

# Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

**RSTCA No:** R009

**Name of Place:** Gorman House Community Arts Centre

**Other/Former Names:** Gorman House, Ainslie Hotel

**Address/Location:** Ainslie Avenue BRADDON 2612  
Block 1 Section 53 of Braddon

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Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	1984	Level of Significance:	Local
Citation Revision No:	2	Category:	Residential
Citation Revision Date:	August 1987	Style:	Garden Pavilion

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Date of Design:	1923	Designer:	JS Murdoch, Dept Works & Railways
Construction Period:	1924	Client/Owner/Lessee:	FCAC now DASETT
Date of Additions:	1927, 1986	Builder:	George & Elphinstone

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## Statement of Significance

One of the four major Government hostels of early Canberra, it was designed by J S Murdoch in a more modest fashion than the principal hostel, the Hotel Canberra. A significant example of the Garden Pavilion Style conceived by J S Murdoch for Canberra's public buildings, it was influenced by the Prairie style of Wright and Griffin. It was significant in the early social life and history of the city, providing accommodation for females only and later for administrative staff and officials transferred to Canberra. The building is a significant example of early Federal Capital architecture.

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## Description

The original hostel was a series of eight single storey pavilions, linked by covered walkways around garden courts arranged symmetrically around the central dining hall. The walls are roughcast rendered brickwork, and the hipped roofs tiled. The fenestration is colonial revival, with the Prairie style discernible in the roof over the hall, projecting porches, rectangular piers, chimneys and the sweeping horizontals. The building was well constructed using day labour and exhibits economies in the use of materials due to shortages at the time. The rat trap bond brickwork is of particular interest. Bricks were laid on edge and used as wall ties. In 1927 Murdoch designed a two-storey block across the open ends of each courtyard, and other minor extensions, in the character and domestic scale of the existing buildings. The building is now a Community Arts Centre, with studios and galleries within the shell of the original pavilions, leaving the external appearance unaltered. The original buff colour has been restored to the roughcast walls and dark green to the woodwork and fascias. Formal planting contributes to this complex, and the hawthorn trees planted in the middle of each courtyard are of significance. The building and landscape contribute to the surrounding townscape of the early residential areas.

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## Condition and Integrity

Exterior good condition and original design intact. Interior substantially altered.

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## Background/History

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**Analysis against the Criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991**

*(i) a place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure or representing a new achievement of its time*

*(ii) a place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group*

*(iii) a place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger or being lost, or is of exceptional interest*

*(iv) a place which is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations*

*(v) a place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type*

*(vi) a place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class*

*(vii) a place which has strong or special associations with person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history*

*(xi) a place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site*

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**References**

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**Other Information Sources**