Royal Australian Mint, Deakin, ACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finance ID Number</th>
<th>DFD-61002</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL) Place ID Number</td>
<td>Nominated - 106191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Status (including CHL Place ID Number)</td>
<td>The Royal Australian Mint is a nominated place for the Commonwealth Heritage List. The nomination has been referred to the Australian Heritage Council for assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>The Royal Australian Mint is owned by Finance on behalf of the Commonwealth. The Royal Australian Mint as a tenant operates and manages the day-to-day running of the former Process Building including the coin manufacturing operation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The Royal Australian Mint site is located on Block 1, Section 65 in Deakin, Canberra, ACT. The street address of the Royal Australian Mint site is 60 - 66 Denison Street, Deakin. The Royal Australian Mint is located approximately 1.5 kilometres west</td>
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southwest of Parliament House (1988) and the Parliamentary Zone on Kurrajong (Capital Hill) and approximately 3 kilometres southwest of Canberra's Central Business District (CBD), all in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

The property is located at 60 – 66 Denison Street, Deakin, ACT
Source: Google maps

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| The Royal Australian Mint is a complex dominated by two adjacent parallel slightly off set buildings. The two buildings are both essentially two-storey 'pavilion' forms and are exemplars of the Late Modern, Stripped Classical style with projecting horizontal eaves all around and equally rhythmic façade treatments. The building forms and their arrangement in relation to each other are comparable to other schematic layouts of the style and time in Canberra and around the world.  

The overall arrangement and design of the Mint buildings in their open setting also ideally suits the function of the Mint and its need for isolation and security whilst offering a unique public visitation experience.  

The large expanse of surrounding open space and the vistas and views created to and from the complex are important to the comprehension of both the main Mint buildings individually and as an architectural whole. The setting of the Royal Australian Mint buildings is elevated and overlooking the expanse of lightly treed grassed land down to the roadway beyond. To the north and to the south are also large open playing fields. Open bitumised car parks are located to the east of the former Process Building and to the north of the former Administration Building and a new paved area is located at the start of the visitor entrance ramp paving.  

The former Administration Building is the more aesthetically pleasing and compositionally resolved of the two buildings. The low pitch hipped roof has large overhangs and projecting eaves all around. It has equally rhythmic and minimally fenestrated façade treatments to the North and South facades and regular ‘bays’ with marble and sandstone cladding with recessed aluminium framed windows. The east and west sandstone clad facades are subtly horizontally banded and have no fenestration except for one window and the marble revealed staff entry and steps centrally located on the east façade. The North façade also has a central recessed entry and a unique, full length, forward set row of tall slender terrazzo columns each with minimal bronze and aluminium rebated bases and capitals respectively. |
The former Process Building is larger and less articulated, or architecturally relieved, than the former Administration Building. However it has certain monumental qualities including its size and a uniform rectilinear aesthetic befitting its original function as, essentially, a factory and the producer of the nation's coinage. The former Process Building’s function dictated the provision of only very high windows to each of the almost identical four facades. The building has projecting eaves all around and a mansard style parapet concealing a series of clerestory roof forms. Skylights fitted to the clerestory structure provide light to most parts of the internal spaces, however ceilings have been subsequently introduced in some areas. The former Process Building has an extensive basement. The original ground level link to the former Administration Building has been removed and a new glazed visitor’s entrance has been created approximately midpoint on the north facade of the building.

In addition to the two main buildings there are a scattering of ancillary structures associated with the Royal Australian Mint. These include the waste water treatment plant in the south-west corner of the site, various stores on the southern side of the former Process building, a new fire sprinkler building east of the former Administration building and a new chiller room and waste enclosure west of the former Administration building.

L to R: The secondary entrance; and exterior and interior of the former Administration Building was designed and constructed as part of the original Royal Australian Mint in 1964-1965. Source: Woodhead, 2012

### Landscape Setting
The Royal Australian Mint site is substantially developed with only a small percentage of landscaping along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. Landscaping generally consists of a collection of mostly non-indigenous tree specimens (of approx. 3-4 metre height) located randomly alongside car parking areas. Hedging along the eastern boundary provides some screening to the car park facing Denison Street. Additional low scale landscaping has been introduced in the area between the two main buildings on the site.

### Heritage Objects and Collections
Above the pair of entrance doors is a bronze Australian Coat of Arms together with the words “Royal Australian Mint” in raised bronze letters directly beneath it. The original coat-of-arms and associated wording located above both the main and side entrances to the building has high heritage value.
| History and Summary of Uses | The Royal Australian Mint is located on the traditional lands of the Ngunnawal people and their descendants continue to live in Canberra and the surrounding region.

A new national Mint was first mooted for Canberra as early as 1943, however at the time this was opposed by both the NSW and WA State governments.

Resistance to the location of a new Mint in Canberra continued but eventually in January 1958, Federal Cabinet agreed in principle to a Royal Australian Mint being established in Canberra. In 1959, an area of Camp Hill behind Parliament House and behind West Block was identified for consideration as a site for a new mint. Cabinet decided however in 1960 that the particular site and any other in the Government triangle would not be appropriate.

In February 1959, Cabinet agreed to the visitation of a senior official from the United States Mint to give expert advice on decimal currency, minting machinery and processes, as well as on the general nature of the building required (Cabinet submission no. 529, 2 February 1960, NAA). There were much internalised and politicised discussions regarding the decision to convert to decimal currency, whether to mint the coinage in Canberra, where in Canberra and the role of the other ‘Royal’ mints in Sydney, Perth and Melbourne.

The ‘Royal’ prefix was also confirmed only quite late in the decision process, there having been both an informal and a formal request from the Australian Government. Finally assent from Queen Elizabeth II to then Australian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies was given in October 1963.

The Royal Australian Mint was designed by the Department of Works from their NSW office in Sydney in 1963 (in association with Sydney architects, J.S. Whitelock and Keith Sawdy Architects). The final design for the Mint buildings’ facades and external treatments display a strong sense of symmetry and proportion that is both an exemplar and typical of the ‘Stripped Classical’ style.

Construction of the ‘Royal’ Australian Mint commenced in 1964. The finished buildings cost $5 million (in 1965) with an additional $4 million spent on equipment. From the beginning, the proof coins produced at Canberra were reportedly of the very highest standard. The use of new techniques was pioneered by staff and transferred from the Melbourne Mint and working in the |
Royal Australian Mint in Canberra in the early 1960s.

His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh, officially opened the Royal Australian Mint on Monday the 22nd February 1965.

The Currency Act 1963 (No. 67 of 1963) is the first of a number of Acts necessary to give effect to the government's decision. The ‘dollar’ was eventually chosen as the name for the new currency. The new currency was introduced on 14 February 1966, referred to as C-day. At the time of conversion both the Melbourne and Canberra Mints were in full operation stockpiling large quantities of new currency. Some staff from Melbourne relocated to Canberra and took with them years of experience to ensure that the Royal Australian Mint produced the finest quality coin from the beginning of production. Once enough decimal coins had been produced to supply the initial demand, the Melbourne Mint ceased operations in 1968.

Since opening in 1965, the Royal Australian Mint has produced more than 14 billion circulating coins, and has the capacity to produce more than two million coins per day, or more than 600 million coins per year. The Royal Australian Mint has an international reputation for producing quality numismatic coins. Furthermore, the Royal Australian Mint won an international award for ‘Best Silver Coin 2006’ for its Silver Kangaroo coin design.

By 1984, over 8,500 million coins had been struck at the Royal Australian Mint and it had become necessary to refurbish the factory area. It was also clear that the production of collector coins required a larger, purpose-built facility. To provide the necessary space without undertaking extensive building works, the decision was made to purchase blanks from local suppliers. The ore melting and rolling areas (which had made the blanks for circulation coins) could then be used for blank handling, circulation coin production and proof blank preparation. The old circulating coining hall was converted into a dust-free proof coining hall that has been the centrepiece of what was a modern proof coin manufacturing area.

Major refurbishments, including new visitor facilities, were undertaken from 1984-87 and the Mint was reopened to the public in 1988. Further refurbishment commenced in 2006. The Department of Finance and Deregulation (now Department of Finance) and the Mint undertook a refurbishment project to provide process efficiencies for the Mint, a safe working environment for staff, improved facilities and overall visitor experience to ensure the continued economic viability of the Mint as both a production facility and national attraction, well into the future.

Stage one of the project involved works to the basement of the former Process Building where building plant was updated to increase energy, environmental efficiencies, new storage areas were created to provide a better utilisation of space and a new goods receipt, and dispatch facility was created on the southern side of the building. Stage two involved works to the circulating coin hall and incorporated the introduction of high levels of process automation, modernised infrastructure and equipment, and re-engineered processes. A new 8 tonne goods lift to enable more efficient materials handling processes was introduced as part of this stage. The lift is currently the largest of its type in the southern hemisphere.

Subsequent stages involved upgrades to the tool room and the collector coin production areas, and the creation of new administration offices, a museum and new public gallery areas incorporating the display of the National Coin.
The final stages of the project involved the removal of the linking structure between the two main buildings, the creation of new staff amenities room, external civil and landscaping works.

By March 2009, the Mint's administrative, business and retail operations were relocated into the former Process Building. At around this time the vacated former Administration Building was handed over to the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Department of Finance) to be refurbished. Refurbishment of the former Administration Building has mainly involved the removal of almost all original partition walls except those directly adjacent to the main entrance and the stairwells. The marble lined walls and floors of the building's original entrance have been substantially retained as have the original stainless steel panelled entrance doors.

Commonwealth Heritage List – Nominated Statement of Significance

The following Statement of Significance was developed as part of the previously prepared Heritage Assessment (2009) and formed part of a CHL nomination for the site.

Approximately 35ha, located at 60 – 66 Denison Street, Deakin, Canberra, including the former Administration Building and the former Process Building (now known as the Royal Australian Mint), being the entire Block 1 of Section 65.

The Royal Australian Mint, constructed 1964 - 1965, is of historical and architectural significance to the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Royal Australian Mint is the principal facility for the production of Australia’s circulating coin currency. Historically the facility is rare in that it was the first and only Australian mint to be established independently of the Royal Mint, London. Politically the development of Australia’s first autonomous mint represents a significant step in Australia’s move towards assuming responsibility for its own governance.

The conversion of the nation’s currency from the Imperial denominations of pounds, shillings and pence into dollars and cents or the decimal system on 14 February 1966 is a significant event in Australia’s history. The significance of this event, together with its direct association with the production of Australia’s
currency, has long made the Royal Australian Mint one of Canberra’s national attractions. As such, the Mint has established a strong association with various tourist and school groups interested in the history and production of Australia’s coins.

The Royal Australian Mint was constructed following the establishment of the National Capital Development Commission in 1958 and is representative of the period of rapid civic development that occurred in Canberra during the 1960s.

The former Administration and Process buildings of the Royal Australian Mint are significant as high quality examples of the Stripped Classical style of architecture and for demonstrating the principal characteristics of the style used for a majority of civic buildings in Canberra during the 1960s. The style is expressed in the buildings through characteristics such as their symmetrical facades, regular bays with height exceeding width, horizontal skylines, columns without bases or capitals, broad horizontal members echoing classical entablatures, central entrances and a lack of classical detailing.

The Royal Australian Mint, together with other buildings of the period, contributes to the distinctive late twentieth century modernist architectural character of Canberra. The planning, architectural detail, layout and quality materials and finishes of the former Administration and Process buildings demonstrate landmark qualities.

Department of Finance’s (Finance) updated heritage assessment

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| Criterion A - I | There are no official values as the Royal Australian Mint is a nominated place. |

### Non-Statutory Listings

| ACT Heritage Register | The Royal Australian Mint was nominated for Provisional Registration on the ACT Heritage Register. The ACT Heritage Council decided not to list the place on the ACT register as it is located on national land and nominated to the CHL. |
| Territory Plan | The Territory Plan does not identify any heritage places separate from the Act Heritage Register. The Deakin Neighbourhood Plan (which forms part of the Territory Plan) identifies the Royal Australian Mint as “a significant Deakin Landmark.” |

### Additional information

| Property Access | The Royal Australian Mint has a visitor’s centre and is open to the public. |
| Consultation | Department of Finance consulted with key stakeholders, community interest groups and Indigenous agencies, including representatives at the Royal Australian Mint, Department of the Environment, ACT Heritage, National Capital Authority, National Trust of Australia, Canberra and District Historical Society, Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and the United Ngunnawal Elders Council. Any additional consultation with other interested parties should include the Compliance, Environment and Heritage team, Department of Finance. |

### Conservation Documents/References

- ACT Planning & Land Authority &lt;www.actpla.act.gov.au&gt;
- Freemen Thorne (2005), Statement of Heritage Impact, Department of Finance.
- National Capital Authority &lt;www.nationalcapital.gov.au&gt;
- Royal Australian Mint &lt;www.ramint.gov.au&gt;

### More information

For further information regarding the Royal Australian Mint, please contact the [Department of Finance](mailto:).