

Design and development of the National Capital

After Federation in 1901, one of the first questions considered by the new Commonwealth Government, and the most contentious, was the site for the Federal Capital. The announcement of an international design competition for Canberra in 1911 attracted worldwide interest. Entries were received from the United Kingdom, the United States, Sweden, Italy, France, as well as from South Africa, Rhodesia, Mexico and Paraguay.

The National Archives holds many maps, plans, files and reports relating to the design and development of Canberra. They range from the competition plans through to the construction of infrastructure, the first Commonwealth buildings, the slow but steady expansion of the capital during the postwar years, and the building of the new Parliament House.

Maps, plans and drawings

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Drawings submitted in the Federal Capital Design Competition</u>	1912	A710
<u>Photographic copies of unsuccessful designs submitted in Federal Capital Design Competition</u>	1912	A763
<u>Linen tracing of design submitted in Federal Capital Design Competition</u>	1912	A764
<u>Photographic negatives of designs submitted in Federal Capital Design Competition</u>	1912	A765
<u>Lithographic copies of designs submitted in Federal Capital Design Competition</u>	1912	A766
<u>Design of the layout of the Federal Capital City of Australia as projected by the Departmental Board</u>	1912	A767
<u>Lithographic copy of design of the layout of the Federal Capital City of Australia as projected by the Departmental Board</u>	1913	A768
<u>Reduced photographic copy of the map of contour survey of the site for the Federal Capital of Australia for the Federal Capital Design Competition</u>	1912	CP895/3
<u>Aperture cards for ACT architectural plans and drawings</u>	1921–59	A9663
<u>Canberra detail plans</u>	1935–55	A2034
<u>Canberra detail plans</u>	1940–43	A2035

Accompanying/supporting documentation

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files – Federal Capital series</u>	1910–17	A110
<u>Personal papers of Mr CS Daley referring to the development of Canberra</u>	1910–45	CP487/6
<u>Documents relating to design of the Federal Capital</u>	1912–13	A762
<u>Publications, articles and plans relating to the development of Canberra</u>	1914–43	M1573
<u>Instructions received by TCG Weston from Director of Design and Construction (Walter Burley Griffin)</u>	1915–20	CP209/16
<u>Correspondence files, single number series with 'C' (Commonwealth Departments) prefix</u>	1930–49	A292
<u>General files of the Senate Select Committee on the Development of Canberra*</u>	1954–55	A7686
<u>Papers of the 'Reference to inquire into and report upon the development of Canberra in relation to the original plan and subsequent modifications, and matters incidental there to'*</u>	1955	AA1984/414
<u>Minutes and agenda papers of meetings of the National Capital Planning Committee</u>	1958–83	A8839
<u>Minutes of National Capital Development Commission meetings</u>	1958–88	A8840
<u>National Capital Development Commission – correspondence files</u>	1958–89	A1340

* Requests for access to records from A7686 & AA1984/414 are to be referred to the Clerk of the Senate. Please consult a reference officer for more details.

Photographic records

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Mildenhall collection of glass plate negatives of early Canberra</u>	1921–35	A3560

For more information

For details of further records relating to the National Capital see:

- *Fact sheet 35 - Administration of the Australian Capital Territory*
- *Fact sheet 95 - Walter Burley Griffin and the design of Canberra*
- *Fact sheet 222 - Mildenhall photographic collection*

For a comprehensive design history of the national capital, see Canberra following Griffin: A Design History of Australia's National Capital (National Archives, 2002). In this heavily illustrated book, noted Griffin scholar and architect Paul Reid explores in-depth the fate of the Griffin design over the 20th century. It contains reproductions of many maps, plans and drawings from the National Archives' collection.