



- Original concrete street marker, Stokes Street
- American Elms, Grant Crescent
- Early government housing, Murray Crescent

LISTED PLACES IN BLANDFORDIA 5

1. The Lawns at Manuka
2. Murray Crescent
3. Stokes Street
4. La Perouse Street & Stokes Street
5. La Perouse Street
6. Durville Crescent & Stokes Street
7. Durville Crescent
8. Durville Crescent & Hayes Crescent
9. Flinders Way
10. La Perouse Street & Grant Crescent
11. Grant Crescent



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A heritage tour of BLANDFORDIA 5

GRIFFITH AND FORREST

A WALK THROUGH A SUBURBAN HERITAGE PRECINCT



NATIONAL TRUST

CONSERVING AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE

Blandfordia 5, now part of Griffith and Forrest, was named by Walter Burley Griffin after a native plant species which includes the Christmas Bell. Development of the suburb began in 1925. It was planned as a suburb mainly for middle class public servants with families on a higher average income than those accommodated in Ainslie, Acton and Barton.

In Canberra's early years suburbs had very distinct social boundaries often based on incomes, a feature which drew criticism from other parts of Australia. By 1938, 90% of the 150 houses were built – 33% were built by the Federal Capital Commission (1925–1937), 47% by the Department of Interior (1932–1938) and 7% were privately built. The suburb was completed shortly after 1945 but in recent years further development of privately owned and designed modern dwellings has occurred.

Garden City Planning

Blandfordia 5 was developed on Garden City Planning principles introduced to Canberra in 1925 from England. This form of planning was aimed at creating a pleasant social character of urban living. Curvilinear street layouts often following the natural contours, planned siting of reserves, creation of space, tree plantings, and hedge plantings, visual recognition of the natural landscape, and a consistency in the form and style of housing were all principles in this type of planning. The houses were mainly separated and single storeyed within spacious yards. Their architectural styles borrowed from overseas including Spanish, Dutch, Californian and elements of the English Arts and Crafts Movement. The final plan of the suburb differed somewhat from Walter Burley Griffin's original 1918 gazetted plan which had a much larger area for housing and parks.

Street names

The streets are named after prominent explorers of Australia.

Bass Gardens:

George Bass (1771–1803) navigator, surgeon; explored the Australian coast, discovered Bass Strait and circumnavigated Tasmania in 1798.

Bougainville Street:

Louis Antoine De Bougainville (1729–1811) first Frenchman to circumnavigate the globe; explored the coast of the mandated Territory of New Guinea, 1768.

Durville Crescent:

Dumont Durville (1778–1852) navigator and explorer of parts of the Australian coast and Pacific Islands, 1827 and 1839.

Flinders Way:

Captain Matthew Flinders RN (1774–1814) navigator; with George Bass explored coasts of NSW and VIC, circumnavigated Tasmania in 1798 and Australia in 1801–03.

Grant Crescent:

Lieutenant James Grant (1772–1833) navigator; surveyed parts of the Victorian coast and Hunter River in 1801.

Hayes Crescent:

Sir John Hayes (1767–1831) navigator, charted part of the coasts of Tasmania and New Guinea in 1793; explored and named Derwent River and Risdon Cove.

La Perouse Street:

Jean Francis de Galaup, Comte de la Perouse, French navigator who arrived at Botany Bay six days after the First Fleet in 1788; later perished in the Pacific.

Murray Crescent:

Lieutenant John Murray (born c.1775) explored Port Phillip Bay and Westernport in 1802.

Stokes Street:

Commander John Lort Stokes RN (1812–1885) surveyor and one of the founders of Western Australia.



2. MURRAY CRESCENT

Murray Crescent forms the northern border of the precinct. Almost at once you can see some of the major features of Garden City planning. Murray Street is a wide curving

4. LA PEROUSE STREET & STOKES STREET

The junction of La Perouse Street and Stokes Street is very open with curved corners and pocket parks serving as traffic islands. In recent years another island has been added to the La Perouse Street

6. DURVILLE CRESCENT & STOKES STREET

Durville Crescent and Stokes Street merge at this point forming a spacious junction with three houses facing a wide view of the surrounding landscape. Utilizing views of the surrounding landscape is another feature of Garden City Planning in Canberra. The Stokes Street Park opens up the view to the slopes and ridge of Red Hill to the west and to the north the tower of St Christopher's can be seen against the distant slopes. The group of poplars in the low section of the park marks the site of a former dam, a reminder that this was once good grazing land

8. DURVILLE CRESCENT & HAYES CRESCENT

A small park leading from the junctions of Durville Crescent and Hayes Crescent is characterised by a natural outcrop of rocks. This was once a favoured camping area for Aboriginal groups. The outcrop is located on the slopes above a small creek which originated on Red Hill and ran into the Molonglo River (now the East Basin of Lake Burley Griffin). Traces of the creek remain on the far side of Flinders Way. Elders of the local Aboriginal people can still remember staying here after the suburb was established. Notice how Durville and Hayes Crescents gently merge to form another characteristic open space.

9. FLINDERS WAY

Walk along the footpath of Flinders Way then take the small lane which leads up to the

10. LA PEROUSE STREET & GRANT CRESCENT

Pause for a while at this point. A small park has been created by the junctions of La Perouse Street and Grant Crescent. This typifies another feature of Garden City Planning; softening the road access junctions by making them into open spaces and creating small urban park lands. If you turn and look back up the hill towards Bass Gardens, you will see another small park with triangular plantings of Blue Gums, Deodars and Atlas Cedars.

The Walking Tour

This tour is designed to create a 1.5 hour walk around the streets of this early suburb to see and understand some aspects of its development. The walk leads to 11 points within Blandfordia 5 covering significant features of the precinct.

1. THE LAWNS AT MANUKA

The Lawns area of Manuka, named by Walter Burley Griffin after a native plant of New Zealand, is a good place to start your tour. You can park the car in the shopping area, or catch a bus to Manuka and walk through one of the arcades to the Lawns. Directly opposite is a narrow lane which leads from Bougainville St. into the Blandfordia 5 precinct. The lane and the Lawns of Manuka are elements of a linear axis linking Telopea Park, Manuka Oval and the former Capitol Theatre building.

street which follows the natural land contour. The verges are also wide and planted with White Poplars and Lusitanian Oaks. Note the differing styles of the houses and their situations on the blocks. Another feature of Garden City planning was to place corner houses obliquely on the blocks to face the corner. A major feature of this street is two storey semi-detached houses, which are sited symmetrically and originally had consistent designs. They act as a transition zone between the commercial area of Manuka and the residential area of Blandfordia 5. Can you find the triplex units amongst the duplexes?

3. STOKES STREET

Take a short walk along Stokes Street. This streetscape is a contrast. While curved, it is much narrower and the many hedges on the blocks form green walls leading up the slope. The narrowness of the street does not detract from the view as it directs the sight up to tall conifers and poplars in the distance. Houses built in the 1930s by the Department of Interior are the most common and original facades remain on several.

junction to slow the traffic. Do you think this has detracted from the nature of the area? The view opens out here and St Christopher's Cathedral can be seen over the exotic trees. One other feature to note is the red-brick gutter, or swale, on this corner. Once common, this particular swale has been personally maintained by a resident; others have been covered or removed.

5. LA PEROUSE STREET

Walk along La Perouse Street and note the remaining original houses, the additions and the differing styles and form of the new houses. This street has an original two-storey Department of Interior house. Can you identify it? Durville Crescent curves gently around an easy slope. At its junction with La Perouse Street you can see a house which has an original separate garage. Another expression of Garden City planning principles was to build garages as separate structures to the side and rear of the houses with paired driveways and verge crossings shared by two houses. Another feature to look out for is the original red fire hydrant about halfway along. It still works!

and of the several creeks which ran nearby.

7. DURVILLE CRESCENT

As you walk along Durville Crescent to this point keep your eyes open for another original swale. Bass Gardens is a major feature of the heritage precinct and a significant example of a community park. Take a walk through the reserve and look for the double row of Atlas Cedars planted in north to south curving avenues. A triangular group of Deodars at the higher (eastern) side points to the western vista of Red Hill. Narrabundah Cottage, a small slab dwelling with a bark roof was once located in what is now Bass Gardens before the land was developed as a Canberra suburb. There is no trace of the cottage today. More than 200 trees were planted, most between 1930 and 1940. The park is also a fine remaining example of native temperate grassland. The tree plantings from Bass Gardens continue as a prominent landscape element leading on to and along Grant Crescent.

left above the main road. This small access route is quite unique and provides a peaceful walk along the house frontages back into La Perouse Street. Many of the original houses have been replaced or substantially altered. Can you spot an original concrete street marker? As you come to the end of this small lane turn into the open space area formed by the junction of La Perouse Street and Grant Crescent. The mature, closely spaced American Elms form a high covering creating a shady boulevard in the warmer months of the year. Grant Crescent has a number of Federal Capital Commission houses where original facades can still be seen. After a very pleasant stroll along this street you will find yourself just 50 metres east of point 2 and at the end of the walk.

GRANT CRESCENT

One of the highlights of this tour is the final walk down Grant Crescent. This is another of the narrow streets in the precinct which encloses the view but provides a highly aesthetic effect. It links the open space of Bass Gardens to the wide roadway and verges of Murray Crescent. The mature, closely spaced American Elms form a high covering creating a shady boulevard in the warmer months of the year. Grant Crescent has a number of Federal Capital Commission houses where original facades can still be seen. After a very pleasant stroll along this street you will find yourself just 50 metres east of point 2 and at the end of the walk.

You might like to return another day to walk around some of the other streets and see more of the layout, buildings and plantings. Blandfordia 5 has been heritage listed by the National Trust, the ACT Government and the Commonwealth Government as a significant example of Garden City planning ideals expressed in the Federal Capital decades ago and still evident today.