



ACT Heritage Council

BACKGROUND INFORMATION PARAL HOUSE 22 BROCKMAN STREET (BLOCK 47 SECTION 79, NARRABUNDAH)

At its meeting of 15 August 2023 the ACT Heritage Council decided that the Paral House was not eligible for provisional registration.

The information contained in this report was considered by the ACT Heritage Council in assessing the nomination for the Paral House against the heritage significance criteria outlined in s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

This background information is a summary of the information that was considered by the ACT Heritage Council at its meeting on 22 July 2021, when it decided to accept the nomination, but not to issue a heritage direction to halt demolition works and their in-principal decision not to provisionally register the place. This document is presented in a format similar to how the Council received it at the time and requires the reader to access the linked resources for a full understanding of the information presented.

HISTORY

Wrigley designed houses in Canberra:

1958 – 14 Jansz Cres, Griffith – His own home First Wrigley House in Canberra – rejected for ACT listing due to significant modification

1959 – 22 Brockman St, Narrabundah – Paral House

1960 – 8 Penrhyn St, Red Hill – Hannan House – recently demolished

1963 – 5 Daly St, Deakin – Freeman House – extant

1966 – 56 Mugga Way – Miles House – extant but seemingly modified

1977 – Cataract St, Kaleen – Kalma House – extant

2013 – 8 Maclaurin Crescent, Chifley – Eco Solar House – extant

Wrigley designed houses outside Canberra:

1955 – Dee Why – Hunt House

1983 – Burra NSW – Ben Wrigley House

2002 – Binalong – Schooneveldt House

Major alterations and additions to Paral House:

1974/8 – Fibreglass swimming pool by Wrigley

1978 – Brick Extension to Residence as enclosure for Swimming Pool by Wrigley

1984 – Fireplace, cast iron, Morso Morso

1987 – Screen wall (A J Carter and sons).

1995 – 2 storey addition Brick extension/Addition to residence.

2002 – Further additions and alterations.

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During this research, there was an absence of mentions of Paral House noted in Wrigley's own work, *Making Your Home Sustainable: A Guide to Retrofitting*; as well as in the Council's main reference to architectural styles in Australia in Apperly, Irving, Reynolds *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*; nor is it found on any of the main non-statutory lists from the Australian Institute of Architects, the *Canberra House* online resource or the National Trust. It did, however, receive a commendation in the 1965 RAI ACT Chapter awards for architecture and a brief mention in Milton Cameron's *Experiments in Modern Living, Scientist's Houses in Canberra 1950-1970*: "Vladimir ('Val') Paral, official photographer for the John Curtin School, and his wife, Heather, commissioned Derek Wrigley to design their house in Narrabundah." (p.55) *Associated footnote: "The Paral House was at 22 Brockman Street, Narrabundah. In 1965 it received a Commendation from the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (ACT Chapter)."

Notes from, and links to, references:

- Designed for Vladimir (Val) and Heather "Nicky" Paral who lived there between 1959 and 1982 (moved to Wapengo Lake after that).

Heather "Nicky" Paral (1932 to 11 August 2020)

- Interior designer
- Heather Paral was one of Canberra's original stylemakers | The Canberra Times | Canberra, ACT <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6889688/heather-paral-was-one-of-canberras-original-stylemakers/>
- Studio 12 Interiors (mainly based in Manuka – around since 1954)
- 1964 invited Douglas Ram Samuj (textiles designer) for a show <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131740069>



Mr. Douglas Ram Samuj, a textile designer, visited Canberra at the weekend to arrange an exhibition of hand-printed fabrics at an interior-decorating studio in Manuka. Here, Mr. Ram Samuj discusses a sample of fabric with Mrs. Heather Paral, the studio proprietor. Mr. Ram Samuj was born in Fiji of Indian parents and studied art at Melbourne Technical College. He graduated in textiles design at Manchester, England, College of Art and became the first non-European to receive the Heywood Prize at the Royal Manchester Institute. Mr. Ram Samuj has exhibited at the Manchester Art Gallery and has sold his designs to major textile firms in Britain and Australia. The main inspiration for his designs is gained from botanical forms as seen in cross-section through a microscope.

- 1964 introduced G-Plan furniture from Britain to Canberra <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105838906>

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Mrs. Paral adds a painting to the display on a G-plan divider which can also serve as a multi-purpose unit for a one-room flat. There are unevenly spaced shelves for small pictures, books or ornaments, a fold-away desk and storage space in lower cupboards.

- Picault pottery from Vallauris, France, had Studio 12 as the only Canberra stockist <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105868217>
- 1966 provided advice in CT for interior decorating and mixing styles etc,



Mrs Heather Paral with a William Morris botanical print . . . a century-old design for furnishing fabrics that is now the rage in London.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105888236>

- Provided suggestions for Christmas makeover <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article106953745>
- Did some interior design for a house featured in the CT and opened for the Canberra Arts Club to raise funds <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article107087457>
- 1970 decorated a new Sydney motel Noah's Artarmon Motor Inn using historic info from the NLA <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110458683>
- In a research trip through Europe was noted in the society pages - <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110714534> which was then followed up by an extension to the store in 1973 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131696598>
- 1974 providing advice on interior decorating <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110765207>

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- Manuka store closed 30 November 1978 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110920843> although the sale was extended into December



- Known for bringing high end European interior and homewares to the ACT, such as Le Creuset and Marimekko (the founder, Armi Ratia, stayed with Heather and Val in the Narrabundah house)
- Also known for putting on fashion shows featuring friends and family as models
- Often pops up in the Canberra Times in relation to interior fashions, or kitchenware, etc.
- Took part in various social gatherings including YMCA moving feasts (their house was used to end the night with coffee and cake while taking in the views) <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105878211>
- Active in the artistic community and had an open home that was well attended <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105890492>
- Worked closely with Wrigley (as architect) and Fred Ward (as furniture designer)
- House was designed with significant input from her, including a large sunken bath (since removed as it wasn't very effective at retaining heat as per Wrigley's advice at the time), a lower level flat for her father and a studio space for the couple to work in
 - The studio space in particular should be considered as it may have some significance for the work the pair were known for that developed into influential businesses for each.

Vladimir "Val" Paral

- Photographer
 - Photographer for the Winter Youth Festival in 1973 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110713444>
- Helped establish the Medical Photography section at the John Curtin School of Medical Research, ANU
- Assistant cameraman for the Australian Documentary Film Makers Group (ADFG) first film in 1955 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91195838>
- YMCA Ski Club Captain 1955

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- 1955 Worked to popularise skiing and build the club <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91198240> also includes a ski fashion parade outfitted by Nish and Joyce and with Heather as one of the models (see <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91198566> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91198732>)



- Represented ski club in Balmain Cup at Guthega - <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91208551>
- 1956 led a party of 12 into Kosciusko but had to shelter for a week in high country huts due to a blizzard seven more experienced skiers tried to get help, but three had to shelter in another hut while four went on to Cooma <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91221374> - they all made it out fine <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91221634>
- He was President of the Southern Districts Federation of Ski Clubs <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91223429>
- 1957 slalom at Guthega <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91595260>
- 1960 YMCA Ski Club Vice-President <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article103076389>
- Weightlifting at YMCA
 - 1961 group leader <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article103084666>
- YMCA Sailing Club
 - 1963 training Juniors <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article104280614> and in 1964 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article107510957> he created the junior training scheme <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article106939147>
 - 1964 racing in the club's 12foot yachts <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article104274793>
 - 1964 changed the titles of positions and he now became Club Captain <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131752461>
 - 1964 more racing with the club <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131754074> and again leading up to state titles <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article107508879> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article107510820> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105868054> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105869150> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105871660> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news->

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[article105881799](http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105881799) and 1966 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article128651338> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article106938860>

- 1965 ran the introductory training courses from the Narrabundah house <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131762704> also <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131764583> also <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131766173> and it turned into a fortnightly thing <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105845218>
- 1965 Yacht Club BBQ at the Paral House <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page11478431>



- YMCA Sailing Club and the Canberra yacht Club combined forces for new club houses <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105845370> with Val heading up the finance committee for it.
- 1976 guest of honour to hand out awards at presentation night <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131820187>
- 1976 donated the Founders' Trophy to the club <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131820690> continuing through 1979 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110948468>
- YMCA Sailing club celebrated 25years in 1987, noting its founding by Val Paral and Ralph Westen (while on a ski trip to Guthega with the YMCA). It is(was?) the only YMCA sailing club in the world <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page15946441> also note that Val is still teaching junior members
- Gun Club
 - Queanbeyan-Canberra Gun Club Spokesperson <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110831618>
 - Chair ACT Shooting Association worked to bring the gun clubs together to create a combined shooting complex in Canberra <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110901826> which would focus on Olympic level sports shooting (i.e. international standard range) as well as associated facilities and cater for emerging trends/sports <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110903019> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110913902>
 - Opening range for state trials in 1979 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110949796>
 - 1979 the ACT Shooting Association was the first incorporating all disciplines to receive approval from the Australian Shooting Association (Val Paral as president) <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110951539>
 - 1980 the ACT Shooting Association submits plans to the NDC for their shooting centre, first mooted 20 years earlier, with Val still on the steering committee <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110962130> eventually noted that the first stage due in 1982 would cost about \$2million with the full program of \$4.5million to be completed by 1987 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article126911775>
- ACT Sports Council

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- 1979 treasurer <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110937952>
- <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110947255>
- ACT Olympic Sports Association
 - 1979 April – convened a meeting to form an ACT Olympic Council with the aim of bringing international sporting fixtures to the ACT <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110941844> - he is again noted as a “Canberra sporting identity and businessman” <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110943294>
 - Name is now officially ACT Olympic Sports Association with first meeting due in March 1980 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110971824>
- Naturalised 19 March 1958 – at the time living at 29 Goorean Street Braddon <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91245720> or <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article240882871>
- 1960 Canberra YMCA Vice President <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article103109097>
- Founder of Microdata that provided photographic services to various agencies in the ACT
- Ralph Westen helped form many of the clubs with Val who was also Ralph’s boss at ANU John Curtin School of Medical Research and both active in YMCA <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110972545>
- Prominent in Canberra community sports
 - Noted in CT as “A Canberra sporting identity and businessman” <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131855449>
 - ACT Shooting Association President and worked to get the club up and running at Majura
 - YMCA, including senior rear admiral of the sailing club (and first chair of the club committee and part of team that got the yacht club building) and swimming and weightlifting and captain of the ski club
 - Worked with refugees (his brother and wife stayed with them at Narrabundah after getting out of Russian controlled Czech <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article107069015> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131668683> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article136950862>)
 - chair of the Czechoslovak – Australian Association

Derek Wrigley

- Architect of Paral House
- From existing Council registrations (with minor updates): “Derek Wrigley was born in Oldham, England, in 1924. He emigrated to Australia in 1947, two years after graduating in Architecture, and taught architecture at the Sydney Technical College. He designed a house at Dee Why constructed in 1955-56 that was featured in the RAIAs journal Architecture in Australia. In 1957 he moved to Canberra to take up a position with the ANU as the Assistant University Designer, upgraded to the ANU University Architect/Designer in 1961 and remained there until 1977 when he moved to private practice. During his time at ANU he took part in and influenced the planning of the ANU campus (with Roy Simpson from Yunken Freeman), the ANU Design Unit and the formation of the CCAE School of Environmental Design, now the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Canberra. He believes that his architecture is one of mature organic

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design where design encompasses everything, and that this house was one of the first in Canberra to utilise passive solar design features combining north facing glazing and internal mass for heat retention”

- Gave public lectures on good design, insulation and solar passive design
- President of the Canberra Art Club and would also create and exhibit art around town
- Active in promoting Book Week
- This is one of his early Total Design houses where site planning, architecture, interior, landscape and graphic design were all incorporated into the plan – a system he developed while in Canberra and likely made possible by his connections with Fred Ward and Heather Paral.
- He is likely to be considered an important person in Canberra (designed lots of street furniture, was a part of the ANU clique of high concept architecture and influential in architectural theory at the time)
 - It is also possible that he has a special connection to the place in his association with Heather Paral and the development of his Total Design theory as well as early experiments with environmental designs
 - He has been noted as saying it is one of his best, but also said, “It was a quiet, restrained house, but, as with the Hannan house my awareness of the need for low energy and resource use was not yet fully honed. The roof was Stramit – relatively new at that time, but it was (in retrospect) not fully effective as a thermal barrier. We had not yet fully woken up to the coming need for constructional corrections to prepare for the coming global warming and subsequent climate changes – nor becoming quite evident in 2015. The housing industry was completely indifferent to the looming problems.” ([1959 PARAL HOUSE, 22 Brockman St. Narrabundah, ACT 2603 Current owner – Bodmin ?? – Derek Wrigley](#)) so it is not perfect or the ultimate expression of his work, but possibly a formative one?
- Can be compared to 14 Jans Crescent of the same time (architects own house) which was considered to be too altered to meet any of the criteria. Paral House has most of the same features and is designed for contemporaries in collaboration with them.
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article136945333>
- The house was commended in the 1965 RAIA awards <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105874110>
- The winning house was 145 Mugga Way and Paral House was commended along with several others: “The judges commended also the following houses: The Walker house, 18 Cobby Street, Campbell, de-signed by Bowe and Burrowes; the Goodwin house, 91 Mugga Way, Red Hill, designed by Moir and Slater; the Paral house, 22 Brockman Street, Narrabundah, designed by Derek Wrigley; and the Nutter house, Holmes Crescent, Campbell, designed by Moir and Slater.”



Canberra's house of the year

The house pictured above is Canberra's best of the year. At least, that is the opinion of a panel of judges appointed by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

This is the house at 145 Mugga Way, Red Hill, which was awarded the ACT Chapter medallion by the Australian Institute of Architects as Canberra's best house of the year. The house is the home of Mr and Mrs R. V. Cater, and it was designed by Allen, Jack and Cottier, of Canberra.

They have awarded Allen, Jack and Cottier, architects, of Canberra, the ACT Chapter medallion for the house which was built for Mr and Mrs R. V. Cater, of 145 Mugga Way, Red Hill.

The judges were Mr J. H. McConnell, of Hassell, McConnell and Partners, architects, of Adelaide and Melbourne; Mr K. Woolley, of Archer, Morlake, Murray and Woolley, architects, of Sydney; and Mrs Loma Rudduck, of Canberra.

The judges commented also the following houses:

The Walker house, 35 Cobby Street, Campbell, designed by Howe and Burrows; the Goodwin house, 91 Mugga Way, Red Hill, designed by Moir and Slater; the Parol house, 22 Brockman Street, Narrabundah, designed by Derek Wrigley; and the Nutter house, Holmes Crescent, Campbell, designed by Moir and Slater.

Although not eligible in the single family house for the 1965 award, the judges highly commended the flats in Arthur Circle, designed by Grounds, Romberg and Boyd, of Melbourne.

Announcing his choice, Mr Ken Woolley said: "The house was well related to a site which was only distinguished by a sweeping view to the north over Canberra.

"The house is distinguished by being good street architecture, the carport and entrance being well screened but inviting and suggesting interesting interior spaces without giving anything away."

Said Mr McConnell: "This house is rich where the others are more or less poor; it has special qualities, a distinctive character, and a human appeal, which unmistakably emanate from an architect having strong architectural convictions

which he is prepared and able to state with considerable, if not complete assurance."



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Simple and B



A simple basic two-bedroom home is featured this week in the Garden City Homes Series.

The series is presented by The Canberra Times in conjunction with the Homes Advisory Service.

The house is Brindabella — T2133 in the Homes Advisory Service folio of plans.

Brindabella is designed with an eye to future extensions.

The floor plan is of the economical rectangular shape.

The floor area is only 10 squares, but the rooms are relatively large.

The living area is separated from the service rooms by a central spine of storage wall, which includes the heating unit.

Brindabella would fit across a 62ft wide block or down the depth of a 50ft block, allowing for a future third bedroom.

The design is readily adaptable from timber to brick veneer, brick or concrete construction.

In timber construction



it would cost about £4,000 to build in Canberra.

In brick veneer, it would cost about £4,200 and in brick about £4,400.

The Homes Advisory Service at the T and G Building, Hobart Place, offers free advice and guidance to prospective home builders.

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- 1966 included in an open house day for the Canberra Art Club with over 700 visitors

PUBLIC NOTICES

**Inspection of Architect
Designed Contemporary
Homes**

Sunday, March 6 
2-5pm

Arranged by the Canberra Art Club for the ACT Council
of Cultural Societies, Griffin Centre.
145 Mugga Way, Red Hill Designed by Allen, Jack and
Cottier.

22 Brockman Street, Narrabundah	Designed by D. Wrigley
91 Mugga Way, Red Hill	Designed by Iain Slater
44 Beauchamp Street, Deakin	Designed by Dirk Bolt
56 Rosenthal Street, Campbell	Designed by A. B. Pegrum
24 Cobby Street, Campbell	Designed by Roy Grounds
50 Savige Street, Campbell	Designed by N. Renfree
56 Vasey Crescent, Campbell	Designed by T. Bischoff

Tickets \$1, available at D.J.'s, Bourchier's, Studio Nundah
or at houses on day of opening.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105889477>

- Note that Derek Wrigley was involved in the Canberra Art Club from the late 1950s
- Chairman of the Cultural Clubs Working Committee - <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article133977157>
- 1966 again included in a roving feast for the yacht Club <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article106949137>
- 1965 the house is commended in the RAIA ACT Chapter awards - <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105874110>

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SITE PLAN



Image 1 Paral House site boundary – left in 2021 with the original house, right in 2022 with the new house mid-construction.