

Australian Capital Territory

Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of 51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest) Notice (No 1)

Notifiable Instrument NI2008— xxx

made under the

Heritage Act 2004 s34 Notice of decision about Provisional Registration

1. Name of instrument

This instrument is the Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of 51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest) Notice (No 1).

2. Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after notification.

3. Notice of Decision

Pursuant to Section 34 of the *Heritage Act 2004* the ACT Heritage Council has decided not to provisionally register 51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest.



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Dr Michael Pearson
Chair ACT Heritage Council
GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2602

6 March 2008

STATEMENT OF REASONS

DECISION REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF 51 TASMANIA CIRCLE (BLOCK 5, SECTION 40, FORREST) IN THE ACT HERITAGE REGISTER

Background

51 Tasmania Circle (Block 5, Section 40, Forrest) was nominated for assessment pursuant to entry to the interim ACT Heritage Places Register, as part of a heritage assessment of the Forrest Housing Precinct by Armes and Ratcliffe in 1995.

Council did not accord a priority to the assessment, and although it was assessed as part of a grant to the Royal Australian Institute of Architects(RAIA) ACT Chapter in 1998-99 and it remained in the backlog of nominated places until it was assessed as part of the Nominated Interim Heritage Place Register (IHPR) Project in 2004-05. The nomination has now been considered and at meeting 18 on 6 March 2008 the ACT Heritage Council endorsed a Statement of Reasons which does not find 51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest eligible for provisional registration (heritage listing).

Detailed reasoning of why 51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, does not meet the threshold for listing under the heritage criteria at Section 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* is included under **Assessment**. It should be noted that whilst this assessment does not find 51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, eligible for heritage listing, it is identified individually as contributing to the heritage significance of Blandfordia 4.

Assessment

The Council's assessment against the criteria specified in s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* is as follows.

In assessing the nomination for 51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, the Council considered:

- The original recommendation in 1995 by Armes and Ratcliffe that the place be assessed.
- RAIA assessment 1998-99.
- The 2004-05 assessment as part of the Nominated IHPR Assessment Project.
- Materials held on file by Council on the Assessment File 99/09794.

51 Tasmania Circle was assessed by RAIA in 1999, and not found to meet their RAIA criteria for Twentieth Century Significant Architecture, although this RAIA assessment identified one ACT criterion for potential significance, although again it did not consider the place met the threshold for listing. The 2004-05 assessment as part of the Nominated IHPR Assessment Project addressed other criteria as well.

In relation to the place:

Criterion (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 RAIA assessment did not address this criterion, nor did the 2004-05 assessment.

Heritage Council assessment:

51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

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

The RAIA assessment indicated the values against this criterion as:

The house exhibits only one of the particular architectural elements specific to the Post-War International Style (1945-60) with its large sheets of glass 7.

The following design features are of additional significance: externally the inflected stone wall and terrace including its contrasting texture, the overhang for shade and the plain smooth wall surfaces, and internally the raked ceilings following the butterfly roof slopes.

The RAIA believes that there are at least three residences in Canberra that are better examples of this style of architecture. The butterfly roof aesthetic, however, is clearly shown by this residence.

It should be noted that 51 Tasmania Circle is identified in the Blandfordia 4 Precinct as a feature intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place, for 'high quality architecture in a range of building styles by private and government architects ...'

Three architects of considerable skill whose work in the precinct is mainly confined to the 1950s are Harry Divola, R.B. Fitzgerald and Richard Ure. Of the three, the work of Divola is the most individualistic and robust, with his love of curves and angles expressed in vividly coloured drawings of readily identifiable style (held in ACT Planning and Land Authority's building files). From Sydney, he opened a drawing office in Manuka in the 1950s. Some of his most imaginative designs were not built (i.e. his initial designs for 72 and 80 Arthur Circle were not built in favour of more modest Divola designs, both built in 1954). No 53 Empire Circuit (1951), now demolished, exemplified the hallmarks of Divola's design, as does the house built by Karl Schreiner, for himself, at 51 Tasmania Circle (1954). The identifying characteristics of this house are the butterfly roof, feature stone wall, interesting angles employed in the design and verandah with semicircular end. The house exemplifies Divola's love of curves and free form. Other designs by Divola were constructed at 21 Tasmania Circle (1949, two storey with Moir & Sutherland 1950 additions and a 1978 porte cochere by architect Richard Luker); 17 Tennyson Crescent, constructed in 1951 for Professor Patrick Moran and occupied by him until his death in 1988; and 64 Arthur Circle (1952), a bungalow with a stone fireplace, added to later by others.

Heritage Council assessment:

51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion. Whilst displaying some characteristics of this style, other aspects of the building are unremarkable. Compared to the Bowden House the butterfly roof is weak in execution and not sharply defined by the plan. Despite the quirky wall alignments, which appear awkward rather than spatially interesting, the planning in rooms other than the main living space is typical for the 1950's. In terms of assessing the building as a good example of the style, it appears that some aspects of the style have been added to a well executed but otherwise unremarkable 1950's building, rather than the entire building being a unified composition in the style as is evident in the other examples.

The Council also considers that whilst 51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, contributes to the heritage significance of Blandfordia 4, the Council does not consider that it meets the threshold for heritage listing as an individual building.

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 RAlA assessment did not address this criterion, nor did the 2004-05 assessment.

Heritage Council assessment:

51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

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

The nominator did not address this criterion, nor did subsequent assessments.

Heritage Council assessment:

51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

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

The RAI A assessment did not address this criterion, nor did the 2004-05 assessment.

Heritage Council assessment:

There is no evidence that 51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, is significant to the Aboriginal community. 51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

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

The RAI A assessment did not address this criterion, nor did the 2004-05 assessment.

Heritage Council assessment:

51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

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

The RAI A assessment did not address this criterion, nor did the 2004-05 assessment.

Heritage Council assessment:

51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion.

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

The RAI A assessment did not make any claim against this criterion.

Heritage Council assessment:

51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion. The house is associated with architect Harry Divola and local builder Karl Schreiner, being one of a number of speculative building projects completed by these two. Whilst well known in their time, neither is considered to have played a significant part in local history.

The house was used for over twenty years as a U.S embassy residence.

Whilst this is of passing interest, the association is not known to have been significant.

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

Heritage Council assessment:

This criterion is not applicable.

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 RAI A assessment did not make any claim against this criterion.

Heritage Council assessment:

51 Tasmania Circle, Forest, does not meet the threshold for heritage listing under this criterion. The Council notes that whilst the building displays some characteristics of Post War International Style (1945-60), but there are better examples as teaching sites including:

- Bowden House, Deakin, by Harry Seidler, 1952
- Birch House, Yarralumla, by Bunning & Madden
- Benjamin House, Deakin, by Alex Jelinek, 1956

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

Heritage Council assessment:

This criterion is not applicable.

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*

Heritage Council assessment:
This criterion is not applicable.

Conclusion

The ACT Heritage Council finds that 51 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, is of insufficient heritage value to warrant provisional registration in the ACT Heritage Register.

Dr Michael Pearson (Chair)
ACT Heritage Council

6 March 2008