



- **Teloepa Park** Courtesy of the ACT Heritage Library, Department of the Capital Territory Collection.
- **Robert Garran Offices** Courtesy of the ACT Heritage Library.
- **Barton Housing** Courtesy of the ACT Heritage Library, Department of the Capital Territory Collection.

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*A heritage tour of*  
**BARTON**

**LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN SIDE**

A SELF-GUIDED TOUR

**NATIONAL TRUST**

CONSERVING AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE

The suburb of Barton is named after Sir Edmund Barton (1849–1920), Australia's first Prime Minister, who held office from 1901–3. Barton was a member of the NSW Legislative Assembly from 1879. He was an active campaigner for Australian federation throughout the 1890s and a leader at the Constitutional Convention debates in Adelaide in 1897. He resigned as Prime Minister in 1903 to become a judge on the bench of the newly constituted High Court of Australia.

The design for the new Federal Capital included housing areas planned for different socio-economic groups within the community, reflecting the social conventions of the time. The Barton area was designed for occupation by middle income public servants. It complimented the areas of Ainslie, where smaller weatherboard houses were built for public servants working in 'blue-collar' roles, and Blandfordia (now Forrest and Griffith), where larger brick homes were built for upper income public servants. Barton provides a good example of the first phase of planned housing development in Canberra, and it demonstrated the landscape planting of 1927.

The houses in Barton were designed by the Federal Capital Commission (FCC). A number of sites were auctioned in May 1926 and construction commenced in that year.

Griffin's Waratah Parkway (now Telopea Park) acted as a dividing line separating the then government houses to the west (Barton) from private houses grouped around Eastlake (now Kingston) shopping centre. Tree planting in Telopea Park commenced in 1920 under the supervision of Charles Weston, the first Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in Canberra. Weston adopted a pattern of planting deciduous trees on minor streets, conifers on main residential streets and eucalypts along the main perimeter roads. Only one variety of tree was to be planted in each street or avenue. While it follows Weston's plan, most of the street planting in Barton took place between 1930 and 1949, after he had left Canberra.

The Kurrajong Hotel, designed by FCC architect, John Smith Murdoch, opened in 1926, and was primarily used by parliamentarians. Brassey House, one of four guest houses designed by non-government architects, opened in 1927. The completion of these hostels was timed to coincide with the opening of the provisional Parliament House. After this, Barton became a desirable suburb, due to the proximity of the subdivision to Kingston shops, Telopea Park School and Parliament House.

More private housing was completed in 1934. Further government housing was completed in the late 1930's, the designs influenced by the earlier FCC housing styles. Streets in Barton are named after Australian governors.

*NOTE: This tour will take around hour to an hour and half to complete, at a moderate pace. A complimentary tour brochure (Barton – Manuka Side) of sites in the vicinity of this suburb is also available.*

## 1. TELOPEA PARK

*(Return here at the end of the walk). The best place to start this walk is from the Park or from the car park near Telopea Park School, across from the Park. Car parking is accessible at a number of locations in or around the Park.*

Telopea Park is named after the Australian native plant, *Telopea* sp. The plant is more widely known as the Waratah, although no Waratahs have been planted in the Park.

The Park is planted with a wide range of native and exotic trees, a few different types of eucalypts, and the uncommon Californian big tree, native to the Sierras of California. Each side of the Park is lined with Atlas Cedar and Flowering Plum. Planting commenced in the 1920s and many of the trees have value as mature examples of their species in Canberra.

A barbecue area and children's playground is located towards the centre of the Park.

## 2. BARTON HOUSING PRECINCT

*Enter Precinct at Gipps Street, turn right into Young Street.*

Cross Darling Street and enter the conservation area, one of the early subdivisions of the new Federal Capital, and part of John Sulman's 'Garden Suburb' plan. The precinct comprises more than 60 houses, including FCC houses built in 1926-7, private houses built between 1926-34, government houses built between 1933-9 and private houses built since 1934. The streetscapes are distinctive with their varied setbacks, street trees, hedges and 1920s street signs and lamps. Belmore Gardens, a small park located off Young Street and surrounded by FCC houses, represents another aspect of Garden City planning, the provision of open space.

### Original street signs

The first sign, as you enter the precinct, is located on the corner of Young and Darling Streets; there are several others within the precinct. The signs are originals dating back from the mid-1920s, when work commenced on the

### Street Trees

Tree planting in streets other than Belmore Gardens:

*Darling Street:*  
Southern Nettle Tree;

*Gipps Street:*  
Incense Cedar  
and Black Locust;

*Macquarie Street:*  
Kurrajong,  
Candle-bark  
and White Gum;

*Young Street:*  
Cottonwood;

*New South Wales Crescent:*  
Pin Oak;

*Telopea Park West:*  
Deodar Cedar.

### Belmore Gardens

This is one of a number of communal gardens incorporated into Canberra's early suburban plans, in line with the



## 4. HOTEL KURRAJONG

*Go to Brisbane Avenue then turn right into National Circuit and proceed along it; after crossing Blackall Street, the Kurrajong is on the right.*

This is the second of the early hostels built to provide

## 8. ST MARK'S MEMORIAL LIBRARY

*Turn right at Blackall Street; this site is first on the left.*

This one of a number of cathedral sites allocated to the various Christian denominations in the new Federal Capital. It was selected by the Anglican Church in 1923 but no church building was constructed due to the economic severity of the Great Depression. The foundation stone for St Mark's Anglican Memorial Library was set by Sir William Slim, Governor General of Australia, on St Mark's day in 1955. It is now St Mark's National Theological Centre and includes a library, Charles Sturt University of Theology, a chapel and bookshop for theology students.

At the top of the hill overlooking Lake Burley Griffin is the Tent of the Meeting, an open-air place of spiritual gathering and reconciliation, intended as a place of healing

## 6. STATUE OF

layout of the subdivisions. A small number of similar signs exist in some of the other early suburbs such as Forrest.

### FCC Housing

There were over 20 different types of FCC house designs built in early Canberra. The FCC houses in this precinct (there are around 50) include 13 of these different designs, with at least 23 variations to the standard designs. They are in the Mediterranean and Arts and Crafts styles. All are single storey and built of brick, the majority being rendered with a rough-cast finish. Most retain their original red terracotta tile roofs. Features include door and porch arches, false windows and niches, various kinds of pillars and small six-paned windows. On corner blocks, the houses are sited diagonally across the block, to allow uninterrupted views of the architectural style.

plans, in line with the 'garden suburb' principles adopted by John Sulman. The trees planted in Belmore Gardens are Silver Birch and Atlas Cedar.

### 3. BRASSEY HOUSE

Originally called the Telopea Park Hostel, the building was opened in 1927. In that year, it was renamed 'Brassey House' after Sir Thomas Brassey, Governor of Victoria from 1885–91 and an early supporter of Federation.

Brassy House is designed in the American Colonial style which differed from other government hostels. The building is set in a picturesque garden setting. When it opened, it provided full board for 60 people in 36 single rooms and 12 double rooms. In 1935 it was leased to the private sector and returned to Commonwealth management in 1959. Major extensions were carried out in 1964. It was sold in 1987 and, after major refurbishment, now caters to the short-stay tourist and business market.

accommodation for public servants who were transferred from Melbourne to Canberra prior to the opening of the provisional Parliament House. It was designed in 1924 by John Smith Murdoch, the Commonwealth's Chief Architect, who designed many of the Federal Capital's early buildings. Murdoch used the Garden Pavilion style, as he had for the design of the Hotel Canberra, the first Government hostel. The Kurrajong opened in 1926 and was extended in 1936.

The Kurrajong came to be associated with Labor Members of Parliament, who preferred to stay here rather than at the Hotel Canberra, which came to be associated with Liberal Party MPs. The most famous of the Labor MPs to stay at the Kurrajong was Ben Chifley, Australia's Prime Minister from 1945–9, who remained at the Hotel during his term as Prime Minister, rather than staying at the Lodge. In June 1951, Chifley suffered a fatal heart attack in his room here. Arthur Calwell, leader of the Labor Opposition from 1960–66 also stayed here.

Major refurbishment was undertaken in 1994. In September 2005 the Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School acquired operation of the hotel with a 10-year lease.

### 5. ROBERT GARRAN OFFICES

*(Former Patent Office)  
Proceed along National Circuit to the last building on the right before reaching Kings Avenue.*

The Patent Office was proclaimed in 1904 and was initially located in Melbourne. It was relocated to Canberra in June 1932, along with around 70 staff members, and was among the first buildings erected in the Parliamentary Zone.

Designed by the Chief Commonwealth Architect, E.H. Henderson, in the Inter-War Stripped Classical style, the original building, completed in 1941, is E-shaped in plan and has two storeys, except for the central wing, which has three. The building is constructed from sandstone on a steel and reinforced concrete frame. The entrance steps at the front (Kings Avenue side) are flanked by bronze lanterns set on fluted stone pillars, and lead to the main entrance vestibules, detailed with black and white marble. Two further sets of similar, although smaller, entrance steps are at either side of the building. Today it is used as the offices of the Attorney General's Department.

## BARTON

Outside the next building on the corner of Macquarie Street and Kings Avenue, stands a bronze sculpture, one and a half times life size, of Australia's first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton. It was sculpted by Marc Clark, former Head of Sculpture, Victorian College of the Arts, and unveiled in 1983.

### 7. EDMUND BARTON BUILDING

*Turn right into Kings Avenue and continue to the other side of Macquarie Street.*

This is the former site of Stage One of the National Library, constructed in 1934–5. A new National Library was constructed by the shore of Lake Burley Griffin in 1968 and the first building was demolished in the early 1970s to make way for the Edmund Barton Offices. This building was designed in 1973 by Harry Seidler one of Australia's leading architects for the National Capital Development Commission, and completed in 1974. The building is constructed extensively of wide-span pre-cast concrete and is recognised as an outstanding example of the late twentieth-century international style of architecture.

as a place of pilgrimage for all Australians. It is also the site for the planned Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. The area below the Tent is a Conservation Park for native Australian grasses, particularly Kangaroo Grass.

This is also the site of Rottenberry Hill, where George Rotteberry established a farm in the early twentieth century. He was the grandson of a stone mason who migrated from England to work for the Campbell family of Duntroon. At the bottom of the hill an old orchard remains near the site of the house. George's father also built a cottage on the property. It was located where Telopea Park is now and was demolished in the early 1920s.

*From St Mark's Memorial Library, proceed along Blackall Street and take the path at the end of the Street between the buildings. Cross Brisbane Avenue and enter Young Street again. Turn left into Darling Street and continue back to Telopea Park.*