

# Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter

## Register of Significant Architecture

**RSA No: R 144**

**Name of Place:** JERILDERIE COURT

**Other/Former Names:**

**Address:** Ainslie Avenue REID 2612

Section 9 of REID

Listing Status:	RSA Listed	Other Heritage Listings:	None
Date of Listing:	March 2023	Level of Significance:	Territory
Citation No:	1 (E Martin)	Category:	Multi Unit Residential
		Style:	Modern
Date of Design:	1975	Architects:	Philip Cox & Partners
Construction Period:	1976-77	Client/Owner:	Housing ACT
		Builder:	

### Statement of Significance

Jerilderie Court is a significant complex of high quality government housing provided by the National Capital Development Commission in a period of growth and development in the ACT.

It demonstrates a design skill of sustainability through its northern orientation, creating private and community spaces enjoyed by tenants, set within a landscape for tenants and the broader setting of Reid. It has provided a high-quality living environment.

It was designed by internationally recognised and RAIA Gold Medalist (1984) architect Philip Cox. It is one of his early and formative works and a significant part of his architectural contribution to Canberra.

### Description and Condition

Jerilderie Court consists of 62 dwelling units. Housing types include 3-bedroom townhouse, single-storey garden units, in maisonettes and mews-style units. The design principle adopted was to orientate all units direct north creating oblique facades to the street frontage. The northern elevations contain private courtyards formed by garden walls and creating a series of receding and projecting planes. In addition, a large central communal space provided address to dwelling units, supervised playgrounds and protected barbecue areas.

Use of repetitive standard structural systems and cladding elements was essential to comply with the budget. The houses rely on staggered massing both vertically and horizontally and the contrast of pitched and flat roofs to provide visual interest within a framework of standardized building components.<sup>1</sup> The buildings are well maintained and in good condition.

### Background/History

Jerilderie Court was commissioned in 1976 by the National Capital Development Commission to provide residential accommodation for low-income families in a medium density housing scheme. The project created a precedent for medium-high density residential development.

The development was awarded the CS Daley Medal in 1978.<sup>2</sup> The judges' comments were:

*"...group housing development of high quality"*

*"Although built to a public-housing budget, the project is superior in many ways to much of the housing built for the private sector market."*

*"The jury was particularly impressed with the skill shown in creating spaces around and between the buildings."*

*"The housing clusters are placed to retain a number of trees on the perimeter, and are arranged to give a human scale appropriate to pedestrian users and passers-by."*

It was awarded the Institute's 25 year (Enduring Architecture) Award in 2005 with the judges' comments including:

*"Generous private outdoor space is provide for each unit, patios and garden courtyards, and direct private access to the street from some units. It is this carefully considered arrangement and proportional relationship of the built form and landscape space which greatly adds to the amenity of residents and acts as a unifying element across the development."*

*The mix of housing – maisonettes, garden units, flats and some three bedroom townhouses, suits a 'community of all ages' from young and elderly single to small and larger families. This housing mix continues to provide flexibility for its public owner/manager. Importantly. It provides choice and a high quality living environment for ACT public housing tenants which is evident in the care of the complex, low vacancy rate and popularity with residents, many long term (18 years in one unit).*

*The building form is characterised by staggered vertical and horizontal massing, contrast and layering is achieved using pitched and flat roof sand varying materials in the building elevations. These elements have produced a visually interesting development despite a public works budget that necessitated the use of standard structural systems and material. The buildings have required minimal interior and exterior maintenance apart from upgrades for fire safety and some minor work to improve security. The durability of its construction and finish is particularly significant given the number of residents that are likely to have occupied the units over the life of the buildings."*

*The jury believes Jerilderie Court is of historical significance in its origins and an excellent early example of the medium density housing type in a culturally significant setting. Its sympathetic design strongly evokes Griffin's vision of the 'garden city' and stands in stark contrast to much of the built form in its immediate vicinity."*<sup>3</sup>

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### **Designer/Architect: Philip Cox**

Philip Cox is one of Australia's most distinguished architects and has designed some of Australia's most important and technologically sophisticated buildings, including the National Maritime Museum, the Sydney Exhibition Centre, the Sydney Entertainment Centre and some of the facilities at Homebush Bay, including the National Aquatic Centre, used for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Cox has won many architectural awards in Australia, including both the Silver and Gold Medals from the Australian Institute of Architects. He is regarded as one of the founders of the Sydney School of architecture.

Cox has designed a number of major buildings and smaller projects in Canberra. They include the Kambah Health Centre (1973), Bruce Stadium (1974), the Irish Embassy (1975), the ACT Family and Juvenile Courts (1977), the National Indoor Sports Centre (1979), the house at 34 Fihelly Street, Fadden (1983) and the National Convention Centre (1989).

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## **Values which meet ACT Heritage Criteria**

### **a. Importance to the course or pattern of the ACT's cultural or natural history;**

The Jerilderie Court complex was designed at a time of expansion of the ACT and the urgent need for public housing. It demonstrates that quality design can occur within budget constraints. It has contributed to this part of the ACT's cultural history.

### **e. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT;**

The complex exhibits high aesthetic appeal which is demonstrated by the recognition by the Australian Institute of Architects, the tenants and illustrated by the complex in its landscape setting.

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

The complex demonstrates a high degree of creative achievement which is recognized by the RAIA (ACT) 1978 CS Daly Award, the 2005 25 Year Award and the high quality of living environment provided.

It is designed with north orientation, a variety of community and private spaces appreciated by tenants and illustrated by the low turnover and care of the complex. The skill in creating spaces between building components and the landscape within and around the complex has provided an enhanced environment and setting.

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

The complex is by internationally recognised and gold medal winning architect Philip Cox and represents one of his early and significant works. Cox's significance is illustrated in the monograph on him as one of the Australian Architects published by the Australian Institute of Architects. Philip Cox has contributed to the ACT with a number of award-winning buildings and his company's ongoing presence in Canberra since the mid-1970s.

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## **References**

- Cox, Philip, *Australian Architects*, Royal Australian Institute of Architects: Education Division, 1984  
Towndrow, Jennifer, *Philip Cox*, Cox Architects Penguin, 2008  
Cox Architects & Planners, Philip Cox, Stuart Harrison, Sandra Kaji O'Grady, Anna Johnson, 2008

## Plans<sup>4</sup>



## Photographs<sup>5</sup>



## **END NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Australian Architects: Philip Cox, RAIA, 1984, p 35

<sup>2</sup> The Canberra Times, 15 December 1979, p3

<sup>3</sup> 2005 Award

<sup>4</sup> Australian Architects: Philip Cox, RAIA, 1984 p 36

<sup>5</sup> ibid p 35-36