



THOROLD ROBERT CASBOULTE (1891-1952)

Born at Ringarooma, Tasmania, Casboulte was one of Presbyterian minister Rev Robert Walker Casboulte's seven sons. He began an architecture course in 1909 by studying Building Construction, Drawing, Science and Art at Launceston Technical School. In 1915, by then a qualified architect, he enlisted for service in the First World War. He was appointed 2nd Lieutenant in the 8th Infantry Battalion, and embarked in Adelaide for Egypt. He appeared to be the best-dressed junior officer in the ship-board photo, in pith helmet, collar and tie. In December he was a casualty, with severe colitis. He recovered, was discharged from a hospital in Heliopolis in early 1916 and proceeded to England, then France. There he was promoted but wounded in action in late 1917, with severe gas poisoning and neurosis. He was 'struck off strength,' and embarked for home. His appointment was terminated in early 1918 and he received a British War Medal, Victory Medal and Star Medal.

Casboulte was an architect in an administrative position at the War Service Homes Commission in Victoria in 1921. The houses had already been designed before he took up the position, but he made some amendments to them. He received definite instructions from the central administration to have nothing to do with the construction of houses. At the inception of the Federal Capital Commission in 1925, he transferred to its Architects' Department. He and his wife Isobel were the first occupants of the weatherboard house at 14 Balmain Crescent, Acton. In November 1926 he became the architect in charge of the newly-created Housing Construction Department of the FCC, responsible for the housing which enhanced the character of Canberra's garden suburbs, mainly in Ainslie, Braddon, Reid, Barton, Forrest and Griffith. He rose to the position of FCC Chief Architect in 1927. Casboulte oversaw the designs of the Solar Observatory at Mt Stromlo (1926-9), by J.S. Murdoch, the Albert Hall (1926-8), by David Limburg, the Institute of Anatomy (1930), and the Grouped Housing at Manuka (1930-5) both by Walter Hayward Morris. When the FCC was disbanded in 1930 Casboulte was appointed to the Department of Works in Canberra. Among his many duties was assisting a committee to review rents in Canberra. He moved to Sydney, where he died in 1952 at Concord Repatriation Hospital.

References:

- Casboulte T.R. National Archives of Australia Series B2455 Barcode 3217687
AWM Group Portrait of Australian Junior Officers ID number P06566.003
The Argus, 1 December 1921 'War Service Homes'
Peter Freeman *The Early Canberra House* The Federal Capital Press, 1996
Brenden O'Keefe, *Walter Hayward Morris*, Canberra Historical Journal No 76, March 2016
Tim Reeves and Alan Roberts, 'Manuka Housing Precinct' in *100 Canberra Houses*, Halstead Press, 2013, p50