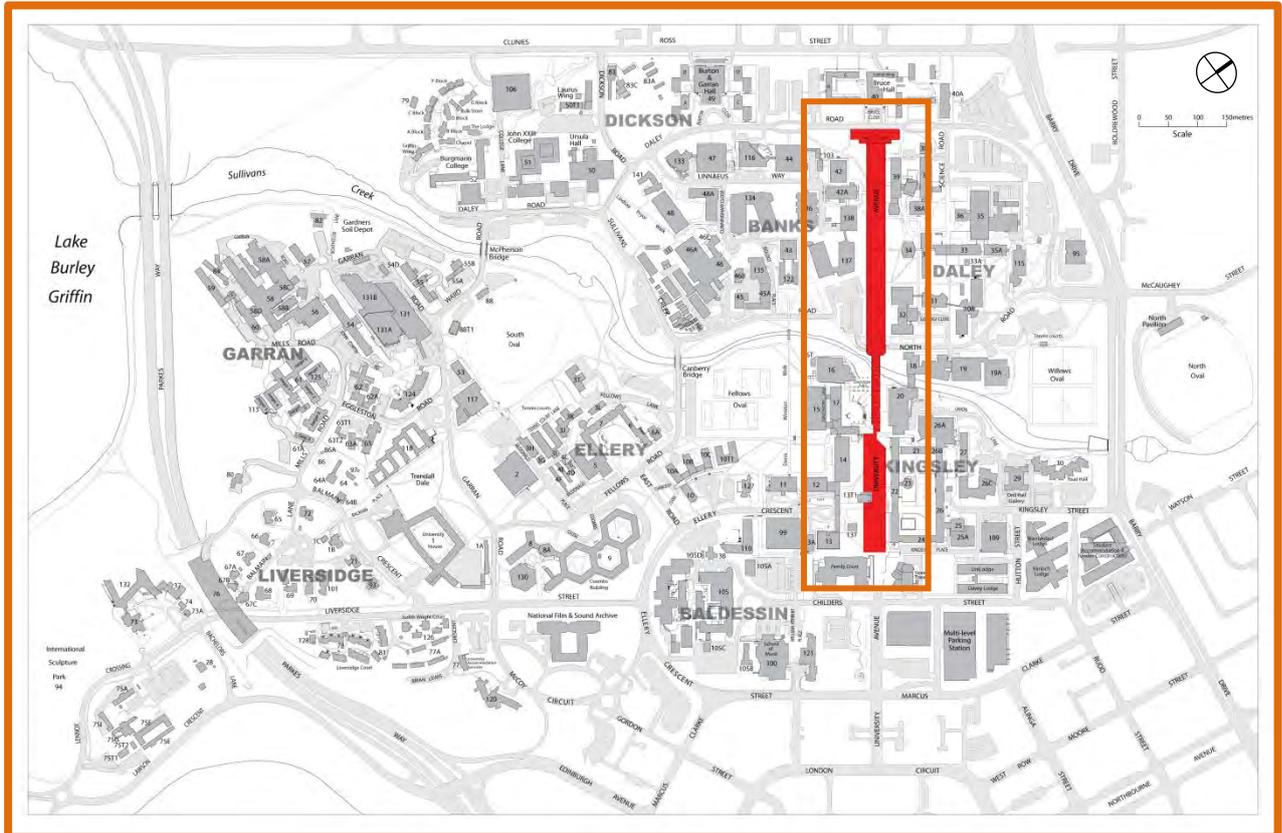


# Australian National University

## Acton Campus — Site Inventory



Study Item/ Area	University Avenue
Acton Campus Precinct	-
Building Nos. & Names	-



**Figure 1:** Location of study area within the ANU Acton Campus site.

Heritage Ranking	University Avenue— <b>High</b> —Commonwealth Heritage value
Heritage Listing	University Avenue is not individually listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL). University Avenue is listed on the ANU Heritage Register (Place ID AC0041).
Condition—Date	The condition noted here is at October 2011. The landscape and trees of the University Avenue area continue to be well maintained and are in reasonable condition. Many of the original trees have been removed from the University Avenue area, in particular the eastern end and around Union Court.
Relevant Documentation	No Heritage Management Plans have been prepared for University Avenue. The ANU Heritage website provides a historical overview and significance assessment of the place. ( <a href="http://heritage.anu.edu.au/index.php?pid=1276">http://heritage.anu.edu.au/index.php?pid=1276</a> ).

### Brief Historical Overview

Walter Burley Griffin indicated the general site for a University as part of his original plan for the city of Canberra. Important planning elements for the larger city area were a number of design axes, including a Water Axis, Land Axis and Municipal Axis. Both the Water Axis and the Land Axis ran through the Acton campus from east to west, and were to be used as formal planning mechanisms for the future development of the university campus site.

The first ANU campus site plan, prepared by Professor Brian Lewis of Melbourne University in 1947, relied heavily on the Griffin Plan. Lewis used Griffin's Water Axis as a design generator for the primary University site, siting two curved wings of residential accommodation and research facilities, opening out towards the future West Basin of Lake Burley Griffin in the Beaux Arts tradition. University Avenue, named 'Terrace Avenue' on early plans, was sited as the western extent of Griffin's Municipal Axis. It was the primary route from the Canberra CBD to the proposed CSIR (now CSIRO) site and beyond to the northern Canberra suburbs.

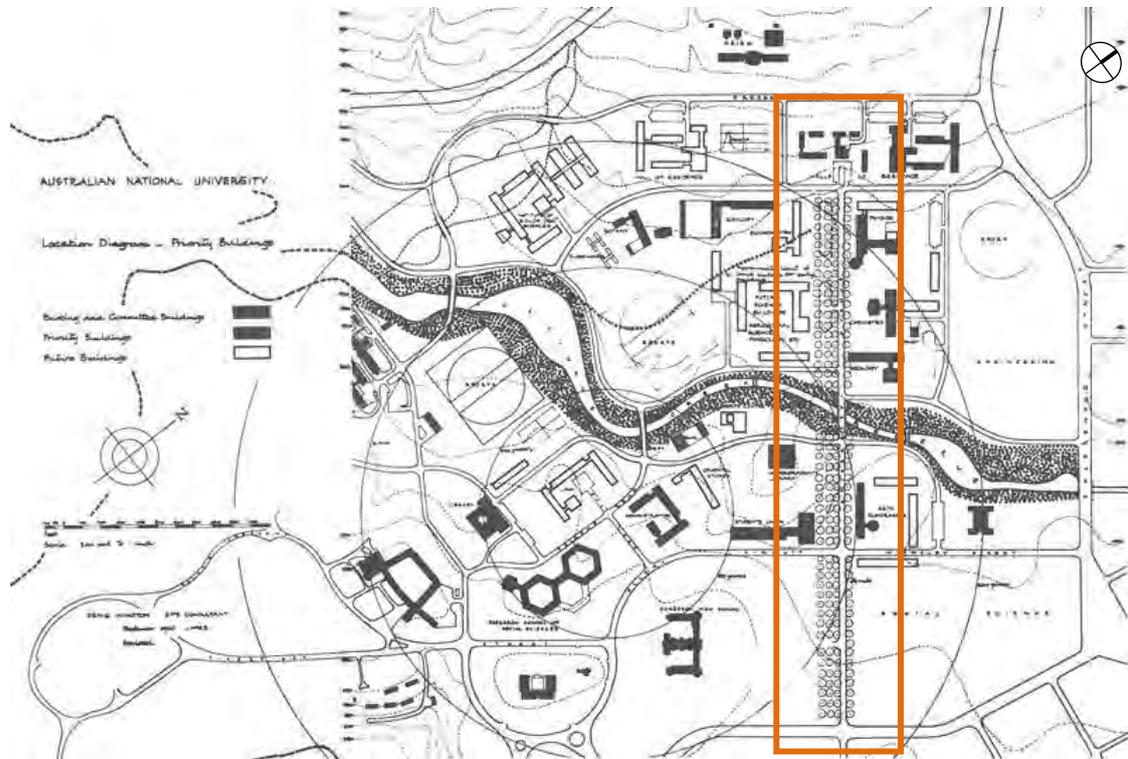
By 1933 'Terrace Avenue' had been renamed University Avenue by the Department of the Interior, the first physical identifier of the University site on plans of Acton (though the name was still in use when plans of the CSIRO were drawn up in 1972).

The initial proposal to close the eastern end (that closest to the Civic Centre), was articulated in the overall campus plan prepared by Professor Denis Winston, ANU Site Planner, in 1958. This arrangement was again proposed in a 1966 site plan, and the road linking Civic to the ANU was gradually closed to vehicular traffic by 1969.

The construction of Bruce Hall, again proposed by Denis Winston, formally severed the road to the CSIRO Black Mountain research facility. The central Dining Hall and Common Rooms of Bruce Hall were sited to address University Avenue, taking full advantage of the views. The paved footpaths lining the edges of University Avenue were established for Queen Elizabeth II in the 1960s, when it was agreed that Her Majesty could not be expected to walk on the grass.

The western extent of University Avenue was closed for through traffic in 1971 and by 1974 the only areas of vehicular access that remained ran from Union Court to the Physics Building. Since 1975 only a small section of the original University Avenue has remained open to vehicles, to allow service maintenance, deliveries, emergency vehicles and short-term drop-off access to Union Court.

An interesting element of University Avenue is the Union Court Bridge, which was constructed over dry land before Sullivans Creek was diverted to run under the bridge.



**Figure 2:** The ANU site development plan, prepared by Site Consultant Denis Winston in 1960. Vehicular traffic was gradually ceased over the next ten years (Source: ANU 1971).

### Description of University Avenue

University Avenue runs from London Circuit until it terminates at Marcus Clarke Street. A paved pedestrian boulevard links Marcus Clarke Street with the south-eastern edge of the University campus, adjacent to the Copland and Beryl Rawson Buildings.

The tree-lined pedestrian walkway continues in a northerly direction past the Haydon-Allen (north side) and AD Hope Buildings (south side) until it reaches Union Court. Union Court is the main commercial and social hub of the University with the University Union providing student services, ANU Bar, several cafés and shop, banks and other facilities located here. Only one remnant tree remains of the original patch in Union Court after it was refurbished in 1994.

The concrete pathways that were established for the visit of Queen Elizabeth II in the early 1960s have been replaced by aggregate paths around Union Court Bridge, with tiled paths further west towards Bruce Hall.

Crossing Union Court Bridge, University Avenue continues as a long tree-lined promenade that has lovely vistas to its termination opposite Bruce Hall. The tree plantings that feature along University Avenue are intended to reflect the changes of the four seasons of the year that are distinct in Canberra. Species include *Ulmus picturata* (Picture Elm), *Ulmus parvifolia* (Chinese Elm), *Ulmus procera* (English Elm), *Populus nigra 'Italica'* (Lombardi poplar), *Populus alba* (Silver poplar), *Populus alba 'pyramidalis'* (Upright silver poplar), *Cedrus atlantica* (Atlantic Cedar) and *Prunus cererifera* (Flowing plum).

A number of artworks have been positioned or are clearly visible along the avenue. These include the following:

- Rick Amor, *Relic* – between Street Theatre and Family Law Courts at eastern end (owned and managed by ACT Government).
- Deborah Halpern, *Spirit of Enquiry* – Union Court.
- Anne Ferguson, *Life's Shadows* – Front of Peter Baume Building.
- Jan Brown, *Phoenix* – west of Peter Baume Building.
- Fountain/cascade water feature – western end of avenue, before rise to Daley Road.

## Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

### Statement of Significance

University Avenue is significant both to the ANU and to wider Canberra as part of the Walter Burley Griffin's plan for Canberra. The Avenue was sited to address Griffin's 'Municipal Axis', one of the three primary axes of Griffin's plan. The strong alignment and natural features of University Avenue contrast with the paved surfaces and its passage through the heavily concreted Union Court.

University Avenue has played a key role in the planning of the ANU, dictating building heights, massing and siting. The pedestrianisation of the avenue is also significant, as the ANU moved towards a more pedestrian friendly campus and separated itself from the city for vehicular traffic.

Many of the plantings along University Avenue are significant as they were specifically chosen by Thomas Weston, a prominent horticulturalist who worked with Griffin and was instrumental in the planting of many areas of early Canberra. Later plantings have mimicked the species and alignment of Weston's plantings to ensure consistency in growth.

The buildings along University Avenue are significant as part of the uniform design of buildings along University Avenue. They were designed specifically to address the Avenue and provide a recessive border to the Avenue. The buildings are a significant part of the 'precinct plan' by Eggleston Macdonald & Secomb architects, as per the Denis Winston site plan of the Acton campus. The buildings display a generally homogenous façade with vertical banks of windows offsetting the strong horizontal perspective.

Criteria	Assessment
<p><b>(a) Historic</b> The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history.</p>	<p>University Avenue is significant both to the ANU and to wider Canberra as part of the Walter Burley Griffin's plan for Canberra. The Avenue was sited to address Griffin's 'Municipal Axis', one of the three primary axes of Griffin's plan. The strong alignment and natural features of University Avenue contrast with the paved surfaces and its passage through the heavily concreted Union Court.</p> <p>University Avenue has played a key role in the planning of the ANU, dictating building heights, massing and siting. The pedestrianisation of the avenue is also significant, as the ANU moved towards a more pedestrian friendly campus and separated itself from the city for vehicular traffic.</p> <p>Many of the plantings along University Avenue are significant as they were specifically chosen by Thomas Weston, a prominent horticulturalist who worked with Griffin and was instrumental in the planting of many areas of early Canberra. Later plantings have mimicked the species and alignment of Weston's plantings to ensure consistency in growth.</p> <p>The buildings along University Avenue are significant as part of the uniform design of buildings along University Avenue. They were designed specifically to address the Avenue and provide a recessive border to the Avenue. The buildings are a significant part of the 'precinct plan' by Eggleston Macdonald &amp; Secomb architects, as per the Denis Winston site plan of the Acton campus. The buildings display a generally homogenous façade with vertical banks of windows offsetting the strong horizontal perspective.</p> <p><b>University Avenue meets criterion (a) for historic values.</b></p> <p><b>Attributes</b></p> <p>The alignment of University Avenue, as well as the appearance of the Avenue as part of the treed campus landscape and the buildings.</p>

## Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

<p><b>(b) Rarity</b> The place has significant heritage values because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history.</p>	<p><b>University Avenue does not meet criterion (b) for rarity values.</b></p>
<p><b>(c) Scientific</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>University Avenue does not meet criterion (c) for scientific values.</b></p>
<p><b>(d) Representative</b> The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: A class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or A class of Australia's natural or cultural environments.</p>	<p><b>University Avenue does not meet criterion (d) for scientific values.</b></p>
<p><b>(e) Aesthetic</b> The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.</p>	<p><b>University Avenue does not meet criterion (e) for aesthetic values.</b></p>

## Significance Assessment against the Commonwealth Heritage criteria

<p><b>(f) Creative/Technical</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>University Avenue does not meet criterion (f) for creative/technical values.</b></p>
<p><b>(g) Social</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>University Avenue does not meet criterion (g) for social values.</b></p>
<p><b>(h) Associative</b> 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 and cultural history.</p>	<p><b>University Avenue does not meet criterion (b) for scientific values.</b></p>
<p><b>(i) Indigenous</b> The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.</p>	<p><b>University Avenue does not meet criterion (i) for Indigenous values.</b></p>

### Photographs



**Figure 2:** University Avenue from the Canberra CBD to the east (left) to Bruce Hall, seen to the west (left) across Daley Road, 10 Feb 1966 (Source: ANU Archives).



**Figure 3:** View north west of University Avenue towards Chifley Library (current Union Court area), May 7 1965 (Source: ANU Archives).



**Figure 4:** View southeast of University Avenue towards the Canberra CBD (Union Court area), May 7 1965. (Source: ANU Archives)



**Figure 5:** 1969 view northeast of University Avenue towards Bruce Hall (Source: ANU Archives)



**Figure 6:** Union Court, including Weston-era white poplars (since removed), September 1973. (Source: ANU Archives)

# Australian National University

Acton Campus — Site Inventory



## Photographs



**Figure 7:** View of University Avenue towards the northeast. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)



**Figure 8:** View east along University Avenue towards the Canberra City Centre. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)



**Figure 9:** View west towards Black Mountain along University Avenue. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)



**Figure 10:** University Avenue in relation to the Copland Building behind. (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)

### Photographs



**Figure 11:** View east along University Avenue, including the Engineering Building (32). (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)



**Figure 12:** View south along University Avenue, including the Peter Baume Buildings (42 and 42A). (Source: ANU Heritage Office 2011)

### Management Issues

#### Constraints and Opportunities

**Constraints** arise from the identified heritage values of University Avenue and the requirement under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)* (EPBC Act) to conserve them. The significant aspects of University Avenue, as indicated in the attributes above, should be conserved wherever possible.

University Avenue meets the EPBC Commonwealth Heritage criterion a) historic. Elements of 'high' heritage value embody Commonwealth Heritage values in their own right and make a significant contribution to the values of the Acton Campus as a whole. Elements of high heritage value should be retained and conserved. They require a high level of care in their management and the tolerance for change is generally low or able to tolerate some change and adaptive reuse. Loss or unsympathetic alteration would diminish the Commonwealth Heritage values of an individual element and the campus as a whole.

The **Tolerance for Change** heritage management tool, outlined in Section 7.6 of the ANU Acton Campus Heritage Study 2012, will assist in conserving heritage values through a process of change. University Avenue is able to tolerate some level of change through development whereby the historic characteristics are conserved and interpreted.

**Opportunities** arise from the identified heritage values of University Avenue. The history of University Avenue should be interpreted to maintain the historic and associational values of significant attributes identified in the assessments above. A greater degree of change may be tolerated if interpretation is of a very high quality and considered in any future development, which presents the identified heritage values for the future.

#### Recommendations

University Avenue should be nominated to the CHL and a Heritage Management Plan prepared to guide its best practice conservation and management. This could be undertaken as part of a masterplan for University Avenue.

If development resulting in loss of significant attributes is proposed, interpretation and a heritage impact assessment would be a prerequisite according to EPBC Act requirements.

Photographic recording for the ANU archives should be undertaken prior to any potential loss of significant buildings or landscaping in any future development of University Avenue.

A formal assessment of the aesthetic and social values University Avenue should be carried out.