



ACT Heritage Council

## Entry to the ACT Heritage Register

*Heritage Act 2004*

### **20099. St Christopher's Cathedral Precinct**

Section 24 Block 3 (Catholic Education Resource Centre - formerly St Christopher's School); Section 24 Block 1 (Catholic Education Offices - formerly St Christopher's Convent) and Section 25 (part),

**FORREST**

This document has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council.

This entry which was previously part of the old heritage places or the old heritage objects registers (as defined in the **Heritage Act 2004**), as the case may be, is taken to be registered under the **Heritage Act 2004**.

Conservation Requirements (including Specific Requirements), as defined under the **Heritage Act 2004**, that are contained within this document are taken to be Heritage Guidelines applying to this place or object, as the case may be.

Information restricted under *the old heritage places register or old heritage objects register* is restricted under the **Heritage Act 2004**.

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ACT Heritage Council

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**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY  
INTERIM HERITAGE PLACES REGISTER**

For the purposes of s. 54(1) of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act* 1991, a citation for:

**ST CHRISTOPHER'S CATHEDRAL PRECINCT, FORREST**

has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council and included in an interim Heritage Places Register. This is pursuant to ACT Heritage Council Resolution No. 45/5 made on 25 May 1998.

**Date of gazettal: 26 June 1998**

Enquiries about this place and copies of this citation are available from:

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## INTERIM HERITAGE PLACES REGISTER

### CITATION

#### ST CHRISTOPHER'S CATHEDRAL PRECINCT, FORREST

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#### LOCATION OF PLACE:

Block 3, Section 24, Forrest (Catholic Education Resource Centre - formerly St Christopher's School);  
Block 1, Section 24, Forrest (Catholic Education Offices - formerly St Christopher's Convent); and  
Section 25 (part), Forrest (St Christopher's Cathedral).

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#### FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE.

The features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place are the:

- Catholic Education Resource Centre (formerly St Christopher's School).
  - Catholic Education Offices (formerly St Christopher's Convent).
  - St Christopher's Cathedral; and
  - associated trees and plantings: Strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*); Portugal laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*); Laurustinus (*Viburnum tinus*); Roman cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens* 'Stricta'); Californian incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*); and London plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*). Refer Figure 1.
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#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

St Christopher's Precinct has been the central focus of Catholic worship and education in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn from 1928 until the present.

The precinct is the realisation of early Federal Capital Commission policy to locate religious institutions and other associated buildings within the Kingston/Manuka/Forrest area.

The precinct exhibits a mixture of Inter-War architectural styles, Spanish Mission, Georgian Revival and Romanesque. The Cathedral has become a well known landmark of the city. Mature trees exist which are associated with the construction phases of the various built elements.

The Catholic Education Resource Centre has been continuously associated with Catholic education for nearly 70 years.

St Christopher's School building, as the first Roman Catholic school for the Federal Capital, played an important role in providing religious education for nearly 50 years from its inception in 1928 until its closure in 1971. The building with its teachers, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, also had a wider educational role as a place of instruction for some public servants. It is a representative example of Inter-War Spanish Mission style, and has examples of medallion work by noted sculptor, Raynor Hoff.

The Catholic Education Offices (formerly St Christopher's Convent) has been continuously associated with religious education since 1928, firstly as the home of the teaching order of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, and more recently as the Catholic Education Office. It is a fine example of Inter-War Georgian Revival architecture in the ACT.

From its inception in 1939 to today, St Christopher's Cathedral has been the spiritual centre for those of the Catholic faith within the Territory. It also serves as a reminder of the work of the first Parish Priest of St Christopher's, Father Haydon. As the seat of the Catholic Archbishop of Canberra, it is the most important Catholic building in the diocese. Four serving Prime Ministers have been parishioners. It is a landmark for many Canberrans and an example of Inter-War Romanesque style architecture.

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## **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:**

In accordance with s54(1) of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*, the following requirements are identified as essential to the conservation of the heritage significance of this place. These requirements are prepared to implement the following conservation policy for the place:

### **The place is to be conserved and appropriately maintained consistent with its heritage significance.**

Any activity relating to these requirements to conserve the heritage significance of this place is development under Part VI of the Land Act and requires approval prior to undertaking the activity. To undertake development without prior approval may constitute an offence.

#### **1. Requirements Relating to the Buildings**

- 1.1 Alterations and additions may be made to the Catholic Education Resource Centre (formerly St Christopher's School), Catholic Education Offices (formerly St Christopher's Convent) and St Christopher's Cathedral, where, in the opinion of the ACT Heritage Council, the proposed works will not adversely affect the significance of the place.
- 1.2 Demolition of the Catholic Education Resource Centre (formerly St Christopher's School), Catholic Education Offices (formerly St Christopher's Convent) and St Christopher's Cathedral, shall not be permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances, including circumstances in which the buildings are structurally unsound and beyond economic repair or where there are significant public health and safety reasons to warrant demolition. Demolition shall not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no prudent and feasible alternative. The demolition of original building fabric shall only be allowed in the context of sympathetic alteration and additions.
- 1.3 Construction of new landscape and built elements in the place shall only be permitted where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the ACT Heritage Council, that the new elements do not adversely affect the character of the place.

#### **2. Requirements Relating to the Landscape**

- 2.1 The following trees and shrubs indicated in Figure 1 shall be conserved and appropriately maintained: Strawberry tree, Portugal laurel, Laurustinus, Roman cypress, Californian incense cedar and the London plane.
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## **MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In assessing this place for the interim Heritage Places Register, the Council recommends that a number of actions and activities should be undertaken which will enhance the heritage values of the place. They are made as recommendations and have no legal effect.

1. A detailed conservation and management plan should be prepared, in consultation with the ACT Heritage Council. The plan should be reviewed periodically to retain its relevance.
2. The preparation of this plan should include an inventory of significant internal fabric.

**DOCUMENT HISTORY:**

1. 28 October 1997 Draft citation considered by the ACT Heritage Council at Meeting 41
2. 5 December 1997 Draft Citation released for Public Comment
3. 25 May 1998 Citation considered by the ACT Heritage Council at Meeting 45 for inclusion in an interim Heritage Places Register
4. 26 June 1998 Gazetted in an interim Heritage Places Register