



• FCC 3 design



• Reid Uniting Church
R. Garnett,
ACT National Trust Collection



• FCC 9 design



• Two-storey house

PLACES IN
REID WALK

1. Reid Uniting Church
2. A main gateway to Reid
3. Coranderrk Street
4. Elimatta Street
5. Geerilong Garden
6. Booroondara Street
7. Amaroo Street
8. Railway embankment
9. Booroondara Street
10. Dirrawan Gardens
11. Tennis Club
12. Reid's Heritage Sign



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A heritage tour of
REID

A SELF-GUIDED WALK



NATIONAL TRUST

CONSERVING AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE

Reid is named after Sir George Houston Reid (fourth Prime Minister of Australia, between 1904 and 1905) and is Canberra's oldest continuously inhabited residential suburb. In planning terms, it plays a pivotal role by linking the formal areas of Civic (the Regional Centre) and the Federal Capital Area in an intricate geometric relationship. The suburb has been described as:

One of Australia's finest garden suburbs of the 1920s and 30s, the area demonstrates influences of the English garden city movement. The limited range of houses, designed specially for Canberra, established the architectural character of the area.

(R. Garnett & D. Hyndes, *Heritage of the Australian Capital Territory*, 1992, p. 89).

Reid was designed with detached dwellings on large blocks for Canberra's middle range of public servants. The landscaping, based on street plantings by T. C. G. Weston, represented a new approach in urban design. In the original scheme, just as each Canberra suburb had its own distinctive status symbols to match the peculiar social standing of its inhabitants, so the dominant tree species lining each street in Reid indicated a certain status of thoroughfare. Major broad peripheral avenues (like Anzac Avenue) would be distinguished by evergreen eucalypt plantations, significant through routes like Currong Street were to be planted in evergreen conifers, while 'ordinary' residential streets were to be distinguished by deciduous plantings.

GRIFFIN'S APPROACH

Walter Burley Griffin originally designed Canberra to relate to the major natural features of the Molonglo Valley, providing the basis for a strong urban geometry. Griffin designed the federal area as a triangle, connecting Mount Ainslie to Capital Hill to form the 'land axis' – Anzac Park of the Federal Capital Plan. The base of this triangle is Constitution Avenue, with both roads contributing to Reid's suburban boundary.

The municipal centre is differentiated by its hexagonal geometry. Ainslie Avenue connects Mount Ainslie to City Hill: the focal point for six radiating avenues which include Constitution Avenue. Ainslie Avenue also forms part of Reid's boundary. Reid's grid pattern reflects a compromise between these federal and municipal axes.

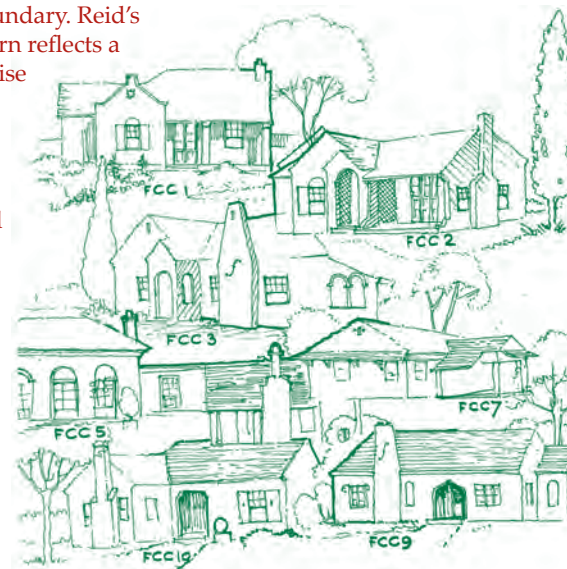
Burley Griffin's original 'garden suburb' design for the area that we know as Reid

is shown in most detail on his 1916 plan of the future suburb. That design would be partially modified in line with John Sulman's later 'village green' approach. Thus the pair of public gardens which form the focal point of this walk (as of the historic suburb of Reid) are not to be found in Burley Griffin's early plans. Like many of the earlier heritage buildings adjacent to them, they date from the mid-to-late 1920s when Sulman was head of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee.

The suburb of Reid has a special heritage standing within the Australian Capital Territory. It contains the very earliest extant European 'heritage places'

within the area, being the Anglican Church of St John the Baptist and its associated church-yard cemetery and school house, which date back to the 1840s. These by-products of a long-departed pastoral era continue to serve a very different Canberra community today, and provide an opportunity for a second (rather different but equally interesting) 'Reid walk'.

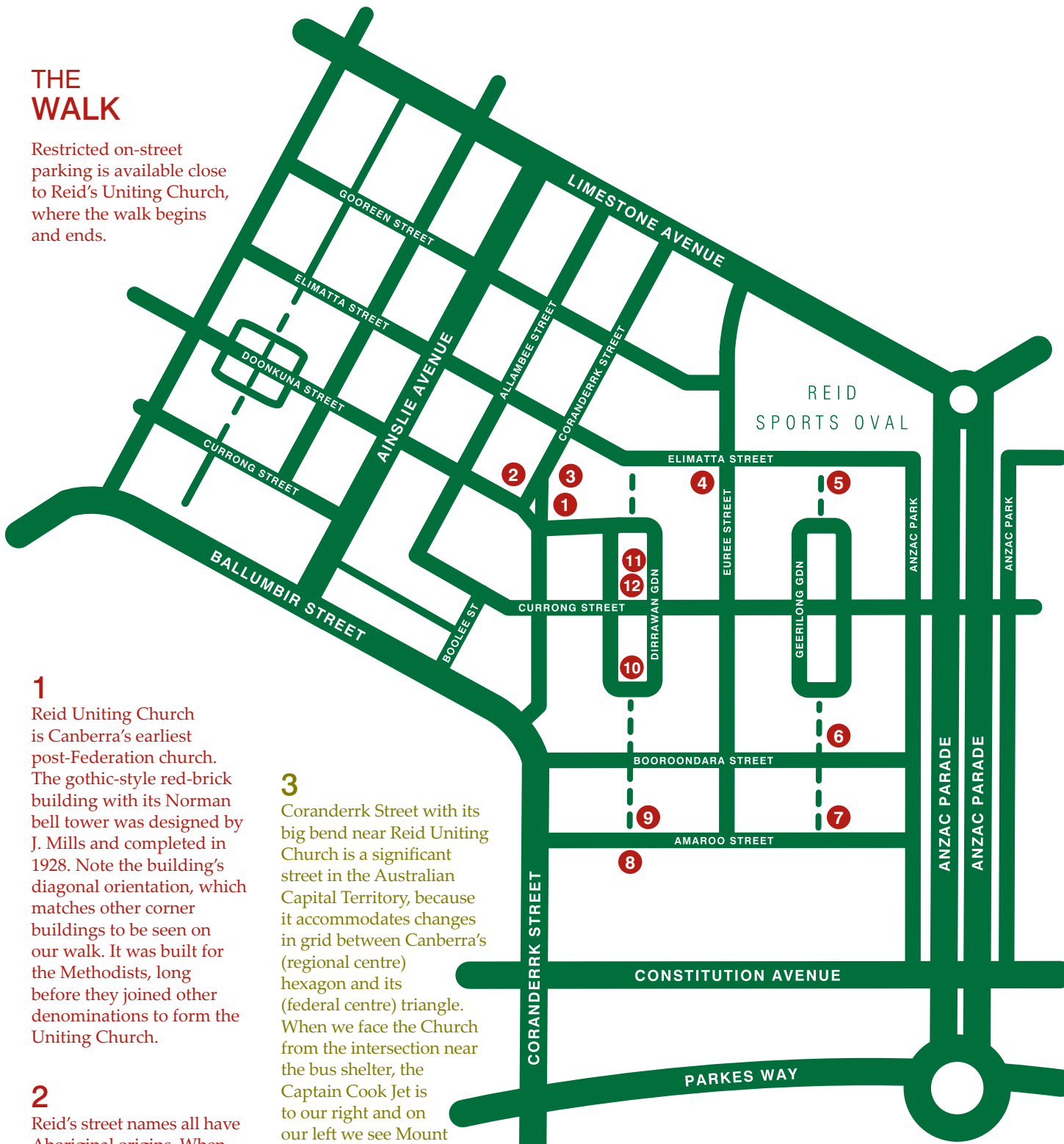
The self-guided walk of this brochure is restricted to that part of Reid's heritage which post-dates the 1920s, when Canberra began operating as our federal capital and became home to a (carefully graded) Commonwealth Public Service. The ACT Heritage Council has recognised the special heritage significance of most of the area covered by our walk, defining it as the 'Reid Housing Precinct' on the ACT Heritage Register. The area between Booroondara and Amaroo Streets, where we pass through post-World War II residential housing, is outside the boundaries of the Council's Reid heritage precinct. However, this part of Reid does contain significant heritage sites like St John the Baptist church and school complex, and the old railway embankment beside Amaroo Street.



Federal Capital Commission house designs. Can you spot them in Reid?

THE WALK

Restricted on-street parking is available close to Reid's Uniting Church, where the walk begins and ends.



1 Reid Uniting Church is Canberra's earliest post-Federation church. The gothic-style red-brick building with its Norman bell tower was designed by J. Mills and completed in 1928. Note the building's diagonal orientation, which matches other corner buildings to be seen on our walk. It was built for the Methodists, long before they joined other denominations to form the Uniting Church.

2 Reid's street names all have Aboriginal origins. When

3 Coranderrk Street with its big bend near Reid Uniting Church is a significant street in the Australian Capital Territory, because it accommodates changes in grid between Canberra's (regional centre) hexagon and its (federal centre) triangle. When we face the Church from the intersection near the bus shelter, the Captain Cook Jet is to our right and on our left we see Mount

6 Booroondara Street (*Shady Place*), planted with Algerian Oaks, is a major residential street with deciduous plantings to provide sun in winter and shade in summer: one of the best designed streets in Canberra. (Walk along the street to appreciate its urban design). If the suburb had been built to Burley Griffin's original scheme, three-storey terraces would have been the architectural norm. Reid's early domestic architecture was, in fact, generally single-storied. However, this intersection of pedestrian path with street is marked by impressive two-storey flanking buildings in a Mediterranean style from circa 1936, forming portals to the garden.

7 Continue on the path through two-storey housing built in the period immediately after World War II, to arrive at Amaroo Street (*Beautiful Place*) with its Chinese Elm plantings. Civic is on the right, and on the left planted with Nettle trees and Eucalyptus (to symbolise New Zealand and Australia) is Anzac Park. Turn right and continue along Amaroo Street

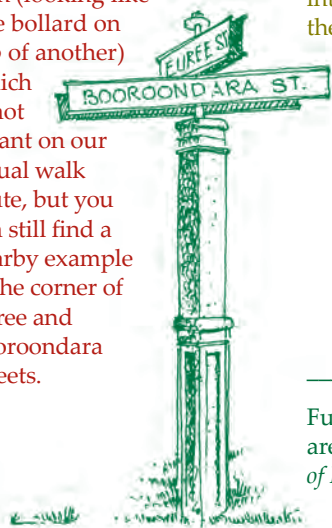
9 Turn right at the pedestrian path leading to Reid's second garden. On arriving again at Booroondara Street, we see a two-storey English-looking Duplex. Such buildings from circa 1927 form portals for the entry to Dirrawan Gardens (*Emu*), with London Planes planted along the street and mixed plantings in the garden itself. Continue on along the pedestrian pathway with its magnificent mature plane trees into the next segment of the gardens, then follow the roadway to your left to avoid the pre-school building in front of you.

10 Dirrawan Gardens has always been a major focal point for the Reid community. Canberra's first pre-school was built here, was opened in 1946, and still survives. It is regarded as having special heritage significance. This building provided the original home for the Reid Residents' Association.

11 Across Currong Street is another Reid 'first': the Tennis Club founded in 1929 is one of Canberra's oldest, but is still going strong. The middle ranks of Canberra's earliest public servants could apparently still find some time for physical relaxation in the great outdoors

Aboriginal origins. When we face the church at the intersection of Doonkuna Street (*Rising Ground*) which is planted with Holm Oaks, and Coranderrk Street (*Christmas Bush*) with its London Planes, we stand at Reid's main gateway. During its early development the suburb was known as South Ainslie. Reid was then served by a twice-daily bus service, hence the historic timber bus shelter dating from 1927-8. This was once a communal meeting place, complete with drinking fountain and post office pillar box.

Note also, across Doonkuna Street from the bus shelter, a surviving example of the earliest form of street sign. Looking more like a bollard, it was designed for pedestrians rather than car drivers. The pressed-metal street names are set into exposed aggregate on the four sides of the pillar. There was a taller column version of this early street sign (looking like one bollard on top of another) which is not extant on our actual walk route, but you can still find a nearby example at the corner of Euree and Booroondara Streets.



Further details about Reid are available in *The Heritage of Reid* (Dutta, 2000)

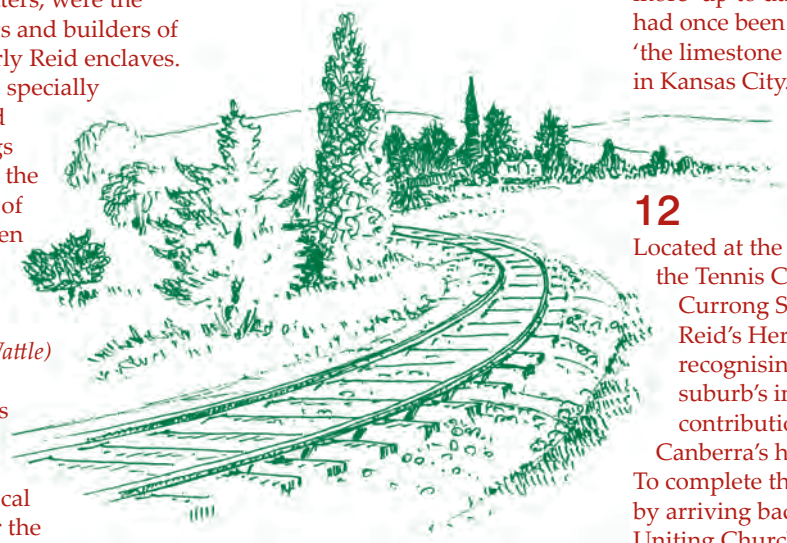
Ainslie. Proceed towards Mount Ainslie, which takes its name from a pioneer station superintendent at Robert Campbell's early *Duntroon* run. Surrounding residential blocks were already built upon prior to 1933, as were most of those on the next section of walk along Elimatta Street.

4 Turn right at the first intersection with Elimatta Street (*My Home*), planted with evergreen Atlas Mountain Cedars to designate a significant through-route, and continue along Elimatta to its intersection with Euree Street (*sleep*) near the Reid Sports Oval. Here observe the neat double-brick dwellings specially built for middle-income public servants by the Federal Capital Commission in 1925, noting how they also are aligned to face the intersection rather than the adjacent streets.

This is an interesting distinctive feature of Reid's early planning.

Many lesser mortals across in Ainslie had to make do with little timber rental cottages, whereas the less numerous 'top brass' in Forrest were able to live in style. The most expensive Canberra house styles advertised by government in 1926 were available for around 2000 pounds, but most single-storey double-brick residences then being built in Reid would have cost less than 1500 pounds. Some 'optional extras' were possible, at the owner's expense of course. The interesting mix of government-built houses made available to residents of Reid in the 1920s and 1930s contributes much to the suburb's heritage character, and to the interest and pleasure of this walk. Private front gardens are another pleasant feature of the suburb. Owing less to standardised bureaucratic influences than the actual residences, they do respect Burley Griffin's 'garden city' concept.

5 Continue along Elimatta Street beside the oval, to turn right at the pedestrian path leading to Geerilong Garden (*Star in the Sky*). This is one of two gardens that mark the suburb's centre, representing an early modification to Griffin's original plan. However, the general pattern of residential buildings surrounding central open communal spaces linked by pedestrian thoroughfares has its roots in Burley Griffin's detailed 1916 plan for a garden suburb. The Federal Capital Advisory Committee headed by John Sulman, and the Federal Capital Commission headed by John Butters, were the designers and builders of these early Reid enclaves. Note the specially designed dwellings marking the junction of the garden with Currong Street (*Silver Wattle*) with its plantings of Atlas Cedars, at this focal point for the Reid community. Continue along the path to arrive at Booroondara Street.



Impression of the original railway track looking towards St John's Church.

along Amaroo Street. Cross Euree Street, planted with Atlas Cedars, to enter the plantings of Eucalyptus and Cedars that line Amaroo Street.

8 The railway embankment, separating the Reid CIT campus from Amaroo Street, is a heritage site. This is a remnant of an early railway track that terminated at Civic, and was built to accommodate trains carrying building materials from Kingston for construction uses in the new federal capital. Griffin's railway plan also followed this alignment. The slight curve of the eucalypt plantings reflects the path of the old railway.

their great outdoors. Of course, they were also expected to cultivate their backyards to grow vegetables to feed the family. Water was not yet a problem in this 'garden suburb'.

Many of Canberra's early commercial facilities developed across what was then the Molongolo River, in the general vicinity of Manuka. Construction of our conveniently large and handy shopping complex at Civic was still decades into the future. However, the butcher, the baker and the milkman provided motorised home deliveries. Those who preferred tennis or golf to spade work could even find a motorised green grocer. Government brochures sought to persuade public servants that things were more 'up to date' (on what had once been designated 'the limestone plains') than in Kansas City.

12 Located at the corner of the Tennis Courts and Currong Street is Reid's Heritage Sign, recognising the suburb's important contribution to Canberra's heritage. To complete the walk by arriving back at Reid Uniting Church, continue ahead along the left-hand side of the tennis court, and turn left when you hit the roadway.