

# Heritage (Decision about Registration of 1 Astley Place, Garran) Notice 2012

Notifiable Instrument NI2012—544

made under the

***Heritage Act 2004* section 42 Notice of decision about Registration**

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**1. Revocation**

This instrument replaces NI 2012—281.

**2. Name of instrument**

This instrument is the *Heritage (Decision about Registration of 1 Astley Place, Garran) Notice 2012*.

**3. Registration details of the place**

Registration details of the place are at Attachment A: Register entry for 1 Astley Place, Garran.

**4. Reason for decision**

The ACT Heritage Council has decided that 1 Astley Place, Garran meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria at s 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The register entry is at Attachment A.

**5. Date of Registration**

18 October 2012

**Jennifer O'Connell**  
**A/g Secretary** (as delegate for)  
**ACT Heritage Council**

**18 October 2012**



ACT Heritage Council

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**HERITAGE REGISTER  
(Registration Details)**

For the purposes of s. 41 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, an entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

1 Astley Place, Garran

Block 36, Section 16, ACT

**DATE OF REGISTRATION**

18 October 2012 Notifiable Instrument: 2012—544

Copies of the Register Entry are available for inspection at the ACT Heritage Unit. For further information please contact:

The Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
GPO Box 158, Canberra, ACT 2601

Telephone: 132281 Facsimile: (02) 6207 2229

## IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE

1 Astley Place, Block 36, Section 16, Garran, ACT.

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### STATEMENT ABOUT THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE

The house at 1 Astley Place, Garran is important as an example of the Late Twentieth Century International Style demonstrating key indicators of the style including cubiform overall shape, expression of structural frames, large sheets of glass, plain smooth wall surfaces and deep eaves overhangs for shade.

The building also has high design and aesthetic qualities in its striking use of crisp white painted horizontal features balanced by solid concrete block work, its simple and logical plan arrangement, and its high quality of interior detailing.

The building exhibits a high degree of innovation in a 1960s house. This includes the use of structural plywood to form deep beams that extend over long spans, a cantilevered reinforced concrete fireplace hearth, cantilevered, frameless silicone sealed glazing and the custom designed pivoting sill ventilation system.

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### FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE

The features intrinsic to the heritage significance of 1 Astley Place, Garran, which require conservation comprise:

- indicators of the Late Twentieth Century International Style including cubiform overall shape, expression of structural frames, large sheets of glass, plain smooth wall surfaces and deep eaves overhangs for shade;
  - external original built fabric and details, including large spans of frameless, silicone sealed glazing, flat metal deck roofing, fair face concrete block walls, painted plywood fascias, soffits and wall cladding, hidden gutters and downpipes in blockwork columns, fascia and eaves detail, wall finishes and details, window types, materials and sill details, and door treatment; and
  - internal simple plan arrangement and designed interior detailing including cantilevered concrete hearth and custom designed ventilation louvres
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### APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES

The 'Heritage Guidelines: General Conservation Guidelines for Historic Heritage Places 2012' adopted under s25 of the *Heritage Act 2004* are applicable to the conservation 1 Astley Place, Garran.

The guiding conservation objective is that 1 Astley Place, Garran, shall be conserved and appropriately managed in a manner respecting its heritage significance and the features intrinsic to that heritage significance, and consistent with a sympathetic and viable use or uses. Any works that have a potential impact on significant fabric (and / or other heritage values) shall be guided by a professionally documented assessment and conservation policy relevant to that area or component (i.e. a Statement of Heritage Effects – SHE).

## REASON FOR PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

1 Astley Place, Garran, has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance when assessed against three criteria under the *Heritage Act 2004* including a & g.

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### ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Pursuant to s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, a place or object has heritage significance if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria. Significance has been determined by research as accessed in the references below. Future research may alter the findings of this assessment.

- (a) it demonstrates a high degree of technical or creative achievement (or both), by showing qualities of innovation, discovery, invention or an exceptionally fine level of application of existing techniques or approaches;**

The building exhibits a high degree of innovation for a house of its time. This includes: the use of structural plywood to form deep beams that extend over long spans; a cantilevered, reinforced concrete fireplace hearth; cantilevered, frameless silicone-sealed glazing; and the custom designed pivoting sill ventilation system. These are highly original elements and unusual for a relatively modest residential building.

Subsequent additions have been undertaken which have maintained the design quality of the place.

1 Astley Place meets this criterion.

- (b) it exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group;**

The place is assessed as not meeting this criterion.

- (c) it is important as evidence of a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function that is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost or is of exceptional interest;**

The place is assessed as not meeting this criterion

- (d) it is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations;**

This place is assessed as not meeting this criterion.

- (e) it is significant to the ACT because of its importance as part of local Aboriginal tradition**

The place is assessed as not meeting this criterion.

- (f) it is a rare or unique example of its kind, or is rare or unique in its comparative intactness**

The place is assessed as not meeting this criterion.

**(g) it is a notable example of a kind of place or object and demonstrates the main characteristics of that kind**

The building is considered to be a late and mature example of the Late Twentieth Century International Style, exhibiting typical characteristics such as:

- cubiform overall shape
- large sheets of glass
- plain smooth wall surfaces
- deep overhang for shade
- expression of structural frames

The building also has high design and aesthetic qualities complimenting its formal style, in its striking use of crisp white painted horizontal features balanced by solid concrete block work, simple and logical plan arrangement, and its high level of interior detailing including cantilevered concrete hearth, frameless silicone windows and custom designed system of ventilation louvres.

The building is considered to be an example of how the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) fostered private development incorporating a distinctive use of unfamiliar materials that later became popular.

1 Astley place meets this criterion.

**(h) it has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase in local or national history**

1 Astley Place, Garran, has special associations with its architect, Dirk Bolt, who has made several valuable contributions to Canberra's architectural heritage however, it is not considered to pass the threshold against this criterion.

The place is assessed as not meeting this criterion.

**(i) it is significant for understanding the evolution of natural landscapes, including significant geological features, landforms, biota or natural processes**

The place is assessed as not meeting this criterion.

**(j) it has provided, or is likely to provide, information that will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of the natural or cultural history of the ACT because of its use or potential use as a research site or object, teaching site or object, type locality or benchmark site**

The place is assessed as not meeting this criterion.

**(k) for a place—it exhibits unusual richness, diversity or significant transitions of flora, fauna or natural landscapes and their elements**

The place is assessed as not meeting this criterion.

**(l) for a place—it is a significant ecological community, habitat or locality for any of the following:**

- (i) the life cycle of native species;**
- (ii) rare, threatened or uncommon species;**
- (iii) species at the limits of their natural range;**
- (iv) distinct occurrences of species.**

The place is assessed as not meeting this criterion.

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## SUMMARY OF THE PLACE HISTORY AND PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

### HISTORY

#### Background

The building is typical of the residential work of Dirk Bolt in Canberra, which used a palette of fair face concrete masonry, timber glazing walls, white painted fascias and flat roofs.

Other examples by Bolt include:

- 6 Fuller Street, Deakin
- 44 Beauchamp Street, Deakin

This house is one of only a few reflecting a shift at the time from mainly government designed and built housing to private development where the individual owner commissioned an architect. This shift is the result of the early National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) fostered private development whereby builders were invited to construct architect designed display homes, demonstrating an alternate housing solution.

The building received the RAI ACT Chapter 25 year award in 2000.

#### The Architect

*'The house was designed for Mr and Mrs Barr. It was in discussions with Mr Barr, who was the chief meteorologist in Canberra, that I developed my interest in climate change. The design of the house attempts to resolve the conflict between the wish to retain the view of the Brindabella Range to the west of Garran, and the need to protect the interior of the house from excessive exposure to western sunlight. In response, the living room was conceived as a 'balcony room', protected by an awning, and with the view separated from the interior by rimless glass that was suspended from the roof outside the parapet, allowing a gap for natural ventilation. The interpretation of the concept was an exercise in the beauty of reason; the timber beam was supported at the right points, the construction was modular, details were selected for clarity of rationale. The design process was well supported by the clients.'* (Email from Dirk Bolt, 30/5/05)

As such the building reflects not only the style of Dirk Bolt, but the result of the interaction between the owner and architect: the conscious choice by the owner of Bolt because of his style and the finished design demonstrating choices and wishes of the owner.

Dirk Bolt was born in the Netherlands, where in 1949 he commenced his studies of architecture and town planning at the Delft Technical College (renamed Delft University of Technology in 1986). In 1951, he migrated to Hobart, Australia, where he qualified as an architect and town-and-country planner. In Australia, he designed buildings in Hobart and Canberra such as the Christ College for the University of Tasmania and Burgmann College for the Australian National University. In Canberra, he designed a number of innovative homes whilst, as a consultant (1965-1971) to the National Capital Development Commission, he contributed to the design of extensions to Canberra. During the 1970s, he worked for the United Nations, World Bank and other international development organisations in Africa and Asia. He was subsequently appointed Senior Lecturer, Urban Design, at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, where he obtained his PhD in town planning. Bolt was also the President of the ACT Chapter of the Royal Institute of Architects.

In his thesis, he modelled a sustainable, humane urban future. Since then he has gone on to work internationally in this arena, notably in the 1980s, on low-energy aspects of planning at the TNO (Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research), Delft, the Netherlands, in a study titled 'Urban form and energy for transportation', and later as Director of Housing, Fiji, applied these principles to shelters for the homeless after a hurricane, working on the 'International Year of Shelter for the Homeless', and shelter principles following a hurricane, later developed as 'CoreHouse'. In the 1990s, Bolt as professor of Urban Planning and Management, ITC-Enschede, the Netherlands, developed the use of remote sensing as a tool for planning infrastructure requirements for the vast and unplanned growth of mega-cities in developing countries. Now in Scotland, he is applying his skills to the use of non-structural grade timber as a potential resource for the sustainable construction of low cost homes, designing a sustainable, modular, demountable, wood-based building material product system named the Reinforced Building Units System (ReBUS™), addressing the issue of affordable domestic construction in March 2005.

Professionally, Dirk Bolt is registered as an architect and planner in the Netherlands. In Australia, he is listed as honorary fellow of the Australian Institute of Architects, past president of the ACT division of the Australian Planning Institute and past national president of the Australian Modular Society (UK *Sunday Times*, 22/5/05).

## DESCRIPTION

1 Astley Place, Garran was designed by Dirk Bolt in April 1967 and construction was completed in June 1968.

The building is a late, mature example of the Late Twentieth Century International Style, characterised by:

- cubiform overall shape
- large sheets of glass
- plain smooth wall surfaces
- deep overhang for shade
- expression of structural frames

Further elements related to this style include:

- external built fabric and details, including large spans of frameless, silicone sealed glazing, flat metal deck roofing, fair face concrete block walls, white painted plywood fascias, soffits and wall cladding, hidden gutters and downpipes in blockwork columns, fascia and eaves detail, wall finishes and details, window types, materials and sill details, and door treatment
- interior wall, floor and ceiling finishes, wall panelling and full height doors, cantilevered reinforced concrete hearth, cantilevered, frameless silicone sealed windows and the custom designed system of ventilation louvres.

Examples of this style by other architects in Canberra include:

- 11 Northcote Crescent (Bowden House), Deakin, by Harry Seidler
- 3 Arkana Street (Birch House), Yarralumla, by Bunning & Madden
- 10 Gawler Crescent (Benjamin House), Deakin, by Alex Jelinek which is entered to the ACT Heritage Register

1 Astley Place, Garran, is located on a sloping corner block at the entrance to a short cul-de-sac. There are excellent views of the Brindabella Ranges to the west. The house is designed to take full advantage of the westerly views from the main living areas and of the northerly aspect from the kitchen, breakfast area, laundry and courtyard.

The house demonstrates a great deal of innovation for its time, including the use of structural plywood to form deep beams that could extend over long spans, frameless silicone sealed glazing and a clever system of ventilation louvres.

Construction is of grey concrete blockwork, flat metal deck roofing and crisp, white painted marine plywood for fascias, soffits and wall cladding. The simple form and detailing is continued in the interior with full height timber doors and panelling and simple mouldings.

The original house was a 'H' shape, open to the street-side on the west. A small entry porch, open to the south was flanked by a courtyard (now a bedroom). The central entry was off a porch that doubled as a shallow carport. The porch led up a few steps to a glazed gallery, backed by a service core and fronting the courtyard, which linked the living and sleeping wings to the west and east respectively.

The living wing is located to the west, taking full advantage of the sweeping views. It was originally fully open plan with a den. Living and dining spaces are divided by a block work fireplace wall, with an innovative cantilevered concrete hearth.

The major, striking feature of these spaces is the continuous, frameless silicone-sealed glazing across the western elevation. Concrete block work extends to a low sill level, whereupon the glazing line is cantilevered forward on a timber sill. In the resulting gap between under sill wall face and the glass line is an ingenious system of pivoting ventilation panels. Lighting is set at the top of the block work wall, level with the pivoting panels with individual lose fitting obscure glass panels over. The concealed fluorescent lights subtly illuminate the glass wall at night. The glass extends to the ceiling line, which runs seamlessly out to form a wide eave and terminates in a deep fascia, supported on concrete block piers.

The pronounced horizontal effect produced by the deep beam, frameless glass and heavy concrete block columns is striking. The roof over this space is supported on trusses and tension cables.

The central service core contains a kitchen, large pantry and laundry, which originally opened up to a courtyard roofed by a pergola with fly screen mesh on the north. The northern courtyard wall was demolished and the family room was extended out further than the original courtyard.

The sleeping wing is to the east and contains two bedrooms, a bathroom and ensuite. The eastern façade is similar to the west with a wide eave overhang and deep fascia with a continuous uninterrupted band of sash-less sliding and fixed panes above a concrete blockwork wall.

The house opened to the north on to a courtyard. A detached single carport sited in the south-east corner of the block is linked to the house by a courtyard.

The house has been altered on two occasions in 1973 by Eggleston McDonald & Secomb and in 1980 by Bill Douglas. In 1973 the northern courtyard was demolished and a family room added, while the dining room was extended north and north glazing installed. The original materials and details were matched sympathetically.

In 1980 the south-facing entry porch was partially enclosed to form a third bedroom and the living room widened. A more generous entry was created through the original study in the south west corner. A new carport / porte-cochère was built on the south side, supported on piers to match the details of the east and west elevations.

Both alterations respect the original design qualities of the building.

### Physical Condition and Integrity

Whilst additions to the residence were undertaken in 1973 and 1980, the dwelling remains in good condition.

### **REFERENCES**

Miles, M. [canberrahouse.com.au/profiles/1astley.html](http://canberrahouse.com.au/profiles/1astley.html), 2000-2004

Metcalfe, A. *Canberra Architecture*, Landmark Press, 2003, p 118, Item L21

ACTPLA Building File

R. Apperly, R. Irving, P..Reynolds, *Identifying Australian Architecture Styles and Terms from 1788 to Present*, pp 218-221, Angus & Robertson, 1989.

UK *Sunday Times*, 22/5/05.

Email from Dirk Bolt to assessor - 30/5/05

### **MAPS AND IMAGES**

**Figure 1. Front view of 1 Astley Place, Garran.**



([www.canberrahouse.com/houses/1960s-house-profiles/1-astley-place-garran-1967/](http://www.canberrahouse.com/houses/1960s-house-profiles/1-astley-place-garran-1967/))

**Figure 2. Location of 1 Astley Place, Garran.**



1 Astley Place, Garran indicated by solid red line.