

Parliament House Canberra, 1927

Records relating to the design, constructions
and opening of the provisional Parliament House



This guide is number 6 in the series of Research Guides published by the National Archives.

Guides include the material known to be relevant to their subject area but they are not necessarily a complete or definitive guide to all relevant material in the collection.

The National Archives reviews its collection to confirm the value of records for research, evidential and other purposes or to identify, in consultation with agencies, records for destruction. At the time of publication all the records described in this guide were present in the Archives collection. However, it is possible that some of the records may be destroyed if they are reviewed and considered not to be of enduring value. If this occurs, the guide will be revised accordingly.

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Cover: Canberra citizens passing the steps of Parliament House during a civic reception to mark the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York to open the new Parliament House, 10 May 1927. NAA: A5342, 700.

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INTRODUCTION

The National Archives of Australia

The National Archives of Australia ensures that full and accurate records documenting Commonwealth government activities are created and kept. From this massive body of information the Archives selects, cares for and makes available to all, those records of continuing value. This collection constitutes the archives of the Commonwealth government – a vast and rich resource for the study of Australian history, Australian society and the Australian people.

The collection spans almost 200 years of Australian history. The main focus of the collection is material which documents Federal government activities since Federation in 1901. There are also significant holdings of nineteenth-century records which relate to functions that were transferred by the colonies to the Commonwealth government at the time of Federation and subsequently. The records described in this Guide are a small but significant part of the collection.

Access to the collection is provided free of charge in public reading rooms located in each capital city. Researchers are assisted by specialist reference staff and also have available to them a range of reference tools to help them identify and use the records in the collection. These reference tools include databases, guides, publications and fact sheets. Researchers unable to visit a reading room may seek information and assistance by telephone, mail, facsimile or email.

More information about the Archives, the collection and the services provided to researchers is provided on the Archives' Internet site. The site contains descriptions of some of the most frequently used records in the collection and includes images of some original documents and photographs. It also provides online access to the Archives' databases, which you can use to search detailed descriptions of the collections as well as descriptions of over 2 million individual items and many of our photographic collections. A visit to the site will help you determine whether the Archives holds records that may assist with your research. The site also provides links to other archives in Australia. The site is located at www.naa.gov.au.

Using this guide

The aim of this guide is to describe and facilitate access to records relating to the design, construction and opening of the provisional Parliament House in Canberra. The provisional Parliament House served as the home for the House of Representatives and Senate of the Australian Federal Parliament from 1927 to 1988. Its white facade on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin is familiar to all Australians and the 70th anniversary of its opening is an opportune time to publish a guide to the records.

The records contain correspondence on all issues relating to the design and construction of the building and the opening ceremony. There are extensive photographs of all stages of construction and architectural plans and drawings of the building, the furniture and fittings and the gardens. The records contain copies of invitations and tickets to the opening ceremony.

As well as documenting the history of the provisional Parliament House the records convey information about the young city of Canberra and the people who were instrumental in developing the Federal Capital. A reader is able to gain some idea of the attitude Australians and their representatives had towards Federation, the building of the Federal Capital and Australia's place in the world as a new nation.

This guide is not a comprehensive finding aid to every item in the collection relating to the design, construction and opening of the provisional Parliament House. However, it describes in detail the range and variety of material held by the National Archives in Canberra. Some record series deal exclusively with the provisional Parliament House. In other cases, relevant files may be included with other correspondence from the agency. For most series some relevant items are listed and their contents described. Guidance on how to find other records is given below in the section on locating additional information.

This guide can be viewed online at www.naa.gov.au/publications.

Structure of the guide

The guide is divided into four chapters which follow a chronological progression from the first mention of the building of a Parliament House to its opening in 1927. Within each chapter the records are arranged in series number order.

Chapter 1 gives an overview of the events and decisions leading to the building of a provisional Parliament House rather than a permanent building. It also describes the construction of the provisional building and its opening.

Chapter 2 describes records related to the architectural competition launched in 1914 for the design of a permanent parliament house. This competition never came to fruition and is now long forgotten. At the time it excited considerable interest around the world. The related correspondence is spread through many record series. Item descriptions are given for those files which hold the most important and interesting information.

Chapter 3 details records which relate to the decision to build a provisional rather than permanent building. The files also follow the progress of the construction including plans, drawings and photographs.

Chapter 4 deals with the opening ceremony held on 9 May 1927. Files not only contain correspondence about the planning and execution of the ceremony but also copies of invitations, plans of the layout of the stands, plans of the city of Canberra and newspaper articles. As the building was opened by His Royal Highness the Duke of York the files also contain correspondence about the entire Royal Visit.

The records contain correspondence by many of the senior public servants who were responsible for the establishment of the Federal Capital. Appendix 1 contains a list of these people and their positions. Several agencies were responsible for the administration of the Federal Capital Territory (now the Australian Capital Territory) from 1901–30. Appendix 2 contains a list of the major agencies and some brief information about them. Appendix 3 provides a list of further reading, while Appendixes 4 and 5 respectively give a glossary of archival terms and details of other guides to the collection. Appendix 6 gives the Archives' addresses and hours of opening.

Structure of the entries

Each entry in the guide describes a group of records which have been maintained together in a recordkeeping system, referred to as a series of records. A series is made up of items, which are the individual files, volumes, maps, cards, diaries etc that were received into custody by the Archives from the creating department, agency or individual. Series usually consist of many items, but can occasionally consist of just a few or even a single item. A definition of *series* is given in Appendix 4.

The entries have been designed to give the researcher not only an idea of the contents of a sample of items within each series but also some idea of the context of the record – for example when it was created and by which agency. An indication of other types of records in the series is also given.

Each entry includes the series title and the date range of the series contents. On the right hand side is the series number (eg *A6680*, *CP325/6* or *M4071*). This is the Commonwealth Record Series (CRS) number assigned to the series by the Archives.

The title and CA (Commonwealth agency) number of the agency(ies) which recorded the series (eg Federal Capital Commission CA 226) is given along with the dates for which each agency was responsible for creating the records.

Quantity, given in either metres for boxed files or number of items for volumes and books, is a guide to the extent of the series. However, this is not always a guide to the amount of material relevant to the provisional Parliament House. Some very large series may contain only a small number of relevant items.

The location indicates in which office of the National Archives the records are held. In this guide, the records are all held in Canberra.

The description for each series attempts to set the records in their administrative context, and to describe its function and overall content. Whether the series is listed on the item level database, RecordSearch, or has a paper listing is stated where possible.

All items in the series are listed at the end of the entry if the total number of items is small. If the series is extensive and it is not possible to list all items in the guide, an example of items from the series is given. For many items a general description of the contents is given. In other cases the title is self-explanatory. Against each item on the right hand side is its citation consisting of the CRS number and the item number. This must be cited in any inquiry about the records. More information about citing archival records is given below in 'Citing the Records'.

Many items in these series are described at item level in our online item database, which is available in our reading rooms and on our website at naa.gov.au. Descriptive information at series level is available on the National Archives RecordSearch database, which is available for online searching in each of our reading rooms and on our Website.

Locating additional information

Additional information on the building and opening of the provisional Parliament House, the development of Canberra and the history and events of the provisional Parliament House since it was opened, can be located by conducting searches on the National Archives' databases. Some useful key words to use are '*parliament house*', '*federal territory*', '*Canberra*', '*federal capital*' and '*royal visit*'. During the period this guide covers the ACT was called the Federal Capital Territory.

Series containing useful information on the construction of the provisional Parliament House were created by the Department of Home Affairs (I) (CA 8); the Department of Works and Railways (CA 14); the Federal Capital Office (CA 601); the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (CA 292); the Federal Capital Territory Branch, Department of Home Affairs (CA 756); and the Federal Capital Commission (CA 226). For some series individual items are listed in the Archives' RecordSearch database (available online in our reading rooms and on our website at www.naa.gov.au). For others there are paper indexes or inventories. Reference staff can help researchers to use these lists and also access series where unfortunately there are no lists at all.

The construction of Parliament House was only part of the development of the National Capital at Canberra. The series and files in this guide also contain considerable information about the development of Canberra. The National Archives has produced fact sheets which can help researchers locate useful records. These are: Administration of the ACT (Fact Sheet 35), Design and Development of the National Capital (Fact Sheet 60) and Walter Burley Griffin and the Design of Canberra (Fact Sheet 95). Copies of these are available on the Archives' Internet site.

Access to the records

Please note that not all items listed in RecordSearch are available immediately for public access. Some may first require examination to ensure they do not contain information which remains sensitive (eg personal details). If individual record items within a series have not been examined you are free to apply for access to them but there may be a delay while they are examined. In most cases this should take no more than a day or two.

Most of the records in this guide are old, ranging from 90 to 60 years. Many of them, particularly the plans and architectural drawings are fragile. In some cases you may not be able to have access to the original item. In these cases you will be given access to either a photocopy or microform copy.

Charges

No charges apply to the services described above unless copies of records are requested. Copy charges are set out in Fact Sheet 51.

Citing the records

The correct citation of archival records is important both when requesting them from the Archives and when referring to them in written or published works. The correct method of citation will not only help staff of the Archives to more readily locate the records you are seeking, but will also help other researchers to find the material you have used if they wish to examine it for themselves.

The correct form of citation for records held by the National Archives is expressed as follows: the name *National Archives of Australia* followed by a colon; the series number followed by a comma; and then the item number. An example is :

National Archives of Australia: D4189, 68

The name *National Archives of Australia* may be abbreviated to 'NAA'.

1. THE GENESIS OF THE PROVISIONAL PARLIAMENT HOUSE

For many years after Federation in 1901 deciding upon the site for the Federal Capital was a contentious issue. After much debate and some acrimony the Yass–Canberra area was chosen. An international competition was held to find a design for the city which was won by the American architect Walter Burley Griffin in 1912.

The design competition for a permanent Parliament House

Once the design of the city had been decided upon and construction began, action turned to the construction of a Parliament House. Parliament could not move from Melbourne until it had a home.

The Government decided that an international competition would give access to the best architects in the world and deliver the best result. It was intended that Parliament House be a monumental building that would be the focus of the new capital. It was also an opportunity to set a new and unique architectural style for Australia. The competition was launched in the Australian press on 1 July 1914.

Announcement

The Australian Government announces an international architectural competition for the purpose of selecting the architect of the Parliament House and possibly incidentally additional architect for other government structures of the new Federal Capital City, Canberra.

Only tentative outline sketch designs for the building are requested and eight (8) prizes are offered aggregating £6,000, the first being £2,000, in addition to commission for service at the scale of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

The designs may be submitted in either Melbourne or London in March, and will be judged by the following jury of architects:-

*George T Poole of Australia
John J Burnet of London
Victor Laloux of Paris
Otto Wagner of Vienna
Louis H Sullivan of Chicago*

whose decision will be final.

Programme will be issued to any practising architect on application to the High Commissioner for Australia in London, or any British Ambassador to whom copies are being forwarded.

The importance of this event is not to be measured by that of the foremost building of the Commonwealth but by the opportunity to establish an architectural standard not only for the future seat of Government in Australia, but for a great new Democracy of scope and scale and modern advantages, as well as of climatic conditions differing radically from any prototype in Europe or elsewhere.

NAA: A2911/4, 664/1914

A booklet entitled *Federal Parliament House Architectural Competition* was produced which advised entrants of the conditions and requirements.

Unfortunately, the competition was withdrawn almost immediately due to the outbreak of World War I in September 1914. During 1915 and 1916 the Government became concerned about delays in relocating the Seat of Government to Canberra and moved to have the competition revived.

The situation was complicated by the international disruptions of the war. Australia was now at war with countries whose citizens had previously been asked to take part in and even judge the competition. Several possible solutions were put forward:

- proceed with the original competition but exclude enemy subjects
- limit the competition to Empire countries and make some alterations to the conditions
- abandon the competition and appoint an 'eminent' architect to design the building.

The last two suggestions were vigorously opposed by Walter Burley Griffin who had helped prepare the original competition. He felt that the wish to change the conditions reflected on him personally and to limit or abandon the competition would damage Australia's international reputation.

The competition was resurrected in August 1916 with the original conditions but excluding enemy subjects. This immediately met with outrage from various institutions in particular the Royal Institute of British Architects. They explained that many young architects were unable to take part due to being on active service. Holding the competition during the war would unfairly benefit architects in neutral countries, particularly the USA. The thought of another non-British architect winning a competition was enough to make their British blood boil. Consequently, the competition was once again withdrawn.

Discussion dragged on for several years with various attempts to revive the competition. However, with a huge war debt hanging over the Government it was reluctant to take on the expense of a large permanent building. The establishment of the Seat of Government at Canberra was becoming pressing after the delays of the war years. The Government did not want to wait for the time it would take to conclude the competition and erect a monumental building. The search began for a quicker, cheaper solution.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works was charged with the task of reporting to the Government on the best solution. The committee recommended that although the competition for a permanent building should go ahead, construction should begin immediately on either the nucleus of a permanent building or a provisional building. After much debate, the proposal for a provisional building was accepted and financed by Parliament in August 1923.

If the Government thought it had finally settled the issue of the competition it was sadly mistaken. Many architects around the world had been working on their designs with some of them now ready to submit. Announcement of the postponement brought complaints and demands for compensation.

At this time a competition for the lay out and design of cottages for Canberra was proposed. However, the Federal Council of the Australian Institute of Architects informed the Minister that it would not recognise such competition until the government agreed to compensate the registered competitors of the original Parliament House competition.¹

After some deliberation the Government decided that although there was no legal obligation to pay compensation, Australia's standing would be enhanced by an act of grace payment to deserving architects.

A board was convened and architects who had officially registered were invited to send in any work they had undertaken. Again the devastation of the war was obvious as many

architects could not be located. Their work or their businesses or, in some cases, their lives had been lost. Compensation was paid according to the amount and quality of work done. Out of 217 registered entrants, 78 received compensation.



Although the Government had been reluctant to provide compensation, it proved a worthwhile move as architects responded with letters of appreciation. These letters show that architects considered fair dealing from competition organisers was not always forthcoming and receiving compensation was a welcome change. Appleton P. Clark of Washington wrote:

Architects suffer quite severe losses in competitions and I assure you it is refreshing to see some one with a spirit of fairness in such matters.²

It is ironic that 66 years after the launching of the original competition a design for a new and permanent Parliament House was eventually chosen through an international design competition. The original has faded from most people's memory but the events and personalities live on in the records.

NAA: A414, 42

The design and construction of the provisional Parliament House

The initial design for the Federal Capital was of a city 'having massive and monumental public buildings and works of an architectural character worthy to rank with those of older countries'.³

The design included a Capitol building for ceremonial purposes on top of Kurrajong Hill (now Capital Hill, the site of the new Parliament House). The Federal Parliament House would be below on Camp Hill. Other main government buildings were to be located on the terraces in front of Camp Hill.

¹ NAA: A414, 42, Parliament House Competition.

² NAA: A430, G1277, Architectural Competition for Design of Parliament House (Permanent) Canberra.

³ NAA: A199, FC24/1174, Provisional Parliament House turning of the first sod in connection with the work of erection.

However, in the wake of World War I this concept was revised because of the change in economic circumstances and the need to proceed with the establishment of the Federal Capital as soon as possible. The idea of a monumental city was shelved and the idea of Canberra as a garden city emerged.

As mentioned above, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works was charged to investigate and report on the question of the proposed erection of a provisional Parliament House. John Murdoch (Chief Architect, Department of Works and Railways) provided sketch plans for such a building.

The committee reported on 12 July 1923. Members felt that the competition should go ahead to decide the design for a permanent Parliament House but to expedite the move to Canberra some construction should begin immediately. The Government was presented with two choices:

- to establish the nucleus of a permanent building on Camp Hill; and
- to construct a provisional building just below Camp Hill.

Both suggestions had their enthusiastic supporters. The opponents of the nucleus of a permanent building stated that it would still be too expensive, take too long to build, present an unfinished appearance and cause too much disruption to Parliament when eventually expanded.

The opponents of a provisional building believed it would not serve its purpose successfully, would not be of sufficiently imposing appearance and would detract from the permanent building when it was finally constructed. Walter Burley Griffin was a vigorous opponent of the provisional building believing that it was an unwarranted variation to his design. He likened the concept to 'filling a front yard full of outhouses'.⁴

On 26 July 1923 the Minister for Works and Railways (Mr P G Stewart) moved in the House of Representatives 'That it is expedient to carry out the erection of Provisional Parliament House buildings at Canberra, a proposed work which has been investigated and reported upon by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works'. In support the Minister stated:

If ... in Canberra we are to have the world's most beautiful city ... in forty to fifty years' time, the work of building a Parliament House worthy of such a city is too big a job for us to tackle at the present time, and might well be left to posterity.

The Government desires that Canberra shall not be a sink for the pouring out of public money, but shall be run on business lines. It does not desire to overload the Federal City with a huge capital cost at the expense of the taxpayers.⁵

After some debate where opponents of the provisional building mounted a final push for a permanent parliament house, the resolution was passed. To put this resolution into practice, a Loan Bill containing an amount for the Federal Territory was raised. This Bill passed through the House of Representatives on 17 August 1923. The Senate proved reluctant to

⁴ Parliamentary Paper, *Erection of Provisional Parliament House, Canberra*, , Session 1923–24, Vol IV, p. 784.

⁵ *Hansard*, 26 July 1923, pp. 1668–1669.

approve the Bill. In a very lengthy debate on 24 August 1923 Senator Gardiner (Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) stated that he wished:

... the Capital built as it was intended to be built, even if it takes ten years to do so, rather than have a smudge that would be of no value and would really be a disgrace to the nation ... I shall never vote to waste £200,000 on a building which after all, would mar the original design of the gentleman who designed this great city.⁶

The Senate attempted to return the Bill to the House of Representatives with an amendment that would stop the provisional building going ahead. The House refused to accept this and the Senators in favour of a permanent building had to concede defeat. The debates about the provisional Parliament House can be followed in Hansard. Details of the debates on the original proposal and the Loan Bill are given in Appendix 3.



A steam shovel turning the first sod at Parliament House,
28 August 1923. NAA: A3560, 441

On 28 August 1923 the first sod was turned by the Minister for Works and Railways (P G Stewart). This was a modest ceremony attended by a small number of parliamentarians and approximately 2000 residents of the surrounding areas. In his speech the Minister said:

The Parliament House now being commenced will therefore be a provisional building, but it will in no way be a mean structure. While its design is on simple and economic lines, it will be substantially constructed in brick and will be of a commodious and comfortable character, presenting a good appearance architecturally ... The design includes garden courts, and conforms to the general conception of Canberra in the first stage as a garden city.⁷

⁶ *Hansard*, 24 August 1923, pp. 3438–3439.

⁷ NAA: A199, FC24/1174, Provisional Parliament House turning of the first sod in connection with the work of erection.

John Murdoch and the Department of Works and Railways could now throw themselves into preparing the final plans, incorporating changes suggested by the Public Works Standing Committee. Colonel P T Owen, Director-General of Works, was located in Canberra to supervise the construction while Murdoch was in Melbourne preparing the plans.

Work began immediately on the excavations. By November 1923 they were ready to start on the footings. A tramway had been laid from the Yarralumla brickworks and Owen was expecting the first half million bricks. Construction proceeded rapidly and in February 1924 Owen was writing to Murdoch 'We are getting nervous that we will overtake the drawings unless you can let us have something more to go on with next week'.⁸ This became a common theme over the next months with Owen bombarding Murdoch with demands for plans and drawings.



This view of Parliament House from the north west shows the tramway laid to transport bricks to the site direct from the Yarralumla brickworks.

NAA: A3560, 652

During the next four years of construction the plans were modified according to the development of the building and the wishes of those who would occupy the building. Choosing materials such as floor coverings, the sealing of the roof, the plastering of the chambers, the blinds and so on occupied many months. The extremes of Canberra's climate from freezing winter frosts to searing summers influenced the choice of materials. At times there was conflict between the idea of a provisional building and the need to keep costs down and the wish, particularly on Owen's part, to provide the best materials.

As the major construction work was completed, tenders for the furnishings and fittings were placed. Drawings of every detail of the building poured out of Murdoch's office. There were drawings for cornices, light fittings on the tables, library desks, press gallery chairs, ventilation grills and on and on.

⁸ NAA: A292, C2737B, Provisional Parliament House erection, Canberra.

In November 1925, John Butters (Chief Commissioner, Federal Capital Commission) was able to say, 'I was over at Parliament House this morning and find that everything is going well and that by Christmas the place will be looking quite respectable.'⁹

Through 1926 the work continued internally and members of Parliament started taking an interest in their accommodation. Discussion began on how space should be allocated within the building. By Anzac Day 1927 all tradesmen had moved out of the building and the exterior of the building and surrounding area were tidied and cleaned ready for the Opening Ceremony.

The opening ceremony

The date of the opening of Parliament House had been announced on 26 May 1926. As with all issues decided by the Parliament there had been considerable debate about the most suitable date. 9 May was the anniversary of the opening of the first Federal Parliament in Melbourne in 1901. However, many favoured 26 January as being more appropriate. Although Parliament House could be ready by 26 January 1927, the infrastructure necessary for the Opening Ceremony and for the transfer of government departments from Melbourne could not be achieved by that date and so 9 May was confirmed.

On 12 July 1926 the Governor General sent a telegram to King George V to:

... most loyally and respectfully request Your Majesty to permit Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York to visit Australia on the occasion of the official opening of Canberra in May, 1927, and to perform the opening ceremony.

In making this request we recall with pleasure and pride Your Majesty's own visit in 1901 when you graciously consented to open the first Federal Parliament.

We would regard it as singularly appropriate if your son were permitted to represent you at the establishment of the Federal Capital which marks another important phase in the development of this great British Commonwealth and is regarded by our people as an event of deep national significance and importance. We feel that the presence of His Royal Highness on such an occasion would evoke the strongest possible expressions of loyalty and enthusiasm and further strengthen the bonds which unite us to the Mother Country and to your Royal House.¹⁰

The reply was received on 16 July 1926.

It will give the Duke of York the greatest pride and pleasure to represent His Majesty at the opening ceremony and Their Royal Highnesses are eagerly looking forward to their visit to Australia for this purpose.¹¹

Although Australia had hosted royal visits before and the Parliament had been opened in Melbourne in 1901, this was the most significant event that the fledgling Federal Government had organised. The Government wished the opening to be a major international event reflecting glory upon Australia and the new federal capital.

⁹ NAA: A292, C2737C, Provisional Parliament House erection, Canberra.

¹⁰ NAA: A1606, B40/1, Attachment, Their Royal Highness the Duke and Duchess of York. Invitation to perform ceremony of the official opening of Canberra in May 1927.

¹¹ *ibid.*

Copies of the *Canberra Community News*¹² show that Canberra with a population of approximately 6,000¹³ had an established, lively community. There were schools, churches, hotels and hostels and sporting groups. However, the infrastructure of what was to be a large city was still in the infant stage and the facilities for staging a grand international event were very limited.

Photographs from the Mildenhall collection¹⁴ demonstrate clearly that in 1927 Canberra was a collection of isolated buildings scattered across the plains around Parliament House. There were a few hotels and hostels, a smattering of residential homes and a small number of government buildings. These were widely separated, loosely joined by roads that seemed to begin and end nowhere. Although a massive afforestation program was underway, there were few mature trees. There was little public transport and only a small number of privately owned cars, buses and trucks. The majority of people organising the ceremony lived in Melbourne and most had never visited Canberra. The task of staging a major international event in such circumstances must have been daunting.

The Federal Capital Commission established a Royal Visit Section which appointed committees to deal with the various aspects of the visit and ceremony. John H Butters as Chief Commissioner of the Federal Capital Commission was in overall control. This Section liaised with the Royal Visit Cabinet Committee and Major-General Sir C B B White, Commonwealth Director, Royal Visit.

In the Federal Capital Commission's Third Annual Report there is an extensive summary of the Royal Visit and Opening Ceremony. It reflects the effort needed to organise an event of such magnitude.

The organization of the numerous activities associated with the Royal Visit and the functions connected with the Opening of Parliament House involved a very heavy burden on the Commission's staff at a time when it was also proceeding with a large constructional programme and developing its municipal organization.¹⁵

Accommodation was one of John Butters' biggest headaches. The several hotels (Hotel Canberra, Hotel Kurrajong and Hotel Ainslie) and guesthouses (Blandfordia Guesthouse – later Hotel Wellington) could only provide 720 places. Even this was in doubt until the last minute as some guesthouses were under construction and were not finished until the day before the ceremony.

The selection of official guests caused much anguish. Whether wives and families would be able to accompany the guests was a vexed question. As well there was the press to consider and parliamentary staff. Most of the parliamentary staff slept in Parliament House. After much consideration slightly over 500 official guests were invited and around 50 press representatives. There are numerous letters requesting invitations or recommending people to be invited which had to be politely refused.

The organising committees were also besieged by numerous offers of help and suggestions for what the ceremony should include. Citizens wrote giving ideas for music, flags, native dances, fireworks, sporting events and groups of people such as pioneers, limbless soldiers

¹² NAA: A429 – Canberra Community News (Master set), 1925–27.

¹³ J Gibbney, *Canberra 1913–1953*, AGPS Press, Canberra, 1988, p. 103.

¹⁴ NAA: A3560 – Mildenhall collection of glass plate negatives, 1913–35.

¹⁵ Parliamentary Paper, *Third Annual report of the Federal Capital Commission*, Session 1926–28, Vol II, p. 1200.

and children's groups that should be included in the ceremony. The occasion touched a chord with musical Australians with several offers of newly written songs including *Welcome to the Duke and Duchess*, *Australia's Crowning Hour*, *Australia's Flag – Our Land's Delight* and *Canberra Moon*. There was also the offer of an Australianised version of the National Anthem.



Prime Minister Bruce welcoming the Duke and Duchess of York at Canberra Railway station, 8 May 1927. NAA: A3560, 3135

An extra 5000 tickets were distributed throughout Australia for organisations and individuals to use for access to outside stands. Provision was made for the parking of 30,000 cars. At one stage it was thought that up to 100,000 extra people might attend. All of these had to find their own accommodation or use the camping grounds set up by the Commission.

Concerts, dances and sporting events were arranged to keep the crowds occupied. Children from surrounding schools were organised to marshal at Telopea Park School and march to Parliament House. The Social Service Association established 'strong points' around Canberra where people could gather to see the royal couple.¹⁶ In the event the public did not attend in the numbers anticipated and much of the organising proved unnecessary. Several tons of food that had been provided by private caterers to supply large crowds had to be buried.

The small crowd was disappointing to the organisers. Anticipating huge crowds, the camping grounds and car parks had been set up at some distance from Parliament House and there were severe restrictions on the movement of people and vehicles. Also, the legendary freezing weather of Canberra received wide publicity. When it was realised that the large crowds would not eventuate, the regulations were relaxed. However, it was too late to change the situation.

¹⁶ Certain locations along the route to be followed by the Duke and Duchess on 9 and 10 May were advertised by the organisers as places where people should gather to cheer and wave flags. It was thought this would give a better impression than having people strung out in small groups. These gathering points were called 'strong points'. As it turned out the route was changed and many of these people never saw the Duke and Duchess.



Decorations on J B Youngs store at Kingston to mark the opening of Parliament House, May 1927. NAA: A3560, 3055



The crowd awaiting the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of York.
NAA: A3560, 3070

<h1 style="text-align: center;">Programme</h1> <p style="text-align: center;">(Items will be broadcasted and amplified.)</p>			
Time.	Event.	Time.	Event.
10 a.m.	.. Their Excellencies The Governor-General and Lady Stonehaven depart from Government House.		to open the door of Parliament House. His Royal Highness, after saying a few words, opens the door and returns the key to the Prime Minister, to be placed in the records of Parliament House as a memento of the occasion.
10.5 a.m.	.. Their Royal Highnesses depart from Government House.		
10.15 a.m.	.. All unofficial movement of traffic within Governmental area ceases at this time.		The Right Honorable the Prime Minister thereupon presents His Royal Highness with a gold key and casket, and hands over the keys of Parliament House to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
10.25 a.m.	.. Their Excellencies the State Governors and their Wives, Lieutenant-Governors and their Wives, the Prime Minister and Mrs. Bruce, the President of the Senate and Mrs. Newlands, the Speaker of the House and Lady Groom, Ministers and their Wives, and the Heads of the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist Churches, who are to conduct a joint religious service, appear on platform.	11.1 a.m. to 11.6 a.m.	United Religious Service (see Appendix).
10.30 a.m.	.. Their Excellencies the Governor-General and Lady Stonehaven arrive at Parliament House.	11.7 a.m. to 11.15 a.m.	Their Royal Highnesses and Party enter Parliament House and proceed to King's Hall, where His Royal Highness, at the request of the Right Honorable the Prime Minister, unveils the Statue of His Majesty the King.
10.38 a.m.	.. Their Royal Highnesses arrive at Parliament House.	11.50 a.m. to 12 (noon)	Ceremony of the Establishment of the Commonwealth Parliament at Canberra.
10.45 a.m.	.. Their Royal Highnesses turn towards the Assembly.	1 p.m.	.. Official Luncheon.
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> <p>N.B. The Assembly will please remain silent while Dame Nellie Melba sings the first verse.</p> </div>	Dame Nellie Melba, D.B.E., will sing ALONE, to band accompaniment, the first verse of the National Anthem.	2.55 p.m.	.. Her Royal Highness and Lady Stonehaven arrive at Review Ground.
	The assembled people, led by the Philharmonic Society, will then repeat the first verse.	3 p.m.	.. His Royal Highness and His Excellency the Governor-General arrive at Saluting Base at Review Ground. Inspection, March Past, and Advance in Review Order.
10.50 a.m.	The Right Honorable the Prime Minister of Australia addresses the gathering, and, providing a key for the purpose, requests His Royal Highness	3.50 p.m.	.. Their Royal Highnesses and Their Excellencies the Governor-General and Lady Stonehaven and Suites depart for Government House.

The official program. NAA: M4071, 75

The ceremony was quite simple but dignified and impressive and must have been an extremely satisfying moment for all those who had worked on the development of Canberra for many years.

The Duke and Duchess of York (later to become King George VI and Queen Elizabeth) were greeted by a fanfare of bugles by eight Royal Marines who had accompanied the Royal Party in the HMS *Renown* and a 21-gun salute. The Duke reviewed the Guard of Honour. Four year old Gwen Pinner presented a bouquet to Her Royal Highness. Dame Nellie Melba at the age of 67 sang the National Anthem and was then joined by the crowd and the Canberra Philharmonic Society in a spirited repeat of the first verse.

Prime Minister Bruce and the Duke addressed the crowd and a large radio audience. They both spoke of the history of Australia and its progress since Federation and the strong links with Great Britain. The significance of this day as the beginning not just of a new city but also the opportunity to develop Australia as one of the great nations of the world was stressed.

In his address the Duke of York said:

It is impossible not to be moved by the significance of today's events as a great landmark in the story of Australia. I say this not only because today sees the opening of a new Parliament House and marks the inauguration of a new capital city, but more because one feels the stirrings of a new birth, a quickened national activity, of a fuller consciousness of your destiny as one of the great self-governing units of the British empire.¹⁷

The speeches were followed by the culminating moment for all involved. The Duke of York approached the glass-panelled doors and with a gold key made specially for the occasion formally opened the new Parliament building. After 27 years of indecision, delays, complaints and arguments the Federal Parliament of Australia finally could assemble in its own home.



The Duke and Duchess outside Parliament House.
NAA: A3560, 3134

The royal couple and official guests moved inside the House where they assembled in the Senate Chamber after the unveiling of a statue of King George V in King's Hall. The Clerk of the Senate read the Commission of King George V empowering his son to open the sittings of the Federal Parliament in the Federal Capital.

The Duke rose from his position on a dais at the end of the chamber and delivered another speech and a message of goodwill and congratulations from the King.

Our thoughts are more than ever with you on this happy day of memories to me and to the Queen. On this occasion of signal importance in the history of Australia I ask you to assure the people of the Commonwealth of my heartfelt wishes for their continued happiness and progress. I share their pride in the new capital city and join in their prayers for its successful future.¹⁸

The end of the speech signalled the end of an historic ceremony. It was marked by further triumphant fanfares and the crash of guns.

¹⁷ *Hansard*, 9 May 1927, p. 2

¹⁸ *Hansard*, 9 May 1927, p. 5

The last formal part of proceedings was an investiture where honours were bestowed upon the Prime Minister, the President and Leader of the Senate and some officials who had been associated with the establishment of the Seat of Government and arrangements for the Royal Visit. The latter group included John Butters (Chief Commissioner) and John Murdoch (Chief Architect).



Ceremony inside the Senate Chamber.
NAA: A3560, 3184

The Senate and House of Representatives met again at 5.00 pm to approve the adjournment of Parliament until a time when the administrative machinery of Government could be moved from Melbourne.

The more solemn events of the day being over, the Duke and Duchess enjoyed a short tour of Parliament House and a state luncheon.

The couple and official guests partook of turtle soup, poached schnapper, fillets of beef, roast chicken and ham, straw potatoes, green peas, Canberra pudding, fruit ices, coffee and cheese.¹⁹

In the afternoon everyone moved to York Park where a review of 2,000 troops was held. Various air squadrons carried out manoeuvres overhead. The plane of Flying Officer Francis Charles Ewen crashed during the display. He died later that night.

A reception was held that night in King's Hall by the Ministers of State for the representatives of other Dominions of the Empire (ie Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and India). A light supper was provided and a concert held in the Senate Chamber. The Duke and Duchess of York did not attend this reception.

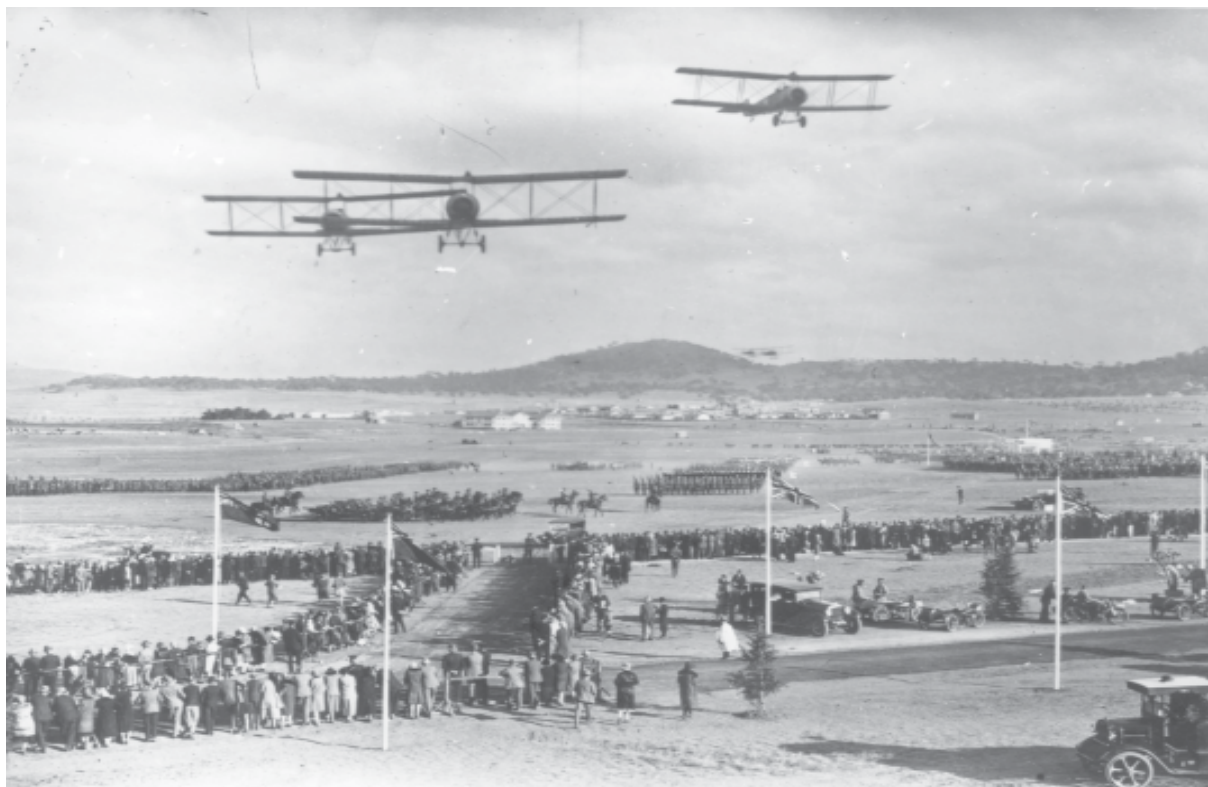
The representatives presented messages of congratulation and goodwill from their governments. There was some criticism that this was an 'after thought reception' hastily arranged when the representatives complained that they were not to be given a place in the opening ceremony.²⁰

The lure of monogrammed cutlery and hotel towels was as prevalent then as now. The Commission had to report that around £128-worth of equipment was lost from Parliament House and hotels during the two days. This included cutlery, plates, glasses, bed linen (including four quilts), dishcloths and towels.²¹

¹⁹ NAA: CP325/6, bundle 1, Public Reception Committee and Official Luncheon Committee.

²⁰ NAA: CP325/6, bundle 1, Royal Visit Newspapers Criticism.

²¹ NAA: CP325/6, bundle 1, Royal Visit Parliament House. Official handing over of goods.



Following the opening of Parliament House a Royal Review was held in York Park. This view, looking south, shows a fly past by RAAF aircraft. NAA: A3560, 3049

The media published complaints that there 'was much bungling at Canberra',²² particularly over the provision of accommodation and public parking. There were also complaints that the arrangements for the public were too restrictive and actually prevented people from attending. The Minister for Agriculture, Mr Dunn was reported in the *Labor Daily* on 11 May 1927 as saying:

... that the whole business was confined to the brass hats, military and other officials and that not more than 6,000 of the general public got a look in.²³

While criticism of any large event is inevitable that aimed at the Federal Capital Commission was perhaps unfair.

Undoubtedly, the Commission did something to deter visitors but the widespread accusations of a desire to reserve the occasion for officialdom were not fair. Nobody had any experience in coping with either crowds or ceremonies and the Commission faced the unprecedented problem of managing a major public occasion in an isolated and barely developed city with inadequate accommodation. In the circumstances, misjudgment on some points was probably inevitable.²⁴

²² NAA: CP325/6, bundle 1, Royal Visit Newspapers Criticism.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ Gibbney, p. 132

"OVERSEA'S GUESTS SLIGHTED"

Melb Herald 11/5/37
Grave Discourtesy Alleged

KEPT IN BACKGROUND AT CANBERRA

That the Federal Government was guilty of grave discourtesy to the representatives of other Dominions of the British Empire, who were present at the Canberra ceremonies as the guests of the Government, was the charge made by a Senator who returned from Canberra today.

"All through the programme they were kept in the background and not given a chance to deliver the important messages which they bore from the Governments of their countries," he said.

"The celebrations were in most respects a brilliant success," he continued, "but as a citizen of the Commonwealth and representative of the people, I feel that this lack of courtesy calls for the strongest protest possible."

"These distinguished guests, coming as they did from Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and India, at the invitation of the Commonwealth, should have been given foremost positions at the celebrations. Instead of that they were kept, comparatively speaking, in the background all through the programme."

"AFTER THOUGHT" RECEPTION

"It is true that entirely as an after-thought, a reception to those representatives was hurriedly arranged at Parliament House on Monday evening."

"After the guests had been received, the Prime Minister (Mr Bruce), in a short address, welcomed the visiting representatives and invited them to say a few words to the small number of people who happened at that particular time to be in the King's Hall."

"But those representatives had come from various countries prepared to do more than say a few words to a few people, who were standing about talking in the vicinity at the moment."

"They had come with carefully prepared and very important messages to deliver from one Dominion to another."

"Clearly they should have been given some proper and fitting opportunity to convey those messages."

CHATTERING AUDIENCE

"Instead of that they were compelled to speak to a standing audience, many of whom, I am sorry to say, continued to chatter while the important speeches were being delivered. There were frequent appeals for silence by members of the audience who were anxious to hear what the visitors had to say."

"The people at the back of the hall, who were unable to hear the speech, made it almost impossible for others to do so by reason of the noise they made."

"I feel most strongly that the treatment accorded to our visiting representatives does not in any way represent or accord with the strong feelings of welcome that animate the minds of Australians generally."

"I know that many others who were present, feel just as strongly upon this matter as I do."

FROZEN OUT

Daily Tel 11/5/37
GILLY reports from Canberra were brought to the city yesterday when the Parliamentary contingent returned after having taken part in the ceremony.

Enthusiasm appeared to be mainly directed to general criticism of the way officialdom had carried out the job, and the frigid manner in which mere State members and their wives had been treated.

The State made excellent arrangements to take the guests to the Federal City; but complaint was heard that the Federal arrangements were below par. The women were allowed to walk about footsore, and nobody in authority seemed inclined to give any concession anywhere.

Half-hearted invitations to attend this or that function were rejected by many members and Ministers, because they were not issued in proper form.

The place had its humorous side. For instance, an ex-Minister of the last Nationalist Government, who could not, even with that doubtful distinction, gain admission by the same entrance as Royalty, was attracted by the perfume of viands at the rear, and with one of his conferees, gained access to the Senate Chamber through the kitchen!

The Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Dunn, outspokenly declared that the whole business "was confined to brass hats, military and other officials," and that not more than 6000 of the general public got a look in. He considered the reports of the attendance greatly exaggerated and expressed the view that 10,000 to 12,000 would cover it.

To cap the whole bungling, Ministers, members and their wives, who wanted to get home, were held up for hours because their train was delayed waiting for those who had availed themselves of an invitation in the form of "come along if you like."

WERE THEY SLIGHTED?

Daily Tel 11/5/37
Overseas Representatives at Canberra

"KEPT IN BACKGROUND"

MELBOURNE, Wednesday.

Were overseas representatives at the opening of Parliament at Canberra slighted by being kept in the background?

A senator who returned from the Federal capital to-day said that grave discourtesy was done the accredited representatives of Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and India.

They had come at the invitation of the Federal Government, but at the actual opening ceremonies were kept in the background, and were not given an opportunity of delivering the important messages with which they had been trusted.

As an after-thought a reception was tendered them at night, and they were asked to say a few words. What a different atmosphere and different setting it was to that in which they had expected to deliver their carefully-prepared messages!

The Canberra Muddle.

Melb Herald 11/5/37
If the story of the opening at Canberra is ever told in its entirety, which it will never be, it will make anything but good reading. Those who took part in it are all agreed upon one point, and that is that everything, and pretty well everybody connected with the affair were sacrificed to the interests of the ruling officials. That, except from an official point of view, the thing was a ghastly failure, seems to be the general opinion. Even in the formal welcome of the Royal guests, the Prime Minister and Mrs Bruce were assisted by an unknown stranger, we are told, and surely such a thing should not have been possible if the managers of the affair had been alert. The catering cost, as might be expected, an enormous sum, but, singularly enough, many of the invited guests were practically starved. When people of importance in the community had to go hungry on the opening day on a bun and a cup of chocolate, while masses of choice viands were available for the all-important public servants, there seems to have been something wrong. £12 10s had to be paid for the use of a tent for a few hours, and, somehow, that seems too stiff a price. Now, it is said, that, at Queenbeyan, drinks cost 2/6 a piece, while at Canberra a bottle was obtainable for a few shillings if the buyers were properly vouched for. Mrs Deakin has told the public how scurvily she was treated, while a glance at the photographs of the great ceremony shows that the Governor of New South Wales was relegated to a back row, far behind a number of unknown Government officials. Mr King O'Malley, who was responsible for the building of this city in the wilderness, was, as has been mentioned before, completely ignored, and, on every hand, one hears similar complaints. Some bungling in connection with an affair of this kind was to be looked for, and could be excused, but, according to all accounts, what actually occurred was unparalleled, and is not calculated to make people optimistic about the future of our "Twelve Million" city, which will, at any rate, for a time, be under the rule of those officials who failed so greatly in connection with the opening.

Some of the press criticism of the arrangements.

CP325/6, bundle 1

The organisers received glowing praise from some who attended the ceremony. The Belgian Consul-General wrote:

I wish also to join in the universal praise and congratulations upon the great achievement realised by the Royal Visit officers, the Federal Commission and all the organisers of the ceremonies, which have been a paramount success in every detail and in every point worthy of this historic occasion.²⁵

Regardless of criticism or praise the building was open and the Seat of Government could finally be established at Canberra. However, the task of moving the Government and Public Service from Melbourne was an enormous one. Parliament did not meet again until 28 September 1927 and the working life of the building began.

Post-1927

The opening ceremony on 9 May 1927 was just the beginning for the provisional Parliament House. It served the Parliament and people of Australia until 9 May 1988 when the new and permanent Parliament House was opened on Capital Hill.

This guide does not identify series documenting the working life of Parliament House. However, the building itself and events associated with it are well documented in other records held by the National Archives.

Over the years the building was extended and refurbished several times. Wings were added on the east and west side in 1949 and further space added in 1965 and 1972.

The provisional Parliament House has been the stage for major events in Australian history. Activities on the front steps, in the chambers and on the lawns are familiar to all Australians. Some events that many can recall are:

- the constitutional crisis and subsequent abdication of King Edward VIII in 1936;
- sessions of Parliament during World War II;
- the funeral of Prime Minister John Curtin in 1945;
- opening of Parliament by Queen Elizabeth II in 1954;
- Vietnam peace marches in 1970;
- erection of the Aboriginal tent embassy in 1972; and
- the dismissal of the Whitlam Government in 1975.

All of these events are documented in records held by the National Archives. Records documenting events occurring over 30 years ago are in the 'open' period and most will be available for access. Records documenting events occurring less than 30 years ago are not generally available to the public. Reference staff can advise you about the appropriate agencies to contact should you wish to seek access to these records.

The original intention was that once a permanent Parliament House was built the provisional building would be removed. Happily, this has not happened and the provisional

²⁵ NAA: A1606, T120/7, Canberra Opening of Parliament, Letters of Congratulation.

Parliament House remains. It does not detract from, but rather, complements the new building above and behind it. For many it is a building of great charm, reminiscent of a bygone age and redolent with the history of Australia.

The provisional Parliament House now houses exhibitions by the National Museum of Australia, the National Film and Sound Archive and the National Portrait Gallery. Tours are held not just of the two chambers but also behind the scenes into the House of Representatives and Senate rooms and the Prime Minister's office and Cabinet room.

It is fitting that a building that saw the unfolding of Australia's history as a Commonwealth and its changing society and culture should now be used to inform and entertain Australians about that history.

2. THE DESIGN COMPETITION, 1914–24

The saga of the architectural design competition for a permanent Parliament House lasted for ten years from 1914 to 1924. The competition was actually only active for a few months in 1914 and again in 1916. Attempts were made to revive it several times in the ensuing years. The competition was never cancelled but postponed indefinitely until a more opportune time. It was not until 1980 (66 years after the first design competition was launched) that an international competition for a permanent Parliament House came to fruition.

The correspondence on the early competition is spread through many series. This guide identifies those series which contain the most comprehensive information. The correspondence reflects the desire of the Australian Government to build a Parliament House that would be the dominant feature of the new capital and be admired internationally. Several files contain correspondence from interested architects who were excited about being associated with the development of a completely new city, not a common occurrence in the twentieth century.

Also of interest in the correspondence is the disruption caused by World War I. When trying to contact architects in 1923–24 to award compensation it was discovered that some had died, others could no longer be contacted and some had had their plans and, in some cases, their businesses destroyed by the war. Attitudes had changed in Australia – for example, the war debt meant that interest in building a new city of monumental and international proportions had waned.

The winding down of the competition also excited correspondence from architects throughout the world who thought they were being treated badly. Although the competition is now largely forgotten it was closely followed by the media and Parliament of the day as shown by extracts from newspapers and *Hansard* reports. The letters turn to ones of gratitude when compensation was awarded. Although the amount of compensation was small, ranging from £10 to £100, the architects were grateful they had not been summarily dismissed. F W FitzPatrick of Chicago wrote:

Howbeit your Administration deserves the praise and commendation of the Architects of the World for the just and equitable manner in which you propose to adjudicate and settle the matter. It is so easy for a Government to call such a competition “off” and let it go at that, dismissing it with a wave of the hand.²⁶

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1903–38

A1

Recorded by: 1903–16 Department of External Affairs (I) (CA 7)
1916–28 Department of Home and Territories (CA 15)
1928–32 Department of Home Affairs (II) (CA 24)

Quantity: 184.92 metres (Canberra)

This series was the general filing system of the agencies shown above. The series covers a wide range of subjects and

²⁶ NAA: A430, G1277, Architectural Competition for Design of Parliament House (Permanent) Canberra.

contains thousands of files. Several files have been identified that cover the construction and opening of Parliament House.

Some items are listed on RecordSearch and paper listings are available. Reference staff can help researchers use the lists and other indexes to locate further information.

**Canadian Trade Commissioner. Parliament House Competition
Federal Capital** **A1, 1916/30690**

**Payment to G. Whiteford for Esperanto translation of conditions
of Federal Parliament House Architectural Competition** **A1, 1917/5333**

Federal Capital Parliament House Competition. Resumption **A1, 1919/1663**

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, FCH/FC FEDERAL CAPITAL SERIES, 1906–17 **A110**

Recorded by: 1906–16 Department of Home Affairs (I) (CA 8)
1916–17 Department of Works and Railways (CA 14)

Quantity: 2.6 metres (Canberra)

The series documents the administration of the Territory for the Seat of Government (including Jervis Bay) and the design, planning, naming and construction of the Federal Capital.

**Applications for copies of Conditions for Competition for
Parliament House, Canberra** **A110, FC1914/808**

**Federal Capital Parliament House Architectural Competition,
withdrawal owing to European Crisis** **A110, FC1914/1063**

**Federal Capital Parliament House Architectural Competition,
extract from *Hansard*** **A110, FC1914/1126**

Parliament House Competition, Canberra **A110, FC1916/340**

Suggested postponement of Parliament House Competition **A110, FC1916/455**
The above two files contain correspondence with the Federal Council of the Australian Institute of Architects and George Taylor, editor of the *Building and Real Estate Journal* about the resumption of the competition in 1916

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 'FCL' SERIES, 1913–24 **A192**

Recorded by: Lands and Survey Branch (CA 737)

Quantity: 12.8 metres (Canberra)

This series contains correspondence relating to acquisition and leasing of land, layout of the city, surveys, afforestation and other land matters to do with the Federal Capital Territory.

Federal Capital – Parliament House Competition **A192, FCL1921/608**

**Parliament House Competition, Canberra
194**

A192, FCL1922/

This file contains a summary of the history of the competition and a copy of *Federal Parliament House Architectural Competition* (booklet of competition conditions).

ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'FCW' (FEDERAL CAPITAL WORKS) PREFIX TO 1917, THEN 'FC' (FEDERAL CAPITAL) PREFIX, 1910-31

A199

Recorded by: 1910-13 Department of Home Affairs (I) (CA 8)
1913-16 Public Works Branch, Melbourne (CA 783)
1917-26 Department of Works and Railways (CA 14)

Quantity: 3.45 metres (Canberra)

This correspondence series documents public works projects in or associated with the Federal Capital Territory. The files cover such topics as the provision of essential services such as road building, bridge building, railway links, water supply, and sewerage, as well as plans, maps and designs for such major public works as Duntroon, Parliament House, Hotel Canberra, and the Mt Stromlo Observatory.

**Esperanto translation of architectural competition details
(Parliament House)**

A199, FC1918/337

CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS, ETC., RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY (FCT), 1906-21

A206

Recorded by: Department of Home Affairs (I) (CA 8)

Quantity: 9 volumes (Canberra)

This series consists mostly of copies of outwards correspondence and printed reports which have been pasted into large leather bound volumes. Entries are arranged (basically) chronologically within each volume. There is an alphabetical index at the start of each volume.

Matters dealt with include the choice of the Yass-Canberra district as the site for the Federal Capital Territory, procurement of land, the need for sea access, the proposal for a competition to design the Federal Capital Territory (a copy of the guidelines for the competition is in Volume 7), and other administrative and personnel matters.

There is a small amount of correspondence about choosing the site and design for Parliament House in relation to developing the design competition for the city and the intention to hold an international competition.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ALPHABETICAL SERIES, 1909–19**A214**

Recorded by: 1909–13 Department of Home Affairs (I) (CA 8)
 1913–17 Federal Capital Office (CA 601)

Quantity: 0.36 metres (Canberra)

This series appears to be the first system created by the Federal Capital Office, Melbourne. The records deal with various matters concerning the Federal Capital Territory particularly the siting and planning of buildings such as Parliament House, the Arsenal (an ill-fated proposal to build a munitions factory in Canberra), churches, hotels, schools and the railway.

Parliament House Design Competition – correspondence**A214, 3**

This file is mainly about the reissue of the competition in August 1916 and its subsequent withdrawal in November 1916. There is a good deal of correspondence from Walter Burley Griffin.

Parliament House Design Competition – programme and conditions with translations**A214, 4 part 1****Parliament House Design Competition – schedules of accommodation, etc****A214, 4 part 2**

The above two files document the development of the competition booklet in 1914.

Parliament House Design Competition – miscellanea**A214, 6****PH (Parliament House) Competition – questions and answers****A214, 14**

This file contains letters from potential competitors requesting further information and the answers that were sent to them.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'DSG' (DISTRICT SURVEYOR GENERAL) PREFIX, 1916–25**A361**

Recorded by: Lands and Surveys Branch, Canberra (CA 745)

Quantity: 8.80 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of files generated by the offices of the District Surveyor General and the Lands and Survey Office. The files cover a wide range of topics such as fencing, rent, rates, repairs and acquisitions of land in the Federal Capital Territory, including Jervis Bay. The files also cover routine administration details of the government such as the hospital, afforestation branch, hostels and hotels, telephone lines, agistment fees, accommodation for visiting members of Parliament and firewood supplies.

Parliament House Competition**A361, DSG17/806**

This file contains 2 pages from Walter Burley Griffin asking for approval of expenditure on the competition. The estimated cost of the competition was £8,500. However, due to the withdrawal of the competition in 1916, Griffin was only asking for approval of £25.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, OCCASIONAL SUB-NUMBERING, 1921–26**A414**

Recorded by: Federal Capital Advisory Committee (CA 292)

Quantity: 1.98 metres (Canberra)

This series comprises the main body of records of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee. The records cover the whole range of the Committee's concerns from such matters as modification of the approved city plan, sewerage and water supply, administration buildings and cottages to expenses of the Committee and preparation of reports. Many files contain sketch plans and maps of the early city of Canberra.

Parliament House Competition**A414, 42**

This file mainly contains correspondence from 1921 to 1924 concerning the decision not to revive the competition and to build a provisional building and whether to provide compensation. Copies of correspondence from previous years is also present to provide evidence for the postponement.

Final Report of Federal Capital Advisory Committee**A414, 92**

This report contains a brief summary of the history of the competition. It is also available in *Parliamentary Papers 1926–28*, Volume II, pp. 1037–1080.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'G' (GENERAL) PREFIX, 1913–39**A430**

Recorded by: 1930–32 FCT Branch, Department of Home Affairs (II) (CA 756)
1932 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch; to 1939, the Department of the Interior (I) (CA 757)

Quantity: 4.14 metres (Canberra)

The files in this series record activities undertaken by the FCT branch in carrying out its responsibility for the administration of the Federal Capital Territory.

No. 2 File. Federal Capital Permanent Parliament House Papers re concluding architectural competition.

A430, G1276

Architectural Competition for Design of Parliament House (Permanent). Canberra

A430, G1277

These two files contain extensive information relating to the decision to postpone the competition indefinitely and pay compensation to the competitors. There are lists of names and addresses of the registered competitors and how much each was awarded. There are many letters from the registered architects making inquiries and expressing appreciation for the compensation. These files also contain several summaries of the history of the competition.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1910–21

A792

Recorded by: 1910–17 Department of Home Affairs (I) (CA 8)
1917–21 Federal Capital Office (CA 601)

Quantity: 0.54 metres (Canberra)

The records in this series deal with subjects related to the construction of the capital city, ranging from the general administration of the department to the building of the city, including railways, water sources, roads, city plans, specific buildings (eg Royal Military College), afforestation and telephone communications.

Federal Parliament House Architectural Competition

A792, 1917/934

This file contains miscellaneous correspondence on the competition including: letter and photograph from J Hugh Davies of a preliminary design; photographs (2) of work undertaken in Russia by M. G. Kalashnikoff; letters from the Atlas Portland Cement Company offering to provide cement for the new building and copies of the French translation of the competition booklet.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE FILES (BY YEAR), 1907–16

A2911

Recorded by: 1907–10 Commonwealth Offices, United Kingdom (UK) (CA 976)
1910–16 Australian High Commission, UK (CA 241)

Quantity: 3.6 metres (Canberra)

This constitutes the first record series raised by the High Commissioner's office, and the subject matter covered includes personnel, administrative and international affairs.

Competition Federal Parliament House, Canberra. Architectural competition

A2911, 664/1914

Canberra Federal Parliament Buildings. Competition for designs

A2911, 1776/1915

The High Commission in London was responsible for advertising and distributing the competition details in the United Kingdom, Europe and United States of America.

These two files document this involvement. There is correspondence from architects, embassies, consuls and legations throughout the world; lists of journals and newspapers where the competition was advertised and correspondence with the Royal British Institute of Architects which opposed the revival during the war.

FOLDERS OF COPIES OF CABINET PAPERS, 1901–

A6006

Quantity: 18.76 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of copies of the following types of Cabinet, War Cabinet and Cabinet committee papers: agenda/business lists, submissions, minutes of meetings listing matters considered and related decisions and decisions on individual matters considered with or without submission. The series is an artificial accumulation comprising copies of papers located in the course of access examination, mainly in departmental files and personal archives held in National Archives.

This series has recently been microfilmed and reference copies are now available for public use in all National Archives' reading rooms.

This series is listed on RecordSearch. There is also a guide to Cabinet papers and an alphabetical index to these and other Cabinet papers in the reading room of the National office, Canberra.

Parliament House competition

A6006, 1916/12/31

Federal Parliament House architectural competition

A6006, 1919/1/15

Competition for design – Parliament House Canberra

A6006, 1922/3/16

Federal Capital – Parliament House competition

A6006, 1922/5/29

Parliament House competition

A6006, 1922/12/31

PERMANENT PARLIAMENT HOUSE DESIGN COMPETITION, 1914 – DRAWINGS SUBMITTED BY EDWIN ELLIOTT PRUITT AND ASSOCIATED RECORDS, 1911–53

A7008

Recorded by: Edwin Elliot Pruitt (CP 486)
Department of Home Affairs (I) (CA 8)

Quantity: 1 metre (Canberra)

These designs, by American architect Edwin E Pruitt, were prepared in response to the international competition for the design of a permanent Parliament House announced in 1914. The designs, along with other records of correspondence, reports and photographs, were donated to the Australian Government by his family.

Printed Publication Commonwealth of Australia. Federal Parliament House Architectural Competition	A7008, 1
Plan of proposed Parliament House. Front elevation from street	A7008, 2
Plan of proposed Parliament House ground floor	A7008, 3
Plan of proposed Parliament House main floor 1/16" scale	A7008, 4
Plan of proposed Parliament House 2nd floor	A7008, 5
Plan of proposed Parliament House 3rd floor	A7008, 6
Plan of proposed Parliament House. Front elevation (close) and 2 sections showing side elevations	A7008, 8
Mounted photograph Edwin Elliott Pruitt. 1873, Russelville, Arkansas, USA 1953	A7008, 9
Folder containing correspondence with Walter D. Bingle and other information about the various postponements and resumptions	A7008, 10
Folder with printed publications relating to Canberra and the competition and other drawings	A7008, 11

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE OF GOVERNOR GENERAL (EXCLUDING WAR FILES), 1884-1937

CP78/22

Recorded by: Governor-General (CA 1)

Quantity: 29 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of despatches, letters, minutes, memoranda, circulars, telegrams and press cuttings relating to all matters arising from the functions of the Office of the Governor-General. The range of subjects dealt with is very wide: Parliamentary proceedings, Commonwealth and Imperial defence, Imperial relations, international conferences, treaties and conventions, foreign consular services, Commonwealth Territories, relations between the Commonwealth and the State Governments, customs and excise, transport and communications, navigation, interstate trade, immigration, naturalisation, fiscal matters and the houses and offices of the Governor-General.

Federal Capital Parliament House design competition
Correspondence with the Governor-General about the resumption of the competition in 1916, including telegrams announcing the resumption and later postponement.

CP78/22, 1916/102

3. THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, 1923–27

The construction of the provisional Parliament House took almost four years. The Department of Works and Railways under Director-General of Works, Colonel P T Owen, was in charge of the project. The Chief Architect, J S Murdoch was instrumental in the design and construction of the building.

The records consist mainly of correspondence between the various participants in the construction concerning the progress of the work, the choice of materials and the problems encountered. Although much of the correspondence is fairly mundane and bureaucratic some hint of the personalities of those involved and their wish to achieve not only an acceptable but also significant building for the Australian Parliament can be determined.

There was some conflict between the notion of a provisional building and the wishes of the builders. For example, in September 1924, Colonel Owen wrote to John Murdoch:

I am alive to your repeatedly expressed desire that it should be borne in mind that this building is provisional, but, on the other hand, it is anticipated that it will stand for at least fifty years, and so we must cover the roof as for a permanent building.²⁷



Few other buildings occupied the plains surrounding Parliament House, as this view from Camp Hill towards Mount Ainslie, shows. NAA: A3560, 347

²⁷ NAA: A292, C2737B, Provisional Parliament House erection, Canberra.

The isolation of Canberra again contributed to problems. Owen was in Canberra, however, the architect's office was still in Melbourne. With only the telephone, letters and telegrams available for communication, Owen and Murdoch were at times working in a vacuum. In March 1924 Owen was in a bother about moving ahead of the plans available and the possibility of having to put off some bricklayers

I know that my previous letter regarding Parliament House (drawings) must be a worry to you, but the call for them is so insistent that I must keep on pressing for them... Priddle sees no more than ten days' work ahead of him with the drawings we have at present, and consequently he is very apprehensive about keeping all the men employed. Being myself removed from Melbourne, and not seeing what you are doing, tends to make one more apprehensive than probably one should be.²⁸

The files also contain newspaper clippings and extracts from *Hansard* that reflect what the parliamentarians and general public thought of not only the building of Parliament House but the Federal Capital in general. Given the number of years taken to get to this point, some were sceptical about Canberra ever being the Seat of Government. When reporting the turning of the first sod ceremony, the *Evening Sun* could state:

Canberra has so long been the plaything of politicians that conceivably another ceremony more or less might not matter. That would account, perhaps, for the cynical smiles on the faces of the workmen and staff. There is, of course, the big "perhaps" and "if" usually associated with Canberra.²⁹

Senator Gardiner had complained in 1924 that a building of a provisional nature costing only £200,000 would be a disgrace to the nation. He may have been reassured when the expenditure to 9 May 1927 came to £538,454.³⁰

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1903–38

A1

Please see series description in Chapter 1.

Erection of Provisional Parliament House – Canberra **A1, 1923/20992**

Foundation Stone at Parliament House – Federal Capital – laying of **A1, 1924/9085**

Statue of HM the King for Parliament House, Canberra **A1, 1926/5288**

Parliament House (Provisional), Canberra – Construction of **A1, 1930/1344**

This file contains correspondence with the Attorney-General's Department as to which department would be responsible for the cost of Parliament House. There is a breakdown on the cost of construction. The correspondence extends into 1929 and is involved with alterations and repairs to the building and grounds.

²⁸ NAA: A292, C2737B, Provisional Parliament House, Canberra, erection.

²⁹ NAA: A199, FC24/1174, Provisional Parliament House, turning of the first sod in connection with the work of erection.

³⁰ NAA: A1, 1930/1344, Parliament House (Provisional), Canberra, construction of.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 'FCW' (FEDERAL CAPITAL WORKS) PREFIX TO 1917, THEN 'FC' (FEDERAL CAPITAL) PREFIX, 1910-31**A199**

Please see series description in Chapter 1.

Provisional Parliament House, turning of the first sod in connection with work of erection**A199, FC24/1174**

This file details the arrangements for the turning of the first sod by the Minister (P G Stewart) of Works and Railways. There are newspaper articles reporting the ceremony, articles about the personalities involved, photographs and a copy of the Minister's speech.

Specifications for floor coverings, linen and domestic sundries, Parliament House**A199, FC25/333****Canberra Parliament House vacuum cleaning****A199, FC25/375****Glassware for Parliament House****A199, FC26/56****CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 'C' (COMMONWEALTH), 1929-50****A292**

Recorded by: Department of Works and Railways (CA 14)

Quantity: 23.49 metres (Canberra)

This series of general correspondence includes reports, plans and sketches relating to Public Works projects in, or associated with the Federal Capital Territory. This series contains extensive files on the construction and furnishing of the provisional Parliament House. It also contains information on alterations to the building since 1927.

Provisional Parliament House erection, Canberra**A292, C2737A****Provisional Parliament House erection, Canberra****A292, C2737B****Provisional Parliament House erection, Canberra****A292, C2737C**

These three files cover the period 1921-32 and are general correspondence files of the Department of Works and Railways on the erection of the provisional Parliament House. There is considerable correspondence on the choice between a provisional building and the nucleus of a permanent building. Other correspondence covers the schedules of accommodation, choice of materials, progress and cost of construction and problems encountered.

Parliament House gardens and grounds**A292, C3516****Parliament House Foundation Stone – laying of, and inscriptions****A292, C667**

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, DSG (DISTRICT SURVEYOR GENERAL) PREFIX, 1916–25**A361**

Please see series description in Chapter 1.

Ceremony of turning first sod for Parliament House –
transport arrangements

A361, DSG23/2034

Progress on works at Federal Capital Territory

A361, DSG23/3064

Location of pegs at site of the Provisional Parliament House

A361, DSG23/3085

Laying Foundation Stone Parliament House

A361, DSG24/433

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, OCCASIONAL SUB-NUMBERING, 1921–26**A414**

This series was described in Chapter 1.

First General Report

A414, 4 part 1

Second General Report

A414, 4 part 2

Provisional Parliament House with newspaper cuttings

A414, 13

This file contains information comparing the cost of a provisional and nucleus of a permanent building and some extracts from the minutes of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee on the progress of the building. The newspaper cuttings cover the indefinite postponement of the competition with objections from architects, the decision to erect a provisional building, the progress of Canberra and the turning of the first sod. There are also blueprints of the three levels of the building.

Final report of Federal Capital Advisory Committee

A414, 92

ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS, 'P' (PARLIAMENT HOUSE) PREFIX, 1925–27**A2514**

Recorded by: Federal Capital Commission (CA 226)

Quantity: 0.10 metres (Canberra)

This series contains plans and drawings created by the Federal Capital Commission relating to the construction of the Old Parliament House building. It also contains some plans and drawings relating to works carried out specifically for the Opening Ceremony. Most of these are also available as aperture cards in series A9663.

Provisional Parliament House – detail of cornice

A2514, P80

Provisional Parliament House – detail showing drainage of
flat roofs

A2514, P140

Provisional Parliament House – main floor

A2514, P200

Parliament House, plan of stands for royal visit

A2514, P258

Layout of gardens facing Parliament House

A2514, P320

ARCHITECTURAL PLANS, ('A' PREFIX TO 1932), 1921-59**A2617**

Recorded by: Department of Works and Railways, Public Works
Branch (CA 14)

Quantity: 4.47 metres (Canberra)

This series comprises the 'ordinary run' of architectural plans for buildings in the Federal Capital Territory dating from 1921 in numerical order. Most of these are also available as aperture cards in series A9663.

**Sketch design for Provisional Houses of Parliament,
Canberra**

A2617, 460

Details of main entrance to Houses of Parliament

A2617, A880

**Sketch for Royal Tennis Court in connection with
Provisional Parliament House, Canberra**

A2617, A1421**MILDENHALL COLLECTION OF GLASS PLATE NEGATIVES, 1913-45****A3560**

Recorded by: 1913-35 William James Mildenhall (CP 491)
1913-24 Department of Works and Railways, FCT (CA 14)
1925-30 Federal Capital Commission (CA 226)
1930-31 Department of Home Affairs (II), FCT (CA 756)
1932-35 Civic (ACT) Administration Branch, Department
of the Interior (CA 757)

Quantity: 87 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of over 7,000 glass plate negatives mainly of Canberra and the surrounding area. Most of them were



Horse teams landscaping outside the almost completed Parliament House.

NAA: A3560, 1323

taken by William James Mildenhall who was employed in the Federal Capital Territory from 1921. His time as Information Officer seems to have included recording photographically the growth of Canberra. Hundreds of photographs of the provisional Parliament House are scattered throughout the series. These include all phases of construction and views of the finished building from all aspects. There are also extensive photographs of the interior of the building and the gardens. The plates have been copied by the National Archives and prints are available for public consultation in the Reading Room of the National Office in Canberra. There is an alphabetical subject index. The photographs relevant to the provisional Parliament House are mainly under '*Parliament House*'.

Parliament House under construction	A3560, 337–355
Parliament House, exterior and interior and gardens	A3560, 3157–3178
Parliament House – interior	A3560, 3530–3553



Planting trees in King George Terrace with a mobile tree planting windlass, January/February 1927. NAA: A3560, 2690

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 'E2' PREFIX, 1921-30**A6270**

Recorded by: Federal Capital Commission (CA 226)

Quantity: 2.32 metres (Canberra)

The files in this series record the activities of the Engineers Department of the Federal Capital Commission (FCC).

Files refer to all aspects of the fitting out of the provisional Parliament House, such as heating, air conditioning, supply of linen, cutlery and furniture, lighting, pianos and musical instruments, bowling greens and tennis courts and sanitary services. This series is listed on RecordSearch.

Linen and towels for Federal Parliament House Canberra	A6270, E2/25/426
Parliament House – seats for members	A6270, E2/27/810
Parliament House pianos and musical instruments	A6270, E2/27/1286
Parliament House furniture for Legislative Chambers	A6270, E2/27/2404
Parliament House acoustics of chambers	A6270, E2/29/1560

APERTURE CARDS FOR ACT ARCHITECTURAL PLANS AND DRAWINGS, ALPHABETICAL SERIES, 1921-59**A9663**

Recorded by: 1921-32 Department of Works and Railways (CA 14)
 1932-38 Works and Services Branch (I) Canberra (CA 740)
 1938-39 Department of Works (I) (CA 30)
 1939-46 Works and Services Branch (II) Canberra (CA 742)
 1946-59 Works Director, ACT (CA 743)

Quantity: 0.90 metres (Canberra)

This set of aperture cards was purchased by the National Archives from Australian Construction Services in 1994 as microform copies of plans in A2617 because of concern about the condition of the plans, many of which were fragile and becoming damaged by high researcher use. It was found that the set of cards included plans and drawings from a number of other series which were previously identified as separate from, but related to A2617 (including A2514).

The cards are held in the reading room in Canberra. They are arranged alphabetically by area (eg Acton, Parkes, Barton etc). For Parliament House look under '*Parkes-Parliament House*'.

**PERSONAL PAPERS OF MR C S DALEY REFERRING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF
CANBERRA, 1910–45**

CP487/6

Recorded by: Charles Studdy Daley (CP 8)

Quantity: 1.71 metres (Canberra)

The series was maintained by C S Daley during the years 1910 to 1951 and relates to the development of Canberra through the Federal Capital Advisory Committee, the Federal Capital Commission and later agencies.

The series goes into details of the designs, layouts, general works and construction of the city. The series also highlights the personal side of the governing bodies.



Road works in progress outside Parliament House, 1927.

NAA: A3560, 2804

**NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, LETTERS AND PRINTED MATERIAL
RELATING TO THE WORK OF P L SHEAFFE IN CANBERRA, 1902-63****M4071**

Recorded by: Percy Lampriere Sheaffe (CP 53)

Quantity: 0.54 metres (Canberra)

Many of the items, such as photographs and invitations, are related to projects in Canberra such as the original survey of the city and area (1910), the hammering of the first pegs (1913), the laying of the foundations for the Commencement Column (1913), the laying of the foundation stone for the Capital (1920) and the building and opening of Parliament House (1927). The photographs and newspaper cuttings give a good idea of life in early Canberra and how the city and attitudes to it have changed over the years.

**28 photographs recording construction of Parliament House
and the Secretariat (now East Block)****M4071, 63**

A rear stairway inside a courtyard at Parliament House.
NAA: A3560, 3427

4. THE OPENING CEREMONY, 1927

The planning for the opening ceremony occupied almost twelve months from the announcement of the event on 26 May 1926. It was to be the high point of the tour of Australia by Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York.

A Commonwealth Director of the Royal Tour (Major-General C B B White CA 1052) was appointed to coordinate all activities of the tour. In Canberra a Royal Visit Section was established within the Federal Capital Commission to arrange the Canberra section of the visit and the opening of Parliament House. The major correspondence is contained in series created by these two agencies. This covers the arrival of the Duke and Duchess in Canberra, the development of the program of events for 9 May, the issuing of official invitations, accommodation and transport for official guests, provision of facilities for the public and the press, construction of outside stands and extra seating in the Senate chamber and all other activities needed to organise the event.

The correspondence directly reflects the problems encountered by the organising committee: the lack of accommodation, transport, food outlets, indeed lack of most facilities needed to mount an event of this scale. Although couched in polite, official terms the frustration of the organisers is evident. The Commonwealth Director and John Butters had cause to use the following wording or something similar many times when confronted with the request to include yet another worthy citizen on the guest list:

... space in the Senate Chamber, and accommodation within the hostels in being at the Federal Capital, have perforce compelled us to withhold invitations from many persons to whom under normal conditions, and in recognition of valued services rendered, we would like to have issued them.³¹

The correspondence reflects the very strong links Australia had not just with Great Britain but with the British Commonwealth or Empire. The Empire as an entity of mutually supporting countries under the umbrella of Britain is very evident. Great Britain is referred to as the 'Mother Country' and the development of Canberra is regarded as an integral part of 'the development of this great British Commonwealth'.³²

L S Amery, Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote from Britain:

[We] are confident that to-day's ceremony will be prelude to yet greater development of the resources and well-being of Australia for the advantage not only of the Commonwealth but of the Empire as a whole.³³

The records convey that the opening of Parliament House and hence the establishment of the Seat of Government in its own home was the real launching of Australia as a

³¹ NAA: A458, J120/7, *Federal Territories Opening of Federal Parliament Canberra*. Invitations to Ceremony, Official.

³² NAA: A1606, B40/1 Attachment, *Their Royal Highness the Duke and Duchess of York*. Invitation to perform ceremony of the official opening of Canberra in May 1927.

³³ NAA: A1606, S120/7, *Canberra Opening of Parliament*. Congratulatory Messages.

new, united country. That this country was to be essentially British was well understood. Prime Minister Bruce in his speech at the opening ceremony said:

Today it is our solemn duty to reaffirm our faith in our country, and our devotion to the Crown and Empire ... In the future, millions of the British race will people this continent. In numbers surpassing the motherland, standing resolutely for those principles of freedom and justice upon which the Empire is based, who can foretell how great may be the part our nation will play in the years to come.³⁴

Although the opening ceremony may have received some criticism and was not as well attended by the public as hoped, it achieved the international recognition desired. Congratulatory messages came from around the world. While interesting for their content, these messages also reflect world politics at the time, including its imperial nature. From the Kingdom of Netherlands came:

an expression of sincere goodwill and the desire that the ties of cordial relationship, existing between Great Britain and Holland will be further cultivated and strengthened between Australia and its nearest foreign neighbour, Netherlands India. The task of developing large tropical territories which is common to both Governments in New Guinea, will – it is hoped – be another factor in cementing the friendship which is characteristic of the mutual relationship.³⁵

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1903–38

A1

Please see series description in Chapter 1.

Opening of Parliament at Canberra File No 2

A1, 1927/199

This file contains correspondence covering all issues relating to the opening of Parliament House. Of particular interest is the list of official guests and where they were accommodated while in Canberra.

Police Protection Opening of Parliament at Canberra

A1, 1927/1256

Catering Arrangements during opening of Parliament Canberra

A1, 1927/4412

CANBERRA COMMUNITY NEWS (MASTER SET), 1925–27

A429

Recorded by: Federal Capital Commission (CA 226)

Quantity: 0.27 metres (Canberra)

This series is 23 volumes from the news magazine issued monthly by the Federal Capital Commission as the publicity organ of the Commission's Social Service Department and its Committees. It mainly deals with the community life of the city. Articles cover schools, playgrounds, infant health, sport, entertainment, the Causeway Hall, the building of residential cottages and the activities in the Bachelors' Quarters and builders' camps. These volumes are a delightful account of

³⁴ *Hansard*, 9 May 1927, pp. 1–2.

³⁵ NAA: A1606, S120/7, *Canberra Opening of Parliament*. Congratulatory Messages.

the life of the 'ordinary' people in the early years of Canberra.

Canberra Community News – Volume 2, No. 8 – May 9, 1927 **A429, 20**
A special souvenir issue giving the details of the Royal Visit and some details about Parliament House.

Canberra Community News – Volume 2, No. 9 – June 11, 1927 **A429, 21**
This issue gives some reports on the public's appreciation of the Royal Visit. There are short biographies of some of the people involved with the opening ceremony and Parliament House including John Butters (Chief Commissioner), Charles Daley (Secretary of the Commission), Herbert Waterman (Secretary of the Royal Visit Section) and Henry Rolland (Architect of the Commission).

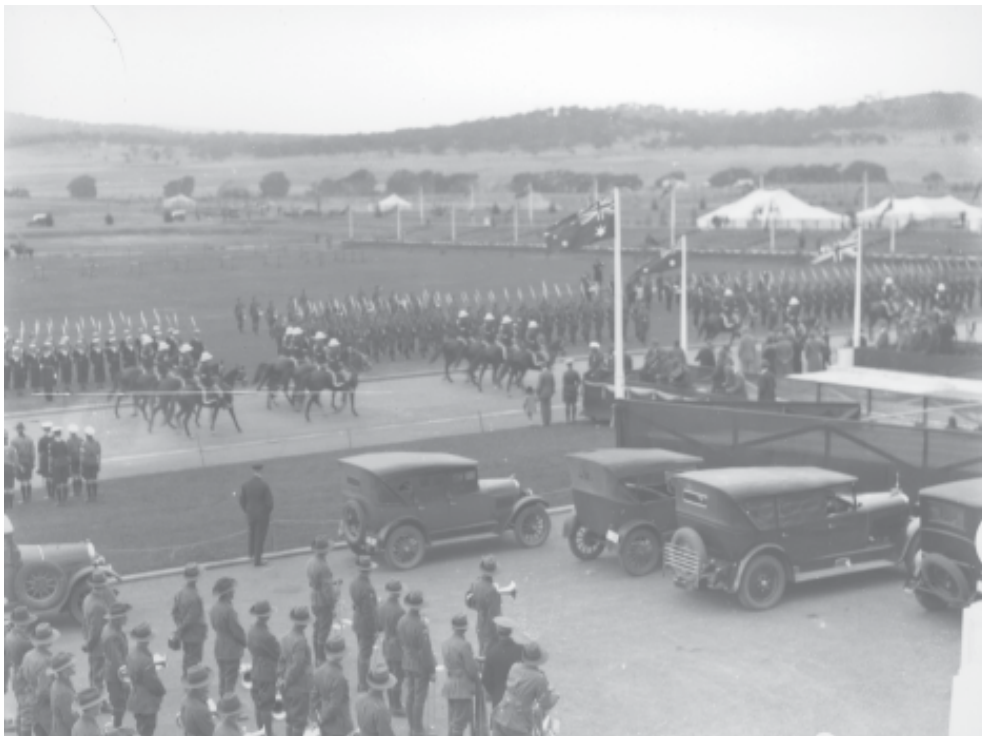
CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES, 1899–1939

A458

Recorded by: Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 49.77 metres (Canberra)

This is a large series covering all subjects which came to the attention of the Prime Minister. Items A120/7 – W120/7 deal with the transfer of the Seat of Government to Canberra and the opening of Parliament House. Items 748/3 – Z748/3 and AA748/3 – AO748/3 refer to the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York in 1927. Many of these items are relevant to the opening of Parliament House.



Mounted police riding past troops outside Parliament House during rehearsal for the opening. NAA: A3560, 3112

Some items are listed on RecordSearch and paper listings are available. Reference staff can help researchers use the lists and other indexes to locate further information.

**Federal Territories Opening of Federal Parliament, Canberra.
Invitations to Ceremony, Official**

A458, J120/7

Opening of Federal Parliament, Canberra. Invitations. General.

A458, K120/7

Canberra. Opening of Parliament. Congratulatory messages

A458, S120/7

Letters of congratulation from governments all over the world including Mussolini as Prime Minister of Italy and the Chancellor of Germany and the Japanese Parliament. There is also a copy of the Prime Minister's speech delivered at the ceremony.

**Visits. Duke and Duchess of York 1927. Commemorative
Medal of Opening**

A458, G748/3

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES, 1901–50

A461

Recorded by: Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 144 metres (Canberra)

The series consists of general correspondence files which cover the wide range of subjects that came to the Prime Minister's attention. This is a very large series. Several files have been identified that cover the construction and opening of Parliament House.

Some items are listed on RecordSearch and paper listings are available. Reference staff can help researchers use the lists and other indexes to locate further information.

Federal Parliament House General

A461, A4/1/10

Canberra. Opening of Parliament House General

A461, C4/1/10

Parliament House, Canberra President's Chair Senate

A461, I4/1/10

Parliament Houses. Speaker's Chair Part 1

**A461, H4/1/10
part 1**

**Rangachariar, Dewan B – Indian representative at opening
of Parliament, Canberra**

A461, 5573

**CORRESPONDENCE FILES, LETTER PREFIX, SECRET AND CONFIDENTIAL
SERIES, 1903–44**

A1606

Recorded by: Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 5.67 metres (Canberra)

The series consists of files of papers covering a wide variety of subjects that came to the Prime Minister's attention.

Opening of Parliament – Canberra 1927	A1606, A32/1
Canberra opening of Parliament. Official invitations to overseas delegates	A1606, D32/1 part 1
Canberra opening of Parliament, invitations to Dominions representatives, South African representative	A1606, D32/1 part 2
Canberra opening of Parliament, invitations to Dominions representatives, New Zealand representative	A1606, D32/1 part 3
Canberra opening of Parliament, invitations to Dominions representatives, Canadian representative	A1606, D32/1 part 4
Canberra opening of Parliament, invitations to Prime Minister of Great Britain	A1606, D32/1 part 5
Canberra opening of Parliament, invitations to Prime Minister of Newfoundland	A1606, D32/1 part 6
Canberra opening of Parliament, invitations to Prime Minister of Irish Free State	A1606, D32/1 part 7
Visits – Duke of York 1927	A1606, B40/1
Their Royal Highness the Duke and Duchess of York, invitation to perform ceremony of the official opening of Canberra, May 1927	A1606, B40/1 attachment
This file contains the telegrams sent by the Governor-General inviting the Duke and Duchess of York and the reply from King George V, accepting. There is also correspondence about the proposed itinerary of the tour.	
GLASS LANTERN SLIDES OF THE 1927 OPENING OF FEDERAL PARLIAMENT AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY CANBERRA SCENES, 1927	A3348
Recorded by: Department of the House of Representatives (CA 692)	
Quantity: 50 slides, 50 negatives and 50 photographic copies (Canberra); 50 photographic copies held by Department of the House of Representatives.	
The slides were presented in 1947 to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Mr John Solomon Rosevear, in whose private vault the slides were housed. Their functional origin and creator are unknown.	
TRH Duke and Duchess of York being greeted on the steps of Parliament House	A3348, 3

View of Kings Hall, Parliament House	A3348, 12
Royal party on the steps of Parliament House with Prime Minister, Rt Hon. S M Bruce	A3348, 31
MILDENHALL COLLECTION OF GLASS PLATE NEGATIVES, 1913–45	A3560
Please see series description in Chapter 2.	
The series contains numerous photographs of the Opening Ceremony at Parliament House and the subsequent review of troops in York Park.	
Photographs covering the Royal Visit and Opening Ceremony and Review	A3560, 2991–3154
Proceedings in Senate Chamber during Opening Ceremony	A3560, 3184–3187
FOLDERS OF COPIES OF CABINET PAPERS, 1901–	A6006
Please see series description in Chapter 1.	
Representatives of Dominions to be invited to opening of Parliament House Canberra	A6006, 1926/12/31
Opening Ceremony at Canberra	A6006, 1927/06/01
Royal Visit to Canberra – Holidays	A6006, 1927/12/31
Cost of Royal Visit to Canberra	A6006, 1927/12/31



The Duchess of York receiving a bouquet. NAA: A3560, 3052

CORRESPONDENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE FILES, 'DY' (DUKE OF YORK) PREFIX, 1860-1928**A6680**

Recorded by: 1926 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)
 1927 Director of Royal Tour (CA 1052)
 1928 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 3.66 metres (Canberra)

This is the principal record series of the Commonwealth Director of the Royal Tour of 1927, being correspondence and administrative files arranged in a multiple number sequence according to general subject headings. This series covers the whole of the Royal Tour with many files relating to the opening ceremony in Canberra. There are many requests for invitations and letters making suggestions for music, dances etc to be included.

Offer of Dame Nellie Melba to sing at opening of Parliament **A6680, DY25/5**

Canberra programme file and general arrangements at Canberra (6 files with this title) **A6680, DY25A-F**

Incidence of Cost Canberra Royal Visit **A6680, DY36/9**

Luncheon – Parliament House, Canberra **A6680, DY44/4**

Reports on Royal Visit 1927 **A6680, DY73/1**

This file gives a final report on the whole Royal Visit including the Canberra component. Of particular interest is a full list of invited guests with names and titles and whether they accepted or not.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ROYAL VISIT 1927, 1926-29**A6976**

Recorded by: Federal Capital Commission Royal Visit Section (CA 226)

Quantity: 1 metre (Canberra)

This series records the planning and arrangements made by the Federal Capital Commission for the ceremonial opening of Parliament House on 9 May 1927. The files contain correspondence, cables, schedules, maps, plans, financial statements and estimates etc. This includes planning the reception, accommodation, security, catering, transport, parking invitations to functions, presentations, opening of Parliament etc.

Accommodation. Public and motor cars **A6976, 1 part 1**

Public catering RV IIB **A6976, IIB**

Chess match. Commonwealth Parliament v House of Commons **A6976, 13A**

Invitations to functions – public **A6976, 21**

Musical features at opening ceremony **A6976, 28**

Programme. Official opening Parliament House, part 1	A6976, 39 part 1
Programme. Official opening Parliament House, part 2 These two files contain details of the full development and carrying out of the Opening Ceremony. Part 2 contains a report from the Chief Commissioner Sir John Butters on the ceremony outlining how it was planned, the problems encountered and the actual execution of the ceremony.	A6976, 39 part 2
Stands. Official (and decorations)	A6976, 49
UNREGISTERED CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ROYAL VISIT 1927, 1926-27	A6977
Recorded by: Federal Capital Commission Royal Visit Section (CA 226)	
Quantity: 0.18 metres (Canberra)	
This series consists of working papers and some correspondence relating to the Royal Visit of the Duke of York to Canberra in May 1927 for the purpose of opening Parliament House. Items deal with schedules, permits, sketches of seating arrangements, traffic, parking, lists of invited guests, railway time tables and all the paraphernalia associated with organising a public event.	
Arrangements for Royal Visit	A6977, 1
Badges	A6977, 2
Correspondence Tent Hires	A6977, 3
Royal Visit 1927 – Data for Brochure	A6977, 4
Royal Visit Erection of Stands in Parliament House Grounds – for general public	A6977, 5
Bookings NRMA and RAC (VIC)	A6977, 6
Royal Visit 1927. Parliament House arrangements	A6977, 7
Police, traffic and Parking, Camping Committee	A6977, 8
Sample Tickets etc	A6977, 9
Stands	A6977, 10
Receipts for Tickets	A6977, 11
Suspense Act. (Account) Parking and Camping cars	A6977, 12
Receipt forms parking areas	A6977, 13
Ushers	A6977, 14
Programme of Events	A6977, 15
Guest and travel lists for opening of Parliament House	A6977, 16
Catering for the Public at Canberra	A6977, 17
Transport Arrangements for May 8, 9 and 10	A6977, 18

ROYAL VISIT 1927, OPENING CEREMONY FILE INDEX, 1926-27**A6978**

Recorded by: Federal Capital Commission Royal Visit Section (CA 226)

Quantity: 0.01 metres (Canberra)

The series consists of multiple copies of an index of files, one card, marked 'File schedule', two cards detailing the extra (A, B, C) files, one card marked 'Marking Register' and two cards with the file lists pasted on to them all, inside a Federal Capital Commission folder. These are the control records for A6976.

ROYAL VISIT 1927: ACTION OUTSTANDING REGISTER, 1927**A6979**

Recorded by: Federal Capital Commission Royal Visit Section (CA 226)

Quantity: 0.01 metres (Canberra)

This is a handwritten register of 20 large format sheets attached to a Federal Capital Commission file cover. It is ruled into columns from left to right: Name or Number of file; matters outstanding; date referred; to whom referred; remarks. It appears to have served as a check list to ensure completion of outstanding tasks prior to the arrival of the Royal visitors. Five printed booklets of directions for invited guests are clipped to the register. These are the control records for A6976.

FCC RECORDS RELATING TO THE ROYAL VISIT, 1927**CP325/6**

Recorded by: Federal Capital Commission (CA 226)

Quantity: 0.30 metres (Canberra)

This series contains papers of various committees charged by the Federal Capital Commission to oversee different aspects of the Royal Visit and Opening Ceremony

Royal Visit 1927. Stands and Decorations Committee.**CP325/6, bundle 1****Royal Visit 1927. Public Entertainment Committee****CP325/6, bundle 1****Royal Visit Newspapers Criticism.****CP325/6, bundle 1**

Cuttings from newspapers criticising the treatment of overseas representatives and senior parliamentarians and their wives. Also criticism of the perceived bungling by the over estimation of public attendance and the restrictions placed on car users.

Royal Visit Parliament House. Official Handing over of Goods.**CP325/6, bundle 1**

Losses of items from hotels and Parliament House during the Royal Visit. Items include cutlery, glasses, jugs, dishes, bed linen and kitchen towels.

Royal Visit, 1927. Cinematography Committee.	CP325/6, bundle 1
Royal Visit, 1927. State Luncheon and Public Reception Committee. Includes schedules of events for ceremony and floor plans of Parliament House.	CP325/6, bundle 1
Royal Visit, 1927. Housing And Provisioning Committee. Contains a list of the official guests.	CP325/6, bundle 1
Royal Visit, 1927. Medical and Sanitary Committee.	CP325/6, bundle 1
Royal Visit, 1927. Public Reception Committee and Official Luncheon Committee.	CP325/6, bundle 1
Royal Visit, 1927. Official Cars Committee	CP325/6, bundle 1
Royal Visit, 1927. Trees and Tree Planting (HRH)	CP325/6, bundle 1
Royal Visit, 1927. Military Committee.	CP325/6, bundle 1
Royal Visit, 1927. School Children Committee. Details of arranging the attendance of school children including letters from schools accepting the invitation.	CP325/6, bundle 1
Royal Visit, 1927. Housing Provisioning Committee Proceedings.	CP325/6, bundle 1

CORRESPONDENCE FILES OF THE CANBERRA SOCIAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION, 1925-31

CP698/9

Recorded by: Canberra Social Service Association, FCC (CA 226).

Quantity: 2.24 metres (Canberra)

The purpose of the Social Service Association was to establish social and sporting networks for the newly arrived Commonwealth employees in the Federal Capital Territory. The Association was also concerned with women and children's welfare. Several files also concern the efforts of the community in organising events to celebrate the Royal Visit to Canberra in 1927 for the opening of Parliament House.

Royal Visit – General – Correspondence of the Canberra Social Services Association, 1927-28	CP698/9, 53/1
Canberra Social Services Association – correspondence regarding the royal visit by the Duke and Duchess of York to open Parliament House, 1926-27	CP698/9, 53/2
Royal Visit – Public Entertainment Committee, 1927	CP698/9, 53/3

**NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, LETTERS AND PRINTED MATERIAL
RELATING TO THE WORK OF P L SHEAFFE IN CANBERRA, 1902-63****M4071**

Recorded by: Percy Lampriere Sheaffe (CP 53)

Quantity: 0.54 metres (Canberra)

This series was described in Chapter 2.

**Newspaper cutting from the Canberra Times, 10 May 1927(?)
giving the Official Programme for the opening of Parliament****M4071, 72****Invitation to Miss Isabel Sheaffe to the establishment of the
seat of government at Canberra, 9 May 1927****M4071, 74****Synopsis of Programme of Official Opening of Parliament
House, Canberra by HRH the Duke of York KG, 9 May 1927****M4071, 75**

APPENDIX 1 KEY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

The National Archives hold records containing correspondence from many senior public servants involved in the establishment of the Federal Capital. The following list gives the names of the key officials and the positions they held. Further information on most of these officials can be found in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. The *Canberra Community News*, Volume 2, No 9 (NAA: A429, 21) gives brief biographies of John Butters, Charles Daley, Henry Rolland and Herbert Waterman. The National Archives holds personal records of a number of key Commonwealth persons. Biographical information and a detailed description of the records available can be found on the National Archives' online RecordSearch database (at www.naa.gov.au) using the CP (Commonwealth Person) number following their surnames.

Bingle, Walter David

Acting Head, Department of Home Affairs – 1907–09, 1914–16
Secretary and Permanent Head, Department of Works and Railways – 1917–26

Butters, Sir John Henry (CP 503)

Chief Commissioner, Federal Capital Commission – 1925–29

Daley, Charles Studdy (CP 8)

Senior Clerk, Department of Home Affairs – 1905–30
Secretary, Federal Capital Advisory Committee – 1921–24
Secretary, Federal Capital Commission – 1924–30
Civic Administrator, FCT Branch, Department of Home Affairs – 1930–32
Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior – 1932–52

Murdoch, John Smith

Senior Assistant to Director-General Works – 1904–14
Architect, Department of Works and Railways – 1914–19
Chief Architect, Department of Works and Railways – 1919–29
Director-General, Department of Works – 1927–29

Owen, Colonel Percy Thomas

Director-General Works – 1904–25
Member, Federal Capital Advisory Committee – 1921–24
Chief Engineer, Federal Capital Commission – 1925–29

Rolland, Henry Maitland (CP 26)

Head Architect, Federal Capital Commission – 1921–26

Waterman, Herbert Roy

Assistant Secretary, Federal Capital Commission 1926
Secretary, Royal Visit Section, Federal Capital Commission – 1927

White, Major-General Sir Cyril Brudenell Bingham (CP 10)

Commonwealth Director, Royal Visit 1927

APPENDIX 2 KEY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

During the period that this guide covers, the Federal Capital Territory was administered by several different agencies. This list provides brief information about the agencies and the dates they were responsible for the Territory. Further information about the agencies can be found by searching the National Archives RecordSearch database using their Commonwealth agency (CA) numbers.

Department of Home Affairs (I) (CA 8)

1 January 1901–14 November 1916

The Department of Home Affairs was established on 1 January 1901. It was one of the first seven Departments of State to be established when Australia became a Commonwealth. Amongst other functions it was responsible for Public Works and the Federal Capital. It administered the *Seat of Government Act 1908*, the *Seat of Government Acceptance Act 1909* and the *Seat of Government (Administration) Act 1910*.

Several branches within this department were responsible for administering the federal territory: Public Works Branch; Lands and Surveys Branch, Canberra; Lands and Survey Branch; Works Branch; FCT Administrative Offices.

When it was abolished in 1916 the function of administering the Federal Capital went to the Department of Home and Territories. Functions dealing with public works went to the Department of Works and Railways.

Department of Home and Territories (CA 15)

14 November 1916–10 December 1928

This department was responsible for the administration of the territories. Its main function with regard to the Federal Capital Territory was to establish the Seat of Government at Canberra. It oversaw the activities of the Federal Capital Commission.

Department of Works and Railways (CA 14)

14 Nov 1916–12 Apr 1932

This department, amongst other functions, was responsible for the design, construction, addition and maintenance of public buildings; and design and execution of engineering works. In this capacity it was responsible for the design and construction of all buildings in the Territory including the provisional Parliament House through the Director-General, Colonel P T Owen and Chief Architect, John Murdoch.

Federal Capital Office (CA 601)

1 Oct 1913–28 Feb 1921

The Federal Capital Office came under the Minister for Works and Railways and its main function was to advise the Minister on the design of Canberra. Walter Burley Griffin was the head of the office as Director of Design and Construction. The Office

was abolished in 1921 and Griffin's services were terminated. The advisory function was passed to the Federal Capital Advisory Committee and responsibility for design and construction went to the Department of Works and Railways.

Federal Capital Advisory Committee (CA 292)

26 Jan 1921–30 Jun 1925

The Federal Capital Advisory Committee was appointed to advise the Government on matters concerning the construction of the Federal Capital. The functions of the Committee were to inquire into and advise upon the following matters in relation to the construction of the Federal Capital at Canberra:

- The existing data, plans and works.
- The works, buildings and city services that can be further proceeded with or commenced forthwith.
- A general scheme upon which to develop the buildings of the capital city progressively, having regard to both official and civil occupation.
- Proposals for the design and construction of the necessary works, buildings, and services.
- The order in which essential surveys and the construction of such works, buildings, and services shall be undertaken.
- Such matters as in the opinion of the Committee are expedient, in regard to provision and manufacture of materials necessary for the purposes of construction.
- To inquire into and report upon any special matter in relation to the lay-out and construction of the Federal Capital city, as and when directed by the Minister for Works and Railways.

Its recommendations were executed by the local Works branch of the Department of Works and Railways. The Committee produced three reports, viz:

Construction of Canberra. First general report, 18 July 1921 (Parliamentary Papers. Session 1920–21. Volume III, Paper No. 134, pp. 2027–2069)

Construction of Canberra. Second general report, 31 July 1922. (Parliamentary Papers, Session 1922. Volume II, Paper No. 41, pp. 2791–2804)

Construction of Canberra. Final report, 25 May 1926. (Parliamentary Papers. Session 1926–27–28. Volume II, Paper No. 56, pp. 1037–1080.

The final report was produced as a review of the Committee's operations overall, with the intention of explaining its principles to the body taking over its functions, the Federal Capital Commission.

Federal Capital Commission (CA 226)

1 Jan 1925–1 May 1930

The Federal Capital Commission was established on 1 January 1925 by the *Seat of Government (Administration) Act No. 8 of 1924*. The functions of the Commission as specified by the Act were:

- the control and management of Crown lands;
- the levying and collection of rates upon land in the Territory;
- the construction, maintenance and operation of tramways;
- the construction, maintenance and control of roads, bridges, culverts, levees, sewers, drains and water-courses;
- the provision of gas, electricity, water and sewerage;
- the provision and maintenance of markets, weighbridges, pounds and abattoirs;
- forestry and afforestation, and preservation of flora and fauna;
- the destruction of vermin and noxious weeds;
- the protection of public health and the maintenance of sanitation;
- subject to the approval of the Minister, the construction of all works and buildings required by the Commonwealth;
- the construction and maintenance of all works and buildings required for the purposes of the Commission;
- such other matters as are specified in any Regulation made under this Act; and
- generally the municipal government of the Territory.

By 1929 there were two main Divisions: the first, consisting of the Architect's Department and the Engineer's Department, under the Chief Commissioner; the second, consisting of Accounts, Commissariat, Clerical, Health, Hospital, Internal Audit and Lands and Property Departments, under the Second Commissioner.

APPENDIX 3 FURTHER READING

Books and articles

Daley, Charles Studdy, *As I Recall: Reminiscences of Early Canberra*, ed. Shirley Purchase, Mulini Press, Cook, ACT, 1994.

Dick, George, *Parliament House Canberra Golden Jubilee*, AGPS Press, Canberra, 1977.

Federal Capital Commission, *Canberra and the Territory for the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth: A brief review of history, features and progress*, Federal Capital Commission, Canberra, 1927 (Cover title: *Souvenir of the opening of Parliament House at Canberra by His Royal Highness the Duke of York K.G.* – available at the National Library of Australia).

Fitzgerald, A, *Canberra's Engineering Heritage*, Institute of Architects, Canberra, 1983.

Gibbney, J, *Canberra 1913–53*, AGPS Press, Canberra, 1988.

Gugler, Ann, *The Builders of Canberra, 1909–29, Part One, Temporary Camps and Settlements*, CPN Publications, Canberra, 1994.

McDonald, D I, 'Architect Murdoch and the Provisional Parliament House', *Canberra Historical Journal*, March 1985, p 18.

Hansard and parliamentary papers

These sources provide very interesting and accessible information. Hansard records what was said during debates of the Commonwealth Parliament and not only gives the facts but also reveals the personalities of those involved and their attitudes towards Canberra. The traditional Victoria versus New South Wales rivalry is evident. Reports presented to Parliament, later printed as *Parliamentary Papers*, give summaries of the architectural competition and the construction and opening ceremony.

Sets of *Hansard* reports and *Parliamentary Papers* are available in all National Archives' reading rooms. Sets of *Parliamentary Papers* may not be complete and holdings vary from office to office. *Parliamentary Papers* are also available in State libraries, university libraries and the National Library of Australia.

Hansard, 26 July 1923, pp. 1668–1678

This covers the debate in the House of Representatives on the proposal to build a provisional Parliament House. The proposal was passed and a Loan Bill containing a component for the Federal Territory was raised to facilitate the construction.

Hansard, 17 August 1923, pp. 2984–3042

The debate about the Loan Bill in the House of Representatives. Interestingly, this does not address the provisional Parliament House, probably because the House had already agreed to its construction.

Hansard, 24 August 1923, pp. 3425–3443

This covers the debate in the Senate on the Loan Bill to allow the construction to proceed. The Senate attempted to amend the Bill to force the Government to construct a permanent building.

Hansard, 24 August 1923, pp. 3655–3657

The House of Representatives refused to accept the amendment as the amount was provided in the Bill ‘in order that effect may be given to a Resolution of the House which was passed without division, in favour of the erection of a Provisional Parliament House in Canberra’.³⁶

Hansard, 24 August 1923, pp. 3543–3539

Further debate ensued when the reply came from the House of Representatives. Many senators still opposed a provisional building, but eventually agreed to pass the Bill so that work could proceed on establishing the Seat of Government at Canberra.

Hansard, 9 May 1927

The entire *Hansard* report for 9 May 1927 details the official proceedings of the Opening Ceremony. The speeches by the Prime Minister and Duke of York, the message of congratulations from King George V and the King’s Commission empowering the opening of Parliament at Canberra are given. It also covers the sitting at 5.00 pm in the evening when Parliament was adjourned until sufficient facilities could be moved from Melbourne.

Parliamentary papers

Federal Capital – Correspondence between the Minister for Home Affairs, W B Griffin and others, 1914–17, Vol. II, pp. 885–1017 (Paper No 53).

Federal Capital – Documents necessary to complete Parliamentary Paper No 53, Session 1914–17, Vol. II, pp. 1019–1065.

These two papers mainly cover the debate between Griffin and the Government about the implementation of his design for the city. There is information about the involvement of Griffin in developing the competition for a permanent Parliament House. The section titled *Federal Parliament House – Architectural Competition – Revised Conditions – Correspondence* (pp 991–1004) contains correspondence mainly from Murdoch and Griffin about the proposal to revise the conditions of the competition when it was revived in 1916.

Erection of Provisional Parliament House Canberra, Session 1923–24, Vol. IV, pp. 645–670.

This is the report from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works on the proposal to build a provisional Parliament House. It includes a short history of the competition, the evidence collected from witnesses for and against a provisional

³⁶ *Hansard*, 24 August 1923, p. 3657.

building and the sort of features the building should contain, and the committee's recommendations. The sketch plans prepared by John Murdoch are provided. The numerous witnesses include: P T Owen (Director-General of Works), A Wadsworth (Commonwealth Parliamentary Librarian), J Murdoch (Chief Architect, Department of Works and Railways), C H P Robinson (Commonwealth Parliamentary Reporting Staff), H A Davies (Federal Press Gallery Committee), William Morris Hughes (Prime Minister of Australia 1915–23), James Fairfax (Newspaper proprietor) and Walter Burley Griffin (Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction).

Federal Capital Advisory Committee Reports

These reports document the progress of the construction of Canberra. They cover all building, sanitation, water, roads, hotels, schools and so on. Information about Parliament House is brief and mainly concerns the recommendation by the Committee to postpone the idea of a monumental building and construct a provisional building. The Third General Report contains a plan of the city.

First General Report, 1920–21, Vol. III, pp. 2027–2069.

Second General Report, 1922, Vol. II, pp. 2791–2804.

Third General Report, 1926–28, Vol. II, pp. 1037–1080.

Annual Reports of the Federal Capital Commission

These reports are similar to those of the Advisory Committee, covering all aspects of the construction of Canberra. They all contain progress reports on the construction of the provisional Parliament House giving details of materials used. All reports contain photographs from the Mildenhall collection (A3560). The Third Annual Report contains a report on the Opening Ceremony and Royal Visit, with photographs.

First Annual Report, 1926–28, Vol. II, pp. 1081–1116.

Second Annual Report, 1926–28, Vol. II, pp. 1117–1184.

Third Annual Report, 1926–28, Vol. II, pp. 1185–1305.

APPENDIX 4 GLOSSARY OF ARCHIVAL TERMS

archives

There are three different uses of the term ‘archives’:

1. Those non-current records that are identified as having enduring value and so are suitable for permanent retention;
2. The place (building/room/storage area) where archival material is kept. Also referred to as a repository;
3. An organisation (or part of an organisation) responsible for the care and control of archival material.

case file

A file that deals with a specific action, event, person, place, project or other subject.

citation

In the context of the National Archives, a citation is information recorded about records in a standard format – eg *NAA: A461, 53/221* is the standard format for referring to item 53/221 of the series A461 held by the National Archives.

closed period

Commonwealth records are not made available for public access until 30 years have elapsed since the last day of the year in which they were created. For example, records created in 1965 were available after 31 December 1995 (ie from 1 Jan 1996). The period before records are available is referred to as the closed period. See also *open period*.

Commonwealth Record Series (CRS) System

The Commonwealth Record Series (CRS) System is the cataloguing system used to link records with the agencies that created them. A separate registration is prepared for each agency and series, and each is given a unique identifying number. Series and item number registrations are on the RecordSearch database (view online at www.naa.gov.au/the_collection/recordsearch).

finding aid

Any descriptive medium created by an archival institution to assist staff and users to find records and information within records. These finding aids include guides (general, repository, subject or topical), fact sheets, inventories or registers, location registers, card catalogues, special lists, shelf and box lists, indexes, calendars, and for electronic records, software documentation. The National Archives’ primary finding aids are the RecordSearch and PhotoSearch databases.

guide

A finding aid describing archival holdings relating to a particular subject, period, geographical area, record format, or records created by a particular agency. Details of published guides are available online at www.naa.gov.au/Publications/research_guides/.

item

An item is the smallest discrete unit which has been incorporated into a recordkeeping system and forms part of a series. An item may be a group of folios fastened together, such as a file, or a single volume, card, map, plan, photograph, film, sound recording, computer tape or other document which exists as a discrete entity.

item list

A list of items within a series compiled for the purpose of control and information. It usually contains such information as item number, item title, item date range and occasionally, item size. Also referred to as an 'inventory'.

item number

A control symbol allocated by the creator of the record item, for example, file numbers. As far as possible, the control symbol allocated to an item by an agency is retained for archival purposes. In the absence of original control symbols, they may be allocated by the National Archives to enable retrieval.

National Archives of Australia

A Commonwealth government organisation established to preserve for posterity the most important records created by all Commonwealth government administrations.

open period

Under the Archives Act, Commonwealth records are made available for public access after 30 years has elapsed since the last day of the year in which they were created. The open period (ie available for public access) begins on the first day of the calendar year after they reach the age of 30 years. For example, records created in 1965 came into the open period after 31 December 1995 (ie from 1 Jan 1996). Also referred to as the open access period. See also *closed period*.

privacy

The right of living people to be secure from the unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, information contained in records and archives of a private or confidential nature about themselves or their immediate family.

public access

The public right to consult records which are in the open period, ie records more than 30 years old, subject to access examination to identify exempt information.

quantity

A measurement of the amount of records. In the National Archives this is a linear measurement expressed as the number of metres of shelving occupied by the records.

reader's ticket

A numbered pass issued to researchers to facilitate access to reading rooms. Researchers' details are linked to this number, thereby making it possible to create an audit trail and see which records are being used by whom. By signing a reader's ticket the researcher agrees to abide by reading room rules.

reading room

A room or area set aside for the supervised consultation of archives by researchers. In the National Archives there are both public and official reading rooms. Also known as search rooms in other archival institutions.

RecordSearch

RecordSearch is an online computer database (www.naa.gov.au/the_collection/recordsearch) that contains information about:

- all record series in the National Archives' custody and Commonwealth records in the custody of the Australian War Memorial;
- the agencies or persons who created or control those series; and
- records still in agency custody.

reference copy

A microfilm or other copy of a record or series made for reference use. The reasons for this may be to enable several copies to be available in different locations or to protect the original copy from damage.

reference service

The facilities and services that enable researchers to use the archives and its records once access to them is approved. This includes assistance in using finding aids, and the provision of facilities to view and copy records.

research agent

A person employed to do research on behalf of another, usually for a fee.

researcher

A person who consults records held by the archives, usually in a reading room. Also referred to as a user.

series

A series consists of a group of records which have resulted from the same accumulation or filing process (with the same numerical, alphabetical, chronological or other identifiable sequence) or which have a similar format or information content. Records in a series are usually kept together because they result from the same activity. Series may include files, indexes, magnetic recordings, photographs, films, plans etc. The series is the basic unit of control in the Commonwealth Record Series System.

APPENDIX 5 OTHER GUIDES TO THE COLLECTION

The Archives creates and maintains guides to records in its collection to help researchers identify and locate records relevant to their research. The guides currently available or in preparation are listed below.

Published research guides

- 1 *Chinese Immigrants and Chinese-Australians in NSW*, by Julie Stacker and Peri Stewart, revised 1997, 80 pp.
- 2 *Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: The Royal Commission and Its Records, 1987–91*, by Peter Nagle and Richard Summerrell, revised 1997, 92 pp.
- 3 *The Sinking of HMAS Sydney: A Guide to Commonwealth Government Records*, by Richard Summerrell, 3rd ed., 1999, 191 pp.
- 4 *Papua New Guinea Records 1883–42: Microfilm Collections*, by Peter Nagle, 1998, 136 pp.
- 5 *Royalty and Australian Society: Records Relating to the British Monarchy Held in Canberra*, by Kate Cumming, 1998, 140 pp.
- 6 *Parliament House, Canberra, 1927: Records Relating to the Design, Construction and Opening of the Provisional Parliament House*, by Gay Hogan, 1997, 74 pp.
- 7 *More People Imperative: Immigration to Australia, 1901–39*, by Dr Michele Langfield, 1999, 236 pp.
- 8 *Collections in Melbourne: A Concise Guide*, by Celia Blake, 1998, 76 pp.
- 9 *The Boer War: Australians and the War in South Africa, 1899–02*, by Craig Wilcox, 1999, revised 2000, 94 pp.
- 10 *Citizenship in Australia: A Guide to Commonwealth Government Records*, by David Dutton, 1999, 114 pp.
- 11 *Good British Stock: Child and Youth Migration*, by Barry Coldrey, 1999, 220 pp.
- 12 *Safe Haven: Records of the Jewish Experience in Australia*, by Malcolm J Turnbull, 1999, 170 pp.
- 13 *Cockatoo Island Dockyard: A Guide to the Records*, by Margaret Chambers, 2000, 252 pp.
- 14 *Collections in Perth: A Guide to Commonwealth Records*, by Dan Midalia, 2000, 182 pp.
- 15 *Working for the Dole: Commonwealth Relief during the Great Depression*, by Don Fraser, 2001, 116 pp.

- 16 *Near Neighbours: Records on Australia's Relations with Indonesia*, by Karl Metcalf, 2001, 205 pp.
- 17 *Sound Recordings in the National Archives*, by Helen Cross and Margaret Chambers, 2001, 125 pp.

Forthcoming guides (working titles)

Copyright Collections in the National Archives

Postwar Migration to Australia, Records Held in Melbourne

Northern Territory Land Records

Security Intelligence in Australia, 1946–68

Australia and the Japanese: The First Two Hundred Years

World War II Internment Records

Transcontinental Railway Records

Other published guides

Finding Families: The Guide to the National Archives of Australia for Genealogists, compiled by Margaret Chambers, National Archives of Australia in association with Hale & Iremonger, Alexandria, NSW, 1998, 344 pp.

Federation: The Guide to Records, compiled by Stephen Foster, Susan Marsden and Roslyn Russell, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 1998, 377 pp.

My Heart Is Breaking: A Joint Guide to Records about Aboriginal People in the Public Record Office of Victoria and the Australian Archives, Victorian Regional Office, by Myrna Deverall and Ian MacFarlane, AGPS, Canberra, 1993, 191pp.

APPENDIX 6 ADDRESSES OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES OFFICES

The main office of the National Archives is located in Canberra, where we have galleries and a reading room. We also have offices and reading rooms in each State capital and in Darwin.

Records in our collection can be accessed via our website, viewed in our reading rooms or copies obtained from the National Reference Service.

National Reference Service

Email: ref@naa.gov.au

Website: www.naa.gov.au

Postal address:

PO Box 7425

Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

Reading Room addresses

Canberra

Queen Victoria Terrace

Parkes ACT 2600

Tel: (02) 6212 3900

Fax: (02) 6212 3999

Postal address:

PO Box 7425

Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

Sydney

120 Miller Road

Chester Hill NSW 2162

Tel: (02) 9645 0110

Fax: (02) 9645 0108

TTY: (02) 9743 8419

Postal address:

Locked Bag 4

Chester Hill NSW 2162

Sydney Records Centre

2 Globe Street

The Rocks

Melbourne Archives Centre

Casselden Place

2 Lonsdale Street

Melbourne VIC 3000

Tel: (03) 9285 7999

Fax: (03) 9285 7979

Postal address:

PO Box 8005

Burwood Heights VIC 3151

Brisbane

996 Wynnum Road

Cannon Hill Qld 4170

Tel: (07) 3249 4226

Fax: (07) 3399 6589

Postal address:

PO Box 552

Cannon Hill Qld 4170

Perth

384 Berwick Street

East Victoria Park WA 6101

Tel: (08) 9470 7500

Fax: (08) 9470 2787

Postal address:

PO Box 1144

East Victoria Park WA 6981

Adelaide

78 Angas Street

Adelaide SA 5000

Tel: (08) 8409 8400

Fax: (08) 8409 8499

Postal address:

PO Box 6536

Adelaide SA 5000

Hobart

Ground Floor

85 Macquarie Street

Hobart TAS 7000

Tel: (03) 6230 6111

Fax: (03) 6230 6134

Postal address:

GPO Box 309

Hobart TAS 7000

Darwin

Kelsey Crescent

Millner NT 0810

Tel: (08) 8985 0300

Fax: (08) 8985 0399

Postal address:

PO Box 24

Nightcliff NT 0810