

# Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie) Notice 2015

Notifiable Instrument NI2015–252

made under the

Heritage Act 2004, s34 Notice of decision about provisional registration

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**1 Name of instrument**

This instrument is the *Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie) Notice 2015*.

**2 Commencement**

This instrument commences on the day after notification.

**3 Notice of Decision**

Pursuant to Section 32 of the *Heritage Act 2004* the ACT Heritage Council has decided not to provisionally register Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie to the ACT Heritage Register.

Pamela Hubert  
A/g Secretary (as delegate for)  
ACT Heritage Council  
4 June 2015



## ACT Heritage Council

### STATEMENT OF REASONS

#### DECISION NOT TO PROVISIONALLY REGISTER

#### FAIRBRIDGE CRESCENT

(Blocks 19-27 Section 74 and Block 17-23 Section 75, Ainslie)

#### IN THE ACT HERITAGE REGISTER

In accordance with Section 32 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, the ACT Heritage Council has decided not to provisionally register Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie. This Statement of Reasons provides an assessment of Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie and finds that the place does not meet any of the criteria under s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

#### Background

Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie was nominated to the ACT Heritage Register by the ACT Heritage Council Taskforce in April 1995.

Nine of the 16 houses on Fairbridge Crescent nominated to the ACT Heritage Register are the property of Community Services, ACT Government and are included in the 2011 draft report by Philip Leeson Architects Pty Ltd titled *Heritage Assessments of Housing ACT Properties*. The Report considers these properties do not meet the threshold for registration under the *Heritage Act 2004*.

The houses along Fairbridge Crescent are an example of one of the many attempts to provide public housing post WWII to the influx of public servants to the capital.

The houses consist of CA1 and CA4 types Riley Newsum prefabricated single storey homes which have been altered since construction. Many other examples of this type of construction exist in the ACT particularly within the suburbs of Fairbairn, Deakin, Narrabundah and O'Connor.

Fairbridge Crescent was externally inspected by ACT Heritage in August 2012 and on 8 January 2015.

#### 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 Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie the Council considered:

- the original nomination and documentary evidence supplied by the nominator;
- information provided by a site inspection in August 2012 and on 8 January 2015 by ACT Heritage; and
- the report by ACT Heritage titled, *Background Information Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie*, June 2015, containing photographs and information on history, description, condition and integrity.

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. Future research may alter the findings of this assessment.

**(a) importance to the course or pattern of the ACT's cultural or natural history;**

Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie does not meet this criterion.

The provision of public housing is an important and distinct historical theme within the context of the ACT. Within the wide variety of residential buildings erected in Canberra by the Commonwealth Government in the inter-war and post-war decades, the houses located on Fairbridge Crescent make a contribution to an understanding of the Government's development and provision of public housing in response to the need to accommodate the expanding public sector workforce.

Fairbridge Crescent makes a contribution to the theme by demonstrating the provision of prefabricated single storey homes, particularly type CA1 and CA4 Riley Newsum. Many other examples of these prefabricated houses exist in a number of suburbs throughout the ACT including Fairbairn, Deakin, Narrabundah and O'Connor. While the houses located along Fairbridge Crescent have retained the general form and massing of the original houses, they have been progressively altered since their construction diminishing their ability to accurately express particular attributes of the design. Alterations include loss of original vertical weatherboards and roof sheeting, replaced with different profiles and loss of original timber double hung windows, replaced by aluminium framed windows or timber frames of a different profile. Due to collective loss of integrity Fairbridge Crescent cannot be considered an important example in representing the provision of prefabricated single storey homes, specifically the Riley Newsum type.

A comprehensive study of the remaining Riley Newsum prefabricated houses in the ACT is needed to determine what, if any, retain sufficient integrity to demonstrate their contribution to the provision of public housing in the post war period.

**(b) has uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the ACT's cultural or natural history;**

Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie does not meet this criterion.

Around 500 Riley Newsum houses were built in Canberra between 1951 and 1955. Examples of these houses remain in various locations through the ACT including Ainslie, Deakin, Narrabundah, O'Connor and Fairbairn. As such, Fairbridge Crescent cannot be considered uncommon or rare.

The ability for the place to be considered endangered has been diminished by its loss of integrity. 10 out of 16 houses have had their original wall cladding replaced with a wider vertical plasticised profile, some with horizontal weatherboards, also resulting in the loss of the bottom timber plinth. Some houses have also had their roof sheeting replaced with a profile different to the original corrugated iron roof and many timber double hung windows have been replaced with aluminium.

**(c) potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT's cultural or natural history;**

Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie does not meet this criterion.

There is insufficient evidence before the Council to demonstrate that Fairbridge Crescent has the potential to yield important information that will contribute to a wider understanding of the ACT's cultural or natural history.

Fairbridge Crescent is an example of the prefabricated Riley Newsum house erected in the ACT to house the influx of public servants to the capital in the post-war period. Many other examples of these prefabricated houses exist in a number of suburbs throughout the ACT including Fairbairn, Deakin, Narrabundah and O'Connor.

A comprehensive study of the remaining Riley Newsum prefabricated houses in the ACT is needed to determine what, if any, retain sufficient integrity to demonstrate an ability to contribute to a wider understanding of the ACT's cultural history.

**(d) importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or objects;**

Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie does not meet this criterion.

Fairbridge Crescent demonstrates the provision of prefabricated single storey homes, particularly type CA1 and CA4 Riley Newsum. Many other examples of these prefabricated houses exist in a number of suburbs throughout the ACT including Fairbairn, Deakin, Narrabundah and O'Connor. While the houses located along Fairbridge Crescent have retained the general form and massing of the original houses, they have been progressively altered since their construction diminishing their ability to accurately express particular attributes of the design. Alterations include loss of original vertical weatherboards and roof sheeting, replaced with different profiles and loss of original timber double hung windows, replaced by aluminium framed windows. Due to collective loss of integrity Fairbridge Crescent cannot be considered an important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the provision of prefabricated single storey homes, specifically the Riley Newsum type.

A comprehensive study of the remaining Riley Newsum prefabricated houses in the ACT is needed to determine what, if any, retain sufficient integrity to demonstrate their importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics.

**(e) importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT;**

Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie does not meet this criterion.

Whilst Fairbridge Crescent exhibits post-war design and aesthetic qualities of low cost housing within a mature streetscape, there is no evidence to demonstrate that these qualities are valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT.

**(f) importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement for a particular period;**

Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie does not meet this criterion.

The Riley Newsum prefabricated house demonstrates a degree of creative and technical achievement, for its time, though its innovative design being able to be factory built, transported efficiently and quickly erected.

The houses located along Fairbridge Crescent however do not represent this innovative achievement to a high degree sufficient to meet this criterion due to the extent of alterations and modifications which diminish its integrity. 10 out of 16 houses have had their original wall cladding replaced with a wider vertical plasticised profile, some with horizontal weatherboards, also resulting in the loss of the bottom timber plinth. The houses have also had their roof sheeting replaced with a profile different to the original corrugated iron roof and many timber double hung windows have been replaced with aluminium.

**(g) has a strong or special association with the ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;**

Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie does not meet this criterion.

There is no evidence before the Council to demonstrate that Fairbridge Crescent has a strong or special association with the ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

- (h) has a special association with the life or work of a person, or people, important to the history of the ACT.**

Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie does not meet this criterion.

Fairbridge Crescent has an association with its designer, A.B. Armstrong, and its original, past and present residents, however, there is no evidence to demonstrate that any of these persons are either important to the history of the ACT or have an identified special association with these particular houses.

## Conclusion

The provision of public housing is an important and distinct historical theme within the context of the ACT. Within the wide variety of residential buildings erected in Canberra by the Commonwealth Government in the inter-war and post-war decades, Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie makes a contribution to an understanding of the Government's development and provision of public housing in response to the need to accommodate the expanding public sector workforce.

Fairbridge Crescent makes a contribution to the theme by demonstrating the provision of prefabricated single storey homes, particularly type CA1 and CA4 Riley Newsum.

Many other examples of these prefabricated houses exist in a number of suburbs throughout the ACT including Fairbairn, Deakin, Narrabundah and O'Connor. While the houses located along Fairbridge Crescent have retained the general form and massing of the original houses, they have been progressively altered since their construction diminishing their integrity in representing the design.

A comprehensive study of the remaining Riley Newsum prefabricated houses in the ACT is needed to determine what, if any, retain sufficient integrity to demonstrate their contribution to the provision of public housing in the post war period.

This Statement of Reasons provides an assessment of Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie and finds that the [PLACE/OBJECT] does not meet any of the criteria specified in s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

## SITE PLAN



Image 1 Fairbridge Crescent, Ainslie, Nominated Boundary