

Watermark Architectural Guides

Canberra

ARCHITECTURE

Andrew Metcalf



100



101

Gavin Blue

E25

L27

100 Housing—medium density Urambi Village Co-operative

Crozier Circuit, Kambah
1974 Michael Dysart
GC, V, NA

This group of 72 medium density housing units on the western edge of Kambah borders a golf course and is organised on a Co-operative Title basis. Clearly this assisted Michael Dysart to produce a uniquely varied residential environment which has strongly cohesive architectural qualities. There are 43 single storey units, many of them using L shaped plans with courtyards along the golf course side, and 29 tri-level units along the street side.

With parking consolidated into group garages the central space between these two informal rows is predominantly pedestrian and generously landscaped. A comfortable sequence of semi-private spaces conducts the visitor from public street to private dwelling with some grace in spite of the high density of residences and the obvious need for privacy. A restricted palette of materials and simple architectural forms further reinforces the significance of collectiveness and landscape in the overall scheme, particularly the central space, which is totally maintained by the Co-operative.

A similar project by Dysart in Wybalena Grove, Cook is actually larger, but less successful in perhaps not ageing as well as Urambi Village, but for students of medium density housing, it is well worth a visit.

101 Blue House

10 Decker Place, Fadden
1993 Rachel Bourne and Shane Blue
GC, V, NA

Nestling into an east facing, bowl-shaped Fadden hillside and backing onto the Canberra Nature Park [visible from the fire trail but there is a glimpse of the house from Decker Place] this project came early in the careers of Bourne and Blue. Built from joined pavilions of face brick and natural timber stepping down the hillside towards the road, this large house privileges the living room with extensive glass areas to take advantage of views, but operates with a more sheltered language of warm timber walls and smaller openings for the intensely private areas such as the bedrooms.

The prominent use of engineered timber and the aesthetic of expressed structure and junction that accompanies that, are well handled. Of particular interest is the quality of the detailed finish, since not only did the architects design the house, but actually built it too. After the completion of this project Bourne and Blue relocated to Newcastle in NSW and this is their only significant Canberra work to date.