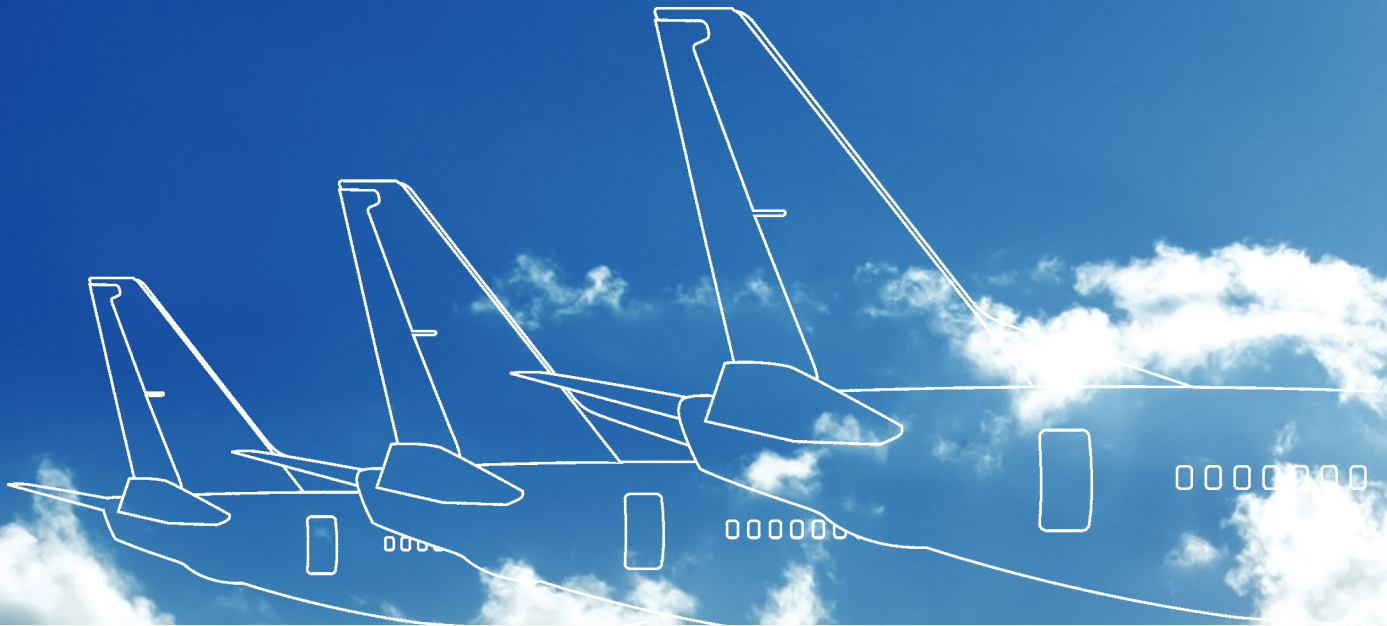


CANBERRA
AIRPORT



Fairbairn Heritage Management Plan

March 2010



Contents

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, letter dated 26 March 2010.

Acknowledging that the Fairbairn Heritage Management Plan is in a form acceptable to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, as a Tool for the management of Heritage Values, during the ongoing development and revitalisation of Fairbairn.

Management Plan compliance checklist for commonwealth heritage places under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Regulations 2003 (No. 1)*

Schedule 7A – Management Plans for Commonwealth Heritage Places

Schedule 7B – Commonwealth Heritage Management Principles

Heritage Management Plan, Former RAAF Base Fairbairn, Canberra Airport, Graham Brooks and Associates Pty Ltd, dated 1 March 2010.



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

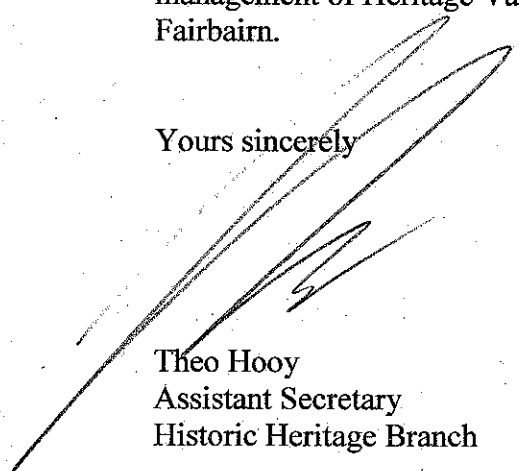
Our reference: 2004/06338

Mr Noel McCann
Planning Director
Capital Airport Group
Canberra International Airport Pty Ltd
1/2 Brindabella Circuit
CANBERRA AIRPORT ACT 2609

Dear Mr McCann,

Thank you for providing the final of the Heritage Management Plan (HMP) for the former RAAF Base Fairbairn which includes the compliance tables. With the insertion of the compliance checklist, the Plan is in a form acceptable to DEWHA as a Tool for the management of Heritage Values during the ongoing development and revitalisation of Fairbairn.

Yours sincerely



Theo Hooy
Assistant Secretary
Historic Heritage Branch

26 March 2010



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MANAGEMENT PLAN COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST FOR COMMONWEALTH HERITAGE PLACES

HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN - FORMER RAAF BASE FAIRBAIRN

MARCH 2010

Although the former RAAF Base Fairbairn is not yet on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL), the compliance tables have been included to ensure that the Heritage Management Plan meets the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* should it be listed on the CHL in the future.

<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Regulations 2003 (No. 1)</i>	
Schedule 7A – Management Plans for Commonwealth Heritage Places	
Legislation	Comment (Refer to)
A management plan must:	
a) establish objectives for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place; and	Section 1 Introduction
b) provide a management framework that includes reference to any statutory requirements and agency mechanisms for the protection of the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place; and	Section 1.4 Heritage Management Framework and Section 8.0 Constraints, Opportunities and Requirements
c) provide a comprehensive description of the place, including information about its location, physical features, condition, historical context and current uses; and	Section 3.0 Physical Description of the Site
d) provide a description of the Commonwealth Heritage values and any other heritage values of the place; and	Section 6.0 Statement of Heritage Significance
e) describe the condition of the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place; and	Section 7.0 Grading of Significance
f) describe the method used to assess the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place; and	Section 5.0 Analysis of Heritage Significance
g) describe the current management requirements and goals including proposals for change and any potential pressures on the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place; and	Section 8.0 Constraints, Opportunities and Requirements
h) have policies to manage the Commonwealth Heritage values of a place, and include in those policies, guidance in relation to the following:	Section 9.0 Heritage Management Policies
i. the management and conservation processes to be used;	Sections 9.1 Primary Heritage Management Policies and Section 9.2 Relevant Conservation Processes
ii. the access and security arrangements, including access to the area for indigenous people to maintain cultural traditions;	Section 9.3 Access and Security
iii. the stakeholder and community consultation and liaison arrangements;	Section 9.4 Community Consultation and Liaison
iv. the policies and protocols to ensure that	Section 9.5 Indigenous Participation

	indigenous people participate in the management process;	
v.	the protocols for the management of sensitive information;	Section 9.6 Management of Sensitive Information
vi.	the planning and management of works, development, adaptive reuse and property divestment proposals;	Section 9.7 Development Planning and Management and Section 9.8 Management of the Built Fabric
vii.	how unforeseen discoveries or disturbances of heritage are to be managed;	Section 9.9 Management of Unforeseen Discoveries and Disturbances
viii.	how, and under what circumstances, heritage advice is to be obtained;	Section 9.10 Provision of Heritage Advice
ix.	how the condition of Commonwealth Heritage values is to be monitored and reported;	Section 9.11 Monitoring and Reporting
x.	how records of intervention and maintenance of a heritage places register are kept;	Section 9.12 Records of Intervention and Maintenance
xi.	the research, training and resources needed to improve management;	Section 9.13 Management Capacity Building
xii.	how heritage values are to be interpreted and promoted; and	Section 9.14 Interpretation and Promotion of Heritage Values
i)	include an implementation plan; and	Section 10.0 Implementation
j)	show how the implementation of policies will be monitored; and	Section 10.4 Monitoring the implementation of policies
k)	show how the management plan will be reviewed.	Section 10.5 Review of the Heritage Management Plan

<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Regulations 2003 (No. 1)</i>	
Schedule 7B – Commonwealth Heritage Management Principles	
Legislation	Comment (Refer to)
1. The objective in managing Commonwealth Heritage places is to identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit, to all generations, their Commonwealth Heritage values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section 5.0 Analysis of Heritage Significance - Commonwealth Heritage values incorporated in Canberra Airport's 2009 Master Plan and 2010 Environment Strategy
2. The management of Commonwealth Heritage places should use the best available knowledge, skills and standards for those places, and include ongoing technical and community input to decisions and actions that may have a significant impact on their Commonwealth Heritage values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report prepared by Graham Brooks and Associates Pty Ltd – Heritage Consultants - Commonwealth Heritage Criteria used - Section 4.0 Comparative Context - Section 11.0 Bibliography - Section 1.8 Consultation
3. The management of Commonwealth Heritage places should respect all heritage values of the place and seek to integrate, where appropriate, and Commonwealth, State, Territory and local government responsibilities for those places.	Section 8.2 Legislative Heritage Issues
4. The management of Commonwealth Heritage places should ensure that their use and presentation is consistent with the conservation of their Commonwealth Heritage values.	Section 8.3 Heritage Management Issues
5. The management of Commonwealth Heritage places should make timely and appropriate provisions for community involvement, especially people who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) have a particular interest in, or associations with, the place; and b) may be affected by the management of the place. 	Section 9.4 Community Consultation and Liaison
6. Indigenous people are the primary source of information on the value of their heritage and that the active participation of indigenous people in identification, assessment and management is integral to the effective protection of indigenous heritage values.	Section 9.5 Indigenous Participation
7. The management of Commonwealth Heritage places should provide for regular monitoring, review and reporting on the conservation of Commonwealth Heritage values.	Section 9.11 Monitoring and Reporting and Section 10.5 Review of the Heritage Management Plan

1 March 2010

Heritage Management Plan



Canberra Airport Group Pty Ltd

Former RAAF Base Fairbairn, Canberra Airport

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1.0

Introduction

1.1 Context and Background of the Report

This Heritage Management Plan (HMP) has been prepared on behalf of Canberra Airport Pty Ltd with respect to the former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct as an integral part of Canberra Airport. The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct forms the north east part of the Airport and is an integral part of Canberra Airport.

This Management Plan provides a Heritage Management Framework that integrates the obligations of Canberra Airport under the *Airports Act 1996* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999* and should be taken into account in relation to any proposed action which is subject to the provisions of these Acts.

RAAF Base Fairbairn, formerly RAAF Station Canberra, was developed on the north eastern side of the current alignment of Runway 17/35 of Canberra airfield primarily in response to the significantly increased Defence infrastructure spending by the Australian Government in the late 1930s. RAAF Station Canberra was developed on a strong geometric grid plan that created clearly separated operational, administration and accommodation precincts, reflecting both the operational categories of the RAAF and the social hierarchy of RAAF personnel, delineated by a combination of landscaped avenues and the main parade ground.

In the mid 1990s the Defence Reform Program determined that RAAF Fairbairn was no longer required and in 1998 Canberra Airport Pty Limited purchased the long term lease of the Airport including Fairbairn, although Defence retained a sub-lease on Fairbairn for a 6 year period. After Defence vacated the base in 2004 a major revitalising and upgrade program commenced to refurbish and adapt the site and buildings.

The Australian Heritage Commission received a recommendation regarding the Fairbairn site in 1999 and from this elements of the site and layout were subsequently listed on the *Register of the National Estate*. However, as the listing was not an assessment of the whole site and many changes have occurred at Fairbairn since 1999, the original listing is outdated. The study undertaken in the preparation of this Heritage Management Plan provides a comprehensive assessment with respect to the heritage significance of the whole site.

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct is located on Commonwealth land. As a result of changes to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, which provided for the establishment of the Commonwealth Heritage List, all places on Commonwealth land must now be assessed against Commonwealth Heritage criteria.

This Heritage Management Plan has arisen from a request by the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts for the development of a thorough understanding of the heritage characteristics and significance of the precinct as a whole in relation to the Commonwealth Heritage criteria. It also fulfils the obligation under the *EPBC Act* for the preparation of a Heritage Management Plan for the place.

1.2 Site Identification

Canberra Airport is located in the Majura Valley, approximately 8km to the east of Canberra's central business district. Fairbairn is located at the north east precinct of Canberra Airport (see Fig.1-1).

The precinct is bounded to the north and east by the Airport boundary, beyond which is the Fairbairn Golf Course and the Majura Military Training Area. The precinct is bounded by Runway 17/35 to the west and by Runway 12/30 to the south. Current road access to the site is via Glenora Drive, north off Pialligo Avenue.

Fairbairn has a gross land area of some 95 ha before the deduction for roads, aviation infrastructure and other services.



Figure 1-1 The former RAAF Base Fairbairn is located in the Fairbairn precinct as defined by the Canberra Airport 2009 Master Plan

The potential Commonwealth Heritage values have been found to relate to the Former RAAF Base Fairbairn within the north east sector of the overall airport. The HMP study area comprises the footprint of the self-contained precinct of the former RAAF Base at the north east of the main runway as established in 1940 and developed in the later half of the 20th century (see Fig.1-2 & 3).



Figure 1-2 Study area

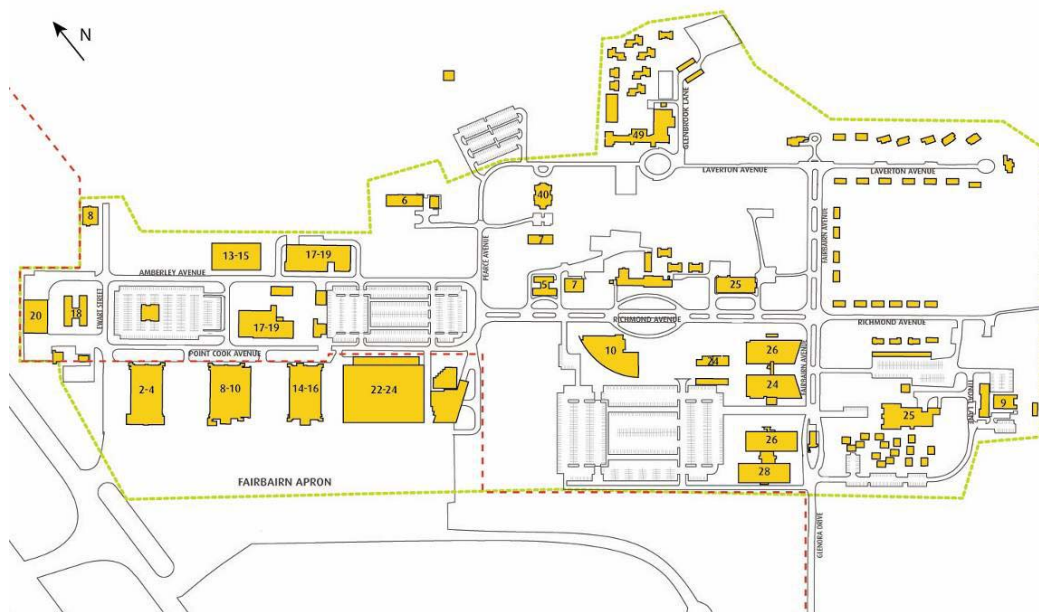


Figure 1-3 Site layout, 2009, indicating the subject area (yellow dashed line), the airside boundary (red dashed line), principal roadways and the location of all buildings. (Map provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

1.3 Airport Tenure

Canberra Airport is managed by Canberra Airport Pty Ltd pursuant to a 50-year lease (with a 49-year option) issued by the Commonwealth of Australia under the *Airports Act* commencing 29 May 1998.

Tenure for third party development sites within airport land / boundary is provided through a sub-lease issued by the Airport Lessee Company (ALC) Canberra Airport Pty Ltd. Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd manages the Airport on behalf of Canberra Airport Pty Ltd.

1.4 Heritage Management Framework

The Australian Heritage Commission received a recommendation concerning the Fairbairn site in 1999, and from this the site was subsequently listed (20/05/2003) on the *Register of the National Estate* as "RAAF Base Fairbairn Group, Glenora Drive, Majura, ACT, Australia". This listing identified a number of buildings of interest and a series of distinctive planning and landscape features of the overall precinct.

Following amendments in 2006 to the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975*, the *Register of the National Estate* (RNE) was frozen on 19 February 2007, which means that no new places can be added, or removed.

The Register will continue as a statutory register until February 2012. During this period the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts (the Minister) is required to continue considering the Register when making any decisions under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). This transition period also allows state, territory, local and Commonwealth Governments to complete the task of transferring places to appropriate heritage registers where necessary and to amend legislation that refers to the RNE as a statutory list.

Fairbairn is located on Commonwealth land. As a result of changes to the EPBC Act, which provided for the establishment of the Commonwealth Heritage List, all places on Commonwealth land must now be assessed against Commonwealth Heritage Criteria, and managed according to the Commonwealth Heritage management principles.

Fairbairn is shown as an "indicative place" on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

"Indicative place" means that data provided to or obtained by the Heritage Division has been entered into the database. However, a formal nomination has not been made and the Council has not received the data for assessment.

Refer to Section 8.2 Legislative Heritage Issues regarding other legislative frameworks including the *Airports Act 1996* and *Airports (Environment Protection) Regulations 1997*.

1.5 Documentary and Photographic Sources

Existing documentary material, which was reviewed for this report, includes the following reports and other sources cited in footnotes.

- *Hazardous Materials Survey, Building 55, Amberley Avenue Fairbairn ACT*, November 2007, Robson Environmental
- *Photographic Archive, Building 55 Fairbairn ACT*, Andrew Metcalf Photography, 2007
- *Canberra Airport 2005 Master Plan*
- *Register of the National Estate Database for RAAF Base Fairbairn Group, Majura ACT, 2003*
- *An Archaeological Assessment of Proposed Development Works at the Canberra International Airport*, a report to Capital Airport Group by Australian Archaeological Survey Consultants, June 2001

- *Fairbairn Heritage Consultation Submissions 2001*
- *Building Conditions Report Summary for Canberra International Airport RAAF Fairbairn* December 2000
- *Facilities Appraisals for RAAF Fairbairn 1999/2000*, prepared by CSPM Pty Ltd
- *RAAF Fairbairn Detailed Equipment Report*, 23 January, 1998
- *RAAF Base Fairbairn Heritage Study: a Beginning*, prepared by Jane Hingston in June 1998 as a student assignment in Cultural Heritage Management

Additional research has been undertaken at the State Library of NSW and the National Archives of Australia.

Contemporary photographs included in this report were taken by Graham Brooks, Director of Graham Brooks and Associates, Heritage Consultants in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

1.6 Terminology

In general this Heritage Management Plan places the responsibility for all management actions on "Canberra Airport". Canberra Airport Pty Ltd will be responsible for appointing the relevant technical and managerial staff and for mobilising the necessary resources to implement the Policies contained in this HMP.

The terminology used throughout this report, particularly the words '*place, cultural significance, fabric, conservation*' etc is as defined in *The Burra Charter*.

The Australian ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (known as *The Burra Charter*) is widely accepted in Australia as the underlying methodology by which all works to sites/buildings, which have been identified as having cultural significance, are undertaken.

The definition of specific terms used in this report is as follows:

Place means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.

Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.

Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

Fabric means all the physical material of the place including components, fixtures, contents, and objects.

Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.

Conservation means good management and care for the character and values of the place.

Maintenance means the continuous protective care of the fabric and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction.

Preservation means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

Restoration means returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

Reconstruction means returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material into the fabric.

Adaptation means modifying a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

Use means the function of the place, as well as the activities and practises that may occur at the place.

Compatible use means a use which respects the cultural significance of a place. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

Setting means the area around a place, which may include the visual catchment.

Related place means a place that contributes to the cultural significance of another place.

Related object means an object that contributes to the cultural significance of a place but is not at the place.

Associations mean the special connections that exist between people and a place.

Meanings denote what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses.

'Campus' is used as a planning term that describes an urban setting. The campus style character relates to free standing buildings set in an open landscape setting.

1.7 Authorship

This Heritage Assessment has been prepared by Graham Brooks, Director and Kate Rodé, Heritage Consultant of Graham Brooks and Associates, Heritage Consultants, Sydney.

1.8 Consultation

Canberra Airport Pty Ltd conducted public consultation in 2001 to seek out the personal stories relating to Fairbairn to complement the written history of the site and better understand its significance for the community. Comments received are summarised in Chapter 2.6 of this report.

Arthur Skimin, President of the ACT Division of the RAAF Association provided valuable assistance during the research process and site inspection in September 2008.

Representatives of Canberra Airport Pty Ltd and Graham Brooks and Associates, Heritage Consultants consulted the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in October 2008 to discuss the requirements for assessing Commonwealth land.

Canberra Airport released the preliminary draft version of this document for 20 days public comments from 7 July to 3 August 2009. Three submissions were received. Due regard was given to all submissions and relevant comments were incorporated in this document.

1.9 Limitations

It is beyond the scope of the present study to comment on the influences of pre-contact Aboriginal occupation on the former RAAF Fairbairn base site.

An investigation of views within the local community concerning the cultural values of the site and its elements was not part of the scope of work of this study. The assessment of social significance contained in the present study has been built on views included in the 2001 community consultation submissions and interviews.

The comparative analysis has been based on desktop review of other operational and former RAAF bases.

Buildings and structures associated with the former base but now located outside the study

area and not managed by the Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd such as The Barn (Buildings 215 and 245), explosive stores and magazines (Buildings 69-71), and wartime bomb dump buildings, are not discussed in detail in this study. Access to these sites was not provided by Defence when requested.

During the preparation of this HMP, a separate demolition application for Building 55 was submitted and approved. Accordingly Building 55, whilst referred to in this document, was demolished during 2009 and has not been included in the datasheet of buildings.

2.0

Historical Summary

2.1 Early European Settlement

Explorers Joseph Wild, James Vaughan and Charles Throsby Smith set out from 'Throsby Park' near Moss Vale and discovered the Limestone Plains, following the discovery of Lake George in 1820. They crossed the stony range of hills beside Lake George and soon reached a point from which they saw the land that is now the site of Canberra. Next morning they climbed Black Hill and followed the Molonglo River upstream to its junction with the Queanbeyan River.

The next year Throsby returned to the area and reported that

*"...the country is perfectly sound, well-watered with extensive meadows of rich land either side of the rivers, contains very fine limestone, slate, sandstone and granite fit for building, with sufficient timber for every useful purpose."*¹

Country of this description was the ideal of early pastoralists and within three years of the discovery of the Limestone Plains, settlers commenced to move in. Joshua John Moore's station was the first to be established, followed by Robert Campbell's station, Duntroon and many others. Spreading to the Murrumbidgee and into the Monaro district, the best land on the Limestone Plains was being rapidly occupied (see Fig. 2-1).

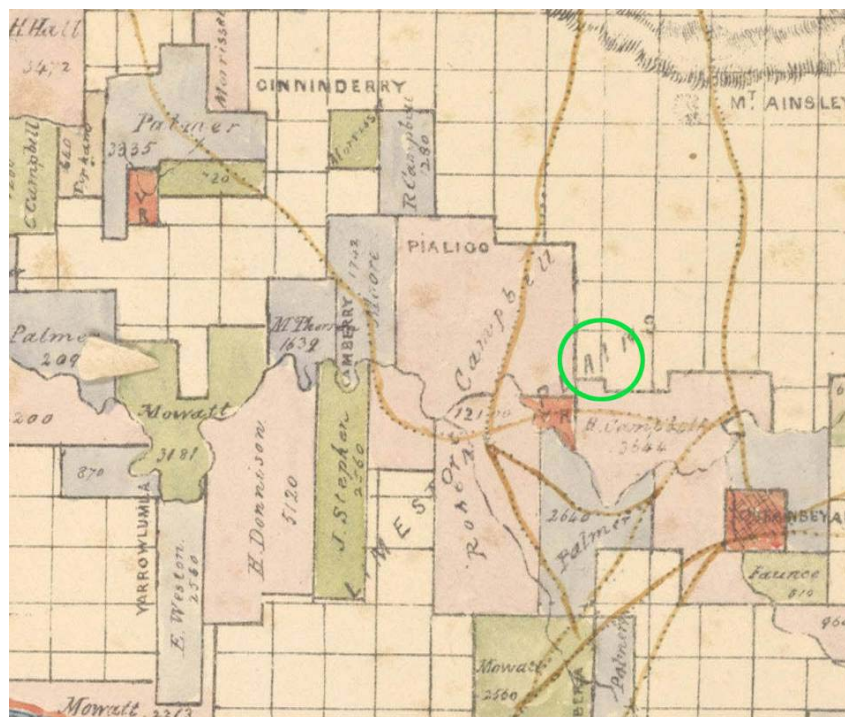


Figure 2-1 Sketch of Canberra, 1843-46, showing early land occupation
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Canberra)

¹ Sited in *Yesterday's Canberra, the story of Canberra* on www.tomw.net.au

The area where the present day Canberra Airport is located retained its rural character and use throughout the 19th and early 20th century. A Parish Map, drawn at the time of Federation indicates that the area comprised large pieces of “good grazing land”. Smaller properties to the north were used for crop and the paddocks were bordered by a creek to the west and by Molonglo River to the south (Fig. 2-5). The Yass to Queanbeyan River diagonally crossed the paddock. The rural character of the area is illustrated on two cyclorama watercolour paintings by Robert Coulter (see Fig. 2-2 and 2-3). Dating from 1911, these paintings showed the fine panoramic amphitheatre prospect of the rural Limestone Plains and were available to the federal capital design competition entrants.



Figure 2-2 Detail of the cycloramic view of the Canberra Capital site from Camp Hill, indicating the rural character of the area. Painting by Robert Coulter, 1911 (K. Taylor, 2006)

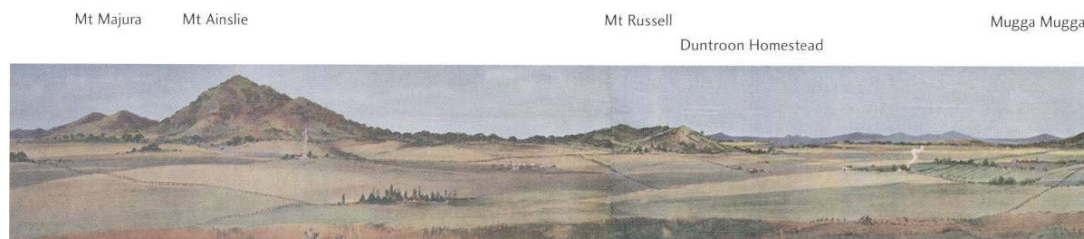


Figure 2-3 Detail of the cycloramic view of the Canberra Capital site from Vernon Hill (now City Hill), indicating the rural character of the area. Painting by Robert Coulter, 1911 (K. Taylor, 2006)

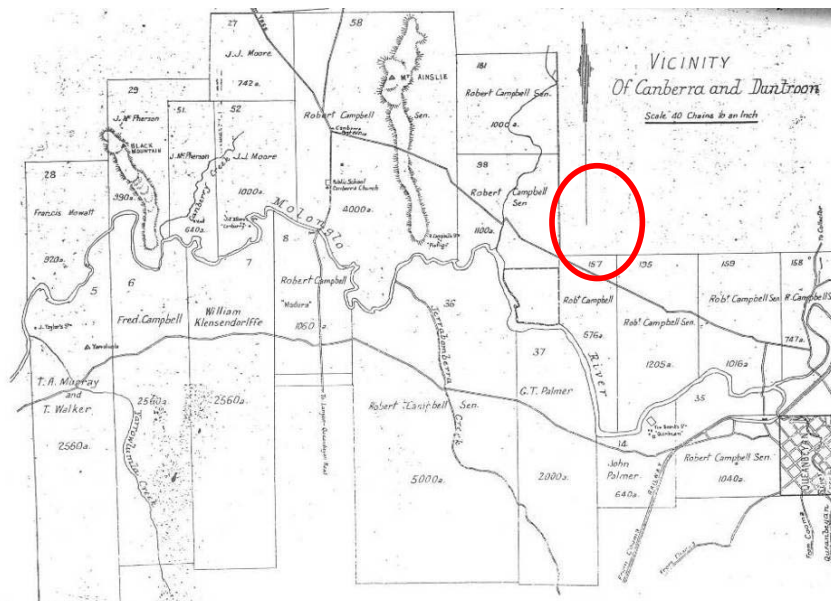


Figure 2-4 Map of Canberra and Duntroon, date unknown, showing the early land grants along the Molonglo River and the approximate location of the subject site (State Library of NSW)

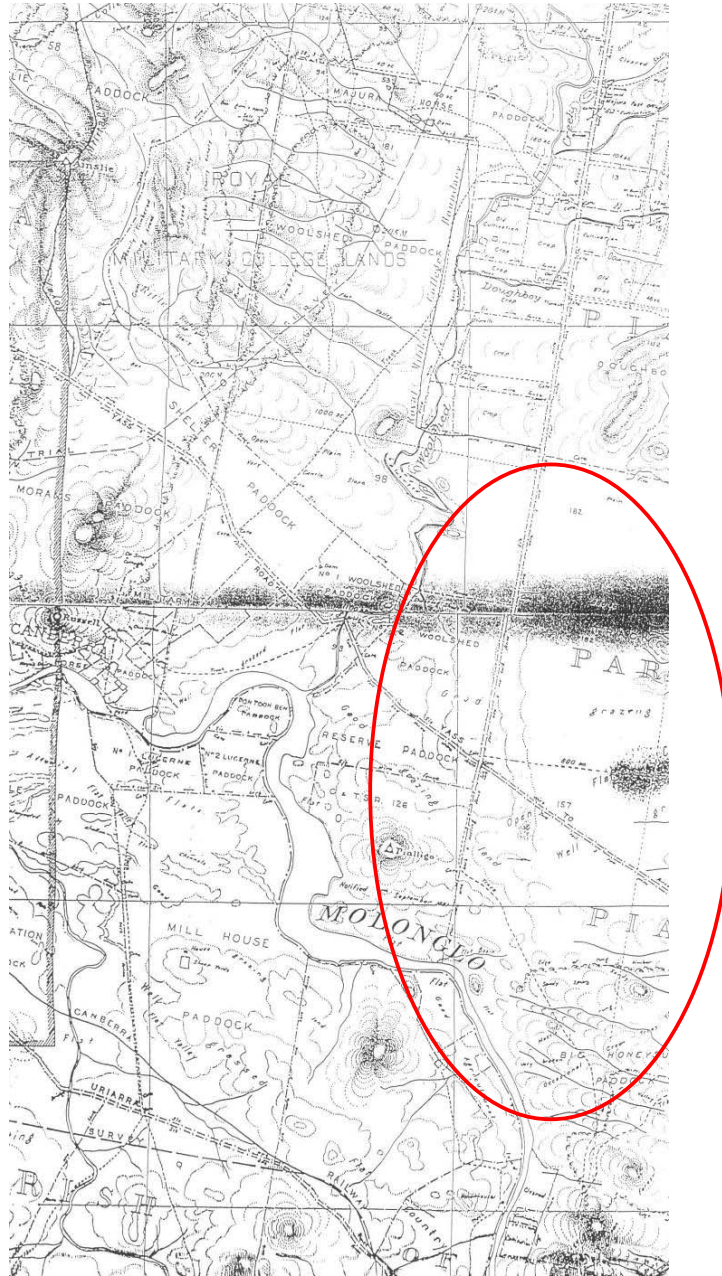


Figure 2-5 Parish of Pialligo, nd. (National Library of Australia)

2.2 The Royal Australian Air Force

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) traces its history back to the Imperial Conference held in London in 1911, where it was decided aviation should be developed within the Armed Forces of the British Empire. Australia implemented this decision, the only country to do so, by approving the establishment of the Central Flying School at Point Cook, Victoria in 1912².

The first course began flying training at Point Cook in August 1914. Graduating students became the nucleus of the Australian Flying Corps, the forerunners of the Royal Australian Air Force³.

² <http://en.wikipedia.org> History of the RAAF

³ Canberra's Engineering Heritage, Aviation, Chapter Eleven by T H Cooke

The Australian Flying Corps (AFC) was formed within the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF), and earned a creditable reputation in both Palestine and France during World War I. Soon after the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the Australian Flying Corps sent aircraft to assist in capturing German colonies in what is now north-west New Guinea. These colonies surrendered quickly, however, before the planes were even unpacked. The first operational flights did not occur until 27 May 1915, when the Mesopotamian Half Flight was called upon to assist the Indian Army in protecting British oil interests in what is now Iraq. The Corps later saw action in Egypt, Palestine and on the Western Front throughout the remainder of World War I. By the end of the war, four squadrons had seen active service.

The Australian Flying Corps remained part of the Australian Army until 1919, when it was disbanded along with the AIF. Although the Central Flying School continued to operate at Point Cook, military flying virtually ceased until 1920, when the Australian Air Corps was formed.

The Australian Air Force was formed on 31 March 1921. King George V approved the prefix "Royal" in June 1921, which became effective on 31 August 1921. The RAAF then became the second Royal air arm to be formed in the British Commonwealth, following the British Royal Air Force.

In addition to the Point Cook Air Base, in the mid-1920s the RAAF established two new military airfields, one at Laverton, not far from Point Cook, and the other at Richmond in New South Wales.

2.3 Initial Canberra Airport Development, 1928-1939

The need to provide an airfield for Canberra was raised in the early 1920s and the Northbourne Aviation Ground near Northbourne Avenue became operational in 1923. Located at Canberra's northern outskirts, this airfield served as an emergency airfield and was infrequently used.

By 1926 a new and more suitable site for a permanent airfield at the present location of Canberra Airport was confirmed. The resolution of the final site for Canberra Airport was urgent as the Chief of Air Staff, Group Captain Williams decided to give the first mass flying display by the RAAF at the opening of Parliament House in May 1927⁴. For the preparations, 250 officers and men of the Citizen Air Force arrived from Richmond and spent their annual 18 day camp in Canberra. In addition, 21 aeroplanes gathered, and a further contingent of 200 Air Force men joined the camp, representative of every unit in the Commonwealth. These forces camped on the aerodrome, where tents were erected for accommodation and two large hangars constructed for the machines⁵. The RAAF camp was located close to the Duntroon/Queanbeyan Road, at its intersection with the track to Majura (Fig. 2-6).

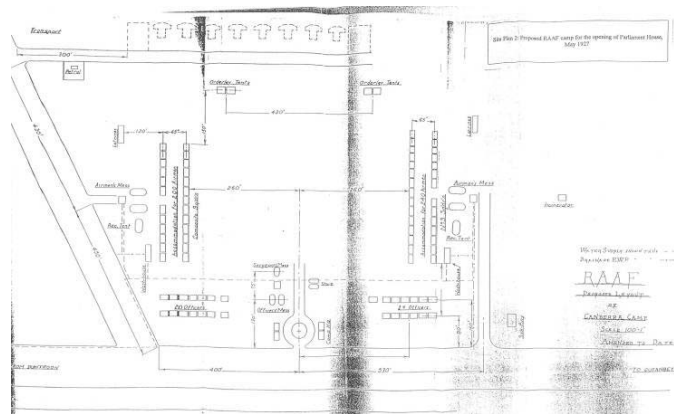


Figure 2-6 Proposed layout of Canberra RAAF Camp, 1927 (National Archives of Australia)

⁴ *Canberra's Engineering Heritage*, Aviation, Chapter Eleven by T H Cooke

⁵ *The Canberra Times*, 29 April 1927, p. 1

In the 1920s and 30s civil authorities administered the aerodrome. There was no hangar, telephone service, nor canvas wind sock to indicate the direction of the wind on the spot. The airport was a large field, for which grazing rights were granted, and the arrival of an aircraft was an event of note. The lack of facilities drew frequent criticism throughout the 1920s. Negotiations between the Department of Defence and the Federal Capital Commission, however, concluded that:

*"The question of the provision of hangar accommodation would be considered when civilian aviation traffic justified it. This would also be the case in connection with the development of the Royal Australian Air Force"*⁶

In 1933, following requests from the Canberra Chamber of Commerce, the matter of developing Canberra Airport was raised in Parliament. Following agreement between the RAAF and civil authorities on the location of their respective establishments on the aerodrome, plans were drawn up for the construction of a large hangar on the southern side of the runway (in the vicinity of the current terminal site). This hangar was completed in mid-1936 after several delays, as the design was modified to accommodate the rapidly increasing size of aircraft operating from Canberra⁷. The hangar unit had a span of 100 feet and a length of 84 feet and bowstring type roof trusses.

In July 1936, extra land was acquired by the Department for the Interior at the Canberra aerodrome after consultation with the representatives of the Civil Air Board and the Royal Australian Air Force. On 24 March 1937 The Canberra Times reported that an area of 2,000 square yards of reinforced concrete in front of the new hangar was completed.

In 1937, the Commonwealth Government announced plans for the establishment of an extensive system of aerial bases along the coast of Australia to provide the Commonwealth with strategic air defence, equal in efficiency to any in the world. The scheme included the establishment of new bases and the full use and probable enlargement and upgrading of existing aerodromes to meet the demands of a growing defence force. By early 1938 the Australian defence preparations quickened and the Air Force's share of the defence vote had increased greatly. Funds allocated to the RAAF ensured first line strength was raised to 18 squadrons equipped with 212 aircraft. Airfields were to be constructed at coastal points in NSW, Victoria and Western Australia⁸.

One place inevitably considered as a site for a RAAF base was the slowly evolving national capital. From before World War I, when for a time it had been planned to make that place the focus of the newly raised aviation corps, the idea existed that Canberra held special defence significance. In the 1920s, however, there was no urgency attached to such a proposal, as the capital was far inland and secure⁹. Nonetheless, by virtue of its intended national status, Canberra saw an intermittent but increasingly frequent RAAF presence, which led to the decision in 1938 to develop the Canberra airfield into a leading defence airbase, while also using it for commercial air services.

No. 8 Squadron was formed on 11 September 1939 at the RAAF base, which was shared with the civilian airfield. The squadron used the only hangar existing on the site for aircraft maintenance and accommodation was provided in tents (Fig. 2-7). The squadron was initially equipped with Douglas DC-2's and DC-3's and re-equipped with Lockheed Hudsons in May 1940.

⁶ *The Canberra Times*, 16 March 1929

⁷ Aviation by T H Cooke

⁸ Odgers, George (1996) *Air Force Australia*, National Bank Publishers, Frenchs Forest, NSW

⁹ C.D.Coulthard-Clark (1991) *The Third Brother, The Royal Australian Air Force, 1921-1939*, North Sydney : Allen & Unwin in association with the Royal Australian Air Force, p.151-152



Figure 2-7 An aerial view of the airfield showing the solitary hangar and tent accommodation, October 1939. (Australian War Memorial)

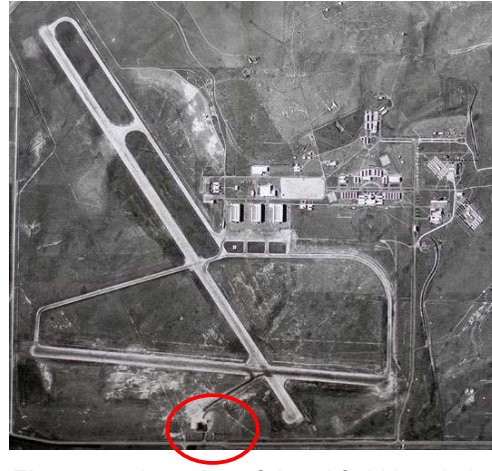


Figure 2-8 Location of the airfield in relation to Fairbairn, shown on the 1949 aerial photograph of the area (Aerial provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

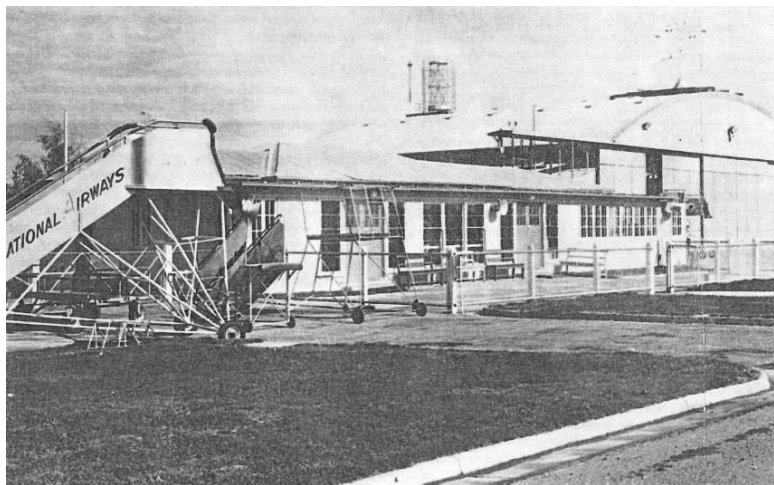


Figure 2-9 The 1936 hangar remained part of Canberra's airport terminal until the 1960s (National Library of Australia)

2.4 RAAF Station Canberra, 1940-1962

2.4.1. Initial Establishment of RAAF Station (1939-40)

In late 1939, Defence planning was given urgent priority. A decision was made that a separate site would be provided on the north-east side of the Canberra airfield for the new airbase.

In April 1939 *The Canberra Times* announced that

"Plans have been designed for the establishment of a large military aerodrome at Canberra to provide for the stationing of three squadrons of aircraft and 480 officers.

The station will be equipped with 36 to 40 aircrafts.

The new establishment will be ready by July 1, 1940.

The aerodrome will cost £400,000, and will be equipped with the most modern planes."

The Master Plan for the development of the base, dated 1939, was prepared by the Office of the Chief Commonwealth Architect, E Henderson, exhibiting British influence but in line with prevailing Australian standards. The plan reflected the design philosophy of the contemporary airbase planning that was evident in the site plans of both existing and planned military bases across the services such as the Point Cook Air Base and RAAF facilities at Darwin, Amberley, Richmond and Pearce.

Early 20th century airbase planning principles included the clear separation of functions and an expression of the strict social and hierarchical organisation of the Air Force. In line with this, the planning of the RAAF Station at Canberra was dominated by a rectangular grid, with principal roads connected at circular intersections. Various functions, such as domestic/administrative and operational areas of the base, were separated by a rectilinear road layout. The parade ground acted as a formal interface between them. Generous-sized open areas between the nodes of different functions enhanced their separation (Fig.2-10).

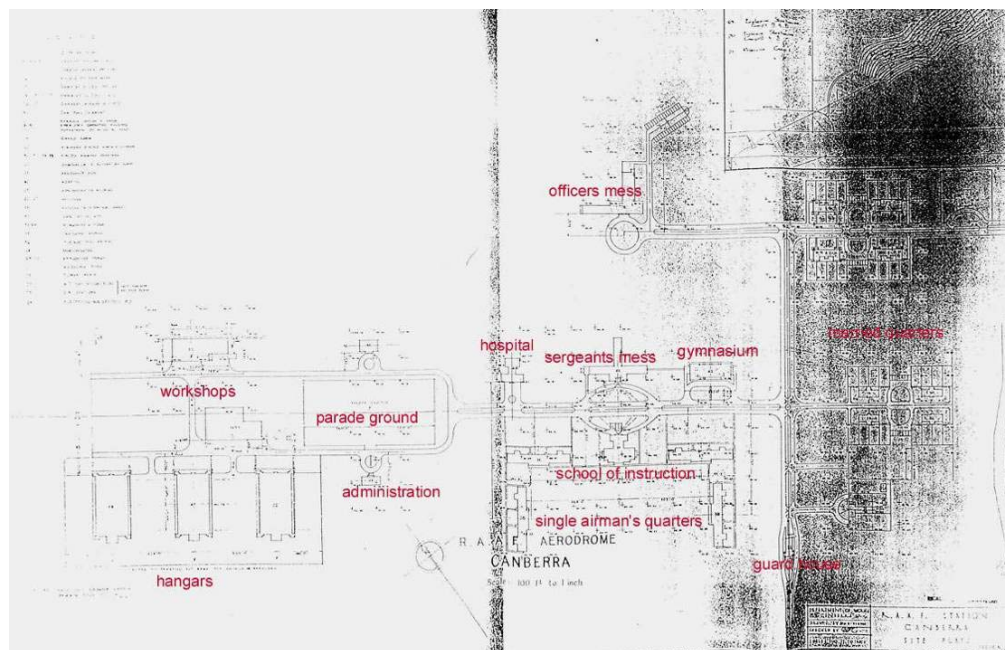


Figure 2-10 Plan of the RAAF Station Canberra, 1939 (National Archives of Australia)

Building plans came from the Department of Interior and were signed by Chief Architect C. Whitley. The Department of Interior was also responsible for the construction of the base and handled the awarding of contracts.

A key difference between RAAF Station Canberra and the earlier airbases was that, with the approach of War, greater economy was demanded. There was to be no repeat of the controversy surrounding RAAF Station Richmond's Officer's Mess, which opened in August 1938 and was branded 'lavish'. The Department of Interior suggested that at Canberra a 'uniform stucco finish [could] be adopted for the walls of all buildings' constructed of brick, as was usual in permanent bases. However, on 10 January 1939, the Department of Defence, mindful of budgetary constraints, requested that 'the cost of construction of these units be reduced as far as practicable'. All waste pipes may be carried down the face of the walls excepting on the front elevation. The buildings should be of brick but economy in both capital and maintenance costs should govern the decision as to whether or not stucco finish should be provided.

By 1940, construction of the airbase was underway and by September of that year, the buildings and facilities required for a squadron to function, such as hangars, offices and workshops were completed. The Canberra Air Force base was officially established on 1 April, 1940, and initially named RAAF Station Canberra. Its first Commanding Officer,

Squadron Leader P.G. Heffernan, and personnel came from No.8 Squadron, which had been stationed at Canberra airport from 11 September 1939.

By November 1940, the guard house, administration block, barrack office and stores, several garages, explosive stores and various accommodation huts were completed. In common with other pre-, and early wartime bases in the period of 1939-1942, some of the structures were erected in brick. These included the guard house, hospital, powerhouse, armament building, photographic store and the entrances to the hangars. Other structures such as the staff residences, huts, photographic building, gymnasium and school of instruction were constructed in weatherboard on brick foundations.

The original establishment called for over 1300 personnel. However, by 1942 living quarters were only available for 460 personnel, mainly in timber huts.

World War II presented a huge logistical problem for Australian defence planners. The solution they arrived at for personnel accommodation requirements was neat and inexpensive – various types of timber huts. Using readily available building materials and easily understood building techniques, tens of thousands of these huts were built by civil contractors across Australia in the period 1939-1945 (see Fig.2-13). Although designed as temporary accommodation, their adaptability and inherent strength made them the backbone of military accommodation for 50 years and many are still in use today¹⁰. The timber accommodation huts at Fairbairn were gradually replaced with single and double storey brick accommodation during the 1980s and 1990s.

Drawings of the base indicate that 1939-1942 was the primary wartime construction period with some 71 structures completed at RAAF Station Canberra. Access to the site was from the Duntroon-Queanbeyan Road, controlled by the guard house. The site planning was clearly zoned into separate areas. The operational area comprised three hangars and the control tower, with the transport building, engineering workshop, store and associated smaller buildings such as the Survey Flight and Film Store Building. There was a separate magazine and explosives storage area to the north east (these buildings are outside the study area).

The orthogonal planning alignment allowed for the clear segregation of functions and the differentiation between married quarters, single men's quarter and various ranks in separate locations. The parade ground acted as a formal interface between operational and domestic areas of the base.

Canberra Airport was operated as a civil airport, administered by the civil authorities, until 31 October 1940, when responsibility was passed to the Department of Air and the airfield became known as "RAAF Station Canberra".

From 1940 to the end of World War II, RAAF Station Canberra was an operational base for antisubmarine patrols and a training school for Army co-operational personnel.

In mid-February 1941, the last buildings from the initial contract were ready to be occupied. That same month, the Canberra aerodrome was renamed as Fairbairn aerodrome to commemorate the work of the late Mr. J Fairbairn who, while Minister for Air, was killed in a plane crash at Canberra¹¹. The RAAF airbase, however, retained its name of RAAF Station Canberra.

The need to construct hard-surfaced runways on the base was first addressed in 1942, as due to the clay surface, 4mm of rain was sufficient to close the airport. The priority assigned to the project, however, was low and at an estimated £51,000, it was postponed indefinitely¹².

¹⁰ *A Little Marvel in Timber & Tin: The Military P1 hut of the Second World War*
Paper Presented to the Fourteenth National Conference on Engineering Heritage (Perth, 18th – 21st November 2007) by Patrick Miller

¹¹ *The Canberra Times*, 19 February 1941

¹² *Aviation* by T H Cooke

The tree-covered hills to the east of the airfield were utilised at this time to provide some degree of camouflage and dispersal for an operations/signals building, petrol dumps, aircraft dispersal and a fusing area to allow progressive arming of bombs. Between May and October 1942, a Signal building, camouflaged as a hay shed, was constructed from concrete blocks on the property known as Dundee. (It is located outside the study area)

2.4.2. World War II Phase (1941 - 1945)

With its army co-operation squadron, RAAF Station Canberra was a natural choice for the new School of Army Co-operation, which was formed on 29 December 1941 to train RAAF and army officers in army co-operation techniques, including artillery spotting and signalling, planning close air support missions, and tactical reconnaissance. The school apparently took over the instruction building, but it also required an administrative building, which was erected in 1942, neither of which currently exists. The establishment of the school at Fairbairn placed extra demand on accommodation, both for permanent staff and officers attending the one-month courses.



Figure 2-11 View of the RAAF Station, 1945, showing Richmond Avenue, the parade ground, rows of temporary huts and the operational zone in the background (Australian War Memorial)



Figure 2-12 View of the RAAF Station, 1945, looking north-west. Note the bare nature of the ground of the early base and its surroundings (Australian War Memorial)

The airbase was considered relatively comfortable and easy to work in with its well-equipped hangars and workshops: however, airmen found the winter months hard to endure, living in the small, unheated wooden huts erected on the base. Accommodation remained the most serious problem for RAAF Station Canberra during World War II. The many huts erected on the base, at times barely met demand for accommodation, and for much of the time did not meet demand at all, meaning at times men had to be accommodated off-site.

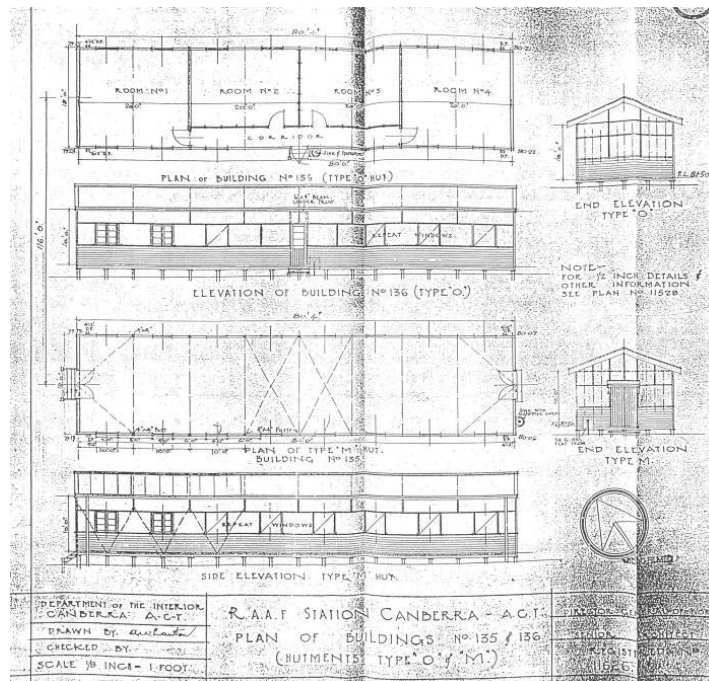


Figure 2-13 Plan of timber huts used at RAAF Station Canberra (National Archives of Australia)

A significant social change occurred with the formation of the RAAF Nursing Service and the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF). The latter undertook administrative duties and some mechanical and maintenance duties in non-operational units. In December 1941, approval was granted to build nurses' quarters at RAAF Station Canberra for five nurses and two 'domestics' which freed up five male nursing orderlies to be posted to other stations. No doubt the nurses were badly needed, especially in winter, when there was 'a high incidence of influenza and upper respiratory tract infections amongst personnel.....which the medical officers attribute to the extremely cold climate and unheated quarters'.

In early 1942 a 'Waaafery' consisting of three accommodation huts and a recreational hut was erected close on the south western corner of Fairbairn Avenue and Laverton Avenue to house WAAAF personnel. The 'Waaafery' was planned and built as a temporary construction that definitely would be pulled down after the war – perhaps reflecting the broad plan and common opinion that women would not continue serving with the RAAF after the war. Some of the temporary huts, brought in from around Canberra, were dismantled and the wood used as fencing to provide the female servicemen with some privacy.

Wartime squadrons that operated from Fairbairn included No. 4 Squadron that was based in Canberra between September 1940 and May 1942. No. 4 Squadron was first established as a unit of the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) at RAAF Point Cook on 16 October 1916. The Squadron arrived in France in December 1917 and provided support for the Army. Based in Cologne it remained in Europe, returning home in March 1919.

No. 4 Squadron was re-formed at RAAF Richmond, New South Wales, on 3 May 1937, flying Avro Ansons on coastal patrols, but retitled No. 6 Squadron on 1 January 1939. It was re-formed again as an army co-operation squadron at Richmond on 17 June 1940, being first equipped with De Havilland Moth Minors and then CAC Wirraways¹³. In May 1942, No. 4 Squadron deployed to Camden Airfield, where it flew anti-submarine patrols as well as army co-operation training sorties until redeploying to Queensland and then in November to New Guinea.

In November 1945 No. 4 Squadron returned again to RAAF Base Fairbairn. It was re-equipped with late-model P-40 Kittyhawks, having received a few of these aircraft while in Borneo, and this was followed by P-51 Mustangs. On 7 March 1948, No. 4 Squadron ceased to exist, having been re-numbered No. 3 Squadron.

No. 13 Squadron was formed from elements of No. 12 Squadron at RAAF Base Darwin on in June 1940. No. 13 Squadron was severely affected by the Japanese Air raids on Darwin on 19 February 1942, with the Squadron's headquarters, stores and spares being destroyed.

The Squadron continued to conduct operations against the Japanese until 4 April 1943 when it handed its Hudson aircraft over to No. 2 Squadron and was withdrawn to RAAF Base Fairbairn to rest and re-equip. At Fairbairn the Squadron took delivery of Bristol Beaufort and Lockheed Ventura aircraft and conducted anti-submarine and shipping patrols along the Australian East Coast. The Beauforts were handed over to No. 2 Squadron in August. The future Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam joined the Squadron as a navigator during 1943¹⁴.

No. 8 Squadron was based at Fairbairn in 1940, 1941 and 1943. The Squadron was a RAAF flying training squadron of World War I and medium bomber squadron of World War II. It was first formed in October 1917 and was disbanded in January 1946 after seeing action during the Pacific War.

¹³ The **CAC Wirraway** (aboriginal for "challenge") was a World War II training and general purpose military aircraft manufactured in Australia by the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC) between 1939 and 1946. The aircraft was an Australian development of the North American NA-16 training aircraft.

¹⁴ <http://home.st.net.au/~dunn/raaf/13sqn.htm>

No. 8 Squadron was reformed as a bomber-reconnaissance unit at RAAF Base Fairbairn on 11 September 1940. Due to a shortage of other aircraft it was initially equipped with ex-civilian Douglas DC-2 and Douglas DC-3 transport aircraft which were used to conduct patrols off the Australian coast and for transport tasks. The Squadron was reequipped with Lockheed Hudson medium bombers in May 1940 and was deployed to Singapore in August.

The Squadron first saw action within hours of the outbreak of war in the Pacific in December 1941 when it attacked Japanese shipping off Malaya. The Squadron suffered heavy losses in the first days of the Malayan Campaign and was virtually amalgamated with No. 1 Squadron RAAF later in December. No. 8 Squadron handed its remaining Hudsons to No. 1 Squadron in January 1942 and was evacuated to Palembang in Sumatra where it received replacement Hudsons. The Squadron continued to suffer heavy losses and was disbanded at Batavia on 16 February with its personnel returning to Australia.

No. 8 Squadron was reformed at RAAF Station Fairbairn on 12 March 1943 equipped with DAP Beaufort bombers as a medium and torpedo bomber squadron. The Squadron moved to Goodenough Island in August and began flying combat missions against Japanese positions and shipping in the New Britain area. The Squadron moved to the New Guinea mainland in April 1944 and flew strikes against Japanese positions near Wewak until the end of the war. No. 8 Squadron was disbanded at Tadjil in New Guinea on 19 January 1946.

During the period April 1942 – December 1943, the base was home to three squadrons of the Netherlands East Indies Air Force. These were No.18, No. 119 and No.120.

When Java was lost, the military headquarters of the Netherlands East Indies evacuated to Melbourne and those airmen who had managed to reach Australia were collected at Fairbairn. It was agreed that they would serve temporarily under RAAF operational command in a new squadron designated No. 18 Squadron (NEI) that included both Dutch and Australian personnel. Formed officially on 7 April 1942, the unit was equipped with B25 Mitchell bombers and undertook training operations and regular coastal patrols (see Fig.2-14). On 5 June 1942, one of the squadron's planes sank a Japanese submarine 115 kilometres east of Sydney¹⁵.

The B25 bombers caused problems on the airfield as they were too heavy for the unsealed runway. In late 1942, however, the suggestion to construct hard-surfaced runways was rejected because RAAF Station Canberra had a relatively low priority for wartime development.

RAAF Station Canberra was already hard-pressed to accommodate personnel and the arrival of the Dutch pushed it to the point of overflowing. Officers and non-commissioned officers were accommodated in hotels in Queanbeyan and Canberra. Airmen, however, were initially accommodated in the recreational hall, but later moved into tents erected on a wooded hill on the other side of the road to Queanbeyan¹⁶. This arrangement worked until the onset of winter, when various problems occurred.

¹⁵ Gibbney, J. *Canberra 1913-1953*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988

¹⁶ *Fairbairn Heritage Consultation Submission 2001*, recollections of Mr Dick Jenkins



Figure 2-14 Two North American B25 Mitchell bombers belonging to No. 18 Squadron, Netherlands Air Force, 1942 (Australian War Memorial)

Fairbairn Aerodrome reached its peak mid-1943, when No. 13 Squadron arrived, equipped with Ventura maritime patrol aircraft. By January 1944, RAAF Station Canberra had 176 male and 6 female (WAAAF) officers, 226 male sergeants and 615 other ranks, and 102 WAAAF servicewomen – making a total of 1125 personnel. At this time the airbase could accommodate 1166 personnel, but more Dutch airmen were expected – some of whom again had to be put up at local hotels. The situation was eased when No.13 Squadron left in June 1944, and later many of the Dutch airmen also moved north¹⁷.

2.4.3. Post-War Years (1945 – 1962)

The upgrading of the airfield was approved in February 1945 and completed in January 1948 at a final cost of £209,000. On 26 November 1948 *The Canberra Times* reported that the camp at Fairbairn, formerly used by the Department of Road Transport in constructing the runway, will soon be used for 400 immigrants arriving in Canberra.

In February 1949 two hundred and fifty Maltese men arrived to Canberra and were then transported by bus to the RAAF Base in Fairbairn. They were housed with other male migrants in the tent lines and used existing messing and community facilities. For a year or so they were placed on various building construction jobs for the Housing Commission, involved in helping to build extensions to the Duntroon Military College and employed in the construction of the Airport (see Fig.2-15)¹⁸.

By May 1949, however, *The Canberra Times* reported that the Maltese migrants were becoming dissatisfied with their conditions¹⁹. They suffered from the cold and had to rely on winter clothing donated for them by women's organizations. They were expected to produce a reasonable output in work for which most of them had not been accustomed or trained. The article concluded that "*If the migration scheme is to be successful – as it should – a thorough survey of the qualifications of each migrant should be undertaken so that each man will be placed where he can be of the greatest advantage to the nation and also help himself to become a useful citizen*"²⁰.

Gradually in the early 1950s the migrants were able to move to rented accommodation or purchase a block of land and build their own home.

¹⁷ Gibbney, J. *Canberra 1913-1953*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988

¹⁸ <http://www.immigrationbridge.com.au>

¹⁹ *The Canberra Times*, 8 March 1949 and 3 May 1949

²⁰ *The Canberra Times*, 8 March 1949, p2



Figure 2-15 Maltese immigrants working at the base, 1949 (State Library of Victoria)

In the early 1950s, a new wing was added to the sergeants' mess and more timber huts were supplied at the airmen quarters on the southern side of the main avenue (Richmond Avenue). New quarters were constructed for female staff on the south western corner of Fairbairn Avenue and Laverton Avenue and a number of prefabricated timber cottages were erected for married officers east of Fairbairn Avenue. Prefabricated housing was developed in the post-war era as a response to building material shortages and the high demand for housing. The design for the cottages was completed in Canberra in June, 1950, and the Commonwealth Government signed contracts with the Jennings Construction Company, who erected 600 buildings in the suburbs of Canberra. 22 cottages were erected at Fairbairn²¹.



Figure 2-16 A 1950s aerial view of the RAAF Station. Note tent accommodation, prefabricated housing and avenues of trees along main roads (Canberra Airport Archives)

²¹ *The Canberra Times*, 1 June 1951

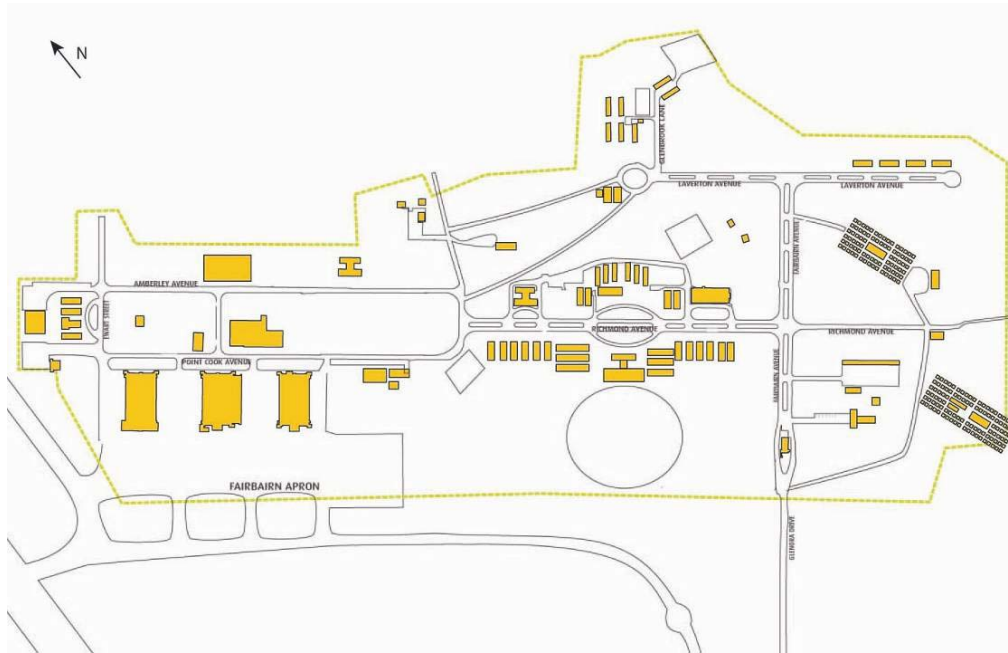


Figure 2-17 Sketch plan of the precinct, showing the road layout and buildings existing on the site in the 1940s (Map provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)



Figure 2-18 Looking south east along Richmond Avenue, 1950s. Note avenue trees in the median of the roadway and in front of some buildings (Canberra Airport Archives)

From 1950 No. 36 Squadron operated the Governor General's Flight from the base.

In 1952 a pre-school centre was established to serve RAAF and local family needs²².

In 1954, Defence departments were transferred from Melbourne to Canberra, resulting in growth of the base. This move also led to the establishment in 1956 of the VIP Squadron at Fairbairn to service the requirements of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C). Over the years, the station has been involved with many official functions, ceremonies, guards of honour for members of Parliament, the Royal family and political dignitaries from other countries (Figs. 2-19&20).

²² http://www.archives.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/135494/Schools.pdf

Some examples of these occasions include the visit of the Duke of Gloucester, the new Governor General and Duchess to Canberra in February 1945, the arrival of Lord and Lady Mountbatten in March 1946, the first royal visit to Australia by Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1954, followed by regular official visits and visit by the President of Vietnam in 1957.



Figure 2-19 The arrival of Lady and Lord Mountbatten at the RAAF Station, 1946 (Australian War Memorial)



Figure 2-20 The President of Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem at Fairbairn, 1957 (National Archives of Australia)

The introduction of air pageants was used by the RAAF to publicise their presence in Canberra during the post-war years. In 1954, Air Force Week was implemented, and from 1965 to 1977, Open Days were held every few years (Fig. 2-22).

In the Post-War period, the base accommodated important wartime exhibits for the Australian War Memorial. Contemporary photographs indicate that planes such as the AVRO Lancaster bomber known as 'G' for George and a Messerschmitt ME262 were dismantled and stored in the hangars ready to be moved to the Australian War Memorial (Fig.2-21).

Fairbairn was home also to many RAAF National Service Trainees during their 154 days of training from 1953 until 1957, when the compulsory training for the RAAF was discontinued²³.

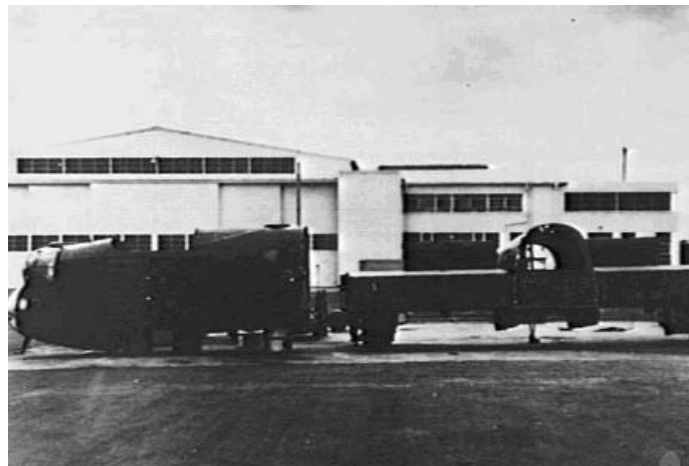


Figure 2-21 'G' for George dismantled and ready to be moved to the Australian War Memorial, 1955 (Australian War Memorial)

²³ *Fairbairn Heritage Consultation Submission 2001*, recollections of Mr Ian Jenkins & The RAAF experience of National Service in *PATHFINDER*, Air Power Development Centre Bulletin, Issue 21, April 2005



Figure 2-22 Formation supply drop on the airfield during Air Force Week activities, 1957
(Australian War Memorial)

2.5 RAAF Base Fairbairn, 1962-1998

2.5.1. The RAAF Staff College

In December 1960, the RAAF Base was selected as the locality for the RAAF Staff College. Staff colleges train military officers in the administrative, staff and policy aspects of their profession²⁴. Before World War II, RAAF officers selected for staff training attended the RAAF Staff College at Bracknell in the United Kingdom. The outbreak of war and the rapid expansion of the RAAF, however, called for the training of potential staff officers and of those who already held staff appointments, in Australia.

The first RAAF Staff School was established at Mount Martha in September 1943, and the RAAF Staff College (RAAFSC) was first formed in February 1949. The initial cadre of staff comprised the Commandant, three officers and six other ranks. The No. 1 Staff Course commenced in June 1959 at Point Cook. RAAFSC remained at Point Cook until the end of 1960 when it was transferred to RAAF Base Fairbairn²⁵. The course lasted eleven months with 24 students, who were required to pass a qualifying examination to be eligible for selection to staff college.

The temporary move of the Staff College from Point Cook to Canberra coincided with the move of Department of Air to Canberra. Buildings taken over as Staff College Headquarters included the former Photographic Building for Survey Flight (Building 57), together with the nearby weatherboard structures at the south western end of the site (Fig. 2-23). Being constructed just before and during the war, these buildings were examples of the “ubiquitous and uninsulated RAAF huts that alternatively froze and baked their occupants with the season throughout Australia²⁶. The main lecture theatre was situated on the southern side of the Headquarters building. Close to the airfield and poorly insulated, it was not only uncomfortable during extreme weather, but could be a “bit of an embarrassment” when aircraft noise drowned out visiting lectures accustomed to less rudimentary facilities (Fig. 2-24).

Despite the obvious shortcomings, the move to Canberra was considered very positive. Guest lecturers could now readily be invited from the Australian National University, the Department or other areas of the Government like Foreign Affairs. The greatly improved library access was also a positive aspect of the relocation.

²⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Staff_college

²⁵ http://www.defence.gov.au/adsc/acsc_history.htm

²⁶ Dough Hurst, *Strategy and Red Ink: A History of RAAF Staff College 1949-1999*, Canberra : Royal Australian Air Force, Aerospace Centre, 2000. pp.47.

During the 1960s, 70s and 80s a number of new temporary structures were constructed in the northern section of the site. Timber framed and weatherboard/asbestos cement walled reading room and staff building were constructed in 1963, followed by new office accommodation, lecture room and reproduction building of similar nature in the early 1970s. By the 1990s the college complex included further weatherboard staff offices, training facilities and shower/toilet ablutions in adjoining huts around the headquarters. The former Photographic Store (Building 80A) became the library. An entry portico and additional huts were attached to the building in the 1990s, visually obscuring most of the brick structure.

With significant changes in the force structure of the RAAF such as the introduction of new technologies and operations, the course material of the staff college, exercises and other activities had been progressively updated over the years. Approaches and outcomes, too, have changed with the times. The RAAF Staff College began at Point Cook with an emphasis on staff studies, but included a strong operational component. Over time the balance progressively moved away from operations and shifted to staff skills rather than operational matters and a preference for training rather than learning approaches. The Staff College syllabus in 1990 restored the operational focus of the early years.

The final course No. 53, graduated in 2000, marking the end of 51 years of successful RAAF Staff College operation. From 2001 the Australian Command and Staff College took over the military education of military officers at the purpose built new facilities at Weston Creek in the ACT.

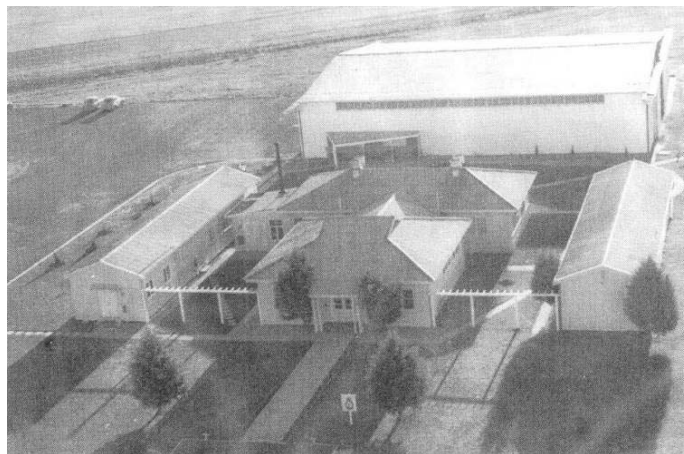


Figure 2-23 The RAAF Staff College in the 1960s (D. Hurst, 2000)



Figure 2-24 Staff College course in the original lecture hall (D. Hurst, 2000)

2.5.2. RAAF Base Fairbairn, 1960s-1980s

RAAF Station Canberra was formally renamed RAAF Base Fairbairn on 19 March 1962.

The post-war development of the base reinforced the functional planning of the wartime years. The 1963 aerial photograph of the area indicates that by this time there was no tent accommodation on the base. The officers' mess was constructed on the north eastern part of the site, which was designated for the unmarried officers. An H-shaped accommodation/ablutions building, built of brick with a metal roof, was added to the airmen's quarters in the proximity of the guard house. The photograph indicates the maturing of the avenue planting in the median strip of the main avenues and the individual trees in front of important buildings such as the guard house and the hospital. Tree planting along the north-eastern boundary line and within open areas is also evident.



Figure 2-25 RAAF Base Fairbairn open day, 1965
(<http://www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews>)



Figure 2-26 Aerial photograph of RAAF Base Fairbairn, 1968. Note the consolidation of avenue trees and cultural planting within the various zones of the base (Canberra Airport Archives)

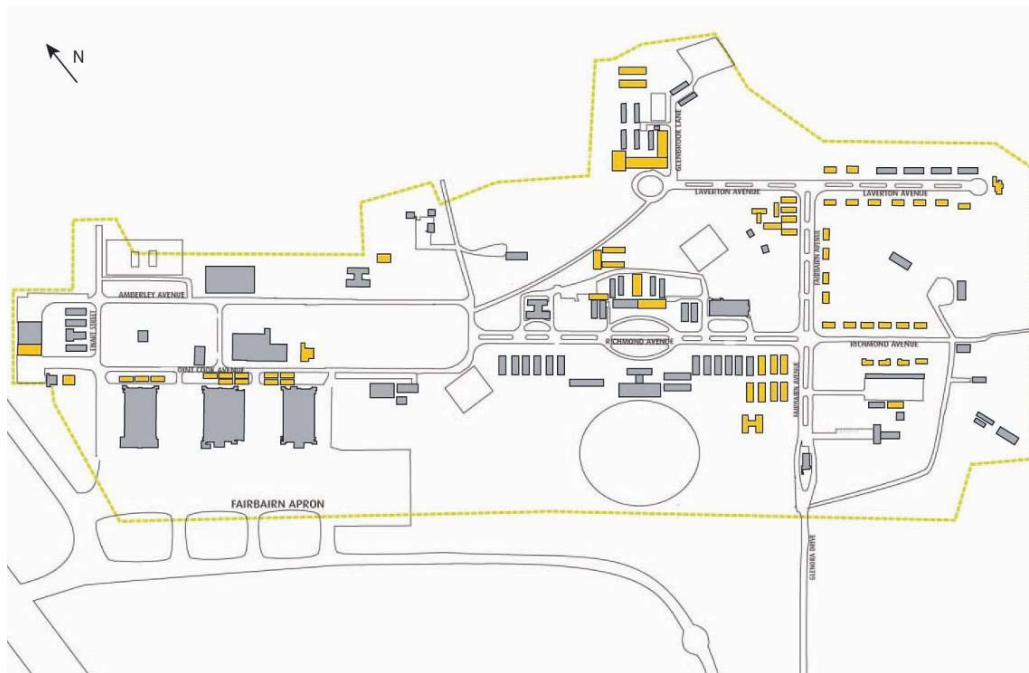


Figure 2-27 Sketch plan of the precinct, 1960s, showing the site layout, earlier (grey) and new (yellow) buildings (Map provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

In the late 1960s, a new brick canteen/recreation building was constructed adjacent to the airmen quarters, but accommodation was still largely provided in timber huts. Parking areas were provided adjacent to administration, office buildings, and living quarters. A fuel farm was constructed adjacent to the transport building. The maturing of the vegetation within and around the base, including a golf course on the northern side of the site, is evident (Figs.2-26-27).

The 1960s and 70s saw changes and improvements to the operational areas of the base, including an extension to Hangar 47, a new control tower attached to Hangar 48 and modifications to the apron. A large, metal framed store/office building was constructed on the northern side of the parade ground, and the Bellman hangar was extended, adding

approximately 35% more area to the building. A number of temporary structures, comprising workshops and associated facilities, were added to the road side of the hangars. Parking areas were enlarged and half of the former parade ground became a car park. The guardhouse acquired a garage extension at the rear. A new airmen's mess was constructed south east of the guard house and behind this new building, an administration building and maintenance depot were added. The officers' quarters were extended with a two storey brick accommodation building. The timber accommodation huts were gradually replaced with single and double storey brick accommodations during the 1980s and 90s (Figs. 2-28&29).



Figure 2-28 Aerial photograph of RAAF Base Fairbairn, 1986. Note the established golf course at the north eastern boundary of the base and maturing planting within the domestic areas (Canberra Airport Archives)

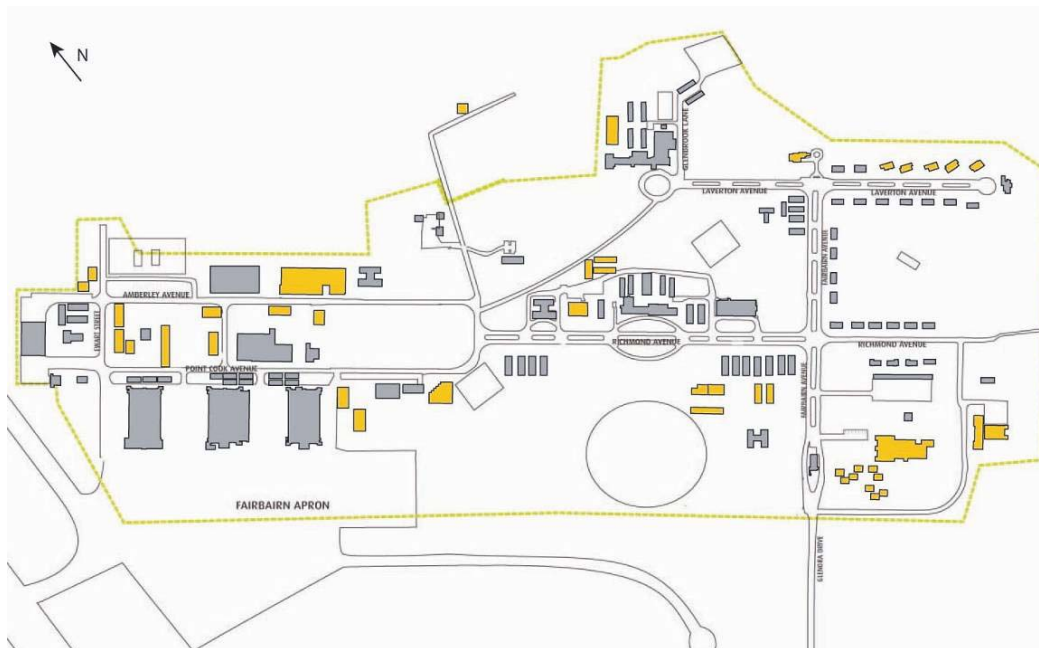


Figure 2-29 Sketch plan of the precinct, 1980s, showing the site layout, earlier (grey) and new (yellow) buildings (Map provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

Further improvements included the construction of an additional health unit adjacent to the

original hospital. New single storey brick veneer structures, containing a studies centre, base information centre and offices, filled up the wooded areas, overlaying the original planning of the site. A new road section was constructed by extending Laverton Avenue to the west to serve to new facilities and provide easy access to the operational zone.

The base was home to numerous squadrons over the years, most notably No.5 Squadron and the VIP Squadron²⁷.

No.5 Squadron disbanded following World War II, but reformed 18 years later to serve in Malaysia. The Squadron's helicopters were used for troop insertion and extraction, re-supply operations and medical evacuations. Based in Fairbairn from April 1966, the Squadron supported peace-keeping forces in the Middle East in the late 1970 and early 1980s. No. 5 Squadron continued its activities until December 1989, when it disbanded and was absorbed into the Australian Defence Force Helicopter School²⁸.

No. 34 Squadron was tasked in July 1959 with providing VIP transport for Australia's leading citizens and visiting dignitaries. The Squadron operated a wide variety of aircraft in the VIP transport role and with its modern Boeing BBJ and Challenger CL 604 aircraft the unit continues to provide transport for the Australian Government²⁹.

As the gateway to the National Capital and to Australia the Base continued to be the stage of official functions and welcome/farewell ceremonies for royalties, political dignitaries and VIP guests. The endless list of such occasions include many visits of the Queen, greeting of Pope John Paul II in 1986 and the arrival and departure of prime ministers, ministers, ambassadors and important foreigner delegations over many decades.

2.5.3. RAAF Base Fairbairn, 1990s

The base's primary role in the 1990s was as Headquarters Training Command Base administered by the Air Officer Commanding Training Command. Principal functions included training, operational and support facilities. Some of the major role of the base was to provide Base Support Services to 307 Air Base Wing, the continuing role of No. 34 Squadron and the RAAF Staff College, the Australian Defence Force Helicopter School, Canberra Area Medical Unit Fairbairn, No. 28 Squadron, Air Power Study Centre and Bureau of Meteorology and Air Services Australia.

The Australian Defence Force Helicopter School (ADFHS)

The ADFHS was raised at RAAF Fairbairn in 1990, with an Army CO/CI and predominantly Army staff. At this period of time the ADFHS was the premier basic helicopter training school for Army and Naval aviators in Australia. The Navy element of the school comprised three staff and 12 trainees a year, while the Army element comprised 43 staff and up to 44 trainees a year. As part of their training, the trainees were required to complete a series of survival modules to develop their ability to handle any situation they may encounter in their professional careers³⁰.

Through the 1990s, the former Instruction Building (Building 56) accommodated the Headquarters of the Helicopter School, which also occupied the adjacent Hangar 46. Classrooms, training rooms, workshops, stores and other associated facilities were located in temporary accommodation, placed between Hangar 46 and Building 56.

After an extensive review of the School and the ADF's requirements, in November 2000 the Government agreed to aggregate the basic training facility at Fairbairn with the advanced rotary wing flying training conducted by Navy at Nowra (NSW), and Army at Oakey (Queensland). In December 2001 the Helicopter School moved to Oakey from Canberra³¹.

²⁷ <http://www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews/editions/4512/history/story01.htm>

²⁸ <http://www.raaf.gov.au/raafmuseum/research/units/5sqn.htm>

²⁹ <http://www.raaf.gov.au/raafmuseum/research/units/34sqn.htm>

³⁰ Relocation of the Helicopter School, Media release, 14 September 2000 & 30 November 2000

³¹ http://www.fourays.org/history/history_4.htm

With the exception of Hangar 46, all building once occupied by the ADFHS was removed in c2002 to give place to the new VIP Hangar, constructed in 2003.

RAAF Air Power Studies Centre

The RAAF Air Power Studies Centre was formed at RAAF Base Fairbairn in August 1989 as a result of a Chief Air Staff (CAS) directive. It was to be a centre of expertise for the analysis of air and space power within the RAAF and for the provision of advice to the CAS and the RAAF generally on air power issues, doctrine and policy³². The Centre produced the RAAF's first *Air Power Manual* in 1990, which at that time was only the second of its type in the world³³.

Over the years the Centre has evolved into an agency that provided subject matter expertise for air and space power education and a well-developed publication program. The Centre hosted numerous Defence fellows and Reserve officers and facilitated major air power conferences. In 1997, the RAAF Historical Section was amalgamated with the Centre, and is now known as the Office of Air Force History. The Air Power Studies Centre was renamed Aerospace Centre in 2000 and then became the Air Power Development Centre in 2004. It is now part of the Department of Defence.

2.5.4. Disbandment

In the early-mid 1990s the Defence Reform Program determined that the Base was no longer required. On 29 May 1998 the Commonwealth of Australia issued a 50-years lease (with a 49-year option) to Canberra Airport Pty Ltd as part of the Government's Phase II airport privatisation program. The lease of the Airport included the RAAF Base Fairbairn site, which was leased back to the Department of Defence for a five-year transitional period to enable the RAAF to relocate.



Figure 2-30 Aerial photograph of the site, 2005 (Canberra Airport Archives)

³² *Units of the Australian Air Force, a Concise History, Volume 9, Ancillary units*, compiled by the RAAF Historical Section in 1995 Australian Publishing Services, Canberra

³³ <http://airpower.airforce.gov.au/Contents/About-APDC/2/About-APDC.aspx>

By 2000 and especially following the events of 11 September 2001 in America, it was considered necessary to provide new and secure hangar facilities for the VIP Fleet. To make way for the new hangar adjacent to the wartime hangars, Building 56, the 1939 Instruction building was demolished.

In February 2002 a disbandment plaque was permanently placed by the Base Commander and officers of Fairbairn at the Federation Highway Memorial Grove to signal the end of RAAF Fairbairn.

The Memorial Grove forms part of the Remembrance Driveway on the Federation Highway, ACT and has been developed through community effort with substantial support from the Canberra Airport Pty Ltd. The RAAF Association – ACT is moving to further develop the historical theme in the RAAF Memorial Grove to improve public awareness of RAAF operational links to the National Capital. The RAAF Association wishes to locate a series of interpretative panels within the landscape to extend the Memorial Grove, which continues to experience increasing visitor levels.

2.6 Canberra Airport Management, 1998

Civil aviation facilities have historically been confined to the south western part of the Airport. Significant construction of the present civil aviation area began in the early 1960s and by the mid 1960s, facilities comprised the passenger terminal, airfreight sheds and the Department of Civil Aviation hangar and workshop (see Figs 2-7, 8 & 9).

Until 1972, the main access road (Fairbairn Avenue, later Pialligo Avenue) ran along the alignment of the present Ulinga Place. A 650 metre extension of the main north-south runway at that time required the construction of the present Pialligo Avenue road deviation to the south and the extension of the RAAF Fairbairn access road (Glenora Drive).

The intention of the Government to provide adequate airport facilities for overseas visitors in time for the 1988 bi-centenary opening of the new Parliament House led to the decision in late 1980 to provide a new domestic terminal³⁴. The extension of the passenger terminal by the Commonwealth, Ansett and Australian Airlines commenced in the mid 1980s. Aviation in the ACT has since increased significantly and Canberra Airport has grown to the a major Capital City Airport with major airline links to other State capitals and by commuter services to regional centres.

In the late 1990s, the Commonwealth Government decided to dispose of its airport assets. Canberra Airport Pty Ltd purchased the long term lease of the aviation facilities, land and infrastructure known as the Canberra Airport, including RAAF Base Fairbairn, with a comprehensive set of development rights. The VIP Squadron activities continue at Fairbairn under the auspices of arrangements with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

At the time of the sale of the Airport in May 1998, no heritage values had been identified at Fairbairn and the initial Environmental Strategy did not identify any known heritage issues. After the Airport sale, the Department of Defence became a tenant at the site and did not vacate Fairbairn until May 2004.

Elements of the RAAF Fairbairn site were listed on the Register of the National Estate on 20 May 2003 under the now repealed *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975*. These include:

- The base layout including Fairbairn, Laverton, Richmond, Amberley and Point Cook Avenues, Ewart Street, Pearce Street and the Parade Ground;
- Street and landscape trees associated with the base layout; and
- Buildings and structures: 33 guard house, 44 hospital, 46-48 hangars, 52 powerhouse and gun testing (now squash court), 42 cinema (now gymnasium), 57 survey flight photographic building, 80A photographic store, 73 the east powerhouse,

³⁴ Aviation by T H Cooke

55 the transport building, 203 Bellman hangar, 43 sergeants' mess, together with 69-71 explosive stores and magazines and the signal buildings, which are not located on the current Airport site.

After Defence vacated the base, a major upgrade program commenced at the site, which included the following works:

1. The removal of all portable, demountable and temporary buildings;
2. The renovation of existing landscaping and provision of new landscaping within roadways, verges and around buildings (including remedial works to trees that died or were severely impacted by the drought during 2002-2003, which was compounded by the decision by the Department of Defence to turn off the irrigation);
3. The renewal of primary infrastructure services and the provision of new infrastructure as required;
4. The refurbishment and/or adaptation to new use of over 40 buildings (including adaptive reuse of six buildings);
5. The construction of five new buildings.

Canberra Airport Pty Ltd conducted public consultation to draw out the personal stories of Fairbairn to complement the written history of the site and to better understand its significance to the community. The 13 submissions provided some insight to the everyday life of the base in various periods of its operational life, but did not reveal the extent and degree of the attachment of the base community. The submissions revealed details of the construction of timber huts in 1940, presented the recollections of a boiler attendant from 1941, an Army flying instructor (1952-53) and a civilian working in the Electronic Data Processing Section in 1961-62. A Senior Engineer Officer with the VIP Squadron between 1972 and 1975 recalled incidents and special moments of the service and a RAAF airman, working at "The Barn" (now outside the Fairbairn site) provided a good description of this unusual building.

In a letter addressed to the Capital Airport Group, the ACT Division of the Australian Flying Corps and Royal Australian Air Force Association summarised its position in relation to the future of the former base. The President of the Division condemned the initiatives of "minority groups" which "seek to retain a specific building or other object, where those initiatives are based solely on a perceived heritage value and retention may not be in the broader public or commercial interests". The President expressed his support for the redevelopment of Fairbairn "as a vital commercial aviation industry and RAAF Special Purpose support facility"³⁵. The President underlined the Division's plans to continue the development of the RAAF Memorial Grove (a dedicated site in the Remembrance Driveway within the ACT) and "appropriately identify the heritage links of RAAF Fairbairn through provision of commemorative plaques, interpretative signage and related facilities".

³⁵ *Fairbairn Heritage Consultation Submission 2001*, submission letter from Wing Commander Ron Christie, President of RAAF Association, ACT Division, dated 29 August 2002

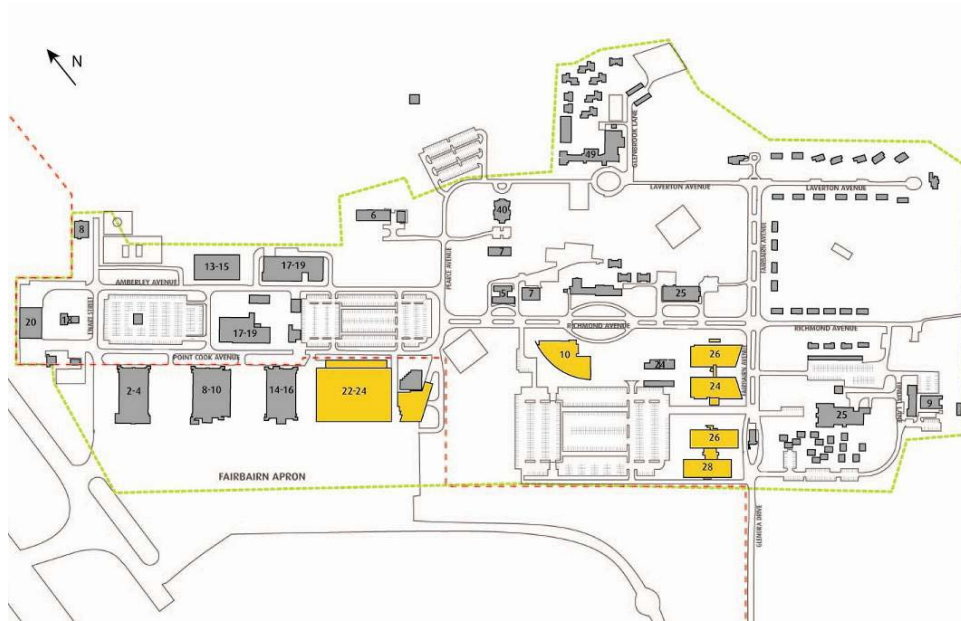


Figure 2-31 Sketch plan of the precinct, 2009, showing the site layout, earlier (grey) and new (yellow) buildings constructed by Canberra Airport after privatisation in 1998. (Sketch provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)



Figure 2-32 View of the refurbished Hangar 48. Frontage to Point Cook Avenue, showing new verge landscaping that reflects Canberra Airport's landscaping and planting policy for the precinct (GBA 2008)

3.0

Physical Description of the Site

3.1 Context within Canberra Airport

Fairbairn is located at the north east precinct of the overall Canberra Airport site. It is separated from the airport terminal precinct by the runways. To the north and east, the precinct is bounded by the Airport boundary beyond which is the Fairbairn Golf Course, Majura Firing Range and Training Area (see Fig 3-1).

Current road access to the site is via Glenora Drive, north off Pialligo Avenue.



Figure 3-1 Location of Fairbairn in the north east precinct of Canberra Airport

3.2 Site Description

The cultural landscape of the former RAAF Base Fairbairn is evocative of a campus, providing long views down several major axial roadways and providing a good sense of space and underlying organisation throughout the site. It is a structured landscape, dominated by the planned layout of the former base, rows of plantings along roadways supported by

pockets of recently grown natural landscape. The planning is based on major and minor axes formed by a divided road system and enhanced by avenues of trees with major buildings set well back to reinforce the spatial composition (see Fig.3-3).

Building construction in the wartime and post-war era reinforced the grid as new buildings were constructed along the main road alignments, progressively replacing earlier structures, as needed for operational or technological reasons. One of a few exceptions was the wartime tent encampment in the area of the later residential precinct, with the tent lines being set up in a diagonal grid to the orthogonal grid to capture and maximize circulation of prevailing winds. This feature was removed at the end of the war.

The overall precinct has significant heritage value for its ability to demonstrate the primary orthogonal, operational and hierarchical planning characteristics of early to mid 20th century air force bases in Australia. The strong axial alignment of the principal, tree lined roadways and campus style character with free standing buildings set in an open landscaped setting, were a consistent feature of the early RAAF bases of Point Cook, Canberra, Richmond, Pearce and Amberley (refer to Chapter 4 - Comparative Context of this report).

The former base is an evolved and continually evolving landscape. The facilities and infrastructure development planning of the site has seen the ongoing demolition and replacement of redundant buildings. The addition of the adjacent golf course (beyond the study area), recent tree growth in areas away from the main axes and consolidation of smaller buildings in the late 20th century has softened the strict grid structure of the site, and added a new layer to the landscape. The development of the landscape reflected the change of the Air Force culture from wartime to peacetime role.

In its current form, the former base provides a campus setting for the existing buildings and structures. The study area continues to demonstrate the fundamental historical organisation of two primary functional zones, the operational / industrial uses in the north western section and the administrative, accommodation and recreational uses in the south eastern section of the place (compare Fig. 2-10 with Figs. 3-2, 3-3 & 3-4).

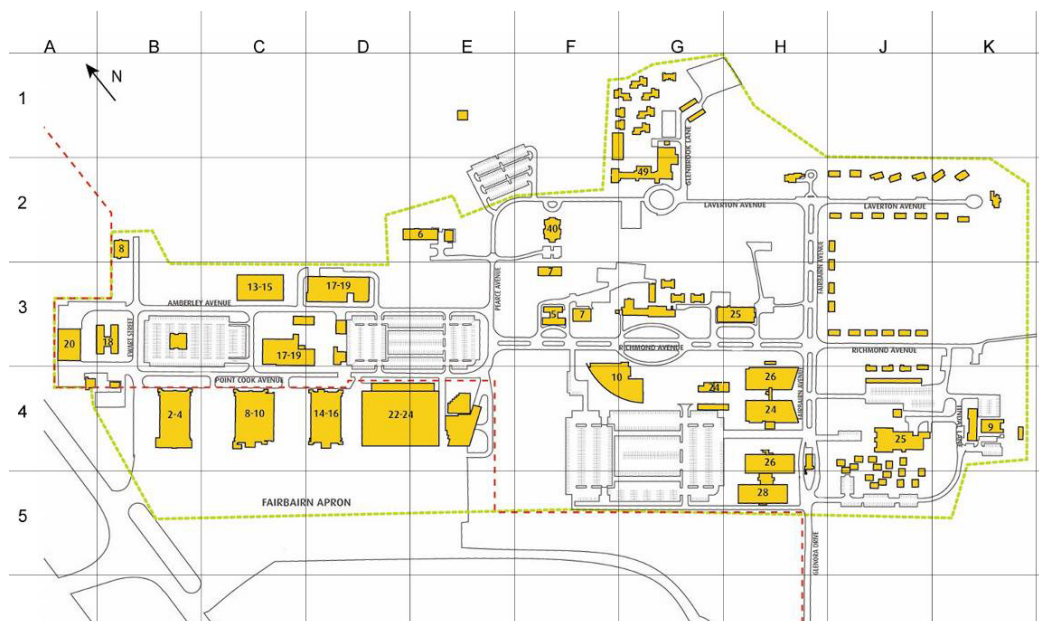


Figure 3-2 Site map of the Fairbairn precinct, 2009, showing the layout and the location of all buildings (Map provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

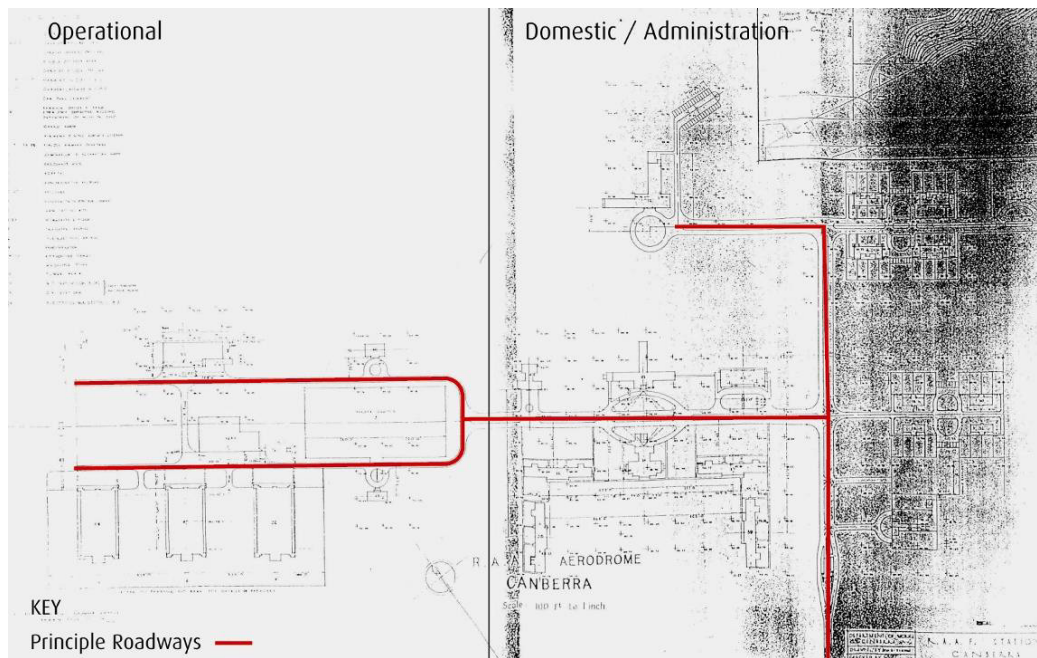


Figure 3-3 Land use organisation and road network (Sketch by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

3.3 Historic Organisational Zones

This section provides a description of the various zones and sub-zones of the site, indicating their historic and current uses as well as the condition of their physical features.



Figure 3-4 Historical organisation of functional zones (Source of aerial photo: Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

Former Operational / Industrial Zone

This zone occupies the north western part of the site and is organised around two parallel roadways: Amberley Avenue and Point Cook Avenue. The road layout of the area is identical to the original design of the base and the area contains major components of the World War II era RAAF base, along with 21st century additions.

The zone comprises three sub-zones as shown in the aerial photograph at Figure 3-5.



Figure 3-5 Sub-zones within the former operational zone (Source of aerial photo: Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

Sub-zone 1

This zone is located on the southern side of Point Cook Avenue and comprises two of the large wartime hangars (Hanger 48 at 2-4 Point Cook Avenue and Hanger 47 at 8-10 Point Cook Avenue), which have been recently partially refurbished and adapted to new air related uses. The airside of the hangars opens to the Fairbairn Apron, a large concrete aircraft parking area with access to the runways and taxiways of the Airport.

Sub-zone 2

This is a secure zone, currently used by the Special Purpose Aircraft Facility, which occupies the third wartime hangar, Hanger 46 at 14-16 Point Cook Avenue. The VIP fleet also occupies the new large curved-roofed hangar, which was constructed in 2002 and associated facilities, including a recently completed VIP reception centre, office accommodation and parking areas located on the former parade ground.

Sub-zone 3

Early components of this sub-zone include the former Survey Flight Photographic Building (Building 57 at 18 Ewart Street), a Bellman hangar (Building 203 at 20 Ewart Street) and the Gun Testing Building (later squash court, Building 52 at 24 Ewart Street), all of which are located at the north western end of the sub-zone. The area between Amberley and Point Cook Avenues contains the former Photographic Store (later library, Building 80A at 19 Ewart Street) and an early engineering workshop and store (Building 53 at 17-19 Point Cook Avenue), which was extended and altered several times over the years. The former parade ground is now a car park. The Transport building (Building 55 at 13-15 Amberley Avenue), once located on the northern side of Amberley Avenue, was demolished in 2009 due to high amount of asbestos present.

New building components added to the precinct in the 1960s and 70s, which still exist, include a central battery servicing facility, aircraft life support workshop and emergency power station. All three were constructed around the early workshop building, in the centre of the operational zone. Other new components were the two storey store and office building on the northern side of Amberley Avenue, built in 1968 (Building 53, 17-19 Amberley Avenue) and a steel framed shed opposite the fuel farm (8 Ewart Street). The single storey brick building for the communication and information centre of the base (6 Pearce Avenue) was constructed off road in the wooded open space in the late 80s/early 90s.

Most of the smaller buildings are unoccupied, while the larger office buildings, stores, workshops and sheds accommodate tenants.

The most important cultural features of the former operational and administrative zone are the early road layout, which remains intact, the open nature of the former parade ground and the wartime hangars. The refurbished and modernised hangars retain their general architectural character and are able to illustrate their wartime origin, while satisfying modern day requirements. These attributes support the continuing operation and air related activities on the site.



Figure 3-6 Looking south east along Amberley Avenue (GBA, 2007)



Figure 3-7 Looking south east along Point Cook Avenue. (GBA, 2008)



Figure 3-8 Looking across the former parade ground to the hangars (GBA, 2007)



Figure 3-9 Looking north west along Ewart Street towards the fuel farm (GBA, 2008)

Former Administrative, Accommodation and Recreational zone

The former administrative, accommodation and recreation zone is located at the south eastern section of the site and comprises a number of distinctive sub-zones. The various sub-zones are bordered by Fairbairn, Richmond and Laverton Avenues, which are all part of the original wartime planning of the former base.

This area contains only a few remaining wartime buildings, because there were only a few permanent buildings built in this zone in the early years. When RAAF Station Canberra was established in the 1930s, restrictions to the budget did not permit the completion of the base. Priority was given to erect those buildings and facilities required for a squadron to function. Accommodation was provided in timber huts and remained so for some decades.

The precinct comprises various sub-zones as shown in the aerial photograph at Figure 3-10.



Figure 3-10 Sub-precincts within the former accommodation and recreation zone (Source of aerial photo: Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

Sub-zone 0

This sub-zone comprises the two main axial roadways (Fairbairn Avenue and Richmond Avenue), connecting the main entry and gate house and operational areas with the accommodation and recreation precinct. Enhanced with avenues of trees, the roadways provide a strong sense of organisation throughout the zone.

Sub-zone 1

Formerly part of the single airmen's quarters, sub-zone 1 does not retain any significant early elements. Located adjacent to the entry point to Fairbairn, the area has been redeveloped and now contains multi-storey office buildings facing Fairbairn Avenue. Another new building is under construction along the Richmond Avenue side of the precinct. A large car park area has been formed behind the buildings. The Bureau of Meteorology maintains a small station in the area that is currently in transition to another site, which has no heritage significance.



Figure 3-11 New development on the western side of Fairbairn Avenue (GBA, 2008)



Figure 3-12 Office buildings on the corner of Fairbairn and Richmond Avenues (GBA, 2008)

Sub-zone 2

Located on the northern side of Richmond Avenue, this sub-zone contains some early buildings associated with the single airmen's quarters. Dating from the early 1940s, these buildings occupy formal positions along the road alignment. The former sergeants' mess, (Building 43, see Fig.3-13) which features many alterations and additions, is centrally located behind a curved driveway. The other wartime buildings, the brick hospital (Building 44 at 5 Richmond Avenue, see Fig. 3-14), and the timber cinema and gymnasium (Building 42 at 42 Richmond Avenue, see Fig.3-15) are typical of health and recreational facilities provided for defence personnel.

A single storey brick veneer building (7 Richmond Avenue), dating from the late 1970s, was constructed as an additional health facility adjacent to the hospital. There are three further single storey buildings, constructed in an awkward position behind the sergeant's mess, added to the precinct as sergeants' accommodation in the mid 1980s.

Two more recent building components are located in the north western corner of the precinct, set well back from the original road-network. Built in 1988 and 1990 respectively, these classroom and office buildings were positioned in the wooded open area of the precinct, necessitating the extension of the road system.

The former hospital building at 5 Richmond Avenue has been renovated and upgraded and is currently tenanted. The former cinema and gymnasium (25 Richmond Avenue) is now a training facility for the fitness industry.



Figure 3-13 The former sergeants' mess (GBA, 2008)



Figure 3-14 The former hospital (GBA, 2008)



Figure 3-15 The former cinema / dance hall, now fitness centre (GBA, 2008)



Figure 3-16 This building was constructed in 1988 as a study centre (GBA, 2008)

Sub-zone 3

This sub-zone is located on an elevated part of the nearly flat ground of the former base, detached from the rest of the site. The precinct served as the officers' accommodation and recreation area during the active years of the base. The position of the precinct is an expression of the officers' status within the social organisation of the air force.

Until the early 1960s, similarly to other accommodation areas, the precinct contained only temporary timber structures. The single storey brick officers' mess (Building 16 at 49 Laverton Avenue), is a 1950s addition to the site that was extended in the later decades (see Figs 3-17&18). It is a large single storey brick structure, comprising a number of components of different character, which provided kitchen, mess, ante-room, bar and accommodation facilities. The first brick built dormitory accommodation building was constructed in 1967 behind the mess, followed by a number of brick cottage type accommodation in the late 1980s. Dispersed among the trees on the undulating ground, the cottages give an informal character to the precinct. A large parking area, rows of garages and a tennis court complete the precinct.

The former officers' mess is currently the Fairbairn Functions Centre, while the cottages are used for short term accommodation.



Figure 3-17 The former officers' mess (GBA, 2008)



Figure 3-18 A recent, renovated wing of the former officers' mess (GBA, 2008)



Figure 3-19 Single officers' accommodation, dating from the late 1980s, dispersed among the trees (GBA, 2008)

Sub-zone 4

This sub-zone comprises the former residences of married non-commissioned officers, officers and commanding officers. The majority of the residences date from the post war period with some more recent houses, which are located on the north eastern side of Laverton Avenue. The cottages are set in a park like landscape with mature planting of cultural trees and shrubs.

The brick and tile roofed houses on the south western side of Richmond Street follow designs prepared by the Commonwealth and used at various bases in the 1950s (see Fig.3-20).

The area bordered by Richmond Avenue, Fairbairn Avenue and Laverton Avenue is lined with Riley-Newsum type prefabricated timber cottages (Fig.3-21). Prefabricated housing was developed in the post-war era as a response to building material shortages and the high demand for housing. The design for the Riley-Newsum cottages was completed in Canberra in June, 1950, immediately before the Commonwealth Government signed contracts with the Jennings Construction Company, who erected 600 buildings in the suburbs of Canberra. 22 cottages were erected at Fairbairn³⁶.

The brick residences on the north east side of Laverton Avenue were built in the 1980s, after the removal of some of the 1950s prefabricated cottages (Fig.3-22).

Currently the cottages are used for short term accommodation. However, new residential accommodation is a prohibited use under the *Airports Act*, however the continued use of the cottages as residential accommodation is permitted.

³⁶ *The Canberra Times*, 1 June 1951



Figure 3-20 The single-storey brick cottages were constructed in the early 1950s (GBA, 2008)



Figure 3-21 The prefabricated cottages date from the early 1950s (GBA, 2008)



Figure 3-22 One of the 1980s brick residences which replaced some of the prefabricated cottages at the north eastern side of Laverton Avenue (GBA, 2008)

Sub-zone 5

This sub-zone is located on the south eastern side of the former guard house. Originally, this area accommodated the wartime powerhouse (Building 73) and associated storage areas arranged around a courtyard. There was a formal access road from Fairbairn Avenue leading to the courtyard and garages located in the north eastern part of the area.

This arrangement changed when the airman's mess was constructed in the early 1970s, replacing the courtyard and retaining only the powerhouse from the earlier scheme. Further development included the addition of the facilities administration building and workshop in the mid-1970s and a two-storey airwomen's and airmen's accommodation in 1980. The single-storey officer's accommodation units date from the late-1980s, while the garages appear to have been upgraded more recently.

The former mess at 25 Fairbairn Avenue was renovated and upgraded and is currently used as office accommodation and training. The former powerhouse at 25A Fairbairn Avenue is also tenanted as a sculptor studio.

3.4 Site Landscaping

The preliminary character of the area on which the base was established was similar to the rural nature of the surroundings: relatively open grassland with a few trees. Planting at the base started in the 1940s and landscaping became an important contributing component to the overall appearance of the Fairbairn Precinct. The main components of the early planting which enhanced the structured character of the landscape and added visual amenity to the surrounds, included:

- Row of *Populus alba Pyramidalis* as street tree in the centre median of Fairbairn Avenue and Laverton Avenue (see Fig.3-23&24);
- *Quercus palustris* as street tree in the median of Richmond Avenue, the main thoroughfare and alignment of the site;
- *Cedrus atlantica* specimen located outside the former hospital (5 Richmond Avenue);
- *Cupressus arizonica* specimens located in front of the former guard house (Fig.3-25) and on the traffic island in front of the former Officers' Mess (49 Laverton Avenue) (Fig. 3-24).

Like other major RAAF operational bases planned or developed under the stewardship of Air Marshall Sir Richard Williams (later Federal President RAAF Association and Director-General Civil Aviation) some species in the early tree plantings in the Fairbairn precinct reflect heritage links to Royal Air Force Station landscape plantings in the UK³⁷.

Over the post-war period domestic trees and shrub plantings were added and softened the character of the landscape, becoming a unifying element and creating a campus character. Features, such as the tennis courts and the golf course on the northern side of the site, emphasised the peacetime role of the facility.

³⁷ Information received from the Vice President of RAAF Association



Figure 3-23 Looking north east along Fairbairn Avenue from the gate house (GBA, 2008)

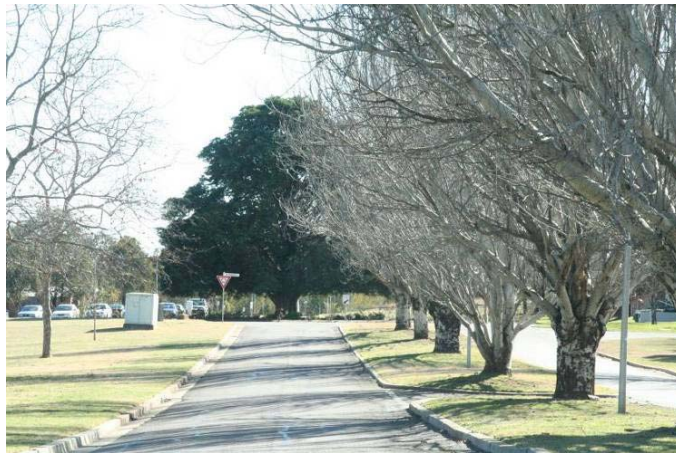


Figure 3-24 Western view of Laverton Avenue. Note large 'Cupressus arizonica' specimen located in front of former officers' mess (GBA, 2008)



Figure 3-25 Cupressus arizonica in front of the former guard house (GBA, 2008)



Figure 3-26 Domestic tree and shrub planting in the former single officers' accommodation area (GBA, 2008)

3.5 Building Stock

This section contains a brief summarised list of buildings which currently exist on the site. Appendix II of this document contains further details for the building stock, including building numbers, location, original and current use and condition of all extant buildings.

Note that Appendix I. contains a list of all buildings which were ever erected at Fairbairn, while Appendix III. includes inventory sheets of site elements and various wartime building components that were originally listed in the RNE.

3.5.1. World War II Phase (1939 – 1945)

The former base retains the following buildings from the initial phase of its development:

- 24 Ewart Street (Building 52)– Gun Testing
- 18 Ewart Street (Building 57) – Survey Flight Photographic Building
- 19 Ewart Street (Building 80A) – Photographic Store
- 14-16 Point Cook Avenue (Building 46) – Hangar
- 8-10 Point Cook Avenue (Building 47) – Hangar
- 2-4 Point Cook Avenue (Building 48) – Hangar (Control Tower added later)
- 17-19 Point Cook Avenue (Building 53) – Engineering workshop and store
- 5 Richmond Avenue (Building 44) – Hospital
- 15 Richmond Avenue (Building 43) – Sergeants' mess and kitchen
- 25 Richmond Avenue (Building 42) – Cinema, canteen, dance hall
- Fairbairn Avenue (Building 33) – Guard House
- 25A Fairbairn Avenue (Building 73) – The east Powerhouse

3.5.2. Post-War Years (1945 – 1962)

Buildings indicative of the development made in this period are:

- 20 Ewart Street (Building 203) – Bellman hangar
- 38-44 Richmond Avenue – Brick residences
- 33-43 Richmond Avenue, 5-11 Fairbairn Avenue, 68-80 and 67-69 Laverton Avenue – Prefabricated residences
- 9 Laverton Avenue (Building 16) – Officers' mess

3.5.3. RAAF Base Fairbairn (1962 – 1998)

The site retains the following buildings during the 1962-1998 period:

- Glenbrook Lane (Building 14) – Officers' accommodation
- 17-19 Amberley Avenue (Building 183) – Store and office space
- 25 Fairbairn Avenue (Building 31) – Airmen's mess
- Amberley Avenue (Building 207) – Central Battery Servicing Facility
- 1 Tindal Lane (Building 190) – Facilities administration
- 3 Tindal Lane (Building 191) – Facilities workshop
- 7 Richmond Avenue (Building 198) – Dental flight and environmental health
- (Buildings 250-259) – Airwoman's/airman's accommodation
- Laverton Avenue 63 (MO30) – Commanders house
- (Buildings 110, 111 & 113) – Sergeants' accommodation
- Amberley Avenue (Building 148) – Aircraft Life Support Workshop
- 7 Glenbrook Lane (Buildings 12 & 13) – Officers' accommodation
- 40 Laverton Avenue (Building 65) – Air Power Studies Centre
- (Buildings 283-288) – Other ranks accommodation
- 7 Glenbrook Lane (Buildings 126-130) – Senior and junior officers' accommodation
- 6 Pearce Avenue (Building 277) – Communication Centre
- 7 Pearce Avenue (Building 297) – Directorate of management services
- 8 Ewart Street (Building 290) – Ground Defence

3.5.4. Canberra Airport Management (1998 – Current)

Canberra Airport constructed the following buildings to day:

- VIP hangar, VIP recreation centre and associated facilities as part of the Special Purpose Aircraft Facility.
- 24-28 Fairbairn Avenue and 26 Richmond Avenue – Office buildings
- 10 Richmond Avenue – Office building

4.0

Comparative Context

4.1 Introduction

The following comparative analysis enables the site to be compared with other similar places on the basis of their design, function, changes over time and other qualities, so as to provide a comparison that can assist in determining the significance of the site and its elements.

The comparative analysis has been based on desktop review of other operational and decommissioned RAAF bases.

The analysis concludes that RAAF Base Fairbairn demonstrates the orthogonal, operational and hierarchical planning characteristics typical of early to mid 20th century air force bases. It contains typical building types which were constructed by standard design at many bases throughout Australia.

4.2 Comparable Examples

Operational Bases

4.2.1. Point Cook, Victoria

RAAF Base Point Cook (see Fig.4-1) is recognized as the oldest military airbase in Australia, serving between 1914 and 1992. Aspects of the base, which illustrate its long service and origins, include the planning and layout of the base prior to World War I, during the Inter-War period and during World Wars I and II, as well as individual buildings and suites of buildings.



Figure 4-1 Aerial view of Point Cook (Google Earth, 2008)

In February 2004, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence announced that Point Cook would be retained in public ownership with the airfield and majority of the land being leased for 49 years to a non-profit National Aviation Museum Trust. Today Point Cook is home to the RAAF Museum. Initiated by Air Marshall Sir George Jones, the Museum has provided for the restoration and display of historic aircraft.

The significance of Point Cook had been recognised through its inclusion in the National Heritage List in August 2007. The base retains a clearly articulated layout based on functional and formal values and a large number of buildings and structures of interest, both representative buildings such as the Bellman Hangars and rare buildings such as the School of Instruction building.

4.2.2. Richmond, NSW

Purchased by the Commonwealth in 1923, Richmond became the second military air base in Australia (see current aerial, Fig.4-2). It was one of the first purpose-built military air force bases in Australia in the late 1930s, which demonstrates their principal characteristics, such as planning, land use zones, road layout, landscape elements and social hierarchy. Richmond RAAF Base is important in illustrating the achievement of Commonwealth architectural staff during the 1930s in the design and execution of permanent buildings for the RAAF, such as permanent brick hangars and other brick structures.

During World War II, Richmond developed into a base of major importance to Australia's defence, and has since evolved from a combat centre to become the home to most of the Air Force's air transport fleet. As such, the base is now the hub of logistics support for the Australian Defence Forces and is known as "home" to the RAAF's C-130 Hercules transport aircraft.

RAAF Base Richmond is a Listed place (22 June 2004) on the Commonwealth Heritage List. The base retains a number of buildings, which are characteristic of the design and architectural style of purpose built World War II era military air force bases in Australia, including the imposing Main Gate / guard house, the Headquarters Building and some of the Hangars. The Officers' Mess, completed in 1938, clearly illustrates the importance given by the Commonwealth under the 1937-38 budget to effect the expansion of the Air Force.



Figure 4-2 Aerial view of RAAF Base Richmond (Google Earth, 2008)

4.2.3. Pearce

Constructed from 1935 as a permanent base in Western Australia, Pearce was home to Nos. 14 and 25 Squadrons during World War II. Following the war, Pearce housed many varied operations, but in 1958, with the arrival of No 1 Advanced Flying Training School and the Vampire jet trainer, the base took on its current role as the home of advanced training for the RAAF's Pilots (see aerial below, Fig.4-3).



Figure 4-3 Aerial view of RAAF Base Pearce, as it is today (Google Earth, 2008)

4.2.4. Amberley, Queensland

Amberley RAAF Base is one of the largest operational bases in Australia (see Fig.4-4). The Base was established in 1938, with operations commencing in mid 1940. It was a major departure point for traffic to and from the United States and major Pacific ports and important depot for the maintenance, salvage and assembly of new aircraft. The Base played a significant role in the Korean War and is now home to Australia's Strike Reconnaissance Group and associated units.

The base retains key features of pre World War II Air Force planning and construction, such as road layout, separation of areas of various functions and a number of structures such the guard house, many Bellman hangars, hospital etc.

Amberley RAAF Base Group is a Listed place (22 June 2004) on the Commonwealth Heritage List. The base retains early brick buildings which follow designs prepared by the Commonwealth and which were widely used in the World War II era at various bases. Comparable building examples at Amberley include the guard house and the hospital (see Fig.4-5), the permanent 1940 hangar and the Bellman hangars.



Figure 4-4 Aerial view of RAAF Base Amberley, 2008 (Google Earth, 2008)



Figure 4-5 RAAF Base Amberley, 2002, Hospital entrance (Australian Heritage Database, 2008)

4.2.5. Williamtown, NSW

The road layout of Williamtown RAAF Base is important in illustrating the principal functional characteristics of RAAF Base development in the immediate pre-war years and the early years of World War II. The Base is now home to most of the RAAF's Hornet and Hawk fighters.

Williamtown RAAF is a Listed place (22 June 2004) on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

4.2.6. Darwin, Northern Territory

Established in 1939, the first RAAF units stationed at the Darwin RAAF Base in June 1940. From the outset of World War II, the Base housed a number of operational units. The Base came under sustained Japanese attack in February 1942, some four days after the fall of the British garrison at Singapore. The Base was upgraded during 1941 and 1942, to provide a headquarters for both RAAF and USAAF units defending the north coastline of Australia and attacking the nearby islands such as Timor.

After World War II the Base developed into a major transit centre and underwent major development between the mid 1950s and mid 1970s, including the construction of new runway, development of an air defence radar site and RAAF development of operational, technical and domestic support facilities. The Base is one of the RAAF's main forward operating bases.

The runway is shared with Darwin International Airport. The original plan of the Base, which survives today on the ground together with the majority of early buildings, reflects early town planning principles as applied to a defence base.

RAAF Base Darwin is a Listed place (22 June 2004) on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

Decommissioned Bases

4.2.7. Laverton, Victoria

Laverton was the Air Force's third base. Established in 1926 on a 160 acre site, it was utilised for housing RAAF equipment, and testing RAAF aircraft. During World War II, the base was developed for the training of squadrons which saw service in the Pacific. In the post World War II era, the Base housed the number 1 Aircraft Depot and Aircraft Research and Development Unit. Operation at the base was reduced in the early 1990s as the Australian Defence Force has concentrated on defending Australia's northern approaches. The Laverton airfield was subsequently decommissioned and sold off for suburban development, although training facilities are still run there³⁸. The Officers' Mess building at Laverton is included in the Commonwealth Heritage List.

4.2.8. RAAF Station Rathmines

Formed in 1939, the RAAF Station at Rathmines on Lake Macquarie near Newcastle, NSW, was established to cope with the training of aircrew, and became one of the major flying boat bases for the RAAF. Following World War II, Rathmines was used as a training base, and the Officers' Training School formed there in 1950. In the early 1960s, Rathmines was closed and the site was sold.

The former Rathmines base at Lake Macquarie has been heritage listed by the NSW State Government. The site retains a number of buildings, such as the hospital (see Fig.4-6), picture theatre and gymnasium (Fig. 4-7) and emergency power house (Fig.4-8), all of which are of standard design of their type.

³⁸ <http://www.airforce.gov.au/bases/Williams.aspx>

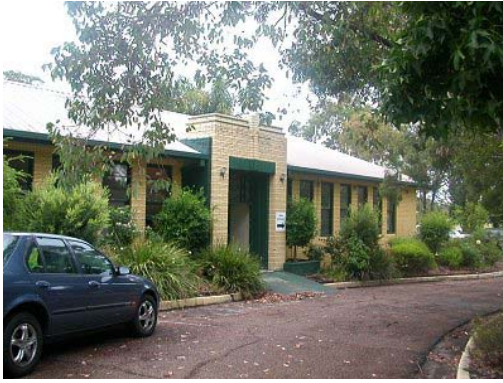


Figure 4-6 RAAF Station Rathmines, former hospital, now nursing home (NSW Heritage Branch)



Figure 4-7 RAAF Station Rathmines, former picture theatre and gym (NSW Heritage Branch)



Figure 4-7 RAAF Station Rathmines, emergency power station (NSW Heritage Branch)

4.3 Comparative Value

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn Precinct is one of a small number of permanent bases that were developed in World War II and continuously altered from the 1950s through the 1990s. However, while the majority of these bases are currently maintained by the RAAF as operational bases, the Fairbairn site was disposed by the RAAF, but continues to house aviation related VIP services associated with the national capital role of Canberra Airport.

Each of these bases are unique in their history, development and function. As no detailed comparative study of these Bases has been undertaken to date, it is necessary to make a few observations about how Fairbairn compares with other RAAF Bases.

- Fairbairn was established during the 1939-1945 war and is one of a number of such air force bases including Richmond, NSW; Rathmines, NSW; Laverton, Vic; Pearce, WA; Amberley, Qld; Williamtown, NSW and Darwin, NT, which were similarly established during this era.
- Some of these bases have remained in operational service with RAAF. Others such as Laverton and Rathmines have been sold for development. Fairbairn was also disposed of, but continues to house aviation related VIP services associated with the national capital role of Canberra Airport.
- Although individual bases, such as Williamtown, Darwin and Amberley show differences in the degree of formal planning, they are organised on a similar functional basis, with the social hierarchy of the RAAF clearly reflected in the location, range and type of accommodation provided.
- The design layout of Fairbairn seems to have been relatively common. Key characteristics of this planning include the central parade ground, tree-lined avenues,

clustering of huts and separation of zones of various functions. A comparable example is the World War II component of Point Cook.

- The provision of married quarters and other on base dormitory accommodation during the 1950s and 1960s, inclusive of their road layout, appears to be typical of other RAAF bases.
- Post-war prefabricated housing can be found at most bases.
- The use of Bellman type hangars for aircraft storage and maintenance, aircraft production and base stores was widespread in the RAAF during the 1940s. The practice of relocating and reusing Bellman hangars in the 1950s and 1960s was also widespread within the RAAF.
- The Commonwealth architectural staff responsible for the design of airbase buildings worked under the influence of the Art Deco style. Face brick walls and hipped roofs became unifying elements in small buildings. This is evident at Richmond, Amberley and Fairbairn bases.
- It was typical that buildings were constructed of both brick and weatherboard. Amberley RAAF appears to have a large number of high quality brick buildings, including a hangar, (modeled on the British RAF 'C' type designed for a more peace time function), which is comparable with the design used at Fairbairn. Fairbairn's guard house and hospital appear to have been a simplified version of those constructed at Amberley in the same period.
- Some buildings at Fairbairn, such as the weatherboard cinema and gymnasium, and the brick emergency power station and gun testing buildings were constructed by standard design used at many bases at the time throughout Australia.

4.4 Relative Value

The cultural significance of the former RAAF Base Fairbairn is considered to derive from;

- aspects which continue to demonstrate characteristics of the purpose built World War II era military aerodrome, including:
 - The concept of the planning of the World War II base, inclusive of the alignment of the road network and spatial distribution of former uses such as operational and accommodation areas etc.
 - The campus like character of the site, including long vistas, good sense of space and organization, wooded character of areas surrounding individual buildings
 - Remnant structures associated with the provision of aircraft hangar accommodation, former runways, taxiways, etc. and the guard house
 - Other World War II buildings and structures depending upon their comparative significance, and
- association with RAAF VIP activities associated with the national capital during the second half of the 20th century.

5.0

Analysis of Heritage Significance

5.1 Commonwealth Heritage Criteria

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct comprises a specifically defined area within the overall contemporary boundaries of Canberra Airport, the whole of which remains as an operational Airport facility, combined with commercial and other related activities. Although the former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct has functional links with the operational runways and historic links with the progressive and on-going development of the entire civilian airport since the 1920s, this Analysis of Significance has been confined to the defined precinct.

Canberra Airport is managed under a long term lease from the Commonwealth of Australia under the provisions of the *Airports Act 1996*. The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct is Commonwealth land and therefore the appropriate heritage management framework is both the *Airports Act 1996* and the relevant provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*. Under the *EPBC Act*, the former RAAF Base Fairbairn is eligible for inclusion in the Commonwealth Heritage List.

The Commonwealth Heritage criteria are:

- a. the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history
- b. the place has significant heritage value because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history
- c. the place has significant heritage value because of the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history
- d. the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:
 - i. a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or
 - ii. a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments;
- e. the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group
- f. the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period
- g. the place has significant heritage value because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons
- h. the place has significant heritage value because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history
- i. the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.

Thresholds

As well as assessing a place against criteria for its heritage value, the Australian Heritage Council applies a 'significance threshold' test. This test helps the Council judge the level of significance of a place's heritage value by asking 'just how important are these values?'. To be entered on the Commonwealth List, a place must have 'significant' heritage value.

5.2 Assessment of Heritage Significance

(a) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history

Indicators of significance include a significant event, economic, political or social process, phase, movement, activity or way of life.

The threshold indicators for this heritage value include a widely known event, longevity, distinctiveness/exceptionality, regional importance, level of usage, integrity of features.

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct, known as RAAF Station Canberra between 1940 and 1962 has, as its primary historic heritage value, its establishment as a RAAF Base at the outset of World War II. Its historic functional associations with military aviation had dated from the initial establishment of Canberra aerodrome in 1927 to coincide with flypasts for the newly opened Parliament House.

RAAF Station Canberra, officially established on 1st April 1940, was an important component of the major expansion of Australian defence capacity in the late 1930s in response to the perceived threat from rising Japanese militancy in the Pacific region. This expansion of defence capability saw the development or upgrading of a number of RAAF airbases throughout Australia (including Point Cook, Victoria; Richmond, NSW; Pearce, WA; Amberley, Qld; Williamtown, NSW and Darwin, NT). Between 1938 and the commencement of Pacific hostilities in 1941, the existing mixed civilian and military aerodrome at Canberra was upgraded to a fully fledged establishment for the RAAF, with the new military aviation facilities located in a separate precinct to the north-east of the runway. The base was initially manned by No. 8 Squadron, which had been stationed in Canberra since September 1939. The continuing civilian component of Canberra airport, located to the south and south-east of the runway, was renamed Fairbairn in February 1941 to honour the late Mr J Fairbairn, Minister for Air, who had recently been killed in a plane crash on the outskirts of Canberra.

RAAF Station Canberra was utilised at various times during World War II by different air force units and activities related to the progress of the Pacific Campaign. In December 1941 it became the base for the newly formed School of Army Cooperation, while other units included No. 13 Squadron, flying Ventura bombers, and No. 4 Squadron, equipped with Wirraways. The 8th Pursuit Squadron of the US Army Air Corps occupied the base briefly in early 1942. For several years RAAF Canberra was the base for No. 18 Squadron (Netherlands East Indies) a unit comprising Dutch East Indies and Australian personnel, flying B25 bombers. The unit's aerial patrols against enemy naval activity off the south eastern Australian coastline resulted in the sinking of a Japanese submarine on 5 June 1942.

RAAF Station Canberra was formally renamed RAAF Base Fairbairn in March 1962 after undergoing a major change of operational focus in 1956 when it became the base for VIP services, which directly supported the political role of the national capital. In 1960, the specialised nature of Fairbairn and its Defence associations with the national capital was reinforced when the RAAF Staff College relocated there from Point Cook. By comparison, many other major RAAF stations throughout Australia remained in full operational service mode. The storage and engineering facilities at Fairbairn were utilised by the Australian War Memorial during the post war years for the conservation and preparation of several major aircraft displays for the Memorial, including the AVRO Lancaster Bomber "G for George".

By the mid 1990s, the Defence Reform Programme determined that RAAF Fairbairn was no longer required as a formal establishment. It was formally disbanded in February 2002.

Threshold Assessment

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct qualifies as having significant historic heritage value under this criterion, sufficient to warrant inclusion on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

It has primary historical associations with Australian defence capability during World War II and with VIP activities associated with the national capital during the second half of the 20th century.

Primary Evidence of Historic Heritage Value

The Primary Evidence of this heritage value lies in the physical association of the former RAAF Station Canberra/RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct with the overall contemporary context of Canberra Airport. Major supporting evidence comprises the road network and the fundamental organisation layout of the Base, with its traditional separation of activities closely associated with airside capacity from other precincts that accommodated support and related activities. The primary buildings that survive from the wartime establishment comprise the three main hangars, the guard house, the cinema/gymnasium and the hospital.

Secondary evidence comprises the progressively developed runways of Fairbairn/Canberra Airport, documentary and photographic records, service histories and commemorative material held in museum, personal and RAAF Association collections.

(b) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history

Indicators of significance include uncommon or rare aspects of use, function, technology, architecture or town planning, integrity in their regional or Commonwealth property context and aspects of the provision of services/communications.

The threshold indicators for this heritage value include validation of the rarity, distinctiveness, exceptionality, intactness, integrity and requires proof from authoritative sources.

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct has no particular rarity or uncommon features when compared with other pre World War II vintage airforce bases in Australia. Other bases of significance in this category include Point Cook, Victoria; Richmond, NSW; Pearce, WA; Amberley, Qld; Williamstown, NSW and Darwin, NT.

Although in its early decades Canberra aerodrome had some rarity value for its combined utilisation by both civilian and military aircraft prior to World War II, the military use was primarily related to its association with the national capital. In addition the early military aviation use of Canberra was largely confined to the south and south east of the runway and not in the location selected for the official establishment of RAAF Station Canberra in 1940.

Threshold Assessment

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct does not meet the threshold for this criterion.

Its planning and organisational layout demonstrates the principal features of early World War II RAAF stations rather than any rare or uncommon features. Canberra aerodrome's pre World War II military aviation history was related to the southern precinct of the overall aerodrome. The aerodrome as a whole and the subject precinct's association with VIP and national capital political activity are unique only to the extent that Canberra is the national capital.

Primary Evidence of Rarity Heritage Value

Not Applicable

(c) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history

Indicators of significance include demonstrated potential to provide new information on particular aspects of the agency's building types, histories or technologies not available elsewhere.

The threshold indicators for this heritage value include earliness, rarity intactness.

There is no significant potential for the RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct to yield additional information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history, which is not available elsewhere, such as in documentary and photographic information.

Threshold Assessment

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct does not meet the threshold for this criterion.

Primary Evidence of Research Heritage Value

Not Applicable

(d) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:

- i. a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or***
- ii. a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments***

Indicators of significance include principal characteristics identified in chronological, typological/design style analysis, of variations, evolutions or transitions in typology/design style, of a technology or process practiced during a particular period, of a particular way of life or value system important in the agency's function or history, or qualities or attributes representative of state, regional, scale, use, materials, construction techniques.

The threshold indicators for this heritage value include important examples of type, design/style and with integrity or intactness of representative features, influential or exceptionality.

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct, originally RAAF Station Canberra, has significant representational heritage value for its remnant ability to demonstrate the primary orthogonal, operational and hierarchical planning characteristics of early to mid 20th century RAAF air bases in Australia. The strong axial alignment of the principal roadways and campus style character of free standing buildings set in an open landscaped setting were consistent features of the early RAAF bases of Point Cook, Richmond, Pearce and Amberley.

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct demonstrates the typical organisational composition of a RAAF Base through a group of main hangars directly accessed from the runway tarmac, the fundamental division between operational and support/accommodation functions and the hierarchy of accommodation comprising separate areas for commissioned officers, non commissioned officers and other ranks.

Threshold Assessment

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct qualifies as having significant heritage value under this criterion, sufficient to warrant inclusion on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

It demonstrates the physical planning layout adopted for early to mid 20th century airbases

throughout Australia.

Surviving buildings from the wartime establishment period contribute to the overall visual and historic character of the place. Individually, each of these buildings has been altered and adapted over subsequent decades in accordance with progressive functional requirements by Defence or more recently by the lessees of Canberra Airport.

Primary Evidence of Representative Heritage Value

The Primary Evidence of this heritage value lies in the physical road network and the fundamental layout of the Base, with its traditional separation of activities closely associated with airside capacity from other precincts that accommodated support and related activities, as expressed in the survival of certain building types within each organisational precinct.

The surviving wartime establishment buildings that most successfully contribute to the overall visual and historic character comprise the three main hangars, the guard house, the cinema/gymnasium and the hospital.

Secondary evidence comprises documentary and photographic records and service histories.

(e) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group

Indicators of significance include landmark quality, iconic feature, expressive or dramatic qualities, streetscape harmony.

The threshold indicators for this heritage value include cohesion, legibility, degree of unity of scale, form, materials, texture and relationships between the components. The particular characteristics and strength of community value must be demonstrated through community acknowledgement of aesthetic characteristics, representation in art, literature, photography or inclusion in tour guides, brochures, post cards or some other means.

Although the former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct has a strong and distinctive visual character due to its axial tree lined boulevards and a campus style layout, these are not features that have been identified and acknowledged by the wider community.

Threshold Assessment

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct does not meet the threshold for this criterion.

Its aesthetic characteristics have not been recognised by the wider community primarily due to the relative lack of public access to the base during its operational period from 1940 to 2002 as a secure Defence establishment.

The architectural character of surviving individual buildings, from both its wartime and post war operational periods, cannot be regarded as distinctive or iconic, such that they qualify under this criterion. The wartime buildings were erected under severe budgetary constraints. Post war buildings were generally of undistinguished architectural character.

Primary Evidence of Aesthetic Heritage Value

The primary physical evidence of its distinctive character lies in the tree lined boulevards and campus style character of free standing buildings in a landscaped setting. In this context, individual trees are not of significance by comparison with the overall visual impression created by the general planting layouts.

(f) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period

Indicators of significance include technical or artistic merit or excellence or a high degree of craftsmanship, conceptual or innovative design, style, ingenuity in use of materials of technology.

The threshold indicators for this heritage value include integrity and intactness and recognition. In order to demonstrate a high degree the value must have public acknowledgement or peer recognition for its innovative or creative qualities, through recognition in journals, other media or through awards as an innovative prototype or high quality design/construction.

Although the former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct has a strong and distinctive visual character derived from the underlying clarity of its original planning layout, this is not a feature that can be regarded as having technical or aesthetic merit, conceptual or innovative design.

Although the former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct contains some individual wartime buildings that exhibit standardised architectural features for their time and function, most notably the three main 1930s hangars, none of the early buildings on the base are of such merit as to warrant individual recognition of significant heritage value. The majority of the remaining World War II buildings have been extensively altered during their subsequent service life, as is typical of the pragmatic functional priorities of most Defence establishments.

Threshold Assessment

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct does not meet the threshold for this criterion.

None of the wartime or post war buildings within the former RAAF Base Fairbairn warrant individual recognition within the Commonwealth Heritage List.

Primary Evidence of Creative or Technical Achievement Heritage Value

The primary physical evidence of its distinctive aesthetic character lies in the tree lined boulevards and campus style character of free standing buildings in a landscaped setting. In this context, surviving wartime buildings that are not of individual heritage significance but which do contribute to the overall character of the former Base comprise the three main hangars, the guard house, the cinema/dance hall and the hospital.

(g) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

Indicators of significance include extent and degree of community attachment for social or cultural meanings, longevity/length of association, popularity and extent of community experience.

The threshold indicators for this heritage value include ability to demonstrate extent and degree of community attachment and enduring nature of association. The value must be supported by a history of community action to safeguard the place, media information, publications or inclusion in tour guides, brochures, post cards, or some other means.

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct has been occupied over the decades by hundreds if not thousands of air force and other Defence personnel and associated staff. It has been visited by many international dignitaries and others through its association with the VIP Squadron and as the gateway to Canberra as the national capital. Typically with most other Defence establishments, Fairbairn has not attracted a strong body of community based support or particular affection from the representative associations of those who served there.

Threshold Assessment

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct does not meet the threshold for this criterion.

RAAF Association representatives have expressed no special attachment to the former RAAF Base Fairbairn, preferring to commemorate the place through documentary records, plaques and artefacts that can be relocated to contemporary Association premises.

Primary Evidence of Community Association Heritage Value

Not applicable

(h) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history

Indicators of significance include enduring association with people or groups of importance to Australia, major achievements of a recognised person or group occurred at the place.

The threshold indicators for this heritage value include importance of the person, degree or extent of association, length of the association, influence of the association.

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct has significant heritage value for its direct, functional association with the Royal Australian Air Force, from 1940 until 2002. It has additional direct association due to its functional associations with the RAAF VIP Squadron and through its role as the gateway to the national capital, with numerous visiting dignitaries throughout the latter half of the 20th century, a role that is on-going through the utilisation of contemporary and recently erected facilities, which also incorporate the required high security features.

Threshold Assessment

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct qualifies as having significant heritage value under this criterion, sufficient to warrant inclusion on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

It has direct and special associations with the Royal Australian Air Force, particularly between 1940 and 2002, having been purposefully established as a RAAF station in 1940 and continued in this role until disbanded in 2002. These associations continue through the RAAF VIP Squadron providing a service for Australian political leaders and visiting dignitaries to the national capital.

Primary Evidence of Associational Heritage Value

The Primary Evidence of this heritage value lies in the physical relationship of the former RAAF Station Canberra/RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct with the overall contemporary context of Canberra Airport, particularly the runways that are the modern expression of the operational nature of a functioning airbase. Major supporting evidence comprises the road network, buildings that survive from the wartime establishment and contemporary facilities utilised by the VIP Squadron, Australian political leaders and visiting dignitaries.

Secondary evidence comprises documentary and photographic records, service histories and commemorative material held in Defence archives, Australian War memorial, National Archives, museums, personal and RAAF Association collections.

(i) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.

Indicators of significance include active participation of Indigenous people as the primary source of information on the value of their heritage.

The 2001 archaeological report which included Aboriginal consultation outlined the predicted archaeological sensitivity of the overall Airport site and concluded that:

"All the areas in the Canberra International Airport site where infrastructure has been constructed is assessed as being of very low archaeological sensitivity. Any Aboriginal sites that may have been present in these areas will have been completely destroyed by this development activity."

Threshold Assessment

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn does not qualify as having significant heritage value under this criterion, sufficient to warrant inclusion on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

Any deposit, as the primary source of information on the value of Aboriginal heritage that may have been present in the area, would have been completely destroyed by the development activity.

Primary Evidence of Indigenous Heritage Value

Not Applicable

6.0

Statement of Heritage Significance

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct, originally established in 1940 as RAAF Station Canberra, located in the north east precinct of Canberra Airport, has significant Commonwealth Heritage values on historic and representative grounds through its primary wartime (1939-1945) establishment for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). There are no identified Indigenous heritage values.

The precinct has **significant historic heritage value** as a former operational RAAF airbase established during World War II.

Canberra aerodrome was selected as an important component of the major expansion of Australian defence capacity in the late 1930s in response to a perceived threat from rising Japanese militancy in the Pacific region. This expansion of defence capability saw the development or upgrading of a number of RAAF airbases throughout Australia including Point Cook, Vic; Richmond, NSW; Pearce, WA; Amberley, Qld; Williamtown, NSW and Darwin, NT.

The existing aerodrome was constructed to support the RAAF flypast during the opening of the new Parliament House in May 1927. Both military and civil aviation had used the south and south eastern portion of the aerodrome precinct until RAAF operations moved to a new operational precinct, to the north east of the main runway. It was formally established as a fully fledged military aviation facility, known as RAAF Station Canberra, on 1st April 1940. The base was initially manned by No. 8 Squadron, which had been stationed in Canberra since September 1939.

The civilian component of Canberra Airport, located to the south and south-east of the runway, was renamed Fairbairn in February 1941 to honour the late Mr J Fairbairn, Minister for Air, who had recently been killed in a plane crash on the outskirts of Canberra. The civilian/commercial development of Canberra Airport evolved progressively throughout the 20th century and continues to this day.

RAAF Station Canberra was utilised at various times during World War II by different air force units and activities related to the progress of the Pacific Campaign. In December 1941 it became the base for the newly formed School of Army Cooperation, while other units included No. 13 Squadron, flying Ventura bombers, and No. 4 Squadron, equipped with Wirraways. The 8th Pursuit Squadron of the US Army Air Corps occupied the base briefly in early 1942. For several years RAAF Canberra was the base for No. 18 Squadron (Netherlands East Indies) a unit comprising Dutch East Indies and Australian personnel, flying B25 bombers. The unit's aerial patrols against enemy naval activity off the south eastern Australian coastline resulted in the sinking of a Japanese submarine on 5 June 1942.

Although its primary historic significance related to its wartime establishment and operational role, the base continued in operation until 2002, when it was decommissioned. RAAF Station Canberra was formally renamed RAAF Base Fairbairn in March 1962 after undergoing a major change of operational focus in 1956 when it became the base for VIP services, which directly supported the political role of the national capital. In 1960 the specialised nature of Fairbairn and its Defence associations with the national capital was reinforced when the RAAF Staff College relocated there from Point Cook. By comparison, many other major RAAF stations throughout Australia remained in full operational service mode. The storage and engineering facilities were utilised by the Australian War Memorial during the post war years for the conservation and preparation of several major aircraft displays for the Memorial, including the AVRO Lancaster Bomber "G for George".

By the mid 1990s, the Defence Reform Programme determined that RAAF Fairbairn was no longer required as a formal establishment. It was formally disbanded in February 2002.

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct, originally RAAF Station Canberra, has **significant representative heritage value** for its remnant ability to demonstrate the primary orthogonal, operational and hierarchical planning characteristics of early to mid 20th century RAAF air bases in Australia. The strong axial alignment of the principal, tree lined roadways and campus style character of free standing buildings, were a consistent feature of the early RAAF bases of Point Cook, Canberra, Richmond, Pearce and Amberley.

The initial establishment phase saw the creation of the essential functional planning and orthogonal spatial layout of the base, a primary physical characteristic that has remained throughout subsequent layers of use and development. Also created at the time was the fundamental division between operational and support/accommodation functions and the hierarchy of accommodation comprising separately located buildings for commissioned officers, non commissioned officers and other ranks. Of some 77 buildings erected between 1939 and 1942, the three major hangers and some support buildings survive, although all have been altered and upgraded on a progressive basis.

Progressive waves of development and redevelopment have taken place across the precinct in response to changing operational requirements, including removal of redundant buildings, upgraded technology and functional issues. Although the RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct contains some individual wartime buildings that exhibited standardised architectural features for their time and function, most notably the three main late 1930s hangars, none of the early buildings on the base are of such merit as to warrant special recognition of significant heritage values. The majority of the remaining World War II buildings have been extensively altered during their subsequent service life, as is typical of the pragmatic functional priorities of most defence establishments. None of these features have been specifically identified or generally acknowledged by the wider community.

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct has no particular rarity or uncommon features when compared with other pre World War II vintage air force bases in Australia. Other bases of significance in this category include Point Cook, Victoria; Richmond, NSW; Pearce, WA; Amberley, Qld; Williamstown, NSW and Darwin, NT.

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct has **significant heritage value for its direct association** with the Royal Australian Air Force, primarily during World War II and to a lesser extent subsequently as a continuing operational facility until 2002.

Although the precinct has been occupied over the decades by hundreds if not thousands of air force and other Defence personnel and associated staff, as with most other Defence establishments, Fairbairn has not attracted a strong body of community based support or particular affection from the representative associations of those who served there. RAAF Association representatives have expressed no special attachment to the former RAAF Base Fairbairn, preferring to commemorate the place through documentary records, plaques and artefacts that can be relocated to contemporary Association premises.

Primary Evidence of Significant Heritage Values

The Primary Evidence of this heritage value lies in the physical association of the former RAAF Station Canberra/RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct within the overall contemporary context of Canberra Airport. Major physical evidence comprises the strong original axial alignment of the principal, tree lined roadways and campus style character with free standing buildings set in an open landscaped setting and some of the buildings that survive from the wartime establishment period.

Secondary evidence comprises the progressively developed runways of Fairbairn/Canberra Airport, documentary and photographic records, service histories and commemorative material held in museum, personal and RAAF Association collections.

7.0

Grading of Significance

Within the former RAAF Base Fairbairn individual aspects or components make differing levels of contribution to the overall significance of the place. The Commonwealth Heritage values of the place focus on its historic association with the build up of Australia's defence capability at the outset of World War II and the surviving "campus" character of that original planning layout.

By grading these contributions it is possible to focus on those characteristics, which require higher levels of heritage management and enable further development to be focussed into areas or aspects of lesser significance.

The relative ability of individual components of the former RAAF Base Fairbairn precinct site to demonstrate the above established significance is assessed below. The assessment has been determined using the following criteria:

- Original design and construction quality
- Degree of integrity and general condition
- Ability to demonstrate the assessed Commonwealth Heritage values

Grading reflects the contribution the element makes to the overall significance of the place (or the degree to which the significance of the item would be diminished if the component were removed).

The following table of graded contribution to significance will inform the development of conservation management policies for the place as a whole, individual buildings and landscape features and the ongoing development of the place.

ELEMENTS OF EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

These elements make a direct contribution to the assessed Commonwealth Heritage values of the place related to its wartime establishment and retain the ability to demonstrate that significance.

- Distinctive site layout with axial alignment of principal roadways
- Tree lined avenue character associated with the main road alignments of Richmond Avenue (west), Fairbairn Avenue and Laverton Avenue (west), but not individual trees
- The open spatial character of the original Parade Ground at the eastern end of the Point Cook/Amberley loop.
- Campus type character with free standing buildings set in an open landscaped setting
- The fundamental functional organisation of the place comprising of operational and other functional activities
- Its proximity to the adjoining, progressively developed runways of Fairbairn/Canberra Airport

ELEMENTS OF HIGH SIGNIFICANCE

These elements make a contribution to significant Commonwealth Heritage values of the place related to its wartime establishment and retain the ability to demonstrate that significance.

- The three individual main 1930s hangars (Hangars 46, 47 and 48), although each has been altered and to some extent adapted and modernised over time, particularly Hangars 47 and 48.

ELEMENTS OF MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE

Although progressively altered and upgraded, these elements make some contribution to demonstration of the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place related to its wartime establishment and retain the ability to demonstrate that significance.

Buildings that retain a reasonable degree of original integrity, at least externally

- Guard House (Building 33)
- 25 Richmond Avenue, former cinema, canteen and dance hall (Building 42)
- 5 Richmond Avenue, former Hospital (Building 44)
- 20 Ewart Street, Bellman hangar (Building 203)
- 17-19 Point Cook Avenue, Engineering Workshop (Building 53)

Buildings that retain a relatively low degree of integrity

- Ewart Street, former Gun Testing, later Squash Course (Building 52)
- 15 Richmond Avenue, former Sergeants' Mess and kitchen (Building 43)
- 9 Laverton Avenue, former Officers' mess (Building 16)
- 18 Ewart Street, former Survey Flight Photographic Building, later Staff College (Building 57)
- 25A Fairbairn Avenue, former East powerhouse (Building 73)
- 19 Ewart Street, former Photographic Store (Building 80A)

ELEMENTS OF LOW SIGNIFICANCE

Due either to their subsequent alterations and additions or their post World War II construction dates, these elements make only an incidental contribution to the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place.

- Brick residences and prefabricated cottages at Richmond Avenue, Fairbairn Avenue and Laverton Avenue, generally constructed after World War II.
- Buildings constructed during the RAAF Base Fairbairn period (1962-1998) and under the Canberra Airport management (1998-today)

INTRUSIVE ELEMENTS

These elements have a disruptive influence on the overall Commonwealth Heritage values of the place, are causing or likely to cause damage to significant aspects, distort significant evidence or conflict with the overall character.

- No intrusive elements have been identified.

Note that the former transport Building (Building 55) at 13-15 Amberley Avenue, was demolished in early 2009, after permission for demolition was granted due to the high amount of asbestos present.

8.0

Constraints, Opportunities and Requirements

8.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the current management requirements and known and anticipated pressures on the Commonwealth Heritage values of the former Fairbairn RAAF Base

8.2 Legislative Heritage Issues

This section identifies the legislative obligations that are arising from the identified Commonwealth Heritage Values of the Fairbairn precinct.

This HMP has been produced in accordance with guidelines provided to Canberra Airport by DEWHA. This process has also been supported by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

8.2.1. Airports Act 1996 (as amended) Heritage Management Processes

Canberra Airport has been leased from the Commonwealth to Canberra Airport Pty Limited pursuant to the provisions of the *Airports Act 1996* (as amended). The planning regime is consistent across all major city airports that have been sold by the Commonwealth on a leasehold basis.

As outlined in clause 3.06(d) of the Airports (Environment Protection) Regulations 1997, established under the Act, an important component of the Airports Lessee Company's preparation of a strategy is the identification and conservation of objects and matters at an Airport that have amongst other things, heritage value (natural, indigenous and/or historic). This process is undertaken in consultation with DEWHA.

As a result of major city leased airports being on Commonwealth land, the provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (as amended) also apply.

The *Airports Act 1996* requires the development and approval of a Master Plan as the principal development plan for each airport and an Environment Strategy. Major Developments on airports as defined in the *Airports Act* are then approved through a process of Major Development Plans (MDPs).

Master Plan

The Airport Master Plan has a planning horizon of 20 years and is required to be revised every 5 years. The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, in his capacity for Minister for Transport is the responsible authority for approval of each Airport's Master Plan. A summary of the process in preparing a Master Plan is as follows:

- Exposure Draft provided to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (DITRD LG), Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and Airservices Australia (ASA) for comment. This exposure draft is also referred to the Department of the Environment, Water, heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) for comment under an agreement between Canberra Airport, DITRD LG and DEWHA.

- Preliminary Draft Master Plan is available for public consultation for 60 business days.
- Draft Master Plan is prepared and lodged with the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government for approval. Part of the documentation supplied to the Minister with the Draft Master Plan is a Consultation Report which outlines the consultation process and provides copies of all submissions and how the Airport has had due regard to public comments and submissions.

Environment Strategy

The Environment Strategy sets out how the Airport will manage the environment at the Airport in response to the implementation of the Master Plan and airport operations. The Environment Strategy must address mandatory requirements under the *Airports Act*, the *Airport (Environment Protection) Regulations 1997* including the identification of environmentally significant areas within the airport site. The process is as follows:

- Exposure Draft provided to DITRDLG and DEWHA for comment.
- Exposure Draft provided to DEWHA for recommendations relating to the environmentally significant areas.
- Preliminary Draft Environmental Strategy available for public consultation for 60 days.
- Draft Environment Strategy provided to the Minister for ITRDLG for approval. Part of the documentation supplied to the Minister with Draft Environment Strategy is a Consultation Report which outlines the consultation process and provides copies of all submissions and how the Airport has had due regard to public comments and submissions.

Major Development Plan

The *Airports Act* outlines a number of triggers for the requirement of a Major Development Plan to be undertaken by the Airport, including a development that is likely to have a significant environmental or ecological impact or which affect an area identified as environmentally significant. Details of the requirements under the *EPBC Act* for Major Development Plans are covered under 8.2.3.

The process is as follows:

- Exposure Draft provided to DITRDLG, DEHWA, CASA and ASA for comment.
- Preliminary Draft Major Development Plan available for public consultation for 60 days. The Referral, if required, is open to consultation pursuant to the decision of DEWHA.
- Draft Major Development Plan provided to the Minister for ITRDLG for approval. Part of the documentation supplied to the Minister with Draft Major Development Plan is a Consultation Report which outlines the consultation process and provides copies of all submissions and how the Airport has had due regard to public comments and submissions.

Referrals under the EPBC Act

The *EPBC Act* requires that any proposed projects or actions which have the potential to significantly impact the environment, which includes heritage values, shall be referred to the Minister for consideration under the *EPBC Act*.

Applications for Works

The *Airports Act* requires that any proposals for work be submitted to the Airport Building Controller (ABC) for approval.

8.2.2. Listings

Commonwealth Heritage List

The Commonwealth Heritage List, established under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), comprises natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places which are either entirely within a Commonwealth area, or outside the Australian jurisdiction and owned or leased by the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth Authority; and which the Minister is satisfied have one or more Commonwealth Heritage values.

Currently Fairbairn is shown as an “indicative place” on the Commonwealth Heritage List. “Indicative place” means that data provided to or obtained by the Heritage Division has been entered into the database. However, a formal nomination has not been made and the Council has not received the data for assessment.

Register of the National Estate

The Australian Heritage Commission assessed the Fairbairn site in 1999, and the site was subsequently listed (20/05/2003) on the Register of the National Estate as “RAAF Base Fairbairn Group, Glenora Drive, Majura, ACT, Australia”. This listing identified a number of buildings of interest and a series of distinctive planning and landscape features of the overall precinct.

Following amendments in 2006 to the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975*, the Register of the National Estate (RNE) was frozen on 19 February 2007, which means that no new places can be added, or removed.

The Register will continue as a statutory register until February 2012. During this period the Minister for the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (the Minister) is required to continue to consider the Register when making some decisions under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*. This transition period also allows state, territory, local and Commonwealth Governments to complete the task of transferring places to appropriate heritage registers where necessary and to amend legislation that refers to the RNE as a statutory list.

8.2.3. Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The former RAAF Base Fairbairn study area is, although leased on a long term basis to Canberra Airport, Commonwealth owned and controlled land. It is therefore subject to the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*.

The assessment contained in this study concluded that the precinct has significant historic heritage values and representative heritage values, which meet the criteria for Commonwealth Heritage Listing. The *EPBC Act* requires that in order to secure their long term retention and conservation, places of Commonwealth Heritage values be managed through a Heritage Management Plan. This document has been prepared for Canberra Airport in response to this requirement.

The Heritage Management Plan prepared for a Commonwealth Heritage place must be consistent with the Commonwealth Heritage management principles and may be approved by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts. A management plan does not exempt the proponent from any requirement to make a referral under the Act if any action proposed in the management plan that is likely to have a significant impact.

Where an action has the potential to significantly impact the environment – which is defined in the EPBC Act to include heritage places – the action must be referred to the Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts for consideration. Three outcomes of such a referral are possible:

- 1 Action is determined not to have a significant impact and can go ahead i.e. not a controlled activity.

- 2 Action can go ahead subject to conditions (which must be included in the referral) and a 'Specified/Particular Manner' finding is made.
- 3 Action is 'controlled', which means that further assessment is required before a decision can be made on whether it can go ahead. The Minister determines the level of assessment, which ranges from the provision of Preliminary Information through to a full Public Inquiry (refer to Part 7 of the Act for further information on assessment methods).

The Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts considers the information provided through the selected assessment level and determines if the action can go ahead and under what circumstances. The Minister can refuse an action at the end of this process if the environmental impacts cannot be appropriately managed.

Major Development Plans

The *EPBC Act* includes a provision that a Commonwealth agency must consider advice from the Minister for the Environment Heritage and the Arts before adopting or implementing a major development plan for an airport. It also stipulates that the environmental impacts of the proposed development must be assessed in accordance with an accredited assessment process. A recommendation on the assessment approach is made by DEWHA.

European archaeology

Resources may be present from the wartime phase, although these are likely to be limited to unexploded ordinance, footings and underground services associated with known building uses. Accordingly their research potential within the context of Commonwealth values would be of limited importance.

Indigenous heritage issues

Any deposit, as the primary source of information on the value of Aboriginal heritage that may have been present in the area, would have likely been completely destroyed by the development activity; therefore the Fairbairn precinct has been independently assessed as being of very low archaeological sensitivity.

There are no known Indigenous Heritage issues at Fairbairn.

8.2.4. National Capital Authority

Following an amendment to the *Airports Act* in 2007, the National Capital Plan (NCP) no longer applies at Canberra Airport.

While no longer applying, the NCP currently identifies Canberra Airport as part of the Central National Area and a "Defined Office Employment Centre in the ACT". Current Airport development and proposals under the *Preliminary Draft Master Plan 2009* are consistent with the National Capital Plan.

8.2.5. ACT Government

Canberra Airport works closely with relevant agencies of the ACT Government to ensure that the Airport is strongly integrated into the ACT strategic and planning framework. Canberra Airport is the major public gateway to the region and the ACT Government acknowledged that the Airport and its ongoing growth must be encouraged.

8.3 Heritage Management Issues

This section summarizes the obligations and requirements arising from various attributes of the identified significance of Fairbairn.

8.3.1. Conservation of the Significance of the Place

Considering the heritage values identified in the Statement of Significance the following issues are to be addressed in the conservation guidelines:

- The distinctive planning layout of the overall site with axial alignment of principal roadways (Richmond, Fairbairn, Laverton, Point Cook and Amberley Avenues) (see Fig. 8-1).

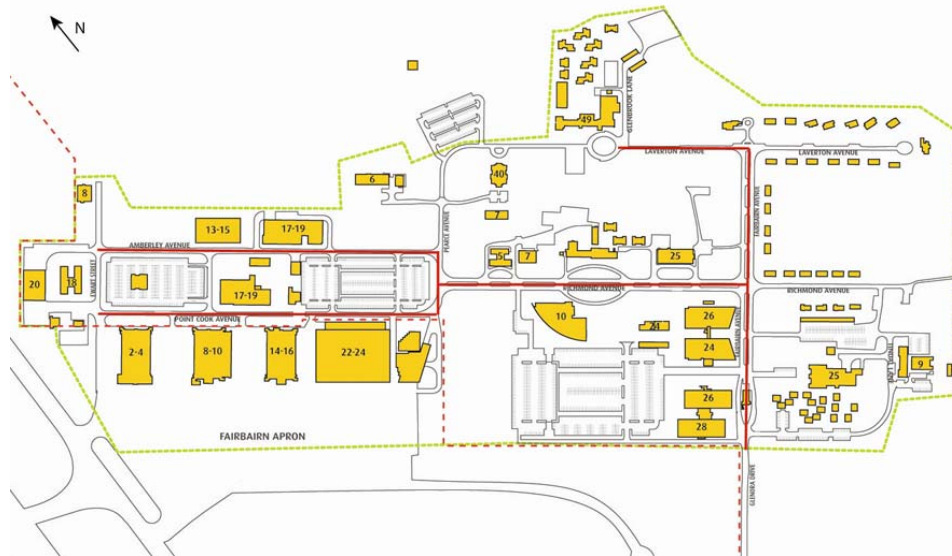


Figure 8-1 Site layout, showing the alignment of principal roadways (Map provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

- The tree lined avenue character associated with the main road alignments of Richmond Avenue (west), Fairbairn Avenue and Laverton Avenue (west) (see Fig. 8-2).

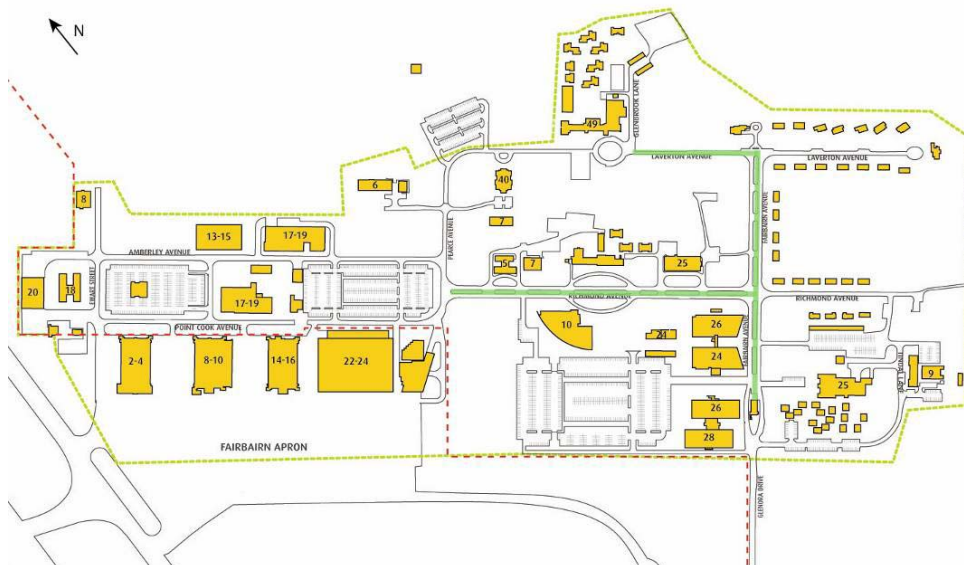


Figure 8-2 Site layout, showing the location of avenue trees associated with the main road alignment (Map provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

- The open spatial character of the original Parade Ground at the eastern end of the Point Cook / Amberley Avenue loop (see Fig.8-3).

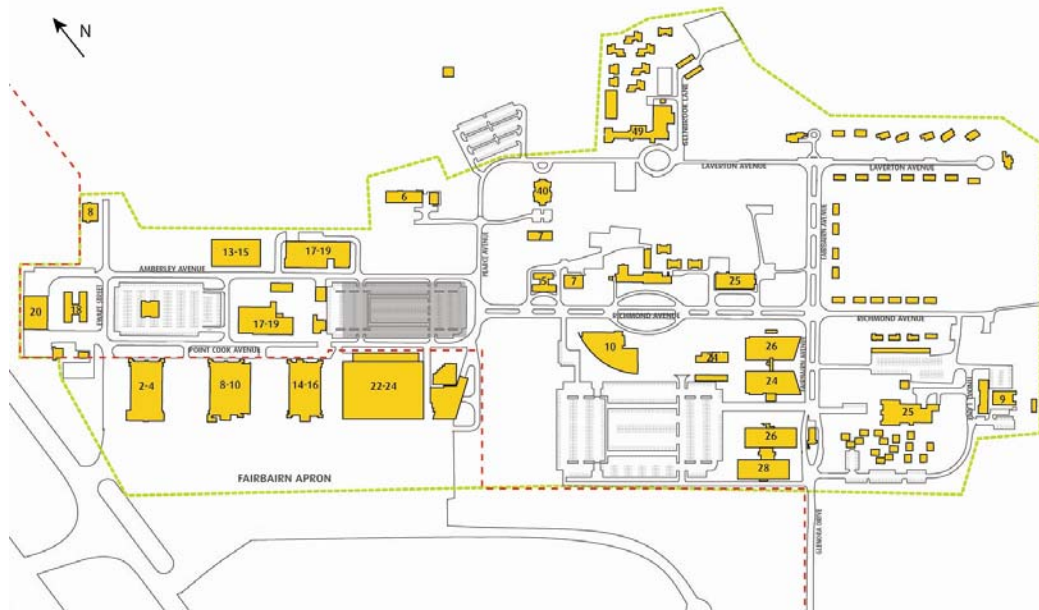


Figure 8-3 Site layout, showing the location of the former Parade Ground (Map provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

- The campus type character of the overall site with free standing buildings set in an open landscaped setting.
- The fundamental functional organization of the place comprising of operational and other functional activities (see Fig.8-4).

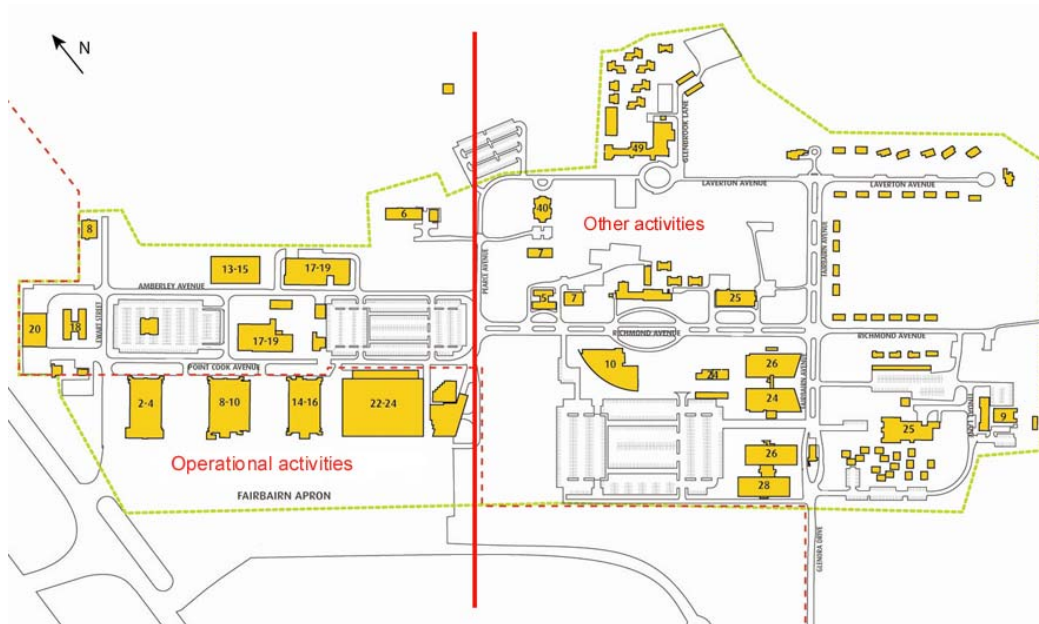


Figure 8-4 Site layout, showing the historic land use organisation of the precinct (Map provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

- The proximity to the adjoining, progressively developed runways of Fairbairn/Canberra Airport.
- The high significance of the three individual main 1930s hangars (see Fig. 8-5).
- The contributory significance of the former Guard House (Building 33), former cinema/canteen and dance hall (Building 42) at 25 Richmond Avenue and the former Hospital (Building 44) at 5 Richmond Avenue (see Fig. 8-5).

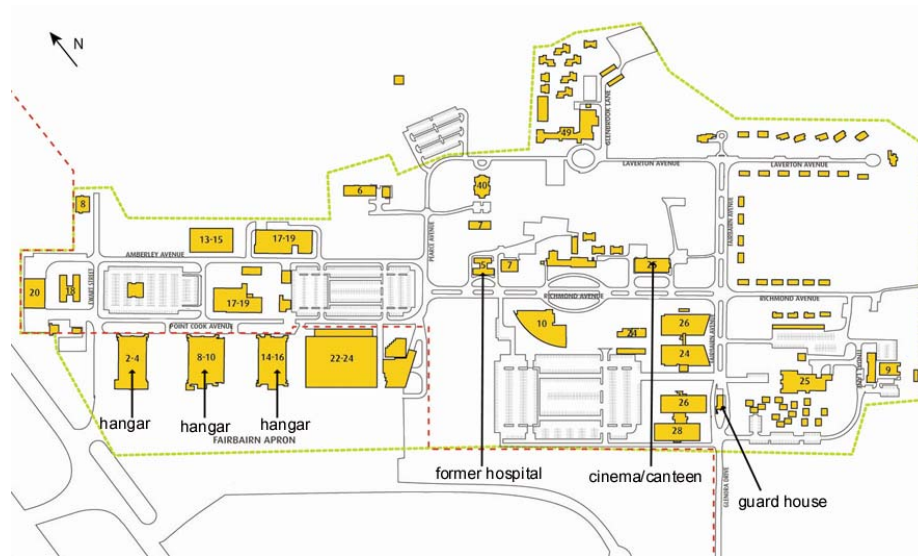


Figure 8-5 Site layout, showing buildings which contribute to the overall significance of the precinct (Map provided by Capital Airport Group Pty Ltd)

The conservation of these characteristics forms the essence of the recommendations for conservation policies within this Heritage Management Plan.

8.3.2. Significance of Individual Attributes

Conservation of the planning layout

The well developed roadway layout pattern of the precinct will be retained and, as development occurs, extended, widened or upgraded in a way which is sympathetic to the original character of the precinct.

Landscape conservation

The landscape of the precinct is distinctive, highly significant and stands out in sharp contrast to the grassland and scattered Savannah woodland character of surrounding land.

The early avenue plantings that reinforce the site layout combined with more recent tree and shrub plantings around the buildings provide a parkland setting and campus like character to the precinct.

The retention and enhancement of this special character will be a key factor in the conservation of the significance of the Fairbairn precinct.

Conservation and re-use of individual buildings

Although recognised as being of Commonwealth Heritage importance primarily for its wartime establishment, the Fairbairn precinct evolved progressively over a 70 year operational life as

a RAAF base, with buildings, infrastructure and the cultural landscape progressively integrated within the underlying planning layout and campus character. The physical development of the place progressively responded to specific defence related requirements including changes in operational nature of the RAAF establishment and advances in aviation technology. Many buildings, including the main hangars, were progressively adapted over time to suit new functional requirements.

Throughout its service life as RAAF Base Fairbairn, the evolution of the precinct was very pragmatic, functional and budget driven in nature, with buildings and other facilities removed, upgraded or replaced as required. As a newly privatised precinct within the overall airport, the future development of Fairbairn, with its strong planning structure and campus character will progressively evolve in accordance with market demand and in accordance with the recommendations of this HMP. In this context, consideration of the potential for retention and re-use of surviving war-time buildings should take account of their relative contribution to the significance and character of the place.

It is recognized that some buildings have less architectural value or original integrity which reduces their capacity to demonstrate and contribute to the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place. The majority of the existing buildings within Fairbairn were erected well after World War II. While demolition or removal of structures which make a lesser contribution is acceptable, a number of distinctive wartime buildings should be retained and adapted in order to adequately demonstrate the initial built environment of the base. These should include the Guard House (Building 33), the former cinema/canteen and dance hall (Building 42) at 25 Richmond Avenue, the former Hospital (Building 44) at 5 Richmond Avenue and the three wartime hangars.

Buildings 33, 42 and 44 may be adapted over time to suit the evolving functional use of the Precinct. Adaptation in this circumstance can embrace any use which is compatible with the nature of the building, particularly the scale and arrangement of its internal spaces.

The former Cinema (Building 42) may be fitted with a single storey addition to the north, connected back to the existing. The former Hospital (Building 44), due to its architectural character, relatively small scale and prominent location, may be extended as a single storey composition to the north or combined with a new, larger multi-storey building erected to its north. Additions to the Guard House (Building 33) are not readily feasible due to its free standing character and location within the landscaped medium strip at the entry to the precinct.

Over time the structure of the early hangars may need to be individually upgraded/alterd/enlarged to suit changing aviation requirements. However, it has to be noted that the wartime hangars were designed with side access, which limits their potential for the accommodation of larger aircraft.

As the *Airports Act* requirements restrict residential use on Airport, Canberra Airport will consider any commercial proposal to relocate the prefabricated cottages off Airport. It has to be noted, however, that asbestos issues with these houses are expected to diminish any relocation and re-use opportunities.

In each case, future proposals for adaptation or redevelopment of surviving WW2 buildings should take account of the likely impact on the overall Commonwealth Heritage values of the place and the ability of the proposed work to respond to the continuity of those values.

8.4 Canberra Airport Objectives and Operational Requirements

The following section presents information about other factors affecting the future of the precinct, including the operational needs of Canberra Airport and future development plans for the site.

8.4.1. Canberra Airport's Vision for the Fairbairn Precinct

The Canberra Airport's vision for the Fairbairn precinct includes the following aspects:

- To enhance the framework of development of the precinct in a manner consistent with its heritage values and character.
- To continue to accommodate and expand, as required, the facilities of the RAAF 34 Squadron aircraft fleet and provide VIP transport infrastructure for the Government and foreign dignitaries.
- To accommodate large structures, such as hangars, aviation navigation infrastructure and industrial buildings as well as office buildings and retail uses integrated within the framework of existing buildings, roadways, streetscape and landscape.

8.4.2. Canberra Airport Project Developments 1998 - Present

The last few years have already seen the partial implementation of policies drawn up in the *Fairbairn Heritage and Development Plan July 2006-June 2010 (FHDP)*, prepared by Canberra Airport in July 2006. The main objective of the FHDP was to support the vision of the Airport Group and "to provide a high quality gateway to the National Capital in a manner to enhance Fairbairn's framework of development to date, in a manner consistent with the heritage character of the precinct layout and majority of buildings"

Heritage management principles

The Airport commenced developing Fairbairn having regard to its heritage character in accordance with the Heritage Management Principles, as set out in the 2006 plan:

- (i) *Adapt the historic street alignment pattern of existing roads and manage these so as to provide a contemporary, efficient, commercial, safe and secure precinct.*
- (ii) *Explore cost-benefit adaptive reuse of heritage nominated buildings subject to:*
 - a. *Asbestos removal*
 - b. *External conditions*
 - c. *Internal conditions**having regard to economic, green building principles and Building Code of Australia limitations.*
- (iii) *Removal of asbestos materials whenever practicable to minimize OH&S issues in opportunities for building reuse.*
- (iv) *Maintain the landscape to integrate existing and future buildings and to manage existing landscape and future species selection in response to aircraft bird strike minimization.*
- (v) *Maintain the verge to facilitate the orderly location for and the maintenance of underground services (wiring to be placed in conduits) in a landscaped setting.*
- (vi) *Consult, as required, with major stakeholders comprising, Department of Environment and Heritage, National Capital Authority, Department of Transport and Regional Services and the Royal Australian Air Force Association.*
- (vii) *Continue to review future aerodrome runway and taxiway impacts on existing Fairbairn precinct boundaries.*
- (viii) *Provide alternate road access to Fairbairn via the northern road option.*
- (ix) *Maintain land use patterns within Fairbairn to reflect mixed uses in response to market demand.*
- (x) *Develop a palette of bold colours for existing and future buildings to enhance the Fairbairn precinct sense of arrival as a significant gateway to the National Capital, and as a contemporary commercial precinct with a complementary mix of heritage character and modern design.*
- (xi) *Maintain these design guidelines for new and existing buildings in regard to economic use, green building principles, and modern aviation requirements and themes.*

- (xii) *Heritage issues to be considered include street alignment, occupational health and safety, street trees and adjoining buildings, in the context of an evolving contemporary, commercial precinct.*
- (xiii) *Maintain a photographic and written record of nominated buildings in pre-development condition.*

These principles remain valid and have been utilised as a background in the formulation of the policies in this HMP.

Completed adaptive re-use works

The Airport has adopted a preferred development concept for Fairbairn of re-new, recycle or re-use of existing buildings. To date 40 buildings have been refurbished and/or adapted to new use, including:

- The three main wartime hangars, which were refurbished for new uses with approvals in a way which retains their character.
- The guard house. Works included the removal of later intrusive additions and asbestos elements.
- The former hospital, which is now used as office accommodation.
- The cinema/dance hall that was refurbished for medium term adaptive re-use as a gymnasium.
- The former airmen's mess that was renovated and upgraded and is currently used as data/call centre.
- The former officers' mess, which is currently the Fairbairn Functions/Education/Training Centre.

New buildings and major works

New buildings and major works are focused on:

- The airside operational zone and comprises the secure zone associated with the Special Purpose Aircraft facility, the new hangar, security lounge and other Defence tenanted buildings and carparks, and
- The new commercial district, which contains five new multi-storey office buildings and on grade carparks.

Demolition of redundant buildings

The demolition of redundant buildings included the removal of all portable, demountable and temporary buildings, and the former transport building (Building 55 at 13-15 Amberley Avenue).

Site works and Landscaping

The renewal of primary infrastructure services and the provision of new infrastructure (where required) was part of the important initial site upgrading works undertaken by the Airport in the early 2000s.

The upgrade program also included the renovation and provision of new landscape within roadways, verges and around buildings as well as remedial works to trees that were severely impacted by the drought during 2002/2003, which was compounded by the decision by the Department of Defence to turn off the irrigation.

Temporary use of housing

The former cottages and various staff accommodation facilities have been renovated and are currently used as short term accommodation or temporary lodgment. It is noted, that new residential accommodation is a prohibited use under the *Airports Act*, and the continued use of existing housing stock as residential accommodation is permitted.

8.4.3. Identification of Operational Requirements

Since May 2004 the remaining Defence presence on the Airport is the Special Purpose

Aircraft (SPA) facility and office accommodation, operated by Squadron 34. The balance is available for Airport and commercial development purposes in accordance with the Airport's Master Plan and market demand.

Introduction of new users to the precinct

The introduction of new uses to the precinct involves the following opportunities and requirements:

- Due to its airside frontage the operational and industrial zone of the former base has mainly been developed with aircraft hangars and aprons, car parking and support buildings. This area has capacity to accommodate further support aviation/technology/light industry, offices and aeronautical navigation aids.
- The administrative, accommodation and recreational zone of the former base provide the opportunity of accommodating new commercial uses.
- Contemporary users may require larger scale structures than the buildings existing on the site.
- New uses may require general commercial space rather than specialized facilities.
- Relocation of temporary buildings, eg Bellman hangar, on or off site may be required.
- Security separation between precincts (already in place in relation to the SPA facility) may be required.
- A public transport route through Fairbairn has been proposed in a circular via Fairbairn Avenue, Richmond Avenue, Pearce Avenue and Laverton Avenue, returning into Fairbairn Avenue. "Hail and ride" management of public transport may be preferred to fixed location bus stops.
- Fairbairn is serviced by all main urban infrastructures, including roadways, reticulated water, sewer, electricity, communication, natural gas and stormwater. It is expected that that with the introduction of new users to the precinct the further upgrade of services infrastructure may be necessary.
- All car parking must be accommodated in designated common user parking areas or within the boundary of each block in properly constructed landscaped car parking area. Kerbside parking on primary roads will not be permitted.
- Requirement for tenancy identification signs is expected.

Re-use and redevelopment

- The Airport has adopted the development concept of re-new and re-use of existing buildings for new commercial uses. A current example of this type of development is the former equipment store and administration building (17-19 Amberley Avenue, built 1968) that is now under refurbishment for the new use as office accommodation.
- Substantial buildings, such as the wartime hangars, have been upgraded to suit contemporary needs and now accommodate new users.
- The adaptive re-use of selected buildings for common or community style uses is a possible option.
- Although the introduction of new uses within the precinct will consider the suitability of the available range of accommodation on the site, it is unlikely that the existing buildings will be able to accommodate the scale, functionality and contemporary environmental requirements of the majority of large commercial uses.
- The demolition of smaller or redundant buildings for larger buildings is an ongoing requirement.

Current development proposals

Approved project now under construction include:

- Construction of a new office building (9-11 Amberley Avenue), work shop, wash bay and car park (13-17 Amberley Avenue) and the refurbishment of the adjacent building (17-19 Amberley Avenue).
- Demolition of redundant Fuel Tank, Ewart Street.

Short-term development proposals

Projects, noted in the Master Plan as proposed within 5 years:

- A road, connecting the precinct to Majura Road via the north of the Airport.

- New office accommodation, to be constructed at 4 Richmond Avenue.
- New Air Traffic Control Tower.
- New data centre (78-80 Laverton Avenue).
- Demolition of two houses (78-80 Laverton Avenue).

Mitigation of aircraft bird strike potential

While the distinctive character of the precinct lies in the tree lined boulevards and campus type landscape setting of buildings, the existing planting comprises a number of species that are not appropriate for the airport. Many species attract birds, increasing the aircraft bird strike potential within the vicinity of the airport.

To improve safety standards plantings will be designed to minimize attraction to birds so as to mitigate aircraft bird strike potential.

Landscape management issues

Since the hand over of the precinct to the Airport all avenue planting has been renovated and enhanced. Canberra Airport provides ongoing monitoring of trees to assess likely life span and requirement for removal/replacement.

Because of the new commercial use of the precinct the integration of structures of larger scale and bulk into the existing fabric is required, therefore the gradual removal of many existing tree can be expected. In order to retain the campus like character of the precinct new development will include adequate planting and landscaping maintenance.

New planting will take account of the bird attracting potential of various tree species. Large birds, bird species that occur in flocks or have slow and/or erratic flight, are potentially hazardous to aircraft. Landscaping and replanting programs, therefore, must not produce habitats or resources that may cause abundance of these species to increase on the airport.

Airside security management within the aviation operational area requires that trees be planted in response to safety set back requirements from the safety fence. Shrubs and ground covers shall generally have a maximum height of 0.6 meters and trees with clear trunk up to 1.8 to maintain sight lines and public safety along public pathways or adjoining public open space.

Military and VIP operations

Military aviation has always had a key role at Canberra Airport. Whilst the entire site is now under civil administration, there continues to be a significant military presence at the airport.

The basing of the RAAF 34 Squadron aircraft fleet at Fairbairn, providing VIP transport for the Government, provides positive impetus for increased military activity at Canberra Airport in the future. It is possible that the Special Purpose Aircraft (SPA) fleet may be increased in size in the future to accommodate increased level of Government SPA operations and possibly larger aircraft over time.

Canberra Airport receives a significant number of visits per year by visiting dignitaries, often using heavy wide-body aircraft. The main Runway 17/35 was lengthened and strengthened in 2006 to better cater for these aircraft movements.

Visiting VIP aircraft are generally handled from the 34 Squadron facilities including the dedicated VIP passenger area located adjacent to the 34 Squadron headquarters building. However, on occasion additional aircraft parking space is required on the civil Fairbairn apron.

It is anticipated that the 34 Squadron facility may be expanded to accommodate further Australian and Foreign VIP aircraft operations over time. To accommodate further growth and comply with aeronautical requirements it can be expected that, if required in the long term, major new development will be placed outside the existing operational core area.

8.4.4. Airport Related Development Outside Study Precinct

Runway and taxiway system development

While the runway capacity is expected to accommodate the needs of Airport past the next 20-year planning period, taxiway upgrades are expected to be required in the short to medium term. This is expected to involve an upgrade and realignment of the taxiway (Taxiway Alpha) along the full length of Runway 17/35 to comply with safety regulations.

Safety clearance dimensions for the future taxiway upgrade will impact on the survival of certain buildings within the study area. The taxiway realignment will require the demolition/relocation of the following buildings:

- the former Survey Flight Photographic Building (Building 57–18 Ewart Street),
- the former Gun Testing/Squash Court (Building 52–24 Ewart Street) and the adjacent building/store
- the Bellman Hanger, (Building 203–20 Ewart Street)

Apron capacity

VIP flights, ad-hoc international flights and widebody diversion aircraft are currently accommodated on the Special Purpose Aircraft (SPA) apron and Fairbairn aprons. The SPA apron also accommodates all military flights, including the RAAF 34 Squadron VIP of aircraft based at Canberra Airport.

The Fairbairn apron is also expected to be utilized for an expansion of domestic overnight and possible international airfreight services. An expansion of the SPA facilities may also require handling additional VIP aircraft activity, including a possible larger aircraft operated by the RAAF into the future.

To meet future demand in the Fairbairn precinct, additional apron capacity is expected to be required. This apron capacity, as well as associated hangars and facilities, will be largely provided due south of the existing Fairbairn apron and east towards Glenora Drive, as well as separate facilities north of the current Bellman Hangar along Taxiway Alpha.

Adjoining environmental considerations

Environmental management issues are identified in the Airport's approved 2005 Environment Strategy and Chapter 15 – Environmental Management of the *Preliminary Draft 2009 Master Plan*.

Environmental issues associated with the management of area adjacent to the Fairbairn precinct include affects on fauna and flora.