

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R122

Name of Place: House at 13 Furphy Place Garran

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: 13 Furphy Place GARRAN
Block 42 Section 10 of Garran

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|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Listing Status: | Registered | Other Heritage Listings: | |
| Date of Listing: | November 2004 | Level of Significance: | Local |
| Citation Revision No: | | Category: | Residential |
| Citation Revision Date: | | Style: | |

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|----------------------|------|----------------------|-------------|
| Date of Design: | 1965 | Designer: | |
| Construction Period: | | Client/Owner/Lessee: | |
| Date of Additions: | 1981 | Builder: | Contractors |

Statement of Significance

The house at Furphy Place, Garran, 1967, is an example of significant architecture and an educational resource. The residence is a good example of the Late Twentieth-Century International style (1960-). The design incorporates features that are specific to the style; cubiform overall shape and plain smooth wall surfaces.

The following design features are of additional significance; overhang for shade, contrasting texture, the glazing, face brickwork, fascia, open carport that contrasts with the solid masonry form, return walls, detailing and finishes.

The residence is valued by the RAI.

The architecture of this residence may contribute to the education of designers in their understanding of Late Twentieth-Century Architectural styles by locating the building in its historical and environmental contexts and placing it within the knowledge domain of architectural, urban and environmental histories.

Description

The house at Furphy Place, Garran, 1967, by Scollay Bischoff and Pegrum, with Tony Pegrum as the design architect, is a good example of the Late Twentieth-Century International Style (1960-) with its cubiform overall shape and plain smooth wall surfaces.

The house is located near the end of the cul-de-sac with the front of the house facing east. The site slopes down to the west and the width of the block increases to the rear. The site contours have been raised to provide level access off the interior. The cavity cement face brick house is rectangular in plan with a flat metal deck roof without projecting eaves overhang. The composition provides roofed recesses into the masonry rectangle envelope to form a long northern porch and protection to the west and south glazed and paneled external walls.

The entrance to the house is approached from the street along a passage between the carport and the house, all under the one flat roof line. The single carport is open to the side and has a brick storeroom at the western end. The main entry is to the south beyond the unbroken brick wall of the living room. The entry lobby is formed as an airlock with two internal sliding doors located at the corner, one opening into the living room to the east and the other opening into a passage that extends to the west.

The living room is the full depth of the house and has a large eastern window that looks towards the street and is set opposite the two adjacent sliding doors that open from the entry and the passage. The location of the window allows a view along the passage out into the front garden.

Two thirds of the northern wall is fully glazed with timber framed windows and a glazed swing door that looks out over and opens onto the porch and beyond to the garden. To the right of the glazing the brickwork extends out forming a 900mm deep by 1100mm wide corner alcove. Externally this alcove forms the 1800mm brick return wall that combines with a matching return wall at the western end to define the northern porch.

Directly to the north of the entry and off the passage is the kitchen with benches and cupboards to four sides, a servery opening to the family room to the west and a central northern window.

Along the short passage and next to the kitchen is the family room that extends into the passage. The room has full width glazing to the north with glazed doors that open out onto the porch and garden beyond. The room is recessed further into the house creating a deeper porch area. The roof is partly open behind the continuous fascia with a pergola to allow northern light into the living room maintaining the rectangular roof form.

Along the central southern section of the house are the wet areas and a small store room. The laundry passage opens to the rear yard parallel to the entry. The rear service area is separated from the entry by a timber gate between the house and the brick store behind the carport.

At the western end of the passage are the three bedrooms, two facing north and one to the south. The north facing main bedroom has the brick alcove that mirrors the living room and both northern bedrooms each have an off-centre full height windows. The southern bedroom has deeply recessed full width western glazing with a 900mm sill height. It has a built-in masonry wardrobe.

There is a skylight to the passage and another to the central storeroom.

The long recessed external walls to the north and south elevations are detailed with three variations: full height timber framed glazing; full height vertical timber paneled walls, and a combination of glazing and fibre sheet cladding where the window sill does not extend to the floor level. The downpipes are either concealed or recessed into the external brick skin. The floor is suspended concrete slab throughout.

The other architectural elements of the Late Twentieth-Century International style (1960-) displayed by the building that relate to the external forms are:

- overhang for shade;
- contrasting texture.

The additional significant design features are; the glazing; face brickwork; fascia; open carport that contrasts with the solid masonry form, return walls, detailing and finishes.

The house can be compared with the significant Late Twentieth-Century International style (1960-) houses in Canberra by Dirk Bolt; two in Deakin including the Butler residence at 44 Beauchamp Street, Deakin, 1965, two in Fisher and 1 Astley Place, Garran, 1967. These houses are also cubiform in their overall shape and have minimal roof overhang. These houses are slightly different in that they have large sheets of glass, which is a feature specific to the style, in comparison to the glazing of the house at 13 Furphy Place; and the Bolt designed houses are constructed in face blockwork. In addition, some of Bolt's designs incorporated steel framing to facilitate the inclusion of the large sheets of glass.

The house can be compared to the significant "Bowden House" Deakin, 1955, by Harry Seidler, which is in the Inter-War Functionalist style, the earlier period of modern architecture that preceded the Late Twentieth-Century International style. Both have the cubiform overall shape and recessed porch under the continuous roof line, however, the "Bowden House" has additional features including large sheets of glass and contrasting textures.

The residence is well maintained and in very good condition.

Condition and Integrity

Good. Extended in 1981 to a design by Trevor Gibson.

Background/History

The original semi-detached dual occupancy houses on the adjacent site at 15 Furphy Place, 1967, were also designed by Scollay Bischoff and Pegrum at the same time as this house. It would appear that the two different clients engaged the firm at the same time. The residential projects were designed in the same style with the same materials creating a modern urban form at the end of the cul-de-sac.

The dual occupancy at 15 Furphy Place has been extensively altered with extensions to the front and rear, the brickwork rendered and painted and the front carports, laundry and garden walls demolished and replaced with new garages.

The houses were not only designed with the same aesthetics but also had matching elevations and part floor plans. The western section of 15 Furphy Place is identical to the western section of 13 Furphy Place, while treatment of the living room northern façade at 13 Furphy Place is similar to the bedroom of the western dual occupancy where the brick alcove extended out in the same form.

This modern brick architecture may have been influenced by Australian architecture of the time, or architecture Pegrum saw while traveling in Europe, or published work from Europe and the west coast of USA.

In Australia this may have included a small number of houses recently constructed in Sydney. Two houses in particular received media coverage in the early 1960s. The Badham House, Cronulla, 1959-1960, by Ancher Mortlock and Murray, with Bryce Mortlock as the design partner, which was awarded the Sulman by the NSW Chapter of the RAlA, and the Palmer House, Turrumurra, 1959-60, by Allen & Jack. Both of these houses are flat roofed modern designs combining post and beam construction with masonry. The Badham House is more expansive and more open plan than Pegrum's design and incorporated large sliding doors and curtains throughout the living areas. Similarities between Pegrum's design and Mortlock's are the cubiform overall shape, the use of grey coloured face cement brickwork, fibre cement sheeting above and below windows, corner sliding doors and northern orientation with the house opening out to the north landscaped garden. The Palmer House is quite similar in the compact overall plan with the entry, garage and garage store location while the internal planning differs. The end walls extend past the glazing but not in the widened alcove form in the Pegrum plan.

In Europe influences may have been the pre WWII brick architecture of Mies van der Rohe and his houses at Krefeld 1928, and Berlin 1932, Lois Welzenbacher's Schulz House in Westphalia 1928, and Karl Schneider's Werner House in Hamburg 1930, as well as his Berlin Exhibition House, 1931, most of which would have appeared in publications and architecture texts. This architecture was of face brick and not the white painted render aesthetic of much of the 'functionalist style'.

On the west coast of the USA the work of Los Angeles architects such as Gordon Drake, Herbert Burns and Richard Neutra was becoming better known and influenced both Sydney and Melbourne architects who were formulating their "regional" styles of the time. The Cronulla house in particular has many similarities to the work of Drake.

The plan for the house is rational and frugal. It is allied with the concern in Australia since the end of the WWII to provide architect designed low cost modern three bedroom houses for the wider community. Preceding the design of the houses in Furphy Place examples of this concern for architect designed houses for the wider community are: the Beaufort Steel House, Ainslie, by Baldwinson, 1947, (with a total area of only 79sqm); the "Operation Snail" kit homes designed by Roy Simpson for the Victorian railways; the post WWII Royal Victorian Institute of Architects Small Homes Service; while right through the 1970s there was an interest in system built houses with an area less than 120sqm. An example of this was the competition held in 1971 jointly sponsored by the Gas & Fuel Corporation of Victoria, Beneficial Finance Corporation Ltd, Merchant Builders Pty Ltd and the RAlA Victorian Chapter Housing Service.

Tony Pegrum

Tony Pegrum graduated in architecture in the early 1960. "In the mid 1960s Tony traveled extensively overseas, working in London for twelve months on urban renewal projects and prefabricated buildings." OBIT NSW ARCH BUL FEB/MARCH 2002.

At the time of the design of the house at 13 Furphy Place the firm of Scollay, Bischoff and Pegrum was an established architecture practice with John Scolley, a prominent local architect, having previously designed a number of important houses in Canberra in the Post War Melbourne Regional style 1940-1960, including 73 National Circuit Deakin, 1959, (now demolished) and 113 Schlich Street, Yarralumla, designed 1959 and constructed shortly after.

There are a small number of houses in Canberra designed by the firm in the Late Twentieth-Century International style with similar planning and the use of the same materials and structure, one at 15 Furphy Place, Garran, 1967, (next door but extensively altered) and another at 18 Godfrey Street, Campbell, (extended at the front).

In 1972 Pegrum joined the firm of Hassell Architects in Adelaide. In 1975 he moved back to Sydney to head a new office for Hassell Architects and to be Director in charge of the new Macarthur Square Centre in Campbelltown. He was acknowledged as a designer of commercial projects and worked with the firm for 28 years before his death in 2001.

The house at 13 Furphy Place and the dual occupancy houses at 15 Furphy Place were jointly awarded the RAI A ACT Chapter C S Daley Medallion in 1969, the inaugural year of the award, an award for architectural excellence given annually from 1969-89 to the best recent ACT residential building.

Analysis against the Criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991

(i) a place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure or representing a new achievement of its time

(ii) a place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group

The house at Furphy Place, Garran, 1967, by Scollay Bischoff and Pegrum, with Tony Pegrum as the design architect, is a good example of the Late Twentieth-Century International Style (1960-) and is notable for displaying the design skill of the architect Tony Pegrum. Two of the main characteristics of style are exhibited here, its cubiform overall shape and plain smooth wall surfaces.

The following design features are of additional significance; overhang for shade, contrasting texture, the glazing, face brickwork, fascia, open carport that contrasts with the solid masonry form, return walls, detailing and finishes.

The house is valued by the RAI A as a good example of this style of architecture.

(iii) a place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger or being lost, or is of exceptional interest

The design of the house demonstrates an important development in architectural style in the second half of the 20th century by contrast with traditional architectural styles. Relatively few houses were built in this style in Canberra. Modern architecture was the most important architecture of the 20th Century. Canberra is one of the few 20th Century designed cities in the world. The combination of modern architecture and urban design is of exceptional interest.

(vi) a place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class

The residence is a notable design of a house in the Late Twentieth-Century International style. It contains two of the key elements of the style in an economic form.

(vii) a place which has strong or special associations with person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history

(xi) a place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site

Through its architectural style and planning this building is a valuable educational resource for designers and planners. Its architecture is characteristic of the Late Twentieth-International style.

The architecture of this residence may contribute to the education of designers in their understanding of Late Twentieth-Century Architectural Styles by locating the building in its historical and environmental contexts and placing it within the knowledge domain of architectural, urban and environmental histories. This building is a very good example of the style. Its innovative planning contributes to its significance and educational heritage. .

The house can be compared with the significant Late Twentieth-Century International style houses in Canberra by Dirk Bolt, two in Deakin including the Butler residence at 44 Beauchamp Street, Deakin, 1965, two in Fisher and 1 Astley Place, Garran, 1967. These houses are also cubiform in their overall shape and have minimal roof overhang. These houses are slightly different in that they have large sheets of glass, which is a feature specific to the style, in comparison to the glazing of the house at 13 Furphy Place. The Bolt designed houses are constructed in face blockwork rather than brickwork and some of Bolts designs incorporated steel framing to facilitate the inclusion of the large sheets of glass.

The house can be compared to the significant "Bowden House" Deakin, 1955, by Harry Seidler, which is in the Inter-War Functionalist style, the earlier period of modern architecture that preceded the Late Twentieth-Century International style. Both have the cubiform overall shape and recessed porch under the continuous roof line, however, the "Bowden House" has additional features including large sheets of glass and contrasting textures.

References

Other Information Sources