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Alice Springs Heritage Precinct

The Precinct reflects the planned development of Alice Springs in the late 1930s, when the European population was rapidly expanding following the extension of the 'Ghan' railway to the town in 1929. It demonstrates a commitment at the time to law and order, the provision of health services, and housing for Commonwealth public servants. Stuart Park, at the southern end of the Precinct, includes an original stone monument to John McDouall Stuart in a formal setting, as well as a more recent statue of the famous explorer.

The Precinct also includes within its boundaries the Aboriginal sacred site, Billygoat Hill, known as "Akeyulere" to the Arrernte people.

ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

The oldest and most prominent building in this group was established by the Women of South Australia and completed in 1939. It served as the Flying Doctor Base. An adjacent building, similar in design, was completed in 1949, and now accommodates the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tourist Facility and the original radio room.

OLD ALICE SPRINGS GAOL

The Alice Springs Gaol was built in 1938 to replace the Stuart Town Gaol on Parsons Street. It still contains many of its original features, including a high perimeter wall and cells once occupied by prisoners. This complex now also accommodates the National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame.



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'ARID ZONE' RESIDENCES

The historic residences in the Precinct, built in the late 1930s and early 1940s, are important examples of housing designed to deal with the hot dry climate of Central Australia prior to the advent of air conditioning. Along with wide verandahs, all the houses feature a central masonry 'core' designed to provide both a cool refuge from the summer heat, and an area that can be heated in winter. Most of these houses were designed by architect Beni Burnett.



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Enjoy a self-guided
tour of historic sites
in the Alice Springs
Central Business
District

Alice Springs
Heritage Trail



Alice Springs
Heritage Trail

The Alice Springs Heritage Trail

is a scenic walk ideal for families and visitors seeking to experience the history of the Alice Springs' Central Business District.

You can enjoy the full journey or join the trail at any point along the map.

You will discover the individual history, story and character of the places that contribute to the Alice Springs of today.

For more tourism information visit
www.discovercentralaustralia.com

ANZAC HILL MEMORIAL

The Anzac Hill Memorial was unveiled on 25 April 1934 (Anzac Day) and was originally dedicated to all those members of the armed services who had paid the supreme sacrifice during World War I. It has now become a memorial to all those who have served in the defence of their country during all wars in which Australia has participated. Anzac Hill is also of significance to the local Arrernte people, who know it as “Untyeyetwelye”.



1

STUART TOWN GAOL

The construction of this stone and timber building commenced in 1907. It was designed to replace the gaol at Heavitree Gap, which was considered inadequate and was subject to flooding. The Stuart Town Gaol had a relatively short life – it was closed in 1938 when a new Gaol opened south of Stuart Terrace. In 1973, it was threatened with demolition, but it was decided to retain the building and restore it.



7

FORMER CWA ROOMS

A branch of the Country Women's Association (CWA) was formed in Alice Springs in 1933, but for many years the members lacked a 'home'. That changed in 1946 when the branch was able to move into this building, which was constructed during World War II as a Recreation Hut for servicemen. A restaurant now operates on this site.



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TOTEM THEATRE

The Totem Theatre Complex includes two 'Sidney Williams' huts, the last surviving evidence of the 'Anzac Hill Camp' established during World War II by the Darwin Overland Maintenance Force (DOMF), and subsequent transport units. The DOMF was instrumental in the creation of the North-South Road, now known as the Stuart Highway. The complex is now occupied by the Alice Springs Theatre Group.



2

THE RESIDENCY

'The Residency', completed in 1928, is a reminder of a brief period from 1927 until 1931 when the Northern Territory was split into two territories, 'North Australia' and 'Central Australia'. It served as the home of the Government Resident of Central Australia. Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh stayed there in March 1963. It is now a community centre.



8

OLIVE PINK BOTANIC GARDENS

These Gardens are associated with the remarkable Ms Olive Pink, who spent over 40 years undertaking anthropological research in Central Australia and advocating for Aboriginal rights. Originally established as the Arid Region Flora Reserve in 1956, it is Australia's oldest public garden exclusively dedicated to the conservation of arid zone flora. Today it includes a café, and is valued by the community as a place of rest and relaxation.



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TODD TAVERN

The Todd Tavern, overlooking the Todd River, first opened in 1960 as the Riverside Hotel, in the midst of a post-War boom in Alice Springs. It was designed by renowned architect Beni Burnett, and built by local identity and businesswoman Mona Minahan. The hotel was extensively renovated in 1974. It is the oldest surviving Hotel in Alice Springs.



3

OLD HARTLEY STREET SCHOOL

This former School was initially constructed in 1930. In 1945, as a result of rapidly growing enrolments, a kindergarten and additional classroom (with a distinctive octagonal shape) were constructed. On 20 September 1950, the first broadcast of the 'School of the Air' was made from here. In 1965, the school closed and became derelict. It was saved by the National Trust, which currently occupies the building.



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WELL, BATH STREET

This well, which is believed to date from the 1930s, is a reminder of the days prior to World War II when there was no reticulated water in Alice Springs. Residents relied on water from wells such as this for all domestic purposes, including growing vegetables. It is now considered rare in Alice Springs.



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PIONEER WALK-IN PICTURE THEATRE

This former Picture Theatre was built in 1942 by 'Snow' Kenna, a prominent figure in Alice Springs. For many years it played an important role in the social life of people in the Alice Springs region. It ceased operating as a cinema in the mid-1980s, and now accommodates a Youth Hostel. It is believed to be the only remaining example of a historic open air picture theatre in the Northern Territory.



4

ADELAIDE HOUSE

Adelaide House was designed by the Rev John Flynn. A particularly favourable fund raising effort in Adelaide in 1919 gave the building its name. It was built between 1920 and 1926, and is designed to cope with the harsh climate of Central Australia. It features thick stone walls, wide verandahs, and a unique cooling system. It is now a well-known landmark in Alice Springs.



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STUART MEMORIAL CEMETERY

This small cemetery contains burials dating from 1889 until 1932. It reflects the slow growth of the Town of Stuart (as Alice Springs was then known) prior to the 'coming of the railway' in 1929. The number of children buried here indicate the harsh conditions of the time. The cemetery contains the remains of a number of prominent pioneers.



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OLD COURTHOUSE

This building was completed in 1928, and initially served as Government Offices as well as a Local Court. The Court had previously been located at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station, but in the late 1920s there was a move to relocate Government services to the centre of town. This building functioned as a Court until 1980, when the new Alice Springs Law Court Building was officially opened.



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JOHN FLYNN MEMORIAL CHURCH

This Church was specifically designed to reflect the life and achievements of the Rev John Flynn (1880-1951), a Presbyterian minister who was the founder of the Australian Inland Mission, and one of the founders of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The foundation stone was laid by the Prime Minister on 26 June 1954, and it was opened by the Governor-General on 5 May 1956.



11

FORMER POST OFFICE & REPEATER STATION

The former Post Office and associated Telegraph Repeater Station were constructed in 1931. The distinctive patterned concrete blocks used to construct both of these buildings were widely used for Government buildings of the day. The construction of these buildings in this location was the impetus for officially changing the name of the 'Town of Stuart' to 'Alice Springs' in 1933.



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CATHOLIC CHURCH

Up until the late 1920s, Alice Springs was a very small town which only saw the occasional visit by Catholic priests. This changed in 1929 when construction of this Church commenced under the direction of Father James Long, using hand-made patterned concrete blocks. When it was officially opened in 1930, it became the first permanent Catholic Church in Alice Springs. It has changed little since that time.



6

HEENAN BUILDING

This building was designed in a clean 'modernist' style by well-known architect Beni Burnett. It is associated with 'Mick' Heenan, who was the first commercial market gardener and poultry farmer in the Alice Springs area. The building was completed in 1949, and initially housed Heenan's Café and fruit and vegetable store. It has been modified over time, but still retains distinctive features from its original design.



12

RAILWAY COTTAGES

These four houses represent two important phases in the development of Alice Springs, following the arrival of the railway in 1929. Numbers 14 and 16 Railway Terrace were constructed at the same time as the railway line arrived. Numbers 10 and 12 were constructed during World War II. Together the houses demonstrate the importance of the railway to the development of Alice Springs.



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