

Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter

Register of Significant Architecture

RSA No: R099

Name of Place: The Pines

Other/Former Names: Fraser House

Address/Location: 21 Furneaux Street FORREST 2603
Block 7 Section 23 Forrest

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	None
Date of Listing:	1995	Level of Significance:	Territory
Date of Citation	1995	Category:	Residential
Citation Revision No:	2		
Citation Revision Date:	February 2021	Style:	Inter-War Spanish Mission

Date of Design:	1929	Designer:	Kenneth Oliphant
Construction	1930	Client/Owner/Lessee:	Dr Rolland Fraser
		Builder:	Chapman & Eggleston
Alterations & additions	2017	Designer	
		Builder	Ken Chapman

Statement of Significance

'The Pines' is a 1930 building of architectural significance for demonstrating the principal characteristics of the Inter-War Spanish Mission Style (c.1915-c.1940), built when it was a new architectural style in Australia. The design of the original two-storey brick building incorporates features which are peculiar to the style, including rounded terra cotta roof tiles on a medium pitched roof and capping to walls, arched openings, twisted columns, a balcony, ornamental metalwork and stucco finish walls with light tones to exploit sunlight and shadows. As such, the original building has the potential to contribute to the education of designers and planners in their understanding of inter-war architectural styles.

This residence, formerly with a dental surgery, exhibits particular aesthetic characteristics evident in the original design which have been retained and are valued by the community today. It is a local landmark, beautifully sited to address the intersection of Furneaux and Bougainville Streets, with appropriate two-storey massing on rising ground and its entrance diagonally opposite the Manuka Centre (from 1924). Being in the Spanish Mission style, it blends with the similarly styled former St Christopher's School (1928) to the east and the large group of Mediterranean style houses (1930) to the south.

Dr Fraser's dental surgery was an important facility for the Manuka community when its shopping centre was becoming established and continued as a surgery and residence for dentists and a general practitioner for many years.

Description

The original two storey residence and former surgery at the intersection of Furneaux and Bougainville Streets had an 'L' plan with an entry portico on the central splayed corner of the residence. The former surgery had a separate entry from Furneaux Street. A flat-roofed garage, entered from the rear, was attached to the surgery. The entry to the residence was through the portico directly into the central lounge. The plaster ceiling had stained exposed beams. Opposite the entry and located in the centre of the facet of the rear facade was a large arched window that allowed a view out into the garden. To the left of the entry in the south west wall was a central fire place with a projecting hood, beside a door into the former waiting room. The stair hall was up a step through an arched loggia, and led to the dining room. The kitchen was at the northern end with a laundry and store room to its rear.

The well-designed staircase, with masonry balustrade, curved mid-landing and full height arched glazing, led to the upper level which consisted of three bedrooms and a bathroom. The ceiling followed the angle of the roof pitch at the sides but was flat in the centre. The main bedroom, located over the living room, had glazed double doors which opened onto the balcony over the entry. Originally, the upper level at both ends had large roof terraces, to the south over the garage and to the north over the kitchen. The north terrace was enclosed with a flat roofed extension in 1963 by the then owner, Dr Fitzhardinge, to provide a large bedroom and an additional toilet and shower.

The original building was constructed of rendered cavity brickwork with timber roof framing. The upper level hall internal wall was stud framed and the floor was timber framed.

The major architectural elements peculiar to the Inter-War Spanish Mission Style (1915-1940) that were displayed by this building relate to the external forms. The design incorporated features which indicate the style, including rounded terra cotta roof tiles on a medium pitched roof and capping to walls, arched openings, twisted columns, a balcony, ornamental metalwork and stucco finish walls with light tones to exploit sunlight and shadows.¹

Background/History

The Spanish Mission style has been recognised among the architectural styles in the Inter-War (c.1915-c.1940) period of Australia's history. Its genesis was in the American States California, New Mexico, Louisiana and Florida, where there were Franciscan missions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These attractive buildings mingled the exuberant richness of Spanish Baroque with sturdy, plain solidity. From the 1890s to the mid-twentieth century mission-inspired architecture prospered in the United States. Australia during the 1920s and 1930s was not immune to cultural propaganda emanating from California, thanks to Hollywood stars giving the style a boost.²

Dr Rolland Fraser leased the block on the corner of Furneaux and Bougainville Streets opposite the Manuka Centre in 1929 and the building was completed in 1930.³ After graduating from Melbourne University in 1920 Dr Fraser completed a doctorate in dental surgery in Pennsylvania in 1923, so was receptive to an American style of architecture for his planned residence and surgery. He had practised in Sydney since 1924 in Double Bay, near Elizabeth Bay, where *Boomerang*, Australia's best example of a Spanish Mission residence was completed in 1926.⁴ He engaged the architect Kenneth Oliphant to design

a building which would function as a surgery and residence for himself and his wife, Florence. It was later named for two pencil pines, one each side of the front path.

When completed in 1930, this was one of the first large private residences in south Canberra that included a surgery.⁵ Dr Rolland Fraser's dental surgery was an important facility for the Manuka community at a time when the Manuka shopping centre was becoming established. With the onset of the Great Depression, Dr Fraser soon tried to sell the house. It was let and then sold to another dentist, Eric Harvie and his wife Joy. In 1947 they divorced and Eric died. Another dentist, Greg Barnes then practised in 'The Pines' until 1958.⁶ From 1959 to 1995 it was the Fitzhardinge family home, where Dr Fitzhardinge practised as a GP.⁷

In 1998 Frank Arnold bought the property and set up his design business there.⁸ Peter Axiom bought the property in 2015 and undertook extensive alterations and additions in 2017.⁹

'The Pines' is located in the Blandfordia No 5 Housing Precinct, which is entered in the ACT Heritage Register. Among the values specific to the precinct are the privately built examples of the domestic architecture of Kenneth Oliphant, due to their notable contribution to the urban architecture character of 1930-1960s Canberra.

The architect Kenneth Oliphant (1894-1975) played a significant role in Canberra's cultural history, from 1926, when he moved from Melbourne and supervised construction of the government housing in Blandfordia, won in a competition by Oakley, Parkes & Scarborough, for whom he worked. The following year he commenced a fruitful architectural practice, which continued until 1965 in the new capital city. Kenneth Oliphant specialised in domestic work and designed many distinguished houses during his career. Examples, apart from 'The Pines', of his virtuosity include the Alcorn house (1929), Forrest, in the Inter-War Mediterranean style, the Tillyard or 'Dial' house (1929), Forrest, with half-timbering common in the Tudor period and Barton Court (1934), residential flats in the Old English style. Study of Oliphant's domestic work reveals commendable confidence, control and assurance. He was clearly concerned with the siting of his buildings, as well as the functional arrangement of the accommodation. He paid heed to orientation as well as views of and from the buildings on their sites. His output extended to religious, commercial and light industrial buildings. It is no surprise that he established and maintained a successful practice for such a long period, and his significance as a major contributor to the development of architecture in Canberra is assured.¹⁰

Condition and Integrity

The alterations and additions carried out in 2017 extended the floor area by adding a north wing, a double garage with a studio and bathroom above it and a separate single garage. A swimming pool was installed behind the residence. Necessary repairs and restoration was carried out in a manner which retained the external heritage character of the building. The original Cordova pattern half pipe terra cotta roof tiles, in shades of red, purple and green, but in poor condition, were replaced with similarly rounded tiles, but with 'S' shaped profiles and only subtle variations in terra cotta hue. The additions blend with the original building remarkably well. Wrought ironwork and other external details have been restored satisfactorily. A garden has been created to form an appropriate setting.¹¹ The condition of the interior is not known.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA IN THE HERITAGE ACT 2004

d. Importance in demonstrates the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or objects

'The Pines' meets this criterion.

The original part of this building is an excellent example of the Inter-War Spanish Mission Style (c.1915-c.1940), built when it was a new architectural style in Australia. The design of this two-storey brick building incorporates features which are peculiar to the style, including rounded terra cotta roof tiles on a medium pitched roof and capping to walls, arched openings, twisted columns, a balcony, ornamental metalwork and stucco finish walls with light tones to exploit sunlight and shadows.

e. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the community or by a cultural group in the ACT

'The Pines' meets this criterion.

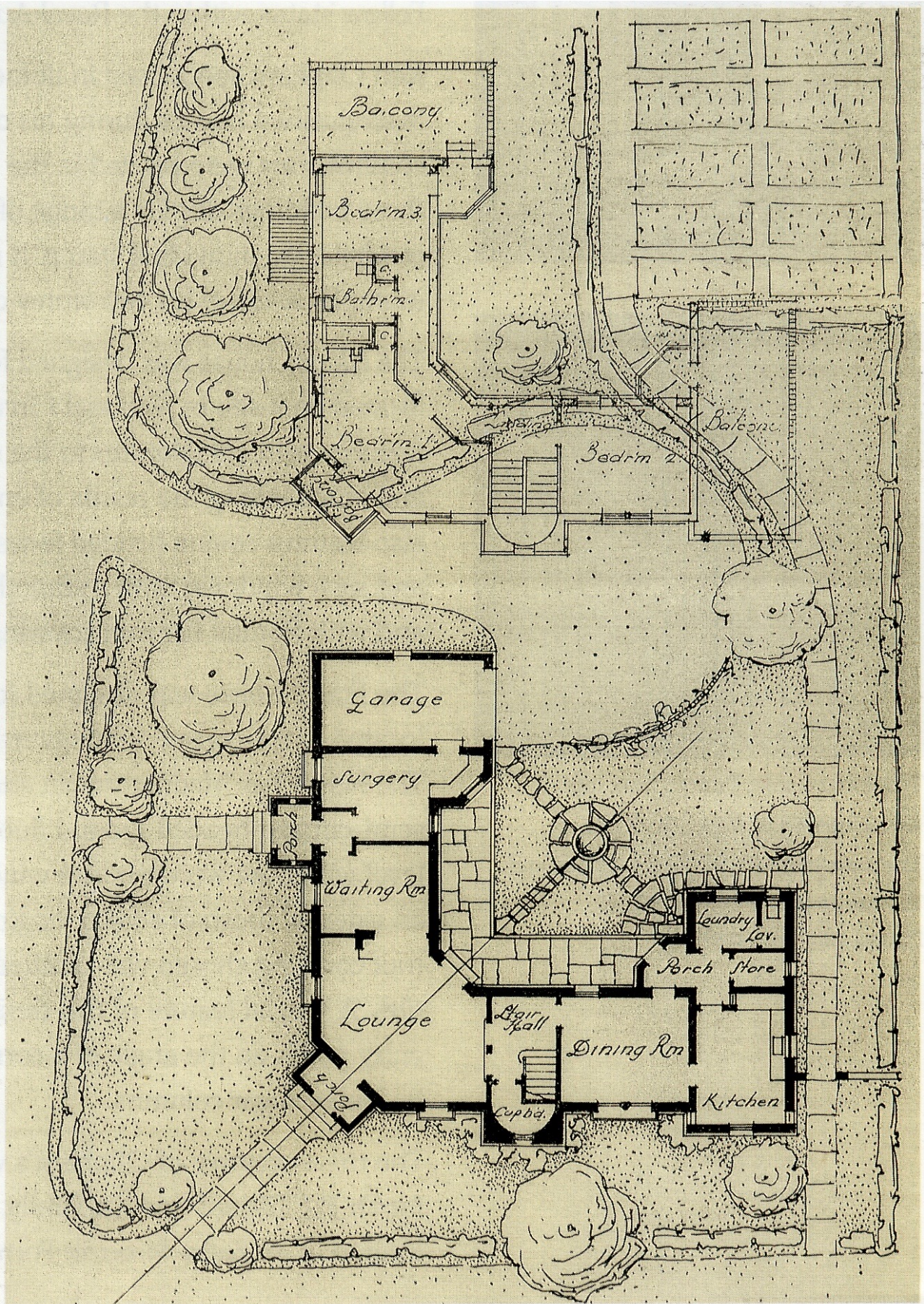
This building exhibits particular aesthetic characteristics evident in the original design which have been retained and are valued by the community today. It is a local landmark, beautifully sited to address the intersection of Furneaux and Bougainville Streets, with appropriate two-storey massing on rising ground and its entrance diagonally opposite the Manuka Centre (from 1924). Being in the Spanish Mission style, it complements the similarly styled former St Christopher's School (1928) to the east and the large group of Mediterranean style houses (1930) to the south.

h. Has a special association with the life or work of a person, or people, important to the history of the ACT

'The Pines' meets this criterion, for its association with the architect Kenneth Oliphant.

Kenneth Oliphant (1894-1975) was an architect who played a significant role in Canberra's cultural history from 1926, when he moved from Melbourne and supervised construction of the government housing in Blandfordia, won in a competition by Oakley, Parkes & Scarborough, for whom he worked. The following year he commenced a fruitful architectural practice, which continued until 1965 in the new capital city. Kenneth Oliphant specialised in domestic work and designed many distinguished houses during his career. Examples of his virtuosity include 'The Pines', the Alcorn house (1929), Forrest, in the Inter-War Mediterranean style, the Tillyard or 'Dial' house (1929), Forrest, with half-timbering common in the Tudor period and Barton Court (1934), residential flats in the Old English style. Study of Oliphant's domestic work reveals commendable confidence, control and assurance. He was clearly concerned with the siting of his buildings, as well as the functional arrangement of the accommodation. He paid heed to orientation as well as views of and from the buildings on their sites. His output extended to religious, commercial and light industrial buildings. It is no surprise that he established and maintained a successful practice for such a long period, and his significance as a major contributor to the development of architecture in Canberra is assured.

Citation prepared by Ken Charlton



'The Pines' plan by Kenneth Oliphant in the *Australian Home Beautiful*, 2 June 1930.
 From *The Early Canberra House*, Edited by Peter Freeman, p 117



'The Pines' before the 1963 addition. Courtesy of Andrew Fitzhardinge.



'The Pines' in January 2021. Photo by Ken Charlton.



ACTPLA Aerial photograph of Block 7 Section 23 Forrest, January 2020.

ENDNOTES

¹ Richard Apperly Robert Irving Peter Reynolds. Identifying Australian Architecture Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present. A & R 1989, p 176.

² *ibid.*

³ Department of the Environment, Land and Planning (DELP) Building File, Block 7 Section 23 Forrest.

⁴ Register of Dentists, NSW, 20 July 1924.

Robert Irving, *The History and Design of the Australian House*, OUP, 1985, p126

⁵ Conversation with Mrs Fitzhardinge, wife of Dr Fitzhardinge, in 1995.

⁶ Tim Reeves and Alan Roberts, 100 Canberra Houses A Century of Capital Architecture, Halstead Press, 2013, p 46.

⁷ Advice from Andrew Fitzhardinge, 30 December 2020.

⁸ Reeves and Roberts, p 47

⁹ Matthew Raggatt, Report for allhomes, 26/3/2016
ACTPLA Aerial photograph, May 2017

¹⁰ *Kenneth H. Oliphant : his life and work*. Peter Freeman Pty Ltd, Canberra 1996.

Peter Corkery 'Canberra's First Private Architects' in *The Early Canberra House Living in Canberra 1911 - 1933* Edited by Peter Freeman, p 117-8 Federal Capital Press, 1996.

Roger Pegrum, 'Oliphant, Kenneth' in *The Encyclopaedia of Australian Architecture* Edited by Philip Goad and Julie Willis, p 515. Cambridge University Press, 2012

¹¹ Matthew Raggatt, Report for allhomes 26/3/2016
External inspection by Ken Charlton 18/1/21