Item Details

Name TAFE NSW Nirimba Campus SHR/LEP/S170 s170 Address Eastern Road QUAKERS HILL NSW 2763 Local Govt Area Blacktown Local Aboriginal Land Council Unknown



Item Type	Group/Collection	Category
Built	Education	Tertiary College

All Addresses

Addresses

Street Name Suburb/Town/Postc Local Govt. LALC Parish Electorate Stre County Address Type et ode Area No Cumberl Unknown Quakers QUAKERS Blacktown Unknown Gidley Alternate Road HILL/NSW/2763 and Address Eastern QUAKERS Blacktown Unknown Gidley Cumberl Unknown Primary Road HILL/NSW/2763 Address and

Boundary Description

Precinct occupied by TAFE buildings

Significance

Statement Of Significance

The TAFE NSW Nirimba Campus is of historic significance for its longstanding connection with Australian defence forces, first as the Schofield Dispersal Aerodrome, then as a temporary Field Camp, to an Air Base and finally to the Naval Shore Station. Since 1953, the primary focus of the site was as training facility for naval cadets, and as one of only two shore stations established by the navy, can also be considered rare. Buildings on the site constructed prior to 1994, particularly the T1 blocks of buildings and the C21 building, which maintain the original, well-designed modernist aesthetics and also provides a physical connection with its military history. Research potential exists, particularly in association with its former use as a migrant centre, and the remaining steel structure of the Bellman hangars has research potential in demonstrating the use of prefabricated, transportable large span structures across Australia during World War 2.

Criteria a)

Historical Significance

Records Retrieved: 2

The TAFE NSW Nirimba Campus is of historic significance for its longstanding connection with Australian defence forces. Originally the site of the Schofield Dispersal Area, it was one of the six camouflaged dispersal aerodromes where aircraft could be hidden during World War 2.

The series of changes of use of the site from temporary Field Camp to Air Base to Naval Shore Station reflect changing military requirements. The primary focus of the site has always been a support and training facility, as a permanent support base for British Pacific Fleet from 1944 onwards and from 1953 as naval technical training establishment for naval apprentices. TAFE NSW continues to use the site and the workshops and hangars erected by the military for training purposes.

Although no physical trace remains, the site is also historically significant as a former Immigration centre (one of three military facilities in the area used for this purpose).

Criteria b)

Historical Association

Significance

TAFE NSW Nirimba Campus is strongly associated with the Australian defence forces, in particular the members of the Australian & British military personnel who were based or trained at Nirimba.

Criteria c)

Aesthetic/Technical Significance

The complex contains aesthetically significant purpose-designed education buildings (those constructed pre-1994) that continue to house the technical training begun under the military ownership of the site and the external appearance of the T1 blocks of buildings and the C21 building maintains the original, well-designed modernist aesthetic of the buildings designed for military education by the architects within the Commonwealth Department of Works.

Criteria d)

Social/Cultural Significance

There is no significant association with any social or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

Criteria e)

Research Potential

The remaining steel structure of the Bellman hangars has research potential in demonstrating the use of prefabricated, transportable large span structures across Australia during World War 2.

Criteria f)

Rarity

The site is considered rare as the largest Naval Training Establishment in Australia and one of only two shore stations established by the Royal Australian Navy to maintain their aircraft (the other being HMAS Albatross at Nowra).

Criteria g)

Representative

Containing a typical Bellman Hangar layout (with associated hardstand). The documentary evidence details the typical camouflage methods utilised by the camouflage artists for the aircraft hides

Integrity/Intactness

The external appearance of the T1 blocks of buildings and the C21 building maintains the original, well-designed modernist aesthetic of the buildings designed for military education by the architects within the Commonwealth Department of Works. The Bellman hangars have been greatly altered and are not immediately recognisable.

Owners

		Records Retrieved: 0	
Organisation	Stakeholder Category	Date Ownership Updated	
	No Results Found		

Description

Designer

Builder/Maker

Commonwealth Director of Works & Buildings (T4-T7),C'wealth Department of Works (T1-T3, T8, T9)

Physical Description

THE SITE:

Updated

The TAFE NSW Nirimba Campus is one part of the Nirimba Education Precinct which is located to the north of Quakers Hill Parkway and Quakers Hill Road, Quakers Hill. The education precinct is located on the portion of the site previously occupied by buildings on the former HMAS Nirimba apprentice training establishment which was located immediately south of the runways of the former World War 2 dispersal aerodrome.

The Nirimba Education Precinct contains four senior education establishments; TAFE NSW Nirimba Campus; University of Western Sydney, Blacktown Campus; Wyndham College (a NSW Department of Education senior secondary college); and Terra Sancta College, Nirimba Campus. The NSW Government and Roman Catholic senior secondary colleges share facilities on the east side of the precinct, the University of Western Sydney occupies the south side of the site and the TAFE NSW campus occupies the north side of the site immediately south of the former runways (incorrectly called "Parade Ground"). The TAFE college and the university share some common facilities such as the library and cafeteria (located in the former military Mess) and the gym and swimming pool. The former north runway area is being redeveloped as housing sites. The remnant portion of the south runway has been labelled "Parade Ground" which is incorrect. It is more likely that the large existing car park south of the remnant runway was the parade ground.

The current education precinct road network is the same road network developed by the navy and some of the roads served dual purposes as roads and as aircraft taxiways. Colebee Street was the main taxiway connecting the four hangers to the runways and the section of Warawara Circuit east of the Blocks T4 & T5 was the eastern apron of those hangers.

The site is a flat site bounded on the west side by the meandering course of Eastern Creek which is bordered on the western bank by the Stonecutters Golf Club. Landscaping on the site is primarily isolated large endemic trees and the openness of the site is explained by the fact that, other than the camouflaged former "aircraft hides", the site was mostly occupied by runways, taxiways, aircraft hangar aprons. There is an important grouping of Spotted Gum and Blackbutt trees north of the Block T1 group of buildings. The pedestrian pathway that runs north between the T2 & T3 blocks has been landscaped with two rows of Liquid Ambers defining the pathway. The education precinct site is surrounded by current and proposed housing developments.

THE BUILDINGS (heritage curtilage contains T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9 and C21 ONLY):

The majority of buildings on the TAFE NSW campus at Nirimba were constructed by the Commonwealth Government when the entire site was a naval apprenticeship training establishment (HMAS Nirimba). The TAFE NSW portion of the site contains the only remaining permanent buildings from the navy educational establishment period, with the exception of the common use buildings (library, café, bookshop, etc in Block C21), university buildings U1 & U2 to U4, the main gate security office, and the water tower located south of university buildings U2 & U3. All the other buildings visible in the 1977 aerial photograph have been removed or demolished.

The TAFE NSW buildings are labelled with a "T' prefix, the university buildings, with a "U" and the common buildings with a "C".

The navy buildings that were reused on the site for current educational purposes are: Block C21 is used as the library, café, bookshop and student association offices for the TAFE college and the university and the building was originally the naval Mess.

Block T1 contains classrooms and teaching staff offices as well as the two lecture theatres. The use of this building has not changed greatly from the naval use of the building.

Blocks T2 & T3 were dormitory blocks during the naval use of the site and are now used for a mix of classrooms, lecture rooms and offices.

Blocks T4, T5, T6 & T7 are used as workshops and are the Bellman hangars originally constructed as aircraft hangers with large concrete aprons.

Block T8 continues its naval use as a complex of workshops as does the smaller Block T9.

All the other buildings on the TAFE NSW site (Blocks T9a, T10, T11, T12 & T13) are purpose-built buildings constructed by the NSW

Government for TAFE NSW use.

BLOCK T1

Block T1 comprises six wings. Blocks T1D & T1F are three-storey buildings the run east-west and embrace a large grassed courtyard in which sits Block T1E (a single-storey building containing two tiered lecture theatres). Block T1C is an eastward extension of Block T1D but is of two-storeys because of the fall of the site. Block T1B runs north-south and links the two parallel wings of Blocks T1F and T1C/T1D. Block T1A is a single-storey building with a prominent south-facing skylight. The stairwells in Blocks T1C/T1D and T1F are capped with large north-facing skylights. The slope of the concrete skylights matches the slope of the large south-facing skylight in Block T1A.

The T1 buildings have concrete floors and columns with dark brick spandrels on the ground floor. On the upper floor the spandrels are raking precast concrete panels that act as the sunshades for the level below. The columns are also proud of the façade and act as vertical sun blades. The fascia is a wide lightweight fascia. Both the fascia and the concrete spandrels are coated with textured render (in vertical stripes) that unites the differing materials. The windows are brown anodised aluminium.

The T1 building complex has a series of well-landscaped courtyards including numerous Cycads.

BLOCKS T2 & T3

Blocks T2A, T2B, T2C, T3A, T3B and T3C are six parallel three-storey, cream brick rectangular buildings with concrete floors and clear anodised aluminium windows. Their roofs are corrugated steel and galvanised steel balconies have been attached to the south facades of the building at both the west and east ends. The blocks were the original dormitory blocks for the naval training establishment with each dormitory room accommodating four seamen. With the exception of Block T2B the dormitory buildings have been converted to classrooms, lecture rooms and offices. The renovations included the over-sheeting of all the internal cream brick walls with plasterboard. Block T2B is totally unrenovated and retains the original built-in beds, desks and wardrobes. The window sill boards and the fire stairs are finished in an orange/brown terrazzo and the fire stirs retain their original balustrades and handrails consisting of galvanised pipes running the full height of the stairwell to which the vinyl-covered handrail is attached.

BLOCKS T4, T5, T6 & T7 (By early1947)

Blocks T4 to T7 were the four Bellman hangers that form the naval air station. The hangars were erected in two stages, one pair was erected during the war and one pair shortly after.

The hangars have retained their original concrete aprons to the east and west of the buildings and the buildings retain their original steel portal frames constructed from welded angles. The wall cladding and roof sheeting on all four hangers has been replaced. Modern steel-framed, open-sided but roofed structures have been added to the west of Blocks T4 & T5 and to the east of T6 & T7 to increase the area for materials storage and for outdoor covered work areas. The former hangers are now used for workshops for building and construction, bricklaying, building services and shopfitting courses.

The Bellmans are now hard to identify as such as the characteristic cross braced hangar doors have been removed. Internally the prefabricated Bellman hangar framing sections survive, including the distinctive piece of the portal frame that connects the roof to the open web uprights.

BLOCK T8

Block T8 is a single storey, high-bay workshop building with a steel portal frame structure and a combination of dark cream brick infill wall panels and lightweight wall cladding. The building continues its naval use as a workshop training building. The current courses are carpentry and joinery.

BLOCK T9

Block T9 is a single-storey brick maintenance office building dating from the naval establishment period and Block 9a is a modern steel clad workshop building for the maintenance staff for TAFE.

BLOCK T10

Block T10 and "boot camp" area consists of a fire test tower, and two metal-clad buildings for storage. There are fenced-in open-air compounds for training in the use of machinery, etc.

BLOCK T11

Block T11 is a single-storey, steel portal frame, metal-clad workshop building with a brick office front. The building was opened in 2010 as a building industry skills centre.

BLOCK T12

Block T12 is a single-storey metal and glass clad building with engineered timber columns and beams. There is a landscaped courtyard in the building and a large workshop section on the eastern end of the building. There is a timber-floored lecture room/meeting room in the east wing with low level windows overlooking the pond in the courtyard. The building was opened in 2010 as the Western Sydney GreenSkills Hub.

BLOCK T13

Block T13 is the campus administration and student services building which was completed in 2014. It is a one-storey steel-framed

building clad with grey textured concrete blocks and an angled steel sunscreen along the front (western) façade. The main interior office space has a raking ceiling of slotted plywood panels.

Physical Condition

Updated

Modifications And Dates

Further Comments

Grading of Significance – As applied to this TAFE college: Blocks T1A-T1F: Little Blocks T2A-T2C: Little Blocks T3A-T3C: Little Blocks T4-T7 (Bellman hangers): High Block T8: Moderate Block T9: Moderate Block T9: Moderate Block T10: Little Block T11: Little Block T12: Little Block T13: Little C21 - Moderate

Landscaping: High

Current Use

College of TAFE

Former Use

Farm, Naval and air force station, Naval apprentice training establishment

Listings

Listings

			Records Retrieved: 1		trieved: 1
Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazzette Number	Gazzette Page
Heritage Act - s.170 NSW State agency heritage register		5063942			

Procedures/Exemptions

Records Retrieved: 0

Sectio n of Act	Description	Title	Comments	Action Date	Outcome
No Results Found					

History

In 1815, the land now comprising the TAFE NSW Nirimba campus was granted to George Suttor, and in 1818 the land was transferred from Suttor to the Pye family. At some time in the 1830s, the Pye family built the "Waawaarawaa" homestead (to the north of the current education precinct).

In 1938, the Commonwealth purchased the land from the Pye family in order to develop a satellite dispersal airfield for the Royal Australian Air Force base at Richmond, and by 1942 there were seven dispersal or satellite aerodromes built: Castlereagh, Clarendon, Marsden Park, Pitt Town, Schofields, Wallgrove and Yarramundi where aircraft could be hidden in camouflaged hideouts. The air force formally occupied the site as a Fleet Arm Camp, constructing numerous corrugated iron-walled, asbestos cement-roofed buildings to the south west of the present hangars and grass runways. The site of the camp has now been redeveloped with more permanent structures.

Plans held at National Archives show the camouflaging of the site in July 1942 (National Archives of Australia Item No. SP110/5 15). Five aircraft hideouts had been completed and a further one condemned. At that time, the camp consisted of only 7 huts and the runway has yet to be cleared and roads had yet to be widened. A detailed description of the facility was prepared for the Director of Camouflage including the farm buildings and hideout pens for the aircraft including Hudson bombers.

"All of these sites are located in well grown box and gum timber and can be well hidden with garnished nets rigged on trees. Work is proceeding on these. Artist labourers on the job have been instructed to erect patches of netting at different levels so as to effect better feeling of third dimension in camouflage..." (National Archives of Australia Item No. SP110/5 15).

Prominent Australian artists undertook the camouflage work, under the direction of the architect John D. Moore. Two of the hides were located in the area shown on the 1946 development master plans as the RAAF Building Area (including the motor pool) Director of Works and Buildings DWG45/46/53.

In 1944, the airfield was given to the Royal Navy's Air Arm as a support facility for the British Fleet in the Pacific and was commissioned as HMS NABTHORPE. In 1945 the airfield was returned to the RAN as HMAS NABSTOCK and on 9 June 1946 the airfield was returned to the RAAF.

In January 1946, a development masterplan was prepared for the RAAF Airfield (or Aerodrome) at the site, which became known as the Schofields RAAF Station. These plans show a triangular layout of runways with a hardstand area in the centre, parking bays and flight control to the north, a series of hangars separated by hardstand areas to Eastern Road (now Colebee Street) and an area designated RAAF Building Area. A view of the facility taken at the end of the war shows that this work had largely already been built. The regular layout of the camp can be seen, as well as the motor pool, two of the four hangars, the runways and hardstand areas (undated aerial c. 1945 www.nepeannaval.org.au/).

The Commonwealth Department of Works and Housing tendered for the installation of electric power and light in the four Bellman hangars at Schofields RAAF Station in February 1947. The hangers were constructed in two pairs, a photograph of the RAAF camp and runways taken at the end of the war only shows two hangars. Wartime tenders for Bellman hangar construction do not give a location. Prefabricated Bellman hangers were utilised throughout Australia during the war. The design was British one, whereby the Directorate of Works developed a temporary hangar in 1936, naming the building after the structural engineer who designed it: N S Bellman. Bellman Hangers had been in use in Australia since 1939, with examples erected at Archerfield (1939) and Parkes Air School (1940). In 1940 alone the Department of Air accepted tenders for the construction of 100 Bellman Hangars in South Australia and Western Australia, 58 of which were to be built by a Sydney contractor, the Waddington Body Company of Granville. The four Bellman hangars survive at the site today and have been extended to varying degrees and are still used as workshops by TAFE.

Plans to utilise the site, which became known as the Schofields Aerodome, for civilian purposes did not prove commercially viable however in 1947 the aerodrome was utilised for international civilian flights (Daily Telegraph, 3 November 1947) and for training flights. In September 1949 a record was set for flying between Sydney (Schofields) and Melbourne (Essendon) and back in 2 hours 2 mins, with a refuelling stop at Laverton VIC. The control tower and the operational block were destroyed by fire in 1949. The previous year a severe hail storm had damaged planes lined up on the tarmac. In 1950 the aprons were sealed.

An article on Migrant Housing in Building and Engineering in April 1950 noted that the RAAF buildings at Schofields and the Army buildings at Wallgrove would be utilised to house migrants; owing to the shortage of building materials, existing surplus military complexes were being reused (Building & Engineering, 24 April 1950). The RAAF camp buildings are believed to have been utilised as migrant accommodation (Immigration Centres) from 1949 until at least 1955, in addition to the facilities at Scheyville and RAAF Richmond (Windsor and Richmond Gazette, 22 June 1955). As well as migrant accommodation, the aerodrome continued to be used for multiple aviation purposes. It was a staging post for flights to Malaysia and Singapore and was also utilised for flood relief work in NSW in the 1950s, making food and blanket drops to stranded families.

In 1951 the aerodrome came under the control of the Royal Australian Navy once again and was commissioned as HMAS Albatross II, RANARY, Schofields. These were the first naval reserve air units in Australia's defence scheme. These squadrons were expected to be used for reconnaissance in the north and included a bomber squadron and fighter planes (West Australian, 19 May 1951). In May 1951, two new timber framed buildings were erected, and alterations made to the 40 existing timber framed buildings (Construction 16 May 1951). On 1 April 1953, Schofields was re-commissioned as HMAS Nirimba, the aboriginal name for the Australian pelican, with RAAF activities at Schofields transferred to Richmond (The Sun 10 November 1952). HMAS Nirimba was a joint RANARY (Royal Australian Navy Air Repair Yard) and technical training establishment for the RAN Fleet Air Arm, undertaking aircraft maintenance for the six squadrons of Sea Fury and Firefly aircraft in the Australian naval air arm. New facilities were also constructed to maintain the Venom fighters and Gannet search aircraft that replaced the Sea Fury and Firefly craft. In 1953, approximately 300 staff were on HMAS Nirimba, and it was expected the expand with the increase in staff (Courier-Mail, 6 April 1953)

The repair yard was closed in 1955 and the airfield was downgraded to "Care and Maintenance". In January 1955, the Navy announced that it would be selling the timber-framed, black corrugated iron walled huts from the Schofields facility (Cumberland Argus 26 Jan 1955).

In September 1955, preparations began to re-commission HMAS Nirimba at Quakers Hill as the RAN Apprentice Training Establishment (RANATE) for Naval Apprentice training. The establishment reopened in January 1956, Captain F.L. George RAN assumed command on 4 January 1956. Five-year apprenticeships were offered for medically fit boys aged 15-17 years for training as fitters and turners, ordnance, electrical (radio and electronic) and aircraft artificers; shipwrights and boilermakers to standards accepted by Trade Unions and Industry (Melbourne Argus 30 Aug 1956). The training school was described as modern and well-equipped, and, "outstanding apprentices also have the opportunity of competing for entry. to the Royal Australian Naval College or being elected for a Fleet Air Arm Commission. Other avenues of promotion to commissioned rank will be available to personnel on completion of apprentice training." Trainees also received a weekly pay allowance. accommodation and meals, medical and dental treatment, clothing, tuition in all sports by Naval Physical Training instructors and six weeks' leave with free travel every year. The School also had a library, games room and cinema on site (Western Herald 13 July 1956).

Over six thousand naval technical trainees and several thousand more members of the Royal Australian Navy served at Nirimba. Nirimba was the daily work place for around 1,300 Defence personnel and 130 civilians. It covered an area of 300 hectares and housed around 200 buildings. Minor works continued to be undertaken, co-ordinated by the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Works.

Repairs and renovations and external painting of 24 buildings and painting of 8 hangars at HMAS Nirimba was undertaken in 1959 (Commonwealth Gazette 28 May and 18 June 1959).

In 1966, it was decided to rebuild the base with permanent buildings to replace the remaining timber framed buildings dating from the 1940s. The first stage of the project to rebuild HMAS Nirimba, the RAN apprentice training shore station was approved in late 1966 at a cost of \$1.8 million of an estimated \$8-9 Million total cost) (Canberra Times 13 October 1966). The first of the permanent buildings were the two-storey accommodation buildings (barracks) for the apprentices (current Blocks T2A-T2C & T3A-T3C). Tenders were called for ventilation, hot water, cooking, refrigeration for the new Wardroom and Apprentice's blocks at HMAS Nirimba in November 1968. The new facilities are believed to have been designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works.

An open day was held in September 1968, enabling the general public to watch the 650 cadets going about their regular day in the various machinery shops, laboratories and classrooms. There was also a recital by the band, weapon demonstrations and shooting exercises, boat building and engineering displays. The day was ended with a march past (Broadcaster, 3 Sept 1968). Nirimba at that time was the largest Naval Training Establishment in Australia and one of two shore stations established by the Royal Australian Navy to maintain their aircraft (the other being HMAS Albatross at Nowra).

In 1972, Stage 2 of the rebuilding of the base commenced with the construction of the "Academic Centre" (current Blocks T1A-T1F). Photographs of a model of the complex dated 1971 are held in the National Archives.

In November 1977, the airfield hosted Australia's first international air show and from 1986, until its closure in 1994, the airfield housed Alan Bond's Swan Airship (Skyship 600-02) with a large purpose-built hangar.

HMAS Nirimba was decommissioned on 25 February 1994, having trained some 13,000 young men and women from the RAN and other Commonwealth Navies. (From https://nirimba.nsw.edu.au/history).

The Nirimba Education Precinct was established in 1995. Comprising two co-educational senior secondary schools (Wyndham College and St John Paul II Catholic College), TAFE and a university, its intent was to provide flexible opportunities for education in the rapidly developing area of North West Sydney. Partners in the precinct include NSW Department of Education and Training, TAFE, Catholic Education Office and Western Sydney University. TAFE NSW purchased the site from the Commonwealth on 29 November 1996 for \$10,424,334 (\$6,708,312 for the land and \$3,716,022 for the buildings) (TAFE title information).

The Memorial Garden at the former HMAS Nirimba site was formally dedicated on 3 November 2001.

Block T13 Admin building was designed by Perumal Pedavoli, constructed by Lahey Constructions and was completed 2014. The same contract also involved the refurbishment of Blocks T1A, T1B, T1C, T1D, T1F, T2C for a total cost of \$5.5m

DATES OF CONSTRUCTION T1A-T1F: 1972 (construction), 2014 (refurbished) T2A-T2C: 1968 T3A-T3C: 1968 T4: By 1947 (but after July 1942) Bellman Hangar T5: By 1947(but after July 1942) Bellman Hangar T6: By 1947 (but after July 1942) Bellman Hangar T7: By 1947 (but after July 1942) Bellman Hangar T8: pre-1977 T9: pre-1977 T9A: post-1977 & pre-2016 T10: pre-2016 T10A: pre-2016 T11: 2010 (opened) T12: 2010 (opened) T13: 2014 (completed) C21: pre-1977

Historic Themes

Records Retrieved: 7

Records Retrieved: 0

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Unknown
7. Governing	Defence	Unknown
6. Educating	Education	Unknown
5. Working	Labour	Unknown
3. Economy	Technology	Unknown
3. Economy	Industry	Unknown
3. Economy	Agriculture	Unknown

Recommended Management

Management Summary

In accordance with Action 3 of the TAFE NSW Asset Management Plan 2018-2023, TAFE NSW should prioritise the preparation of a CMP/CMS for this site to assist with its ongoing management and guide any future changes.

Retain the existing buildings and ensure they are maintained on a regular basis.

Management

Management Category	Management Name	Date Updated	
No Results Found			

Report/Study

Heritage Studies

Records Retrieved: 1

Report/Study Name	Report/Study Code	Report/Study Type	Report/Stud y Year	Organisation	Author
Former Schofields Aerodrome, Nirimba Drive, Quakers Hill, Heritage Impact Statement for Defence Housing Australia			2015		Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions

Reference & Internet Links

References

				Records Retrieved: 0
Туре	Author	Year	Title	Link
No Results Found				

Data Source

The information for this entry comes from the following source:

Data Source	Record Owner	Heritage Item ID
State Government	TAFE NSW	5063942

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