

National Trust of Australia



NATIONAL TRUST

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ACT National Trust severely criticises plans for new building at ANU

The ACT National Trust has sent the Department of Environment and Water Resources a severe censure over proposals for a new building to be constructed in a heritage listed area on the Australian National University Campus.

The ANU plans to build a new 3 story building for the Crawford School within the grounds of Old Canberra House on the Upper Acton Peninsula.

National Trust President, Mr Eric Martin AM, said that Old Canberra House and its surrounding landscape is of high heritage value depicting the early development of Canberra as the National Capital and is on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

Old Canberra House, designed by J.S. Murdoch (designer of Old Parliament House), was erected in 1913 for the first Administrator of the ACT and was the first substantial dwelling of the new Territory. It was later used by the Chief Commissioner of the Federal Capital Commission and for a number of British High Commissioners. The building is now part of the ANU campus.

Charles Weston, the Officer in Charge of Afforestation, for the new capital planted many trees in the grounds from 1913 to 1923 including a row of cedars to act as a windbreak.

Mr Martin said this new building will intrude into the row of cedars requiring the removal of up to fourteen trees and would require the re-emplacement of two other historic buildings associated with OCH. It will also connect to the rear of Old Canberra House requiring some substantial alterations to the building.

The ANU has sent the plans to DEWR for referral and for public comment.

The ACT National Trust believes that if this project was to be approved the existing heritage values as specified on the Commonwealth Heritage List for Old Canberra House and its surrounds would be severely compromised and may breach the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act which is supposed to protect it.

For more information contact

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