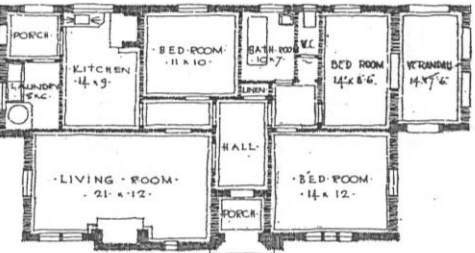
Types 1 to 26

- Types B:
 - T12
 - T14
 - T15
- W + R D1 & D2


TYPE
F.C.C. 9




A



B



C



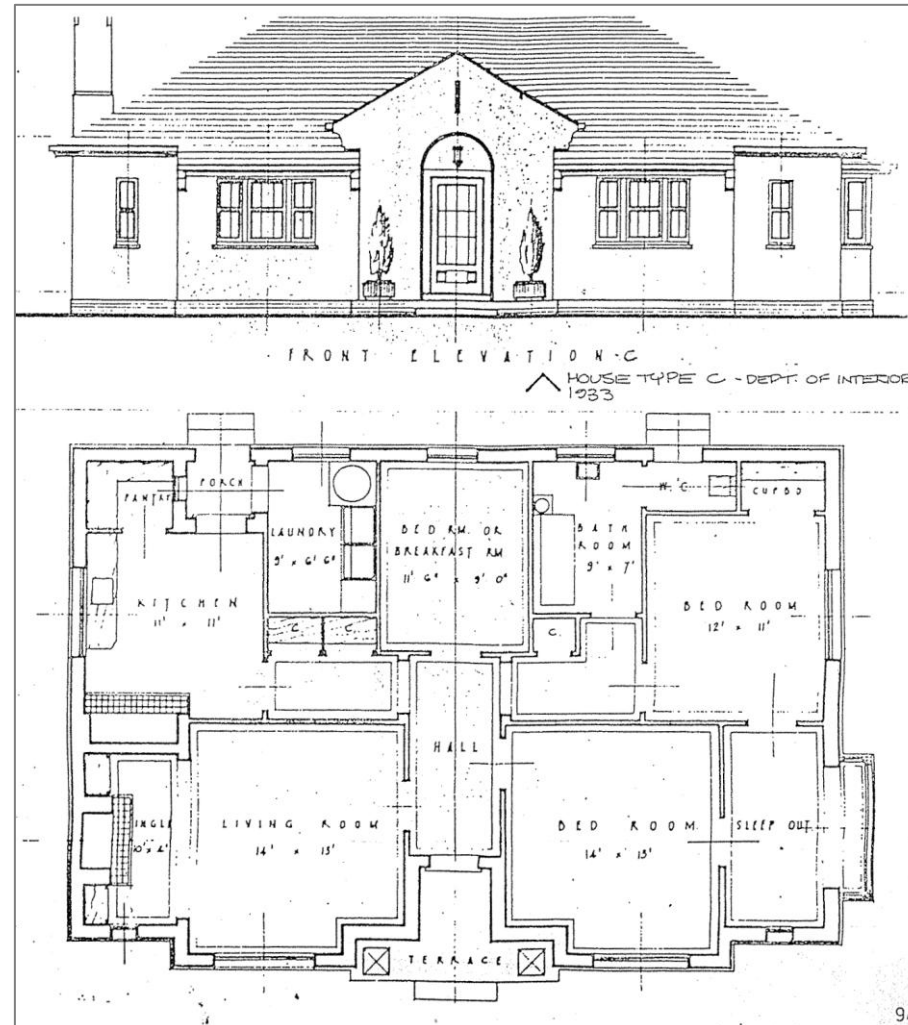
C

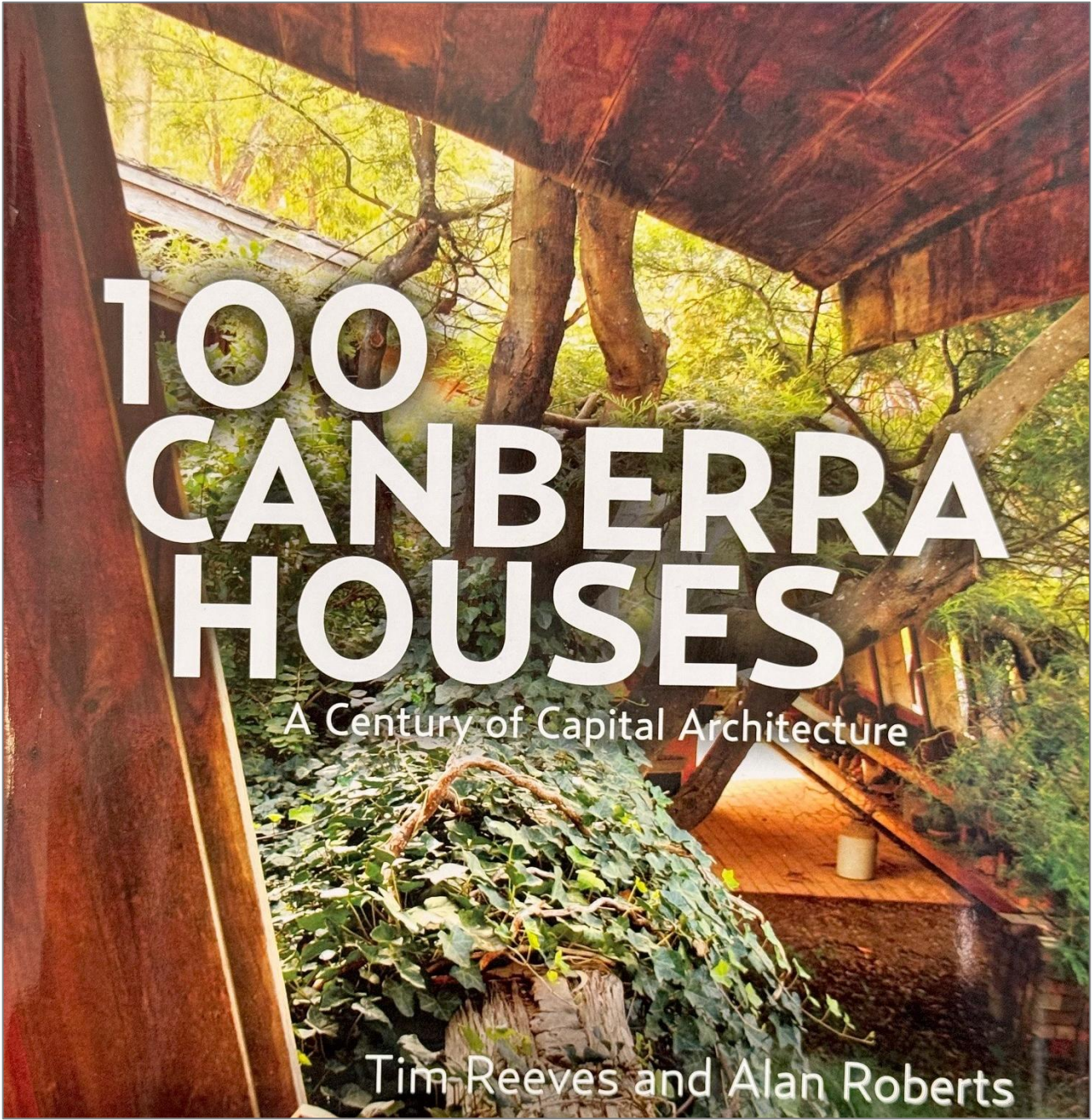
Area of Cottage	1,320	square feet
Area of Verandahs	134	
Total Area		<u>1,454</u>	

PRICE £1,425
(Including fuel store, toolhouse, and gravel footpaths)

DEPT OF HOME AFFAIRS AND THE INTERIOR 1930-1938

EH HENDERSON CHIEF ARCHITECT





100 CANBERRA HOUSES

A Century of Capital Architecture

Tim Reeves and Alan Roberts

14

PETERSON HOUSE

Forrest, 1927

Federal Capital Commission

At the first auction of residential and business blocks in 1924, the first residential lease—in Eastlake (Kingston)—was sold to the Sydney property developer, Henry Halloran, for £400. Only about a third of the land offered was sold, but the second sale in 1926 was significantly stronger. By the third sale in April 1927, just before the opening of Parliament House, prices had skyrocketed.

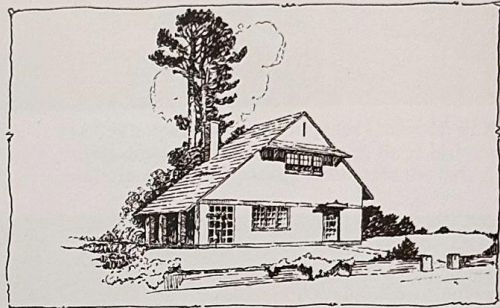
It was in this climate that the Federal Capital Commission (FCC) was given responsibility for moving the many public servants associated with the relocation of Parliament from Melbourne. It directed its Chief Architect, Henry Maitland Rolland, and his small Architects Department to design a number of 'standard type homes', mainly in brick but also timber. The designs were issued in April 1926 in a booklet, *Canberra: General Notes for the Information of Public Servants*. Rolland was appointed OBE in 1927; his watercolour and pencil renderings of Canberra are held by the National Library.

Houses could be secured by renting from the Commission or buying from it with cash or rental-purchase, or through financing from the Commonwealth Bank. Returned soldiers were offered assistance via the War Service Homes Commission. The only other alternative, of self funding and employing an architect and builder, was rarely taken up. While the FCC offered a variety of inducements to public servants to buy or build, almost all of them elected initially to become public housing tenants.

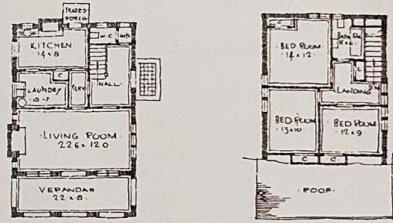
Herbert Peterson from the external affairs section of the Prime Minister's Department and his wife, Gladys, chose the rental-purchase option, paying £2 18 shillings and 1 pence weekly rent for a house in Blandfordia (Forrest), a suburb set aside for upper-echelon Commonwealth employees. The house was Type FCC 15, one of four two storey designs—

FEDERAL CAPITAL COMMISSION

TYPE F.C.C. 15



A



GROUND PLAN

FIRST FLOOR

Area of Cottage 1,458 square feet
 Area of Verandahs 239

Total Area 1,697

PRICE £1,710

(Including fuel store, toolhouse, and gravel footpaths)

of which only one each was built—showing the influence of the English Arts and Crafts movement. This is the only one still substantially intact. It features a steeply pitched roof, face brickwork, a tiled window hood between the prominent side gables and a verandah integrated with the roof. The design was expanded to accommodate the Petersons' large family.

A Type 15 design was priced at £1,710 plus 7% FCC expenses, but the Petersons waited until 1941 to purchase the house. It passed to the Cusack retail family two years later.

A branch fell on the house in 1997 during tree lopping. The ACT Government ordered repairs and it was later heritage listed. It now sports a parallel wing in the same image as the original house.

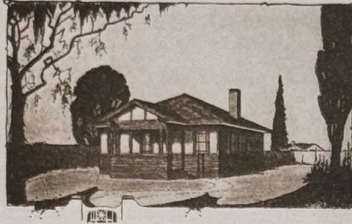


Petersen House in 1983
 Inset: The house in 2013, showing additions



FEDERAL CAPITAL COMMISSION

TYPE
F.C.C. 25 T.2



Area of Cottage 957 square feet
Area of Verandahs 217
Total Area 1,174

FOR RENTAL ONLY—30/- PER WEEK.

15 BISHOP HOUSES

Ainslie, 1927
Federal Capital Commission
Griffith, 1930
Kenneth Oliphant

Frank Bishop, a parliamentary staffer, was another of the public servants who moved from Melbourne to Canberra in 1927. He and his wife, Jean, were allocated a small weatherboard and fibro cottage in Toms Crescent, Ainslie, in an area reserved for timber houses. It was one of the standard designs developed by the Federal Capital Commission—Type FCC 25 T2. There was no option to purchase; rent was 30 shillings a week.

The house was almost a square of five rooms—living room, two bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom—with a central front porch and a back porch flanked by a laundry and outside toilet. It sat in a treeless landscape which flooded in heavy rains and baked in summer 'as westerlies whipped up dust from unmade roads and open sewer trenches'. In winter, the water in flower vases froze. But the garden flourished and the Bishops quickly became part of the local community, helping to build the tennis courts that became the social hub of the area.

Almost immediately on arrival, they gave £150 to the Canberra Building and Investment Co. to bid for the lease of a block of land. But the company failed, the lease was



'Yaralla', c 1931

The house was of red brick from the Yarralumla Brickworks, roofed with terracotta tiles. It was more spacious and solid than their first house, still only two bedrooms, but the rooms were larger and it included an entrance hall and (under the same roof) a garage for 'Julia', their baby Austin car. There was no dining room: family meals were eaten in the kitchen or at a table in the living room when visitors came. Floors were polished dark and wooden features stained near-black, the walls were white or cream and the plaster ceilings had intricate mouldings.

Near the front door, 'Yaralla' shone from a gleaming brass name plate. Polishing it was a weekly task for the Bishops' only child, Meryl, as soon as she was big enough to reach. She grew up in the Griffith house and was married there to Cec Hunter, a carpenter who had

surrendered and the Bishops lost their deposit. With the financial assistance of Jean's family, they secured another block on Flinders Way in Blandfordia (Griffith) and engaged Kenneth Oliphant to design a house. It was built for £1,345 and was completed by Christmas 1930.

migrated from England. He became a builder and his success led to his buying the Lend Lease Corporation franchise around 1962 to build houses in Canberra. The couple built their own house in the mid-1950s designed by the architect, Cyril Courtney.

Type FCC 25 T2 house, Mount Ainslie behind





Westridge House, 2013

16

WESTRIDGE (LANE POOLE) HOUSE

Yarralumla, 1928

Harold Desbrowe-Annear

Charles Lane Poole was a driving force in Commonwealth forestry. As Inspector-General of Forests, he proposed the establishment of an Australian Forestry School which opened temporarily in 1926 in Adelaide before moving to Canberra the following year. This brought him to the national capital at the same time that his wife, Ruth, was decorating the Lodge and Government House.

The site for the new Forestry School was in Westridge (Yarralumla) and included a massive block of nearly 5 acres for the principal's residence. The first principal, Norman Jolly, disliked the standard Federal Capital Commission houses for senior public servants. His successor, Charles Lane Poole, rejected a design done especially for him by

Commission architects, requesting that the house be bigger and of two storeys. In an unusual move, he was authorised to approach an outside architect. Ruth proposed Harold Desbrowe-Annear from Melbourne, whom she had promoted in articles for *Australian Home Beautiful* and who was assisting with furniture design in her new job. It would be his only house in Canberra.

Desbrowe-Annear had an unconventional philosophy of architecture—essentially that it was an art, not a profession. He believed in the fellowship of architects, artists and craftsmen. He was an exponent of the Arts and Crafts movement with its focus on 'simplicity, truth to materials and the unity of handcraft and design'.

Westridge House is a unique blend of Arts and Crafts and English Tudor, with its half-timbered, projecting upper floor and rendered masonry ground floor. The roof of Marseilles tiles is asymmetrical and slopes steeply around a gabled dormer-like element. A central hall divides the main rooms on the ground floor. Upstairs there are four bedrooms and a maid's room. There are Desbrowe-Annear trademark inventive details, including windows that slide into wall cavities while raising a flyscreen. Like the Forestry School,

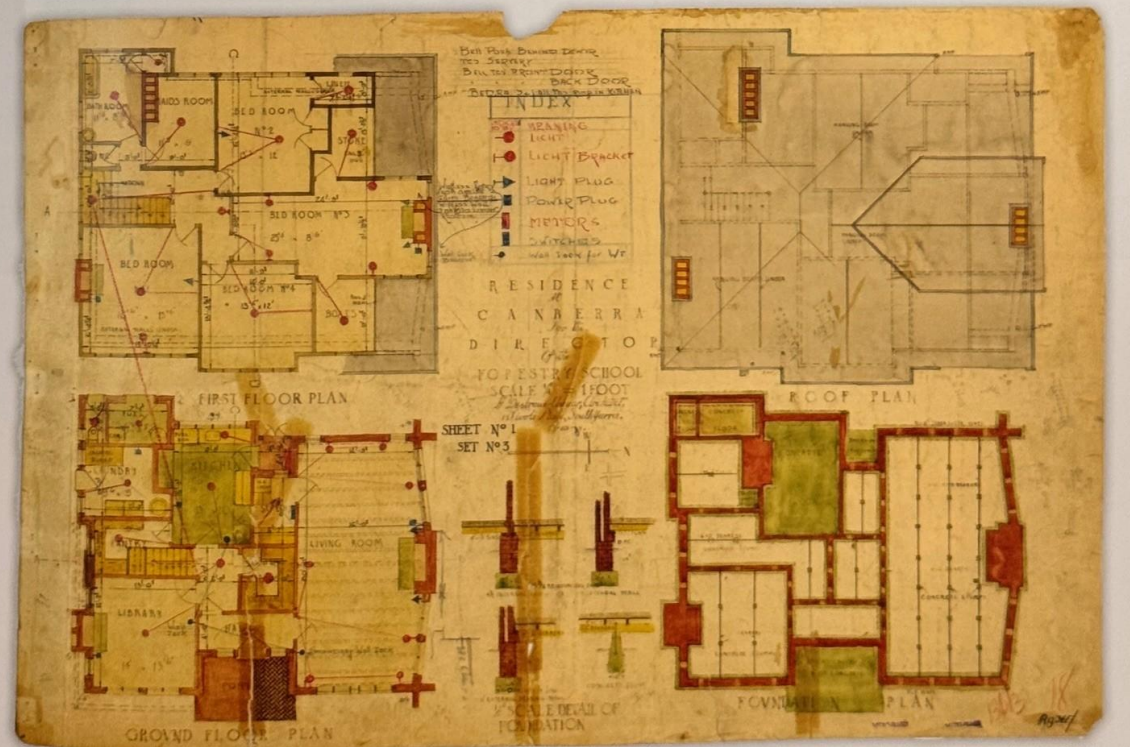
the house featured extensive and finely detailed timberwork. It cost £4,880 to build and was completed in January 1928. The Lane Poole family loved it, and lived there 17 years.

Ruth had worked closely with Desbrowe-Annear, influencing the arrangement of rooms, interior decoration and fittings. She battled with the bureaucracy over her work on the Lodge and Government House, and never took another major commission. She opened a florist shop in Canberra.

The house later became the offices of the Forestry and Timber Bureau and was temporarily renamed the Tudor House, before being acquired and extended by the CSIRO. Following heritage-listing, it was sold in 2010 for use as a private residence.



Westridge House, c 1928





The Pines, nearing completion

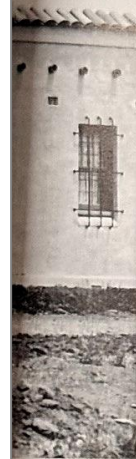
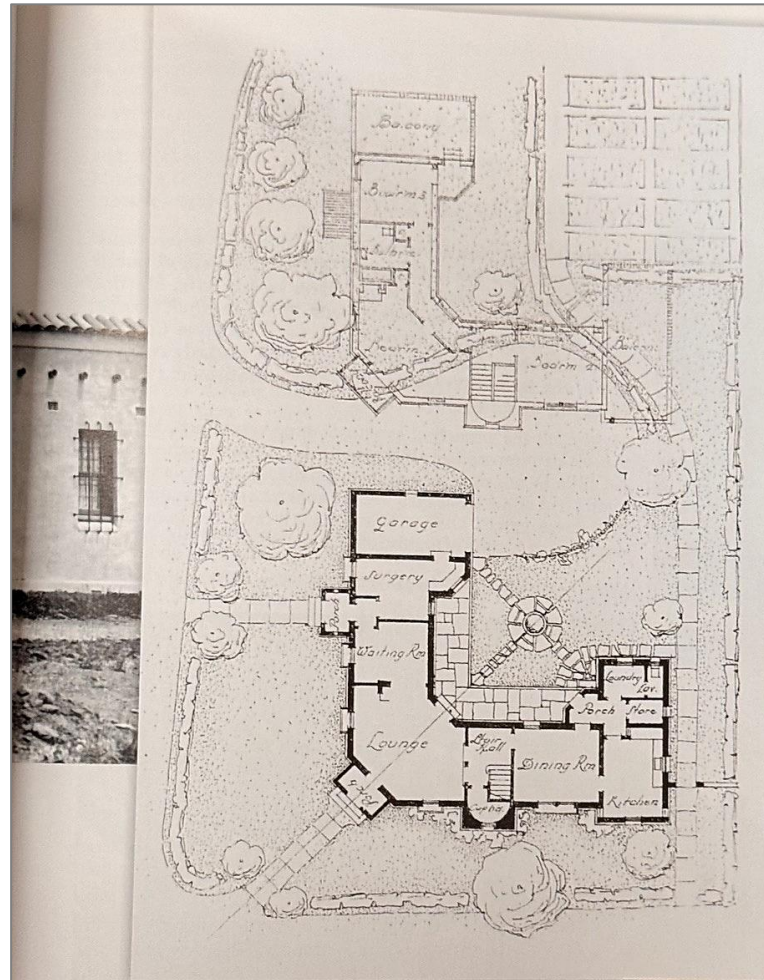
17
**THE PINES
 (FRASER HOUSE)**
 Manuka, 1930
 Kenneth Oliphant

In 1929, Dr Rolland Fraser leased a block on the corner of Furneaux and Bougainville Streets, Manuka. He was a 'surgeon dentist' who had trained at the Universities of Melbourne and Pennsylvania. He commissioned Kenneth Oliphant to design a building which would function as both surgery and residence for himself and his wife, Florance. It would be home eventually to two dentists, an optometrist and a doctor.

Built by Chapman and Eggleston, the house was two storey in the Spanish Mission style, and later named for two pencil pines either side of the front path. The entrance to the surgery was on the east wall and that to the residence at the front corner, through an arch of 'barley sugar' columns. Each of the three upstairs bedrooms had its own balcony. The stucco walls were painted light apple green and the woodwork salmon pink, with black wrought iron balcony railings, window boxes and grilles. The roof was of tiles in red, purple and green.

The house was one of three by Oliphant featured in *Australian Home Beautiful*. It has been claimed (though not confirmed) that the design closely followed a house in Beverly Hills by Irving Gill that was publicised in an American architectural magazine.

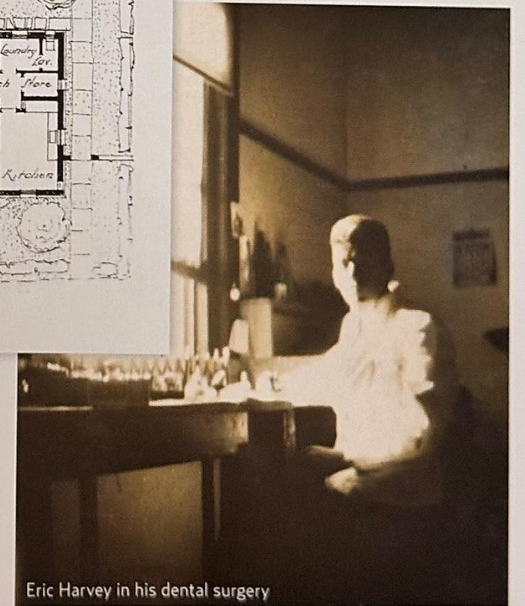
Fraser set up business, advertising his proximity to the recently completed Capitol Theatre on Manuka Circle,



at *The Pines* with her husband and infant son, was found dead in the upstairs bathroom. The following morning, in a murder-suicide, the bodies of John and Warren Lambert were found on a vacant allotment nearby. The coroner ruled that Marjorie's death was accidental, and that John had acted while deranged with grief.

Frank Arnold, who became its fifth owner in 1998, grew up in Canberra admiring the house and set up his design business there. Alone one evening soon after, he came downstairs upon hearing voices and walked into icy conditions with an unpleasant smell and 'a strong, disquieting female presence'. The unexplained incidents persisted, noticed also by Frank's staff, and he engaged a Buddhist priest to conduct a blessing ceremony. The house has been quiet ever since.

Canberra's first cinema. Suffering the effects of the Great Depression, he soon tried to sell the house, even offering it to the government for conversion to flats. It was let and then sold to another dentist, Eric Harvie, and his wife, Joy. In 1947, the Harvies engaged in an ugly divorce case, culminating in Eric being caught *in flagrante delicto* with his lover at the Hotel Kurrajong. On the day the judge ruled against him, he committed suicide in the dentist's chair at Canberra Hospital. Less than six weeks later, Marjorie Lambert, who was lodging



Eric Harvey in his dental surgery



18
WHITLAM HOUSE
 Forrest, 1930
 Federal Capital Commission

Fred Whitlam was Assistant Crown Solicitor when transferred from Sydney to Canberra in the first wave of public servants in 1927. He was joined later by his wife, Martha, and their children, Gough and Freda. Fred's brother, George, soon to be appointed Secretary to the Executive Council, lived with them for some years. They were initially assigned one of the upmarket Oakley and Parkes houses at 2 Barkly Crescent, Blandfordia (Forrest).

Martha felt the wrench of leaving Sydney very much. Morning teas for newcomers and afternoon bridge parties for the women did little to reconcile her to dust, smallness and isolation (the family had no car). But Fred loved Canberra and was committed to its development. They set to and made it their new home. They were among a group of highly intelligent and skilled civil servants

Left: George Whitlam in the garden. Below: Whitlam House, c 1938

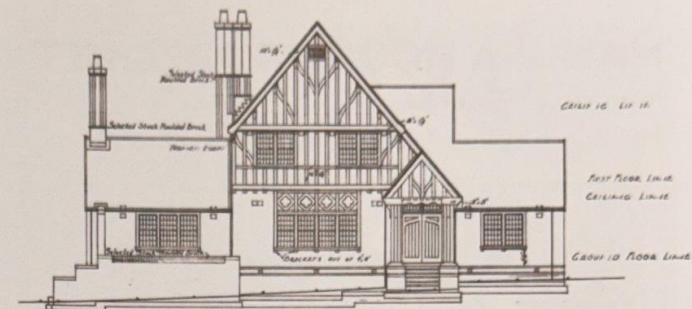


in a town of only 7,000. Martha was an accomplished singer and generous hostess. Fred took a leading role in the development of education. He was promoted to Crown Solicitor in 1936 and worked with External Affairs Minister, Dr H.V. Evatt, in establishing the new world order after the War.

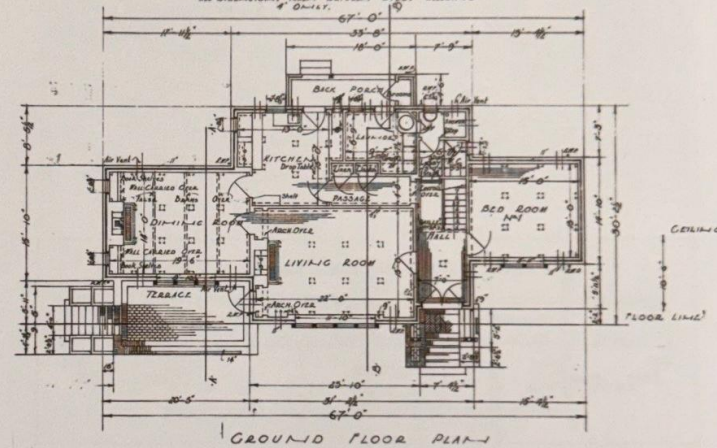
Gough was a precocious youth—tall, well read, irreverent and assertive. He attended Telopea Park High School and then Canberra Grammar, where he was dux. He left for Sydney University on a scholarship, served as a navigator in the RAAF and entered politics in 1952, leading a Labor Government from 1972 to 1975. Freda became Headmistress of Presbyterian Ladies' College, Croydon, in Sydney and Moderator of the Uniting Church in New South Wales.

Fred and Martha bought a lot just up the road on the corner of Empire Circuit and Melbourne Avenue. The FCC agreed to build them a house under the supervision of its Chief Architect, Robert Casboulte, who had succeeded Henry Maitland Rolland. It replaced an earlier design by Rudd and Limburg, one of Canberra's first, though short lived, private architectural practices. The Commission design followed the Old English style of Rudd and Limburg's nearby St Gabriel's Girls School (later Canberra Girls' Grammar), having a steeply pitched and gabled roof that fell asymmetrically, half-timbered first floor, tall chimneys and mullioned windows. An unusual and lavish feature was the downstairs bedroom with separate shower room and toilet, with a further three bedrooms and the main bathroom upstairs. The house cost £3,120, a sizeable sum as the Great Depression took hold.

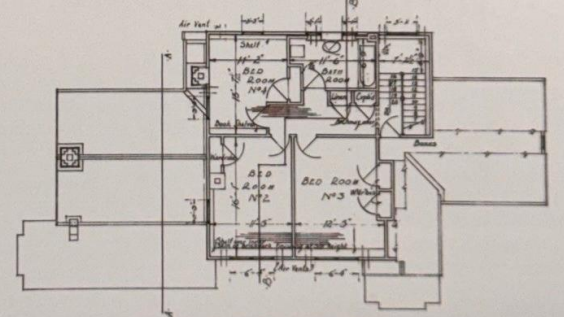
Fred and Martha moved to their third Canberra home, one block from the Lodge, in 1940. Painted white, their Empire Circuit house is now the residence of the Nigerian Ambassador.



NORTH EAST ELEVATION
 ALL DIMENSIONS FROM BATTERED STONE ASSESSING
 QUARTER



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



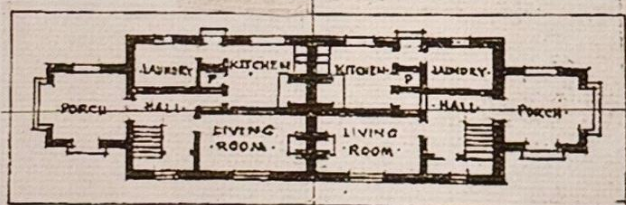
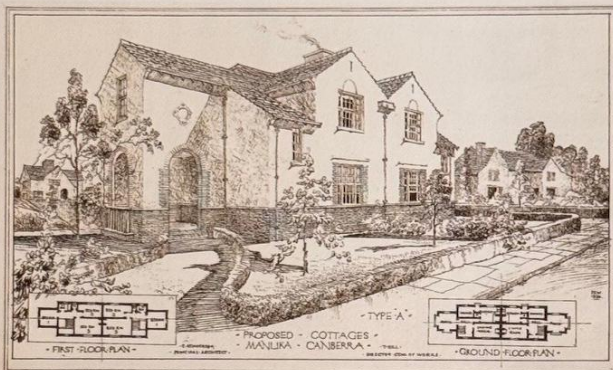
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

19

MANUKA HOUSING PRECINCT

Manuka, 1930–34

Federal Capital Commission



R.M.S. • GROUND FLOOR PLAN •

Rendering and plan of Type A duplex

In late 1928, the Federal Capital Commission was instructed to transfer all remaining public servants to Canberra 'at the earliest possible moment'. But this urgency dissipated as economic conditions deteriorated around the world, leading to the crash in October 1929 of the New York stock market, and the Great Depression. The national capital, then a city of around 7,000 people, entered a decade of stagnation.

As it tried to balance its municipal and developmental responsibilities, the Commission came under attack from transferred public servants used to more democratic local

government in Melbourne. Starved by budget cuts, the Commission was abolished in 1929 by the Scullin Labor Government and Canberra returned to its early days of management by Commonwealth departments. To appease residents, there was a partly elected advisory council.

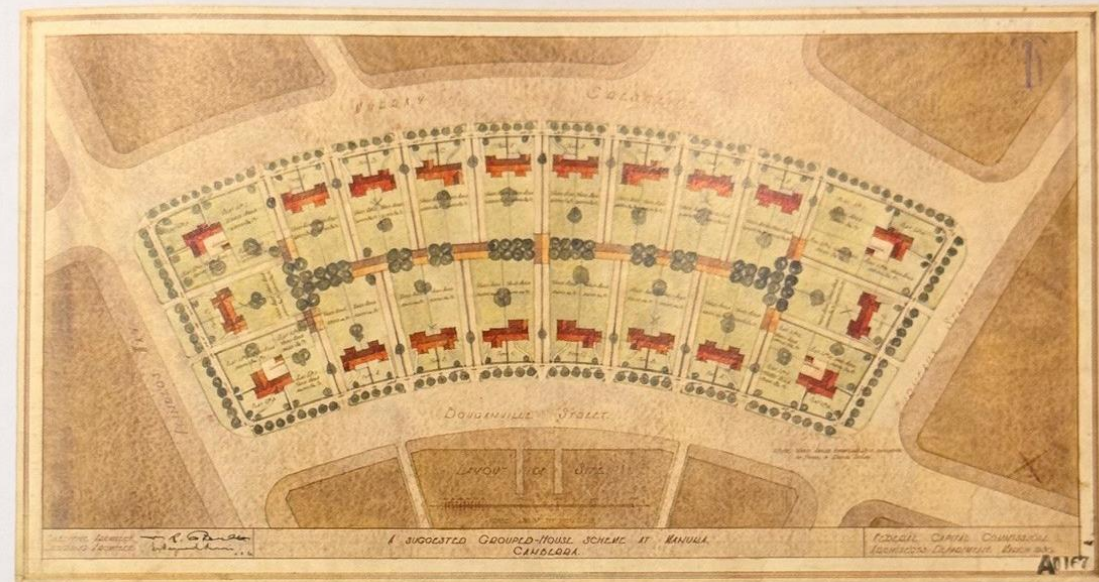
In one of its last acts, the Commission confronted the clamour for low cost housing. Its Chief Architect, Robert Casboulte, designed the first semi-detached, two storey duplex houses at Ainslie and Reid. There was strident opposition—the houses were described as 'ugly and unhygienic' and 'a disfigurement' of Canberra's Garden City principles—but Casboulte pressed on with his colleague, Hayward Morris. On 36 blocks comprising Section 2, directly south of the Manuka shops, they designed another 32 duplexes and four corner buildings containing the city's first flats.

The Manuka site was chosen to stimulate local investment; barely one third of Manuka's shops were let as it competed with Kingston to be the premier south side commercial precinct. This would set a planning precedent in the Territory for affordable, higher density housing adjacent to shopping centres.

The housing was designed as a group and laid out symmetrically around a central pedestrian path. It followed the Mediterranean style so popular with the Commission, with roughcast rendered brick, arched entrance porches, wrought iron balconies and terracotta tile roofs. It was built in three stages over four years and was relatively cheap for Canberra. The flats—three in each building and designated for newly married or childless couples—were initially rented for up to 27 shillings

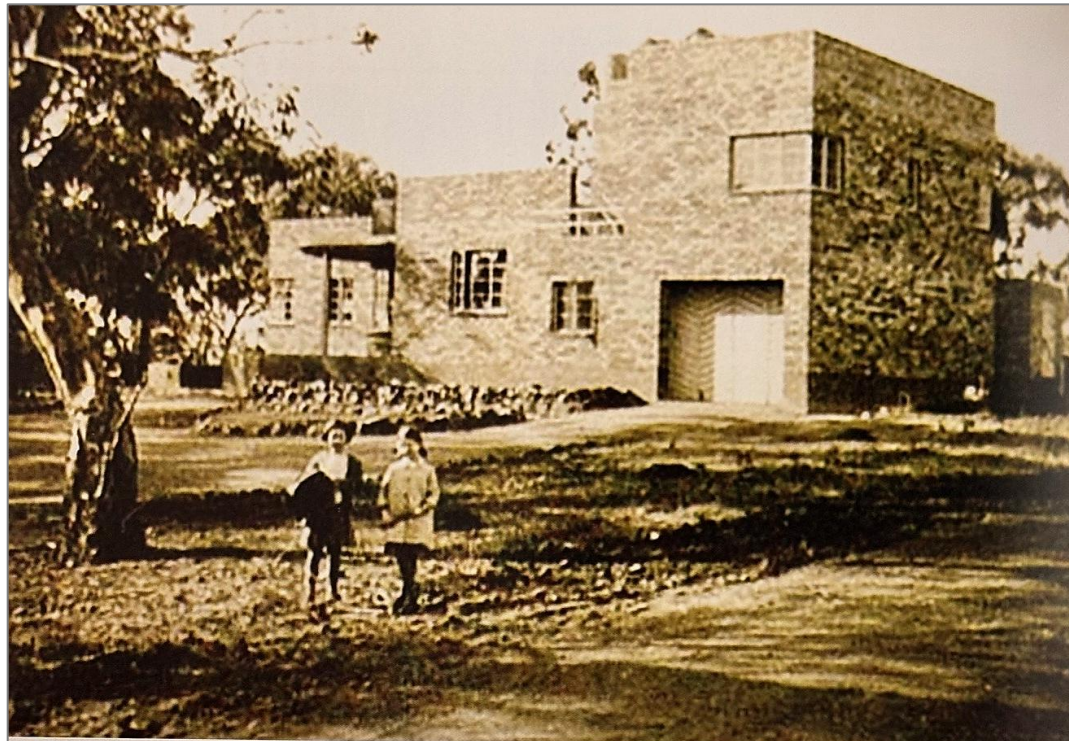
a week, the duplexes for 32 shillings 6 pence. The *Canberra Times* reported that both types were 'proving very popular, numerous applications to rent them having been received'.

Casboulte and Morris are better known for their work on the Institute of Anatomy—now the National Film and Sound Archive—a peerless building in the stripped classical style with Art Deco embellishments. The housing they designed at Manuka, particularly along Bougainville Street, is now valuable real estate and is increasingly being subsumed by commercial redevelopment.



Above: Plan of subdivision. Below: Duplexes in Bougainville Street, from Furneaux Street





Moir House, c 1936, Barbara Moir on left

20

MOIR HOUSE

Forrest, 1937

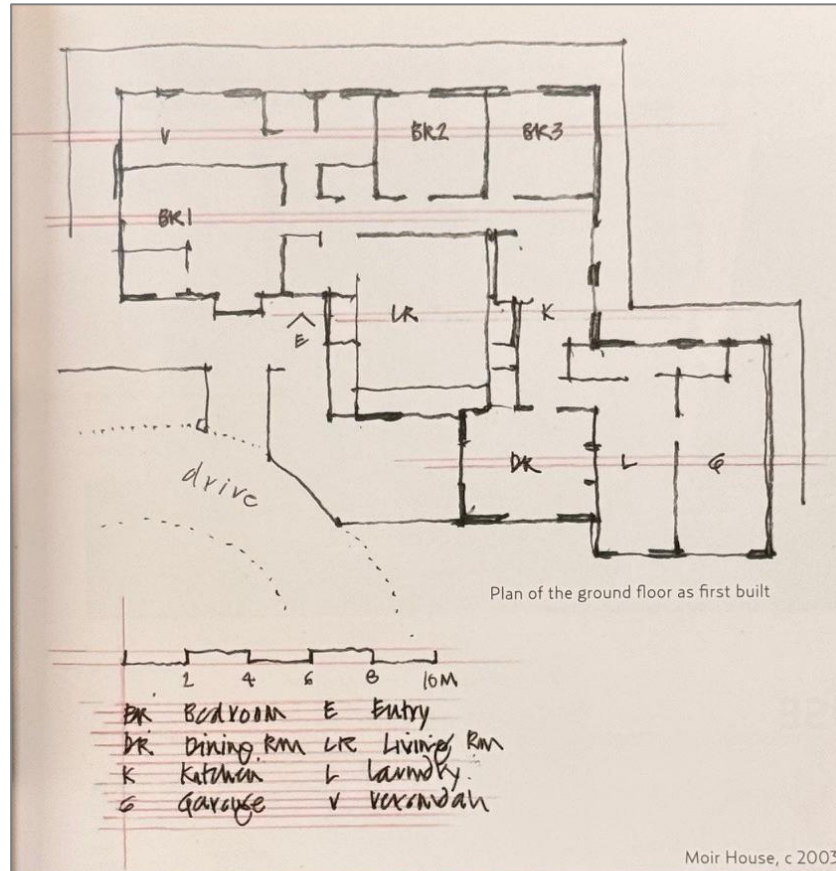
Malcolm Moir

Malcolm Moir was a leading Canberra architect, responsible for hundreds of houses and many embassy buildings. The home he built for himself was a radical design for a city used to Mediterranean, Georgian and stripped classical styles. It remains striking.

Moir was one of the first graduates of the Architecture School at the University of Sydney. He arrived in Canberra in early 1928 to work with the Federal Capital Commission and had a role in the design for the Institute of Anatomy (now the National Film and Sound Archive). The Great Depression halted almost all building work and Moir was retrenched

when the Commission was abolished. He commenced private practice which he later juggled with a job as manager of the Capitol Theatre in Manuka.

The house is an early example of the interwar functionalist style with its asymmetrical cubic massing, corner windows and a roof hidden by parapets. It was initially laid out over three levels, with the living rooms sited to the front, facing north-west, to capture winter warmth. Moir designed the furniture, interior fittings and cabinetry, and installed hydronic heating, a system of household heating by reticulated hot water. His office over the garage was extended



Moir House, c 2003



by the house's most prominent feature, a glazed top floor which replaced a roof terrace. Clients had access via an external cantilevered staircase and balcony.

Soon after the house was finished, and following the death of his first wife, Moir married the architect Heather Sutherland. They established Moir and Sutherland and had a child, Angus. After Heather's death in 1953, Moir went into partnership with Neville Ward and Ian Slater. Later, he was joined by Angus, who followed his parents' calling.

Angus tells the story of a woman seen photographing the house in 1938. She identified herself as Marion Mahony Griffin, widow of Canberra's planner, Walter Burley Griffin, visiting after his death in India. The Moir House and the Civic Theatre were, she said, 'the ones that Walter would have liked'. Little did she know that the Civic Theatre, opened in 1936, had also been designed and managed by Moir. It was demolished in 1970.

Moir was a member of the ACT Advisory Council and, in 1949, he ran unsuccessfully for the new ACT seat in the federal House of Representatives. The house was progressively added to and stayed in the family until it was sold following his death in 1971. The ACT Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, of which Moir was founding president, gave the house its 25 Year Award for sustained architectural excellence in 1997. The Chapter also bestows the annual Malcolm Moir and Heather Sutherland Award for Residential Architecture Houses.



Rear of the original house
Opposite: The original plans

21 TREGEAR HOUSE

Red Hill, 1938
Moir and Sutherland

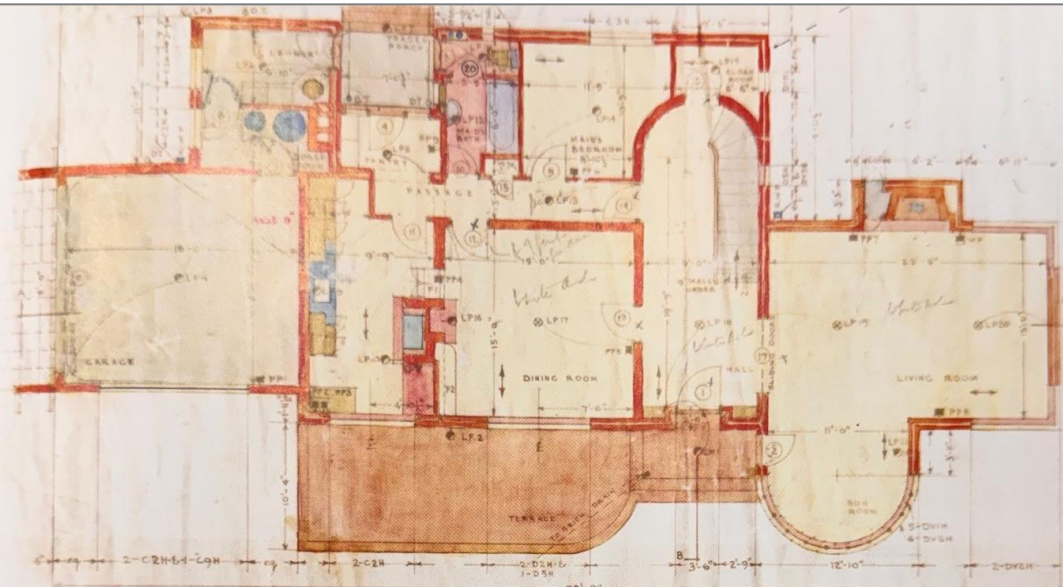
In July 1927, the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Walter Gale, died suddenly at his desk. Public service rules decreed that subordinate officers were to receive automatic advancement. In this chain reaction, Allan Tregear was promoted to Sergeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees on an annual salary of £680. He eventually rose to be Clerk of the House.

Allan lived by himself in one of Canberra's early hostels, Brassey House, for ten years. He and Doris married late—he was 41, she 35—and had a daughter, Gail. They chose a huge block of nearly 1½ acres in Arthur Circle on which to build a north-facing house. The lease for the block had been sold in the first and second Canberra land auctions in 1924 and 1926, but surrendered both times. Following the 1927 auction, when many leases were also returned to the Commonwealth, land was made available to the public by application.

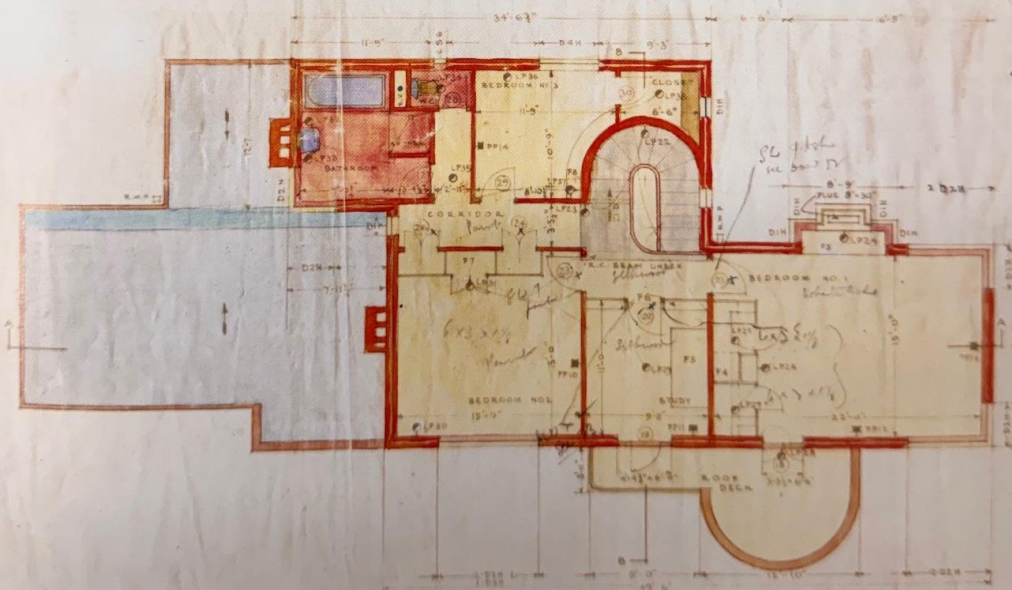
Doris had grown up surrounded by antiques but now



The original house during construction



GROUND FLOOR PLAN





Above: The garden front of Casey House, 1986
Opposite: The door facing the garden

23

CASEY HOUSE

Yarralumla, 1938

Department of the Interior

Richard Gardiner Casey entered Federal Parliament in 1931 in the coalition government led by Joseph Lyons. Casey and his wife, Maie, opted not to live in his Victorian electorate but to move to the national capital where they rented a government house at Duntroon. After his appointment as Treasurer in 1935, and on the pretext that Canberra required a 'resident minister'

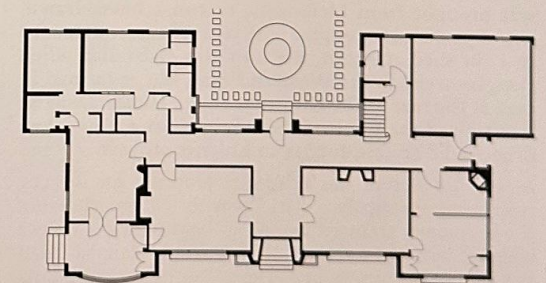
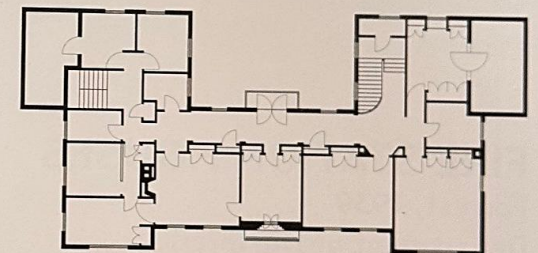
additional to the Prime Minister, Casey convinced Lyons to build him a house. He was allocated a generous block of over 2 acres in an area reserved for permanent residences, including those for the Prime Minister and Governor-General, the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate—though they were never built.

The Chief Commonwealth Architect, Edwin Henderson, developed plans for the house with input from the Caseys. It was a red brick, two storey mansion of 14 rooms in a conservative Georgian style, unusually with Art Deco detailing. Maie, who later collaborated on a book of early Melbourne architecture, chose the interior fittings and colour scheme. The extravagant total bill caused rancorous debate as Canberra coped with a desperate shortage of housing and the nation struggled out of the Depression. Cabinet considered converting the house to flats for Ministers or even for the Caseys to swap with the vast Lyons family, which was spilling out of the Lodge.

But construction continued and the Caseys took up residence in September 1938—to stay only seven months. Casey's aspiration to be Prime Minister had been thwarted by Robert Menzies and the couple returned to Melbourne with a change of portfolio. Richard went on to have a distinguished diplomatic career, was created a life peer and

became Australia's 16th Governor-General. The house was never used again as a ministerial residence, becoming the Canadian High Commission from 1941 to 1973, and then headquarters for the Australian Heritage Commission—before itself being heritage listed. It was sold for the first time in 1998 and leased as professional offices.

Henderson's design for the Commonwealth Bank head office in Martin Place, Sydney, was used as the model for the bank's money box. In Canberra, he is credited with the Art Deco Manuka Swimming Pool (1931) and the original National Library on Kings Avenue (1934, demolished 1968). In June 1939, Henderson became embroiled in scandal after a building contract for his extensions to the Sydney GPO was signed before Cabinet approval. On the day before he was due to give evidence to a royal commission, he committed suicide, though, as it turned out, he was not adversely named in the final report.





Fire Station Houses, c 1939

24 FIRE STATION HOUSES Forrest, 1939 Department of the Interior

Canberra had a fire brigade by 1915 when Percy Douglas was brought from Melbourne to run a horse-drawn, petrol-powered fire engine with two volunteers. Housed in a tin shed at Acton, the unit was disbanded when Douglas went to the Western Front, but re-formed in 1922 at the rear of the Kingston Power House. Douglas rose to lead the Canberra Fire Brigade at a time when firemen did double duty as ambulance officers.

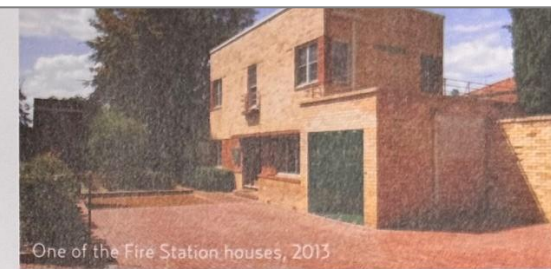
A new fire station was originally proposed for the city centre, but eventually a station—with ten residences for live-in firemen arranged around it—was built on a block bounded by Empire Circuit, Fitzroy Street, Manuka Circle and Canberra Avenue in Forrest. The station was built first, in 1938, in a conventional design of red brick with a hipped roof. The house designs were similarly staid but new plans the following year suddenly embraced a dramatically modern European look. There were four houses at each of the street corners with six semi-detached duplexes in between—all two storey—with horizontal panelling of cream and red brick, steel-framed windows, Juliet balconies and low-

pitched roofs shielded by parapets. The new status of the car was acknowledged with garages, detached in the duplexes but attached in the corner houses and sporting roof terraces.

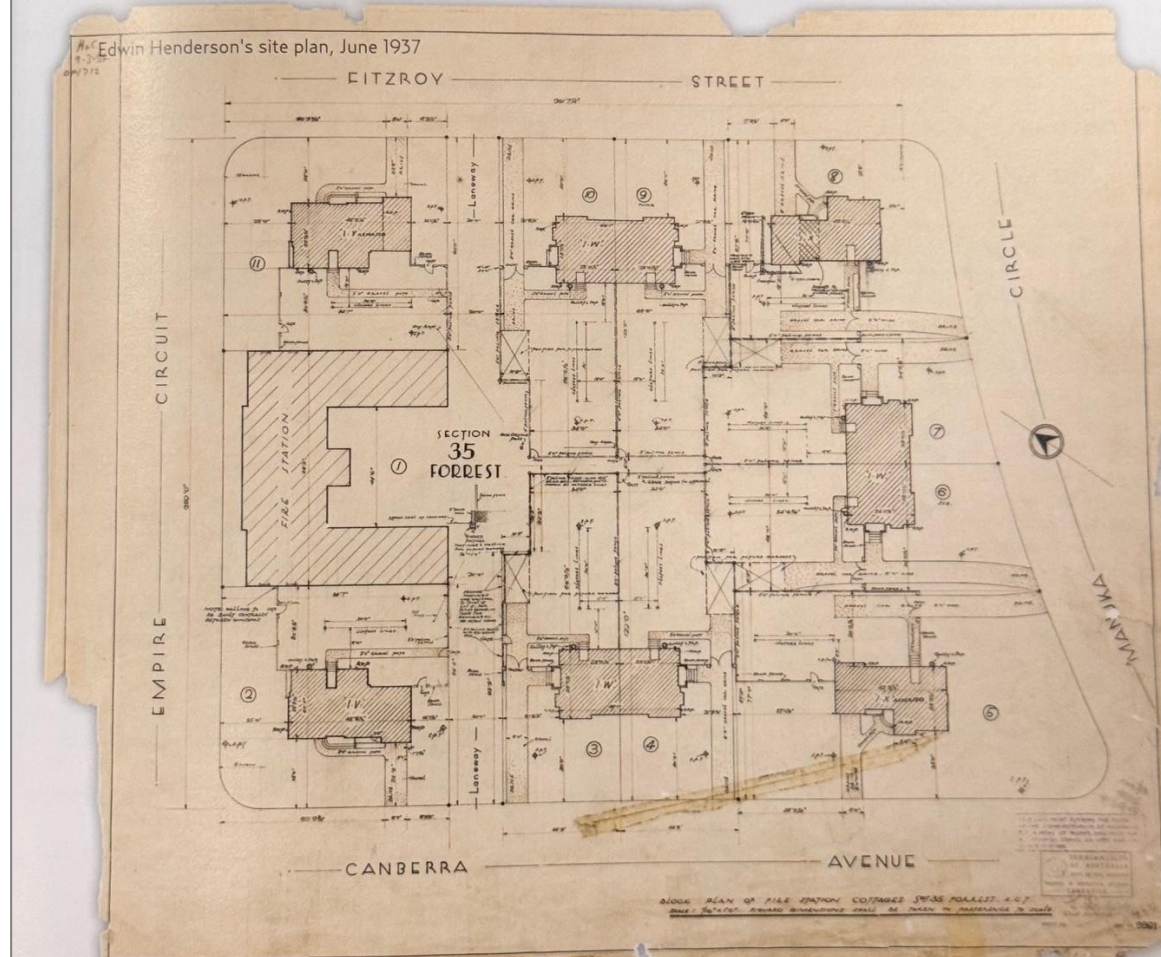
This was to be the first—albeit limited—venture by the Department of the Interior into the inter-war functionalist style, a late arrival in Australia and seen boldly in the 1937 Forrest house of architect, Malcolm Moir. It cemented the Department's move away from the cottage-like designs of the Federal Capital Commission. The plans were signed variously by Chief Architect, Edwin Henderson, and his deputy, Cuthbert Whitley, who took over following Henderson's tragic suicide in June 1939. Whitley also designed the Patent Office (now the Robert Garran Offices), Ainslie Primary School and the Art Deco Canberra High School (now the Canberra School of Art), described at the time as the most modern school in Australia.

When firemen were sought for the station, eligibility was confined to unmarried men aged between 20 and 28 with a minimum height of 5 feet 8 inches and chest measurement of 37 inches. The station ran until 1983; it is now a Brigade museum while many of the houses have been converted to offices. The complex is heritage listed.

There have been innovative adaptations of the original architecture. Collins Caddaye won an award after converting one of the free-standing garages into a delightful mini-residence. And Simon Kringas plans to build a striking, cantilevered extension for his architectural office which floats free of the house.

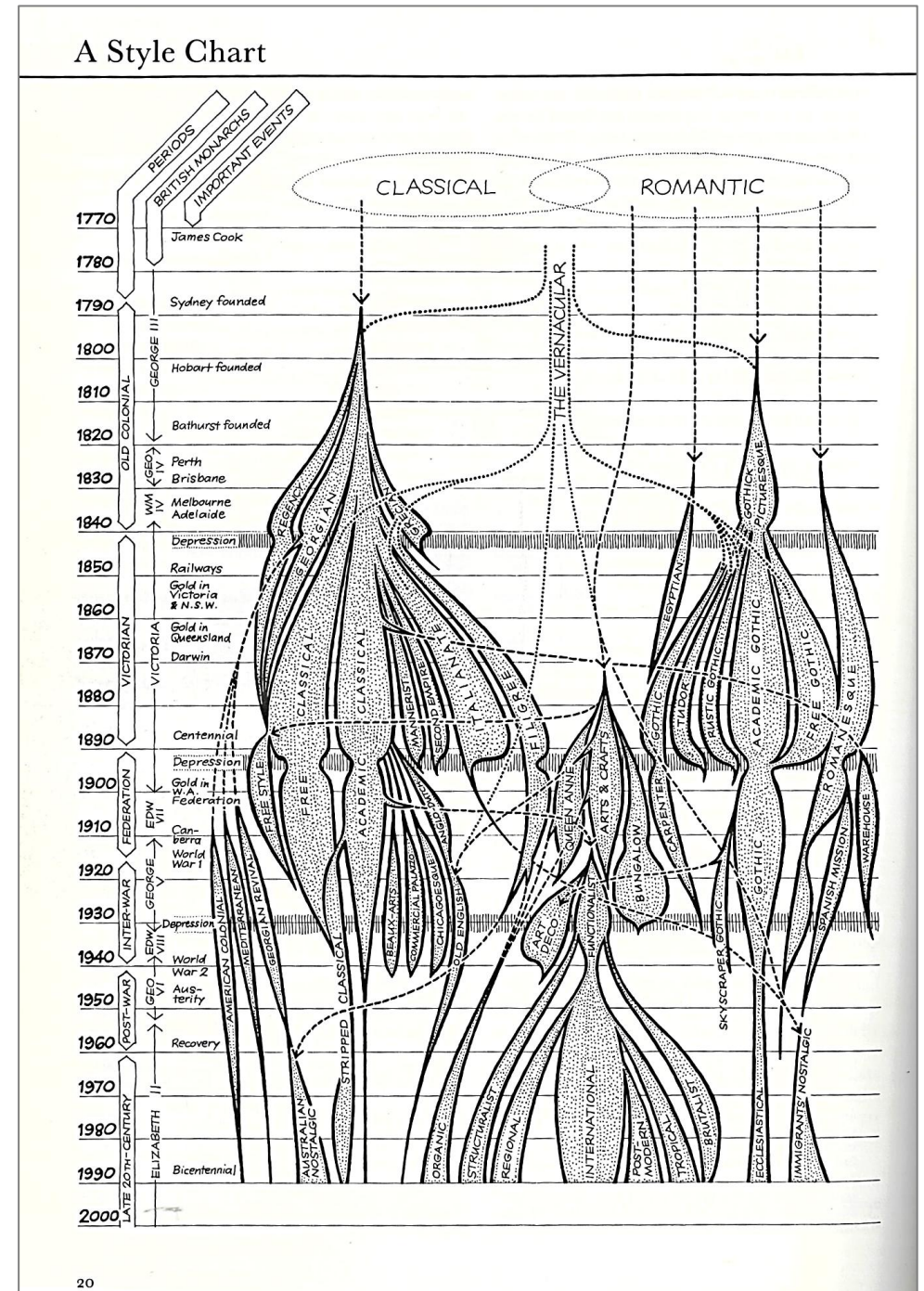


One of the Fire Station houses, 2013



FCC AND ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

- Styles In Identifying Australian Architecture are mainly commercial
- Of the domestic architecture, FCC houses have some inter-war functionalist style indicators



WAS FCC A PRECURSOR TO MODERNISM?

- Information on modern trends and styles was available
- Designs had minimum decoration
- Designs were a break in previous styles
- Designs used new forms and styles
- Designs used less new construction techniques
- Details did not include large glass windows


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