

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R055B

Name of Place: Senior Officers' Quarters Assets C12 to C15

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: 1-4 Parnell Road DUNTROON ACT 2600

Block Section of

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	RNE
Date of Listing:	1984	Level of Significance:	Territory
Citation Revision No:	3	Category:	Military & Residential
Citation Revision Date:	November 03	Style:	Federation Free

Date of Design:	1911	Designer:	Works & Railways
Construction Period:	1911-13	Client/Owner/Lessee:	Defence Department
Date of Additions:		Builder:	

Statement of Significance

A group of four houses which are important for their associations with the Royal Military College as its first detached permanent residences.

The houses are notable examples of military residences, graded in size and ornateness of design according to the importance of their occupants. They are also good examples of the Federation Free Style, with a combination of elements and details drawn from Classical, Georgian and Arts and Crafts styles: Classical motifs in the porches, with stucco as a substitute for stone; some asymmetry; roughcast wall surfaces and roofs of both hips and gables with wide eaves in the Arts and Crafts manner; and double-hung Georgian windows. A rare type of construction material was used for the walls. The group of houses also makes a significant contribution to the special character of the oldest portion of the Duntroon campus, due to their unified architectural designs and siting.

Description

Gwynn House, No. 1 Parnell Road is a two-storey roughcast concrete-block house, one of the two smaller and less ornate houses of this group. The design is in the Federation Free Style, with a combination of elements and details drawn from Classical, Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts styles. Indicators of the style present are Classical motifs in the porch, with stucco as a substitute for stone; some asymmetry; roughcast wall surfaces and a roof of both hips and gables with wide eaves and exposed rafters in the Arts and Crafts manner; and double-hung windows with glazing bars in the upper sashes only.¹ The porches contain massive rendered supports as well as heavy blocked railings. The front door is off- centre within the front facade and is sheltered by a porch with rounded arches and a Classical modillion cornice. To the left of the front door is a bay with a single centred window. The roof line is composed of a forward-facing gable on the right (with a central chimney) and a roof of folded-rib decking.

There is a central stair hall and a pantry to the rear. The wooden staircase is polished and features paneling and a square newel post topped by a turned globe element. To the left of the hall are three rooms and a stair that have been converted to a separate residential unit. This unit includes three bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. To the right of the central hall are two rooms of equal size, both with fireplaces and access to a side verandah. To the rear is a kitchen

featuring a bay window. This unit includes four bedrooms and one bathroom on the first floor. Two of these bedrooms have access to the first-floor verandah.

Sinclair-MacLagan House, No. 2 Parnell Road was built to the mirror-reversed plan of No. 1.

Barnard House, No. 3 Parnell Road is a two-storey roughcast concrete-block house, one of the two larger and more ornate houses of this group. The design is in the Federation Free Style, with a combination of elements and details drawn from Classical, Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts styles. Indicators of the style present are Classical motifs in the porch, with stucco as a substitute for stone; some asymmetry; roughcast wall surfaces and a roof of both hips and gables with wide eaves and exposed rafters in the Arts and Crafts manner; and double-hung windows with glazing bars in the upper sashes only. ¹ The asymmetric front facade is topped by a pyramidal roof of folded-rib decking. The front door is the focal point of the front facade, being accented by rusticated piers and a segmented arch. The front door and the left bay are set slightly forward of the right, which has a central chimney.

The interior contains a central stair hall, to the right of which are two similarly-sized rooms, one to the front and one to the rear. Both rooms have access to the side verandah which has been enclosed. To the left of the stair hall is comparably-sized room in the front, with the kitchen, back stair and eating area to the rear. The patio to the rear of the kitchen has been enclosed for a laundry area and bathroom. The first floor contains four bedrooms, two bathrooms and a family room. The second bathroom was converted from a dressing room. Two of the bedrooms have access to the first-floor verandah.

Hosking house, No. 4 Parnell Road was built to the mirror-reversed plan of No. 3.

Condition and Integrity

Since 1913 the houses have remained in residential use, with only minor modifications. Gwynn House and Sinclair-MacLagan House were restored to their original use as single residences for senior officers in 2000. Some rooms were updated and the gardens were replanted. Barnard House is in fair to good condition. Hosking House was refurbished in 1994 and 2000. ⁵

Background/History

See General Background to Royal Military College Precinct. In October 1911 construction of these houses commenced. They were designed for four senior officers of the Royal Military College. No. 1 was initially occupied by the Director of Military Arts, Lieutenant-Colonel G. N. Gwynn, a Royal Engineers Officer, and No. 2 was initially occupied by the Director of Military Drill, Lieutenant-Colonel E. G. Sinclair-MacLagan DSO, a Yorkshire Regiment Officer. No. 3 was first occupied by Professor Barnard, the Professor of Mathematics, and No. 4 by Professor R. Hosking, the Professor of Physics. The houses were completed during 1912 and 1913. The sites of the four houses were chosen so that they would be conveniently situated when the permanent buildings were completed, as during the early occupation of the college many temporary buildings were constructed. ²

The walls of the houses are constructed from a very unusual and rare material: precast cementitious blocks of plaster-rich material with extrusion holes and straw. ³

While the college was temporarily located in Sydney in the 1930s, Gwynn House, No. 1 Parnell Road, was leased to R. G. Casey MHR and his family while he was the Assistant Treasurer in the Bruce-Page Government. He was later the Governor-General, Lord Casey. ⁴

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

References

1. Richard Apperly, Robert Irving, Peter Reynolds. *Identifying Australian Architecture - Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*. Angus and Robertson, 1989.
2. Philip Cox & Partners. *Royal Military College of Australia Duntroon, Conservation & Management Plan*, for Department of Housing & Construction, 1986.
3. Eric Martin and Associates, *RMC Duntroon, ACT: Conservation and Management Plan for 13 Residences*, Defence Housing Authority, 2001.
4. Jim Gibbney. *Canberra 1913-1953*, Canberra, AGPS, 1988.
5. Australian Heritage Commission, *Residence Asset C12 to C15 Place Details 13381 to 13384*, Register of the National Estate, 2003.

Other Information Sources