

THE OLD COURTHOUSE AND RESIDENCY, ALICE SPRINGS

Updated: 10th February, 2002

The Old Courthouse and Residency, located on the corners of Hartley and Parsons Street, are important components of the Northern Territory's history. They represent a tangible reminder of that brief period between 1926 and 1931 when Central Australia was an independent administrative region, separate from the remainder of the Territory.

The Old Courthouse



The Old Courthouse building was originally designed for use as the Administrative Offices of Central Australia. These offices were established in 1926 following the formal recognition of Central Australia as an independent region under the *North Australia Act*. Construction of the building began in 1927 and by November 1928 it was sufficiently completed for occupation.

Prior to its construction the local Court of Alice Springs (initially called the township of Stuart until 1933), was based at the Telegraph Station. As the town's population increased, and Stuart was identified as the future capital of Central Australia, the Court moved its offices into the township itself. The Old Courthouse was used both for government offices and the Court.

From 1929 until 1931, it was technically the Supreme Court of Central Australia. It ceased to operate as a courthouse in 1980 when the new Alice Springs Law Court building was officially opened.

Gazetted: 20 March, 1996

The Residency

The new administration had a major social and physical impact on the town. As there were no premises suitable for the Government Resident, an official residence was built on the opposite corner of Parsons and Hartley Street. Its construction was closely supervised by the first Government Resident of Central Australia, John Cawood, and was completed by 1928.

Even after the *North Australia Act* was repealed, the Residency continued to be occupied by the former Government Resident, Vic Carrington, in his new role as Assistant Administrator.

The Residency was also home to the Administrator of the Northern Territory between 1942 and 1945 following the relocation of the centre of Government to Central Australia in the wake of the bombing of Darwin.

Over the years the Residency has been occupied by a number of individuals and official guests, nearly all of whom have had a significant impact on the development of the Territory. Such individuals include Lionel Rose, the Chief Veterinary Officer for the NT, Reginald McCaffery and Dan Conway (District Officers of Alice Springs). Notable guests include the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester in 1946 and later Queen Elizabeth II.

Gazetted: 5 July, 1995



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Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment

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THE OLD COURTHOUSE AND RESIDENCY, ALICE SPRINGS (continued)

The buildings were designed specifically for arid conditions with a central masonry core of rooms, surrounding verandah and low verandah wall. Both are characterised by the use of patterned cement blocks. This feature is found on other government buildings from this period in the town such as the former Post Office and some non-government structures such as the Old Catholic Church.

For all these reasons, both the Old Courthouse and Residency are valued by the community.



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