

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R055G

Name of Place: Parade Ground & Associated Buildings Group

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: Parade Ground DUNTROON ACT 2600

Block Section of

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	RNE
Date of Listing:	1984	Level of Significance:	Territory
Citation Revision No:	3	Category:	Military
Citation Revision Date:	November 03	Style:	Mediterranean

Date of Design:	1935	Designer:	Department of the Interior
Construction Period:	1935-39	Client/Owner/Lessee:	RMC
Date of Additions:	1948	Builder:	

Statement of Significance

The Parade Ground and the buildings around it are important for their associations with the development of the Royal Military College, an early Commonwealth Defence initiative, which was the first and is the longest operating officer training establishment for the Army. The Parade Ground dates from the beginning of the college, and the buildings were erected for the re-establishment of the college at Duntroon in the 1930s.

As a dense cluster of structures with shared architectural details, form and colour, the buildings act as a backdrop to enclose the Parade Ground and form a ceremonial and aesthetic heart for the campus.

The Parade Ground is a notable example of a fully-functional and often-used military parade ground, which reflects military customs and techniques imbued with years of tradition.

Description

The parade ground and associated buildings group generally occupies the land northwest of Duntroon House and Garden. Asset numbers of the buildings in this group are:

- A26 Corps of Staff Cadets Headquarters,
- A28 Barrack Block,
- A30 Mess and Kitchen,
- A31 Barrack Block,
- A32 Barrack Block,
- A33 Classroom Block,
- A34 Chemistry Block.

The group of terracotta-roofed roughcast brick buildings in the Mediterranean style, with Art Deco details is planned in a crescent-shape. The Corps of Staff Cadets Headquarters (A26) is the southernmost component of the complex and is oriented to the northeast. Two Barrack Blocks (A31, A32) face the Parade Ground from the northwest. The northeast boundary is marked by the Classroom Block (A33) which has a clock in the centre of the facade. The Chemistry Block (A34) sits at an angle to the east of A33. Both the Barrack Block and the Mess and Kitchen are located behind other buildings facing the Parade Ground.

All of the buildings are visually related, sharing proportions, massing, materials and colour. Planting is minimal, located around the bases of buildings and the walls retaining slopes above the Parade Ground.

Condition and Integrity

Good.

Background/History

See General Background to Royal Military College Precinct.

The Parade Ground dates from the beginning of the college in 1911. The group of buildings for the Corps of Staff Cadets was constructed in 1935–39 as part of the re-establishment of the Royal Military College at Duntroon after the College was transferred in 1930 to Victoria Barracks in Sydney, as an economy measure. The 1936 Annual Report states that the “erection of new buildings and repair of existing buildings at Duntroon was commenced at the beginning of the year and is progressing satisfactorily.”

Duntroon reopened for students on 1 February 1937, and was officially reopened by the Governor General on 19 October 1937. It was stated that the cadets were “now well established in permanent instead of temporary buildings”.

This permanent accommodation consisted of buildings around the revised and developed Parade Ground (Buildings A26, A28, A30– A34).

The blocks for the cadets, two-storeyed buildings of roughcast brick, were well designed and equipped. On the western side of the Parade Ground were the cadets' mess rooms with recreational rooms on the terraces formally occupied by the fibro-cement quarters of the cadets. The northern side held classrooms, the library and the physics and chemistry laboratories, and on the southern side were the administration offices.

During 1935–36 specifications were drawn up for two new brick barracks, and planning of a further two blocks, each housing 24 cadets. A30, A31 and A32 were constructed during 1936 and on 27 June 1936 the foundation stone of the new barracks was laid by the Hon. Sir Archdale Parkhill, Minister of State for Defence. The granite foundation stone had to be removed for engraving, the Minister's title was omitted initially, as he had only received it on 23 June 1936. A31 and A32 became known unofficially as “Ack” Block and “Beer” Block respectively.

During 1937 part of the infirmary was occupied as cadets' barracks, nicknamed “Siberia”. The following year saw the completion of A28 also known as “Cork” Block.

In 1948 an annex was added to the Physics Laboratory and further alterations to other buildings occurred to provide barrack and messing accommodation. ¹

Analysis against the Criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991

(i) a place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure or representing a new achievement of its time

(ii) a place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group

(iii) a place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger or being lost, or is of exceptional interest

(iv) a place which is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations

(v) a place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type

(vi) a place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class

(vii) a place which has strong or special associations with person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history

(xi) a place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site

References

1. Philip Cox & Partners. *Royal Military College of Australia Duntroon, Conservation & Management Plan*, for Department of Housing & Construction, 1986.

Other Information Sources