

# Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

**RSTCA No:** R055

**Name of Place:** Royal Military College Precinct

Comprising:

R61A	Commandant's House (Bridges House)
R61B	Senior Officers' Quarters Assets C12 to C15
R61C	Quartermaster's Residence Asset C7
R61D	Teaching Staff Residence Asset B7
R61E	Captains' Quarters Assets B1 to B4
R61F	General Bridges' Grave
R61G	Parade Ground & Associated Buildings Group
R61H	ANZAC Memorial Chapel of St Paul
R61J	Changi Chapel

**Other/Former Names:**

**Address/Location:** DUNTROON ACT 2600

Block Section of

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Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	RNE
Date of Listing:	1984	Level of Significance:	Territory
Citation Revision No:	3	Category:	Government
Citation Revision Date:	November 03	Style:	Various

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Date of Design:	1911-99	Designer:	Works & Railway/Interior
Construction Period:	1911-87	Client/Owner/Lessee:	Defence Department
Date of Additions:		Builder:	Various

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## Statement of Significance

See individual citations.

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## General Background/History

After the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia, its Department of Defence activities included planning for a military college. In 1910 the Federal Government instructed Colonel (later Major General Sir) William Throsby Bridges to investigate military colleges overseas with a view of setting up a college suited to Australian requirements. Colonel Bridges' recommendation for a college to be located at Duntroon was accepted and he was given the task of founding the new college. Canberra had been recommended for the site of the Federal Capital in 1909 and this influenced Bridges in his choice of a site for the college. On 30 May 1910 he was appointed as its first Commandant with the rank of Brigadier General. On 1 July 1910 Duntroon was confirmed as the preferred site for the college and on 1 October 1910 it was officially approved whereupon a lease of the Campbell homestead and 374 acres was obtained.

By the time the college was opened by the Governor General, Lord Dudley on 27 June 1911, many buildings were in the course of erection. The sites for the quarters for officers were chosen so that they would be conveniently situated when the permanent buildings were to be erected. Many of the early classroom and other buildings erected from this period were considered temporary, but the quarters for officers were to be part of the permanent college.<sup>1</sup>

At the onset of the Depression, in December 1930, the College was transferred to Victoria Barracks in Sydney, ostensibly as an economy measure. The principal economy was the loss of

seventy jobs. The cheaper houses were allocated, as part of normal housing control, to families from Molonglo and the Causeway, while the officers' houses were leased to suitable tenants.<sup>2</sup>

Early in 1935 the Defence Department responded at last to appeals from the Canberra business community for the return of the Royal Military College from its exile in Sydney. The College reopened at Duntroon in 1937 in newly-built barracks, classrooms and administration buildings of the Corps of Staff Cadets. As it had done during the First World War, the College shortened its course for cadets during the Second World War. It also launched a special school for temporary officers of the AIF and absorbed various specialist schools such as the Staff and Command School, hitherto in Victoria Barracks, Sydney.<sup>2</sup>

The ANZAC Memorial Chapel of St Paul was constructed in 1966 and the Changi Chapel was reconstructed near the ANZAC Chapel in 1987. In the 1980s the Australian Defence Force was established just north of Duntroon and major architectural development commenced on Duntroon. The 1920s gymnasium was demolished and new buildings were integrated with the earlier RMC buildings.

A new masterplan for Duntroon was adopted in the 1990s, which led to numerous changes including a new entry to the College off Moreshead Drive. <sup>3</sup>

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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**

1. Philip Cox & Partners. *Royal Military College of Australia Duntroon, Conservation & Management Plan*, for Department of Housing & Construction, 1986.
2. Jim Gibbney. *Canberra 1913-1953*, Canberra, AGPS, 1988.
3. Australian Heritage Commission, *RMC Conservation Area Place Details 13375*, Register of the National Estate, 2003.

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### **Other Information Sources**