



ACT Heritage Council

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**HERITAGE REGISTER  
(Provisional Registration Details)**

**Place No:**

For the purposes of s. 33 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**

Block 36, Section 16

**GARRAN**

**DATE OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION**

Notified: 10 April 2008 Notifiable Instrument: NI 2008-104

**PERIOD OF EFFECT OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION**

Start Date: 4 April 2008      End Date: 4 September 2008

**Extended Period (if applicable) Start Date \_\_\_\_\_ End Date \_\_\_\_\_**

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

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## IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE

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

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## HISTORY OF THE PLACE

1 Astley Place, Garran was designed by Dirk Bolt in 1967.

The building was extended in 1973 by Eggleston McDonald & Secomb and in 1980 by Bill Douglas.

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

### **Note on the Barr House (1 Astley Place, Garran, ACT)**

'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)

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. 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, May 2005**

Dirk Bolt was born in the Netherlands, where he commenced his studies of architecture at the University of Delft. In the fifties, he migrated to Australia, where he qualified as an architect and town-and-country planner. In Australia, he designed Christ College for the University of Tasmania and Burgmann College for the Australian National University in Canberra. In Canberra, he designed a number of innovative homes whilst, as a consultant to the National Capital Development Commission, he contributed to the design of extensions to Canberra (1964-71 Author). During the seventies, 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.

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 fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 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)

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## DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE

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, dining room, second bedroom and courtyard.

The house demonstrates a great deal of innovation for its time, including the use of tension cables to support some of the larger 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 is essentially a shallow 'U' shape, open to the street-side on the south. A small entry lobby was originally flanked by a courtyard (now a bedroom). The lobby 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 originally contained a small study, living room and dining room. The study (now the entry) is set down a few steps from the living room and separated by a joinery unit. Living and dining spaces are divided by a blockwork 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 blockwork 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 together with a series of concealed fluorescent lights which 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 fascia, 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 on the north, now enclosed to form a family room.

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, although the windows are more conventional and interspersed with areas of plywood cladding.

The house opens to the north on to a courtyard. A detached single garage sited in the south-east corner of the block is linked to the house by a courtyard and pergola.

The house has been altered on two occasions by competent architects. In 1973 the northern courtyard was enclosed and roofed to form a conservatory off the dining room and a family room off the kitchen. The original materials and details were matched exactly.

In 1980 the south-facing courtyard was enclosed to form a third bedroom. The original entry lobby was converted into a study nook and a more generous entry 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

The building is a late, but very mature example of the Post War International style, characterised by:

- simple cubic form
- large sheets of glass
- plain smooth wall surfaces
- deep overhang for shade

Detailed elements intrinsic to this style include:

- external built fabric and details, including large spans of frameless, silicone sealed glazing and supporting tension cabling, flat metal deck roofing, fair face concrete block walls, white painted plywood fascias, soffits and wall cladding, gutters and downpipes, 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 are:

- 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

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

Other examples include:

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

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## **STATEMENT ABOUT THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE**

The building is an excellent example of Post War International Style.

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

Subsequent additions have been undertaken by competent local architects who have maintained the design quality.

The house is a good example of Bolt's work, as identified and awarded by the RAI in its 25 year award in 2000.

The building exhibits a high degree of innovation for a house of its time. This includes the use of cable tensioning to trusses over long spans, a cantilevered reinforced concrete fireplace hearth, cantilevered, frameless silicone sealed windows and the custom designed pivoting sill ventilation system.

As an excellent example of Post War International Style the building provides a valuable resource in providing a wider understanding of the style and the work of Dirk Bolt & Associates.

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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 cable tensioning to trusses over long spans; a cantilevered, reinforced concrete fireplace hearth; cantilevered, frameless silicone-sealed windows; and the custom designed pivoting sill ventilation system. These are highly original elements and unusual for a relatively modest residential building.

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

The building is considered to be an excellent example of the Post War International style, exhibiting typical characteristics such as:

- simple cubic form
- large sheets of glass
- plain smooth wall surfaces
- deep overhang 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 blockwork, its simple and logical plan arrangement, and its high level of interior detailing.

Together with its technological innovations including the use of tension cables to support some of the larger spans, frameless silicone sealed glazing and a clever system of ventilation louvres, this building is extremely sophisticated for a residential building in Canberra at this time. The aesthetic is highly refined, almost commercial in appearance, which belies its 40 years since construction.

Subsequent additions have been undertaken by competent local architects who have maintained the design quality of the place.

The house is a good example of Bolt's work, as identified by the RAIA and for which it was awarded their 25 year Award in 2000

- (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;**

Whilst 1 Astley Place, Garran, demonstrates 1960s modernist taste, it does not pass the threshold against 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 did not meet this criterion.

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

This criterion is not applicable.

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

Whilst there are few examples of modernist houses of the quality of 1 Astley Place, Garran, in Canberra, it does not pass the threshold against this criterion.

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

1 Astley Place, Garran, does not meet 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 made several valuable contributions to Canberra's architectural heritage however, it is not considered to pass the threshold against this criterion.

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

This criterion is not applicable.

- (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**

As an excellent example of Post War International style the building provides a valuable resource in providing a wider understanding of the style and the work of Dirk Bolt & Associates. The collection of modernist houses completed by Bolt in Canberra in the 1960s are highly refined and mature examples of the style.

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

This criterion is not applicable.

**(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.**

This criterion is not applicable.

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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:

- external built fabric and details, including large spans of frameless, silicone sealed glazing and supporting tension cabling, flat metal deck roofing, fair face concrete block walls, white painted plywood fascias, soffits and wall cladding, gutters and downpipes, 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.

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### **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 4 criteria under the ACT Heritage Act.*

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### **APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES**

The Heritage Guidelines adopted under s27 of the *Heritage Act 2004* are applicable to the conservation of 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).

## BACKGROUND

### 1. CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Draft provisional registration entry was released for public comment on 12 April 2008 and period for public comment closes on 8 May 2008.

### 2. 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

### 3. 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.

