

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R006

Name of Place: The Lodge

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: Adelaide Avenue and National Circuit DEAKIN 2600

Block 1 Section 3 of Deakin

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	RNE
Date of Listing:	1984	Level of Significance:	National
Citation Revision No:		Category:	Residential
Citation Revision Date:		Style:	Inter-War Georgian Revival

Date of Design:	1926	Designer:	Oakley & Parkes
Construction Period:	1926-27	Client/Owner/Lessee:	C of A
Date of Additions:	1952-78	Builder:	James G Taylor

Statement of Significance

The Lodge is important as the only purpose built official residence constructed for the Prime Minister or Governor-General and otherwise one of only four of their official residences in Australia. It is of historical significance as the official residence of almost all Prime Ministers since its completion in 1927. The Lodge is also associated with the development of Canberra as the national capital, especially the phase which saw the relocation of Parliament to the new city.

The Lodge provides a suite of reception rooms in a building and setting of appropriately refined and dignified design, which demonstrates the principal characteristics of an official residence suitable for the incumbent of that office.

The building is a fine example of the Inter-War Georgian Revival style of architecture, with features specific to that style, such as symmetrical prismatic massing and refined Georgian detailing.

It is also significant for its associations with the architects Oakley and Parkes, who played a key role in the design of Canberra's permanent housing in its initial phase. The Lodge is the Canberra residence which demonstrates best their architectural expertise.

Description

A two-storey rendered-brick residence in the Inter-War Georgian Revival style, the most evident characteristics of which are the hipped roof and symmetrical prismatic massing, along with refined Georgian detailing. 1 The front facade has a central loggia on each level, delicate corner porches and double-hung windows, with large-paned lower sashes, all of which are characteristic of the way these architects used the vocabulary of the style. A closer examination reveals moulded plaster decorative motifs, such as the shield, half hidden by the boxing over the central arch, and swags between the upper windows on the sides. Wrought-iron balusters are decorated with restraint, both externally and internally. The slate roof is hipped and consoles support the eaves.

The interior has an American Colonial character, particularly in its symmetrical

entrance hall, which has stained plywood wall panelling to door height, upper floor beams exposed under the ceiling and round-arched recesses above doorways. A grand staircase, which is the centrepiece of the entrance hall, rises to a landing, then divides into two flights leading to a hall, now partly enclosed, which originally opened onto a loggia above the entrance. Reception rooms on the ground floor include a drawing room to the north and a dining room to the south of the entrance hall. Some of the original dining chairs, which incorporate the letters 'PM' in a Chippendale design, survive. Additions to The Lodge are sympathetic to the original design and the extensive walled garden provides an attractive setting for the house. 2

Condition and Integrity

Although the house has been considerably altered as detailed below, its historical and most of its architectural significance has been retained.

Background/History

The Federal Capital Advisory Committee, in its First General Report on the Construction of Canberra, in 1921, recommended that "A suitable bungalow house should be built in the vicinity of the Government Group, so located as to admit being used for other official residence when the time might be considered appropriate to provide a permanent residence for the Prime Minister on an appropriate scale." 3 The Federal Capital Commission, in its Second Annual Report (1925-26) advised that "authority was received during the year for the erection of an official residence for the Prime Minister at the corner of Adelaide Avenue and National Circuit." 4 The designers of The Lodge were Melbourne architects, Percy Oakley and Stanley Parkes, well regarded for their success, with John Scarborough, in the Federal Capital Advisory Committee housing competition in 1924. Work was begun on the residence in 1926, before the Federal Parliament moved to Canberra from Melbourne. The design was illustrated in the 7 June 1926 issue of *Australian Home Beautiful*. 5 It was built by James G. Taylor of Glebe, NSW, at a total cost of £28,319, which included furnishings, decoration and landscaping, with a tennis court and a croquet lawn. Mrs Ruth Lane-Poole supervised the interior decoration of the house and the purchase of fashionable, late 1920s furnishings. 6 The first occupants were S. M. Bruce and his wife, on 4 May 1927. In 1929 his Labor successor, J. M. Scullin refused to live there, declaring that it was "too grand". There was talk of letting the building, but no tender was received, so the house remained empty while the Prime Minister lived in the Hotel Canberra. The same decision was made by J. B. Chifley in 1946 and he lived in the Hotel Kurrajong, but J. A. Lyons moved into The Lodge with his large family in 1931 and stayed until his death seven years later. R. G. Menzies lived there for seventeen years until his retirement in 1966.

During Menzies' occupation, in 1952, minor additions were carried out to the building. These were an addition of four bedrooms over the garage and butler's bedroom, and a rear balcony off the main staircase landing. The house was redecorated in 1966, and between 1967 and 1970 a double garage was added and the billiard room was converted into a sitting room. The gardens were reworked in 1968-70. A pool was also constructed behind the house. At that time Adelaide Avenue was realigned and upgraded, resulting in the need to erect a brick wall around part of the property, which was completed by 1970. 7 In 1976 the south-east corner porch was enclosed to create a breakfast room and part of the first-floor stair hall was converted into a bedroom.

There were major alterations carried out in 1978. On the ground floor: the kitchen yard was enclosed to form a servery, store, pantry, flower room, staircase, basement store and plant room; the kitchen was renovated; the servants' dining room, scullery and pantry were removed to form a staff dining room; the old servery and service stairs were removed, the dining room was extended and a cloaks' corridor was added under the rear balcony. On the first floor: a sewing room was constructed over the servery, a balcony over the pantry/flower room, and a box room over the dining room

extension; the rear balcony was enclosed to form a study; the 1952 bedrooms were converted into a bed-sitting room with shower rooms and an external staircase. In 1986 the original Westmorland green slate roof was replaced by Spanish slate of "French grey" colour. In 1989 a major internal restoration and renovation was completed, and the 1976 breakfast room was removed from the south-east corner porch. In 1993 a large carport for 12 cars was built in the south-west corner of the grounds. By 1994, efforts were growing to have a new residence for the Prime Minister built, possibly located near the shores of Lake Burley Griffin, but the proposal has lapsed. The current Prime Minister, J. W. Howard, and his family live at Kirribilli House in Sydney, but he stays in The Lodge when in Canberra.

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

The Lodge is of architectural value for the high quality of its design, and for the way it exhibits many of the particular elements specific to the Inter-War Georgian Revival style, the most evident being the hipped roof with boxed eaves and the symmetrical prismatic massing, along with refined Georgian detailing. Other indicators of the style are the way the entrance is given a high-style treatment, the round-headed doorways, the paned double-hung windows of vertical proportions and the plain wall surfaces of stucco. 1

(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

The Lodge is one of the four most important Commonwealth Government official residences, being the main residence of the Prime Minister. 8 The others are the main residence of the Governor-General, Government House, Yarralumla, Admiralty House (the Governor-General's Sydney residence), and Kirribilli House, (the Prime Minister's Sydney residence).

The Lodge also compares with a number of other official residences built in the early period of Canberra's development, between 1911 and 1939. These were:

The Commandant's House, at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, completed in 1912.

'The Residency', for the Administrator of the Federal Capital Territory, in Acton, completed in 1915.

The Director's Residence, at the Solar Observatory, Mount Stromlo, completed in 1926.

The Director's Residence, at the Australian Institute of Anatomy, in Acton, completed in 1930.

Casey House, for the "Resident Minister in the Capital Territory" but only occupied by the Treasurer, in Yarralumla, completed in 1938.

The Lodge, being the official residence of the Prime Minister, housed the incumbent of a higher office than any of these, except the Governor-General. The Lodge

provides a suite of reception rooms in a building and setting of appropriately refined and dignified design, which demonstrates the principal characteristics of an official residence suitable for the incumbent of that office.

(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

The Lodge is of historical significance as the official residence of almost all Prime Ministers of Australia since its construction for that purpose in 1926/7. The Lodge is also associated with the development of Canberra as the national capital, especially the phase which saw the relocation of Parliament to the new city.

It is important for its associations with the architects Oakley and Parkes, who played a key role in the design of Canberra's permanent housing in its initial phase. The Lodge is the Canberra residence which demonstrates best their architectural expertise.

(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 Richard Apperly, Robert Irving, Peter Reynolds. *Identifying Australian Architecture - Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*. Angus and Robertson, 1989.
- 2 Ken Charlton. *Federal Capital Architecture: Canberra 1911-1939*. National Trust of Australia (ACT), 1984.
- 3 Federal Capital Advisory Committee. *First General Report on the Construction of Canberra, 1921*.
- 4 Federal Capital Commission. *Second Annual Report, 1925-26*.
- 5 Australian Home Beautiful, 7 June 1926.
- 6 Committee on Official Establishments. *Final Report, 1979*.
- 7 Landscape Architects for the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. *Conservation and Management Plan for the Prime Minister's Lodge*. 1986.
- 8 Rodney Garnett & Danielle Hyndes, Ed. *The Heritage of the Australian Capital Territory*. National Trust of Australia (ACT), 1992.

Other Information Sources