



ACT Heritage Council

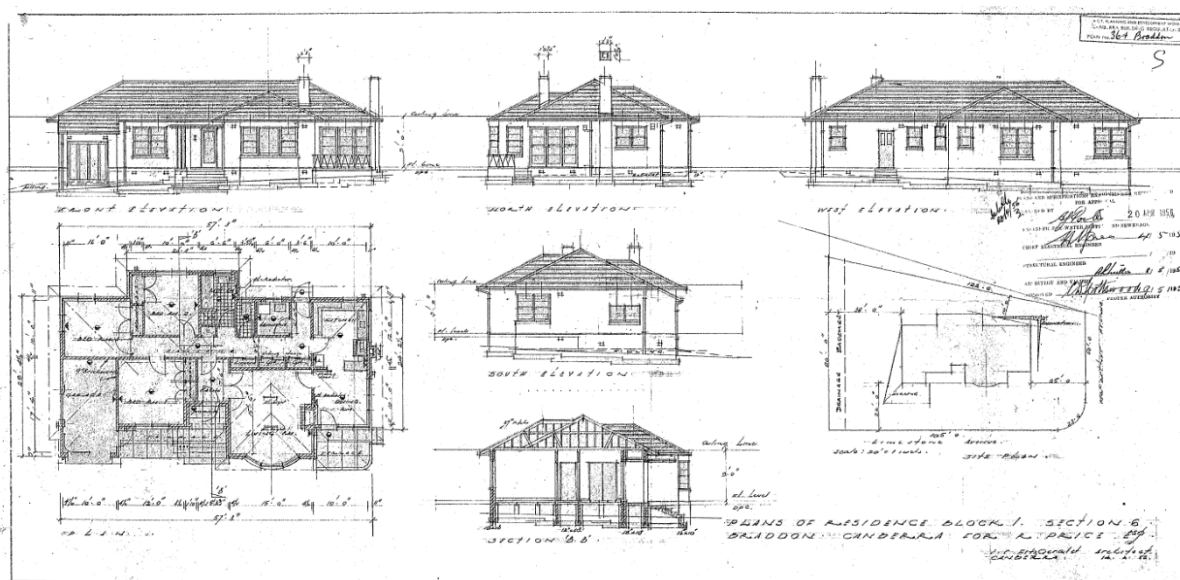
BACKGROUND INFORMATION
153 LIMESTONE AVENUE "FASSIFERN HOUSE"
(BLOCK 1 SECTION 6, BRADDON)

At its meeting of 22 July 2021 the ACT Heritage Council decided that the 153 Limestone Avenue "Fassifern 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 153 Limestone Avenue "Fassifern House" against the heritage significance criteria outlined in s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

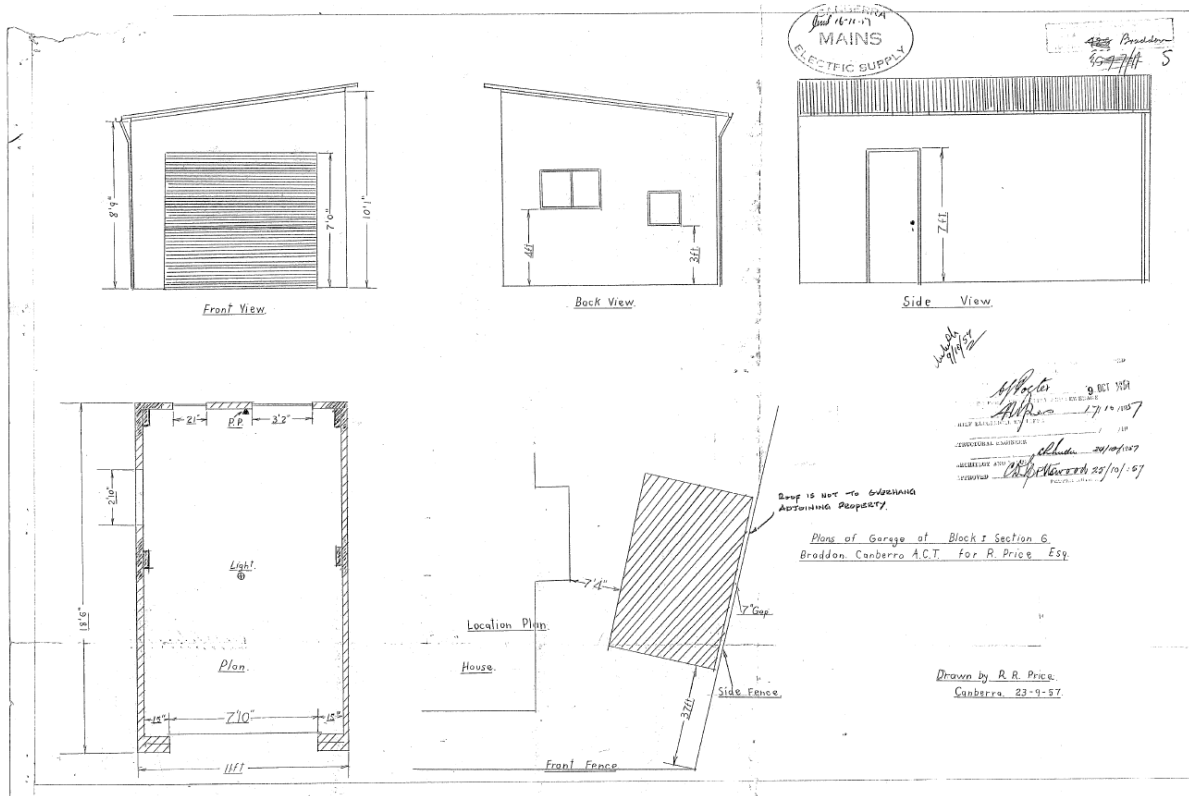
HISTORY

153 Limestone Avenue "Fassifern House" was designed in 1956 by Robert Brian FitzGerald of 13 Lonsdale St Braddon who was a well-established architect at the time and had designed several houses in the Blandfordia 4 Precinct including 5 Tasmania Circle (1948), 3 Ord Street (1951, since demolished), and 82 Arthur Circle (1951 a rendered bungalow with a second storey addition by others in 1982); as well as other places such as 81 Stonehaven Cr Deakin in 1960 and the Bathurst Knickerbocker Hotel in 1939 (a functionalist three storey hotel on the Australian Institute of Architects NSW Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture).



The cement rendered brick garage with a galvanised iron skillion roof sloping towards the house with eaves overhanging the fence along west boundary was designed at the same time by the owner, Mr Ray Price, but although the design was approved in 1957, the garage did not receive a building permit until 1967 retrospectively.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – FASSIFERN HOUSE (153 LIMESTEON AV)



The builder was Vytautas Genys, then Managing Director of ACT Builders. ACT Builders started in 1954 with four builders (Peter Pilka as Managing Director, V. Genys and two others, all as shareholders). Their first job was eight cottages in Ainslie, but after a few years they were struggling to get contracts and the business was on the verge of folding. With little to no work in 1956, Genys took over as Managing Director and the business quickly grew. Ten years after the business started ACT Builders were a large employer in Canberra with around 100 staff and using 300 tradies (*Canberra Times* 16 November 1964:10-11). They were the builders for the hexagonal ABC studios at the corner of Northbourne and Wentworth Avenues, CSIRO Land Research, bachelor flats in Reid, extensions at ANU and RMC Duntroon, the Belconnen Primary School, the Woden Valley High School, the administration building at the racecourse, and many others. Additionally, by 1964 they had built over 600 residences in the ACT. They are currently represented on the Register for building 46 Vasey Crescent. The company wound up in 2016 (finalised 2018 with ASIC deregistration).

Genys was active in local sports and was known as an aggressive basketballer in the local Lithuanian team. He lived in Turner for 19 years (slowly adding to the house) and then moved to Aranda in 1971 in a house he designed and built with the help of his family (*Canberra Times* 20 July 1971:11).

Ann Smith (2021 pers. Comm.) has conducted some research on Genys and reports the following. Vytautas and his wife came to Australia on the Svalbard departing Bremerhaven 21 May 1948. They reached Melbourne on 29 June 1948. The Melbourne arrival means that they most likely spent time at the Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre before being sent to Canberra. The Svalbard was the "Fifth Transport", meaning that Vytautas Genys would have been considered a "good type", probably from having building experience, by the immigration selection officers operating in Germany at the time.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – FASSIFERN HOUSE (153 LIMESTONE AV)

SITE PLAN



Image 1 153 Limestone Avenue “Fassifern House” site boundary