



LISTED PLACES IN
BARTON - MANUKA SIDE

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A heritage tour of
BARTON

MANUKA SIDE
A SELF-GUIDED TOUR



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- **Manuka Swimming Pool** Courtesy of the ACT Heritage Library.
- **FCC Housing** Courtesy of the ACT Heritage Library.
- **Forrest Fire Station Precinct** Courtesy of the ACT Heritage Library, *Canberra Times* Collection.

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 overall residential planning concepts of Walter Burley Griffin, who prepared the city's original design, are well preserved in the street and parkland layout of Barton. Griffin incorporated elements of the 'garden city' concept in town planning, such as the provision of generous areas of open space, communal parks and spacious house blocks. The 'garden city' concept was later adopted by Sir John Sulman, a leading architect, town planner and chair of the Federal Capital Advisory Authority (later renamed the Federal Capital Commission, FCC) which was formed in 1921.

The houses in Barton were designed by the FCC largely to suit middle income public servants and their families. A number of land allotments were auctioned in May 1926 and a few brick cottages were commenced in that year. More private housing was completed in 1934. Further government housing was erected 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 an hour to an hour and half to complete at a moderate pace. Another tour brochure (Barton – Lake Burley Griffin Side) of sites in the vicinity of this suburb is also available.

1. TELEPEA PARK

Car parking is accessible at the Park. The best place to start this walk is at the southern end of Telopea Park, across from Manuka Swimming Pool.

Telopea Park appeared as Waratah Parkway on Walter Burley Griffin's plans for the city, but this was later altered to make it a park. It was named after the Australian native plant, *Telopea* sp., popularly known as the Waratah, although no Waratahs have been planted here.

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 under Charles Weston, and many of the trees have value as mature examples of their species in Canberra. A concrete open stormwater channel, where Spring Creek once ran, runs the length of the Park, with access across it provided by bridges. A combined bicycle track and pedestrian path runs alongside the channel. A barbecue area and children's playground is located towards the centre of the Park.

Manuka Circle

The following places are within Manuka Circle. The Circle was part of Walter Burley Griffin's geometric plan of Canberra located to the south of the proposed Lake. When the area was established, the Federal Capital Advisory Committee enlarged the Circle. Charles Weston designed and established the landscape in the early 1920s, using a circular arrangement of poplars, oaks, cedars and cypresses, on the outside of which was a hedge. Roman cypresses were planted opposite the Manuka Shopping Centre. Most of these trees, now around 80 years old, still remain.

2. MANUKA SWIMMING POOL

The Pool was opened in 1931. Prior to this, the only 'pool' was a swimming hole in the nearby Molonglo River. A factor in the location of the Manuka Pool was access to schoolchildren from the nearby Telopea Park School. An elegant Art Deco style entrance building leads to a walled, ceramic-tiled pool of approximately 31 metres by 12.5 metres and change rooms with terracotta-tiled roofs.

3. MANUKA OVAL

Originally an open field, in 1926 the Cricket Association and football representatives sought to have the area enclosed but it was not until 1929 that the Oval was graded, grass sown, a turf pitch laid and a wire-mesh fence erected around the perimeter of the ground. From 1930, the oval was used mainly for cricket and football. In 1979, the ACT Administration decided to develop the Oval mainly for cricket. A better scoreboard was required, and in 1982 the ACT Cricket Association managed to acquire the original scoreboard from the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), which the MCG was replacing with an electronic scoreboard. The MCG scoreboard was originally erected in 1901, the year of Federation. At Manuka Oval, it was named the Jack Fingleton Scoreboard in honour of Fingleton, test

4. CANBERRA SERVICES CLUB

The Services Club is closely associated with Lady Zara Gowrie, wife of the then Governor General, who inspired the building of the Club and was its first patron. It was established as a Rest Hut for members of the armed services and was affectionately known as 'The Hut'. The building was extended in 1943 to include a dance hall, which was linked to the existing recreational hall. The Club became the nucleus of the Defence forces community in Canberra and welcomed anyone in uniform.

After World War II, the Canberra Services Club was formed and sub-leased the southern portion of the 'Hut'. Alterations were made to the interior of the building



6. TELOPEA PARK SCHOOL

Turn right into Dominion Circuit and left into New South Wales Crescent.

Completed in 1923, this is the first major public school erected for the Federal Capital. It was also one of the first buildings constructed in the new Federal Capital. The original building was designed

7. WESLEY UNITING CHURCH COMPLEX

Corner of Sydney Avenue and National Circuit, accessed by walking along Sydney Avenue and turning left into National Circuit.

The complex was built as a national memorial and centre of Methodism in Australia prior to the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia. The site was selected by Church representatives in 1924, from land designated for monumental churches and cathedrals to

9. BRASSEY HOUSE

At the end of Bourke Street.

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. The original building, and a 1964 addition, were designed in the American Colonial style, which differed from other government hostels. The building, in a garden setting, has clinker brick walls, a steep-pitched slate roof, a giant order portico under a high gable facing Belmore Gardens (visible from the rear entrance which will be visited later in the walk), and side wings angled towards Belmore Gardens. When it opened it provided full board for 60 people in 36 single rooms and 12 double rooms. It was popular, with an occupancy rate of 75%, most of whom were public servants relocated to work in Canberra. In 1935 it was leased to the private sector; it reverted to the Commonwealth management in 1959 and major extensions were carried out. It was sold in 1987 and, after major refurbishment, now caters to the short-stay tourist and business market. It is rumoured to have been built back to front, in that the grand entrance faces the quiet Belmore Gardens, while a more modest façade faces the busy thoroughfare of Macquarie Street.

10. BARTON HOUSING PRECINCT

Turn left at Macquarie Street, right at Darling Street and right into Young Street.

After crossing Darling Street, you 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 built between 1926 and 1934, government houses built between 1933 and 1939, and private houses built since 1934. The streetscapes are distinctive with their varied setbacks, street trees,

cricketer, author and political journalist who worked in the corridors of Parliament House (Old Parliament House) nearby.

The Curator's Cottage, a rendered brick building with a tiled roof, built in 1937 as the residence for the curator of the Oval, still remains in its original condition. The Manuka Oval is well known for its role as annual host to the Prime Minister's Eleven, a cricket team picked by the Prime Minister, which plays against visiting national teams.

and the Club was opened in April 1948 by the Governor General, Sir William McKell. In 1984 the Canberra Services Club acquired the lease for the whole building. It continues to operate as a club for ex-service personnel and police.

5. FORREST FIRE STATION PRECINCT

Located on the opposite side of Manuka Circle to the Canberra Services Club. Turn left into Fitzroy Street and the precinct, which is in the suburb of Forrest, is on the left.

The Forrest Fire Station precinct, which includes the Fire Station and seven residences, is located on Canberra Avenue, Manuka Circle, Fitzroy Street and Empire Circuit. The seven residences are made up of a two storey house at each of the four street corners, with three two storey duplexes in between. The complex is the first example of the Inter-War Functionalist style in the ACT.

The Fire Station was operational from 1939–1983, with the precinct supporting the main ACT Fire Station. The Fire Station is now a museum and the residences have been converted to a variety of offices. The buildings are substantially original and, are some of the last remaining examples of Government sponsored functionalist residential architecture in Canberra.

for 500 students from kindergarten to school leaving age; the school still caters to this range (primary and secondary students to Year 10). It has a gable-ended, tile-roofed main block centred on Sydney Avenue, with an L-shaped, hipped roof pavilion on each side, best viewed from the School's entrance at the intersection with Sydney Avenue. The original gable-ended pavilions are partly obscured by the memorial glass-fronted entrance, built during the Second World War.

In 1927 two two-storey wings were added, one for infants, and the other for technical classes. The wings, best viewed from either side of the School's entrance include gabled sections with round-arched windows and decorative wrought-iron balconies. Other additions have been made over the years and new buildings have also been added on the block. One of the more famous students who attended the School is Gough Whitlam, Prime Minister from 1972–5.

Since 1983, primary teaching has been bilingual in French and English and the bilingual programme continues as an option in the secondary part of the School.

churches and cathedrals to represent the various Christian denominations. The parsonage, a brick residence with a slate tile roof (on the left as you walk along Sydney Avenue) was built in 1938. The Church hall building, now known as Wesley Hall and Vercoe Room, was opened in 1930 as a cooperative Church hall for Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists. The Methodist National Memorial Church was not built until 1955, although the first plans had been drawn up and an Australia-wide appeal for funds had been launched 28 years earlier. Two features of the church interior are the electro-pneumatic organ, considered to be the best organ in Canberra, and six rough, hand-sawn timber slabs taken from the first Methodist church in Canberra built in 1869.

8. YORK PARK CONSERVATION SITE

Cross to the opposite side of National Circuit and follow it along, crossing Sydney Avenue, until you reach a sign on the left.

York Park is an isolated remnant patch of natural temperate grassland which provides a habitat for the Golden Sun Moth. This type of grassland once covered a vast area of south-eastern Australia but today only isolated remnants, such as this one, remain. Native grass species found on the site include Kangaroo Grass, Wallaby Grass and Spear Grass, and wild-flowers such as Yellow Buttons are also here. The Golden Sun Moth belongs to an ancient moth family and is now an endangered species, resulting from the loss of its habitat; it exists only in low numbers in western Victoria and on a small number of sites in the ACT.

hedges and 1920s street signs and lamps.

Belmore Gardens

This is one of a number of communal garden areas incorporated into Canberra's early suburban plans. The trees planted in Belmore Gardens are Silver Birch and Atlas Cedar.

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.

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.

Brassey House

On the right as you walk along Young Street, facing Belmore Gardens, the rear of Brassey House can be seen. This consists of a giant order portico under a high gable.

Continue to the end of Young Street, turn left and walk to the end of NSW Crescent and you are back at Telopea Park.