

I Julian Laffan, educator (primary school, tertiary and vocational), artist, and curator submit the following in support of Megalo Access Arts as a vital and accessible arts organisation deserving of a permanent home at the Fitter's Hall Kingston.

I will address the terms of reference for the inquiry:

The best use of the Fitters workshop, taking into account the acoustic qualities, heritage value, its location, cost and community demand of the building;

Historically, the Fitter's workshop is a place of activity and making. I have located historical images of the Fitters working in the space and the workers outside- both reflect a space very much used on a daily basis (please **see Trove, NLA, Interior, Fitters' Shop, Kingston [picture] below**).

My neighbour, who was trained as a fitter and turner in the early fifties, went through each of the machines he could see within the above photo and explained the set up of the workshop describing lathes, presses and milling machines and described the workings of a workshop such as the Fitter's Hall with the labour, grease and sounds this space would have produced. The appropriate sounds should surely continue to be activity, labour and production

Megalo will respect the heritage value of the building in keeping with its past use and continue to assist the development and identity of the city of Canberra and its development. The historic images show the vivid truth of what the space is about. When viewing the interior of the building in the photograph, you will notice the space had a tin roof and skylights. These have since been modified and the current ceiling has a later cladding that contributes to it's current *accidental* acoustics.

It is meaningless to maintain an empty building when considering contemporary understandings of historical integrity. Currently the *Historic Houses Trust* open significant places to public events, for example Elizabeth Bay House hold functions reflecting the art events of the 1920's and artists interpreting the MacLeay family and their collections, see: <http://www.hht.net.au/museums/ebh/3>. Historical spaces should not be left as empty buildings but places of activity and life, reinvigorating past uses in a contemporary context.

The address of the site is 'Printers Way', a reminder of the historic industrial use of the area. This reference to the role of the government printers in disseminating and replicating information integral to Australia is an appropriate completion of this street to reach a Print Workshop of international standing.



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1928. 1 photograph b&w ; 15 x 20.2 cm.

Part of T.C.G. Weston Canberra photograph albums [picture]. 1925-1929.

The historical meaning and use of the Fitter's Hall as a space for making and creating has engaged my professional practice over the past two years. My work is site specific and responds to the role of the Fitter's Hall as a space where machines are repaired, built and modified, items that in turn enabled the power and movement for the early city of Canberra to be developed. (see: Clark, D. (2011) *Imitation of Life*, Canberra Museum and Art Gallery, Canberra and McConchie, B. (2010) *Print Big*, Megalo Print Studio, Canberra). For Megalo's premier exhibition at the Fitter's Hall I created thirty hand carved replica cutting tools in timber to reflect the nature of Canberra being a continually planned and modified landscape and in keeping with the historic use of the exhibition space as a fitters and turners workshop. I hand cut images of historical and present Canberra on these items to

reflect a place of making, creativity and continual development.



Julian Laffan 'Bird Tool' (Canberra Street View) Woodcut 2010

These works detail such Canberra sites as the Civic Pool, the Kingston Foreshore, The Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Triangle. A number of these works have been acquired by the Canberra Museum and Gallery and reflect the value of the visual arts in connection with site of the Fitters Hall. An image of the 'Bird Tool' (view of the Canberra streetscape) is currently published in Craft Arts International (2011).

The community accessibility and use of the site as a Print Workshop and Gallery would see the space available to all members of the public and tourists alike. Megalo is the best fit for the Fitters Hall. Megalo is a print workshop with the capacity, proven history and reliability to make, create and replicate images and work that reflect the original use of the space and take Canberra into a City of the Future.



The Fitter's Hall, past and present.

December 7 2011.