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## ASTON/Fortis Real Estate Fund (N: ARFCX) (I: AARIX)

## **Fund Quarterly Commentary**

#### 1st Quarter 2011 Commentary

The Fund strongly outperformed its MSCI US REIT Index benchmark during the quarter. Both sector allocation and stock selection contributed to the relative performance, with the lion's share of the outperformance the result of superior stock selection. The absence of any Net Lease holdings accounted for the bulk of the sector contribution, with an underweight position in Lodging and overweight stakes in Self-Storage and Canada also aiding returns.

The two biggest individual stock contributors were Brookdale Senior Living and Douglas Emmett. Brookdale benefitted from a positive fourth quarter 2010 earnings release and 2011 guidance provided by management. The acquisition frenzy that has transpired of late in the Healthcare sector undoubtedly helped the stock as well, as capitalization rates compress.

#### **Portfolio Highlights**

The Fund's largest overweight position continues to be in Malls, as it has been for a while now. We think valuations continue to look attractive, especially for the big players in the sector—Simon Property Group and Taubman Centers—which the portfolio is overweight relative to the benchmark as well. Operating metrics are trending very well for the group as a whole. A holding in Tanger Factory Outlet also continues to witness solid operating fundamentals. Sales for off-price, factory outlets should continue to perform well for the foreseeable future as bargain shopping may endure for quite some time as the slow recovery unfolds and consumers continue to stretch their spending dollars.

We are maintaining a more modest overweight position to Shopping Centers, where operating fundamentals have been more difficult due to meaningful vacancy levels that are only slowly easing. We think the fundamentals have troughed, however, given sequential improvement for the past few quarters. During the quarter, we added Regency Centers and sold Kimco from the portfolio. Regency possesses one of the highest quality shopping center portfolios among public companies, and its valuation appears more appealing than that of Kimco's. We expect better leasing prospects for Regency with their higher level of newer and bigger-box spaces and the demand for such space in the market today. The Fund also participated in the initial public offering (IPO) of American Assets Trust early in the year. The company possesses an attractive, high quality portfolio of primarily retail shopping centers, office, and apartment assets in California, Hawaii and Texas. Beyond the high quality of the assets, the pricing of the IPO was attractive, with shares being offered at a compelling discount to net asset value.

The continued strong relative performance of Canadian property has lessened its attractiveness in our eyes. We have been reducing the portfolio's stake to this area since last year. Macroeconomic and operating fundamentals remain healthy, but modest earnings growth prospects combined with current valuation levels, have lessened its appeal versus the U.S. As a result, Riocan was sold during the quarter. The valuation of this large Canadian shopping center company became too rich after the strong recent performance from its shares and the Canadian REIT universe overall.

Finally, Healthcare remains a large underweight position in the Fund. The sector is deemed defensive in nature and performance tends to lag those areas with more leverage to an improving economy. Long lease terms make it difficult to push rate, even as fundamentals improve. Overall, we think the relative valuation for the sector is unappealing and that companies must rely too heavily

on acquisitions for meaningful earnings growth. In fact, we have witnessed a tremendous level of acquisition/merger activity so far this year, with more expected to follow.

#### Outlook

Consumer confidence fell a bit during the quarter on the back of continued geopolitical risk in the Mideast and Libya, the earthquakes/tsunami/nuclear fears in Japan, a continued slow jobs recovery here in the U.S., and meaningful rise in the price of gasoline. Despite this backdrop, the positive tone we have been espousing for the past few months continues. The recovery is progressing, and while it has been slower than anyone would like, the employment picture continues to look progressively better. This is the key, given that as jobs go, so goes the recovery. Furthermore, signs seem to point to a recovery that is beginning to be self-sustaining, as opposed to merely being stimulus driven.

From a property perspective, improvement in operating fundamentals continues virtually unabated across all property sectors. Thus, we continue to have a favorable outlook on the North American listed property sector. As the economy moves from recovery mode to one of expansion, US REITs are expected to see cash earnings growth of close to 10% in both 2011 and 2012. As always, dividends add to the attractiveness of the sector. With meaningful yield levels today, and many companies at or near their statutory minimum payout requirements, we expect dividend rate hikes to be healthy going forward as well.

## **Fortis Investment Management**

As of March 31, 2011, Brookdale Senior Living comprised 1.14% of the portfolio's assets, Douglas Emmett – 4.17%, Simon Property Group – 12.59%, Taubman Centers – 4.39%, Tanger Factory Outlet – 1.66%, Regency Centers – 2.20%, and American Assets Trust – 0.42%.

Note: Real estate funds are non-diversified and may be more susceptible to risk than funds that invest more broadly. Risks include declines from deteriorating economic conditions, changes in the value of the underlying property, and defaults by borrowers. Investing in foreign markets also entails the risk of social and political instability, market illiquidity, and currency volatility.

Before investing, carefully consider the fund's investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses. Contact 800 992-8151 for a prospectus containing this and other information. Read it carefully. Aston Funds are distributed by BNY Mellon Distributors Inc.

## **Fund Performance**

Average Annual Total Returns											
		Monthly returns (%) Period ended 3/31/11			Annualized Returns (%)  Period ended 3/31/11						
	Month	3 Month	s YTD	1 yr	3 yr	5 yr	10 yr	Since Inc	cept.	Incept.	Date
Fund Class N Shares (ARFCX)	-1.00	8.37	8.37	27.93	1.68	0.16	10.73	8.34		12/30/1	997
Fund Class I Shares (AARIX)	-1.01	8.31	8.31	28.11	1.85	0.38	N/A	3.34		9/20/20	05
MSCI U.S. REIT Gross TR Index	-1.47	6.49	6.49	24.28	2.24	1.39	11.33	8.44		12/31/1	997
Category: Real Estate	-1.31	6.07	6.07	23.22	1.49	0.49	10.42	8.22		12/31/1	997
Calendar year-end returns											
	20	10 200	9 2008	2007	7	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Fund Class N Shares (ARFCX)	29	9.16 28.9	91 -41.88	-19.	14	35.96	13.17	33.39	36.28	4.60	7.29
Fund Class I Shares (AARIX)	29	9.50 29.5	22 -41.77	-18.9	91	36.17	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
MSCI U.S. REIT Gross TR Index	28	3.48 28.0	61 -37.97	-16.8	32	35.92	12.13	31.49	36.74	3.64	12.83

The performance data quoted represents past performance. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Investment return and principal value will fluctuate so that an investor's shares upon redemption may be worth more or less than their original cost. Certain expenses were subsidized. If these subsidies were not in effect, the returns would have been lower. The adviser is contractually obligated to waive management fees and/or reimburse expenses through February 28, 2012. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance data quoted.

For periods less than one-year, total returns are reported; for periods more than one-year, average annual total returns are reported.

The MSCI US REIT Index is comprised of equity REITs that are included in the MSCI US Investable Market 2500 Index, with the exception of specialty equity REITs that do not generate a majority of their revenue and income from real estate rental and leasing operations. The index represents approximately 85% of the US REIT universe, and is an end of day, gross return index. Indices are adjusted for the reinvestment of capital gains and income dividends. Individuals cannot invest in an index.

The Morningstar Real Estate Category figures allow for a direct comparison of a fund's performance within its Morningstar Category.

# Morningstar Rating™ (based on risk-adjusted returns) and Morningstar Rankings™ (based on total returns) Real Estate Category as of 3/31/2011

	Overall	1 yr	3 y	r	5 y	r	10	yr
	Rating	Rank	Rating	Rank	Rating	Rank	Rating	Rank
Fund Class N Shares (ARFCX)	***	5	***	53	***	70	***	50
Fund Class I Shares (AARIX)	***	5	***	50	***	66	N/A	N/A
Total # funds in category	244	268	244		211		114	

For each fund with at least a three-year history, Morningstar calculates a Morningstar Rating™ based on a Morningstar Risk-Adjusted Return measure that accounts for variation in a fund's monthly performance (including the effects of sales charges, loads, and redemption fees), placing more emphasis on downward variations and rewarding consistent performance. The top 10% of funds in each category receive 5 stars, the next 22.5% receive 4 stars, the next 35% receive 3 stars, the next 22.5% receive 2 stars, and the bottom 10% receive 1 star. The Overall Morningstar Rating is derived from a weighted-average of the performance figures associated with its three-, five-, and 10-year (if applicable) Morningstar Rating metrics. © Morningstar, Inc.

The highest or most favorable Morningstar percentile rank is 1 and the lowest percentile rank is 100. The top-performing fund in a category will always receive a rank of 1. Various rating agencies categorize funds differently. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

## **Fund Overview**

## **Investment Strategy**

The **ASTON/Fortis Real Estate Fund** combines both top-down and bottom-up research with a long-term investment horizon to construct a portfolio that maintains the characteristics of direct real estate ownership.

## Objective

The Fund seeks total return through a combination of growth and income.

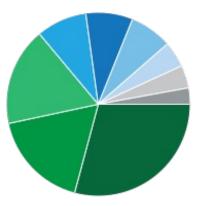
## **Risk Considerations**

All investments are subject to risks and investing in sector-specific mutual funds may entail greater risks than investments in funds diversified across sectors. Because such a fund may invest in a limited number of industries within a sector such as real estate, the fund may be subject to a greater level of market risk and may be more volatile. Risks also include declines in the value of real estate, general and economic conditions, changes in the value of the underlying property and defaults by borrowers.

Real estate funds are non-diversified and may be more susceptible to risk than funds that invest more broadly. Risks include declines from deteriorating economic conditions, changes in the value of the underlying property, and defaults by borrowers.

Fund Stats (as of 3/31/11)	N Shares	I Shares
Origin Of Information	Factset	Factset
Sales Load	None	None
Total Net Assets	38.83	38.83
Turnover	57%	57%
Minimum Investment	2,500	1,000,000
Alpha (3 yr.)	-0.36	-0.12
Beta (3 yr.)	0.94	0.94
R-Quared (3 yr.)	0.99	0.99
Standard Dev (3 yr.)	37.75	37.78
Sharpe Ratio (3 yr.)	0.04	0.04
Current Wtd Average P/E (trailing)	68.97	68.97
Current Wtd Average P/B (trailing)	3.50	3.50
Median Mkt Cap (\$Mil)	5,159	5,159
Average Wtd Coupon	0.00	0.00
Effective Maturity	0.00	0.00





Past performance does not guarantee future results. Investment return and principal value of mutual funds will vary with market conditions, so that shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost.

As the fund is actively managed, the securities as presented may not represent the current or future composition of the portfolio.

# **Fund Holdings**

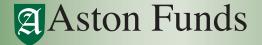
Holdings as of: 3/31/11

Company	Ticker	CUSIP	Number of Shares	Market Value	% of Net Assets $\downarrow$
SIMON PROPERTY GROUP INC	SPG	828806109	45,642	\$4,890,996.72	12.59%
PUBLIC STORAGE	PSA	74460D109	28,950	\$3,210,844.50	8.26%
BOSTON PROPERTIES INC	BXP	101121101	30,583	\$2,900,797.55	7.47%
AVALONBAY COMMUNITIES INC	AVB	53484101	21,041	\$2,526,603.28	6.50%
EQUITY RESIDENTIAL	EQR	29476L107	40,122	\$2,263,282.02	5.82%
FEDERAL REALTY INVS TRUST	FRT	313747206	22,817	\$1,860,954.52	4.79%
ESSEX PROPERTY TRUST INC	ESS	297178105	14,595	\$1,809,780.00	4.66%
HOST HOTELS & RESORTS INC	HST	44107P104	100,036	\$1,761,633.96	4.53%
TAUBMAN CENTERS INC	TCO	876664103	31,859	\$1,707,005.22	4.39%
DOUGLAS EMMETT INC	DEI	25960P109	86,549	\$1,622,793.75	4.17%
VENTAS INC	VTR	92276F100	26,607	\$1,444,760.10	3.72%
VORNADO REALTY TRUST	VNO	929042109	13,929	\$1,218,787.50	3.13%
PROLOGIS	PLD	743410102	75,583	\$1,207,816.34	3.11%
CASH EQUIVALENTS & OTHER			1,054,549	\$1,111,200.58	2.86%
NATIONWIDE HEALTH PPTYS INC	NHP	638620104	24,819	\$1,055,552.07	2.71%
DIGITAL REALTY TRUST INC	DLR	253868103	18,050	\$1,049,427.00	2.70%
REGENCY CENTERS CORP	REG	758849103	19,681	\$855,729.88	2.20%
WEINGARTEN REALTY INVESTORS	WRI	948741103	30,497	\$764,254.82	1.96%
TANGER FACTORY OUTLET CENTER	SKT	875465106	24,708	\$648,337.92	1.66%
BRANDYWINE REALTY TRUST	BDN	105368203	51,848	\$629,434.72	1.62%
LIBERTY PROPERTY TRUST	LRY	531172104	18,188	\$598,385.20	1.54%
GLIMCHER REALTY TRUST	GRT	379302102	64,578	\$597,346.50	1.53%
EASTGROUP PROPERTIES INC	EGP	277276101	13,277	\$583,789.69	1.50%
AMB PROPERTY CORP	AMB	00163T109	14,457	\$520,018.29	1.33%
SL GREEN REALTY CORP	SLG	78440X101	6,762	\$508,502.40	1.30%
BROOKDALE SENIOR LIVING INC	BKD	112463104	15,932	\$446,096.00	1.14%
HCP INC	HCP	40414L109	7,536	\$285,915.84	0.73%

HEALTH CARE REIT INC	HCN	42217K106	4,303	\$225,649.32	0.58%
BOARDWALK REAL ESTATE INVEST	BEIU	B011205	3,772	\$187,179.90	0.48%
CAN REAL ESTATE INVEST TRUST	REFU	2173052	4,860	\$173,696.75	0.44%
AMERICAN ASSETS TRUST INC	AAT	24013104	7,767	\$165,204.09	0.42%
			\$	38,831,776.43	100%

Past performance does not guarantee future results. Investment return and principal value of mutual funds will vary with market conditions, so that shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost.

As the fund is actively managed, the securities as presented may not represent the current or future composition of the portfolio.





## **ASTON/Fortis Real Estate Fund**

March 31, 2010

## **Top Ten Holdings**

	Fund
Simon Property Group Inc.	12.60%
Public Storage	8.27%
Boston Properties Inc.	7.47%
AvalonBay Communities Inc.	6.51%
Equity Residential	5.83%
Federal Realty Investment Trust	4.79%
Essex Property Trust Inc.	4.66%
Host Hotels & Resorts Inc.	4.54%
Taubman Centers Inc.	4.40%
Douglas Emmett Inc.	4.18%
Percentage of Total Net Assets	63.23%

The Fund is actively managed. Holdings and weightings are subject to change daily.

## **Sector Breakdown**

	Fund
Retail	29.16%
Residential	17.48%
Office Properties	17.28%
Health Care	8.91%
Self Storage	8.27%
Industrials	7.49%
Hotels	4.54%
Diversified	4.01%
Cash Equivalents & Other	2.86%

Sector weightings are based on net assets.

## **Portfolio Return Statistics**

	Class N
Alpha 3 Yr.	-0.36
Beta	0.94
Std Dev 3 Yr.	37.75
Sharpe Ratio	0.04
R-Squared	0.99

Alpha measures the difference between a fund's actual returns and its expected performance, given its level of risk. Beta is a measure of risk which shows a fund's volatility relative to an index. Sharpe Ratio is a risk-adjusted measure used to determine reward per unit of risk. R-Squared is the percentage of a fund's movement that can be explained by movements in its benchmark index.

#### Subadviser

#### **Fortis Investments**

(Chicago, IL) The firm emphasizes rigorous bottom-up fundamental analysis to drive security selection and portfolio construction.

## **Portfolio Managers**



### Joseph Pavnica

Mr. Pavnica is the Head of American Property, and has more than 21 years of investment experience. He received his BS in accounting from St. Joseph's College and his MBA from Indiana University Northwest.



#### James Hardman

Mr. Hardman joined Fortis and its predecessors in April 2005 as an Investment Analyst. Previously, he worked as an investment and strategy analyst for Security Capital Research & Management and as a real estate consultant for Earnst & Young Real Estate Advisory Group. Mr. Hardman has a BS degree in accounting and finance from Indiana University.

## **Objective**

The Fund seeks total return through a combination of growth and income.

## **Investment Strategy & Process**

The Fund invests in the securities of issuers throughout the world in constructing a portfolio that maintains the characteristics of direct property real estate ownership, combining both top-down and bottom-up research with a long-term investment horizon.

### **Macroeconomic Analysis**

- Examine supply/demand trends and interest rate outlook
- Property-sector valuation research
- Determine region, country, and property-sector preferences

## **Security Analysis**

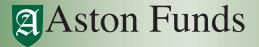
- Require 75% of revenue from property activities with 25% from rental income
- Management and balance sheet analysis
- Multi-factor valuation study—including NAV analysis, discounted cash flow model, and dividend review

#### **Risk Controls**

- Property Investment Committee review every six weeks
- Max variation of individual position size from benchmark of 50% (if greater than 10% weight) or 500 basis points
- Max country/sector variation from benchmark of 50% up to 15 percentage points or 500 basis points (if less than 10% weight)

Note: Real estate funds are non-diversified and may be more susceptible to risk than funds that invest more broadly. Risks include declines from deteriorating economic conditions, changes in the value of the underlying property, and defaults by borrowers. Investing in foreign markets also entails the risk of social and political instability, market illiquidity, and currency volatility.

Parameters set by the Subadviser are not a fundamental policy of the Fund and are subject to change at any time.





## ASTON/Fortis Real Estate Fund

March 31, 2010

## **Calendar Year Returns**

	Class N	Class I	Benchmark
2010	29.16%	29.50%	28.48%
2009	28.91%	29.22%	28.61%
2008	-41.88%	-41.77%	-37.97%
2007	-19.14%	-18.91%	-16.82%
2006	35.96%	36.17%	35.92%
2005	13.17%	_	12.13%
2004	33.39%	_	31.49%
2003	36.28%	_	36.74%
2002	4.60%	_	3.64%
2001	7.29%	_	12.83%

#### **Fund Information**

	Class N	Class I
Ticker	ARFCX	AARIX
Cusip	00078H620	00080Y108
Net Expense Ratio*	1.37%	1.12%
Gross Expense Ratio	1.68%	1.43%
P/FFO		9.6
Wtd Median Mkt Cap (\$Mil)		5,159
Wtd Avg Mkt Cap (\$Mil)		11,702
Total Net Assets (\$Mil)		38.83
Redemption Fee**		2%
Turnover***		57%
Sales Load		None
Number of Stocks		30

The Adviser is contractually obligated to waive management fees and/or reimburse ordinary expenses through February

#### For quarterly Fund commentary please visit us online at www.astonfunds.com.

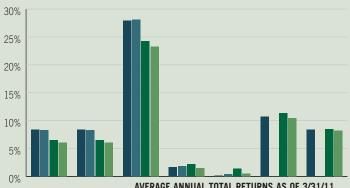
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Shareholder Services: 800 992-8151

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Online Services: www.astonfunds.com

#### **Performance**



**AVERAGE ANNUAL TOTAL RETURNS AS OF 3/31/11** 

	Current Quarter ^	Year- To-Date^	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	Since Inception	
■ Class N Shares	8.37%	8.37%	27.93%	1.68%	0.16%	10.73%	8.34%	12/30/97
Class I Shares	8.31%	8.31%	28.11%	1.85%	0.38%	_	3.34%	9/20/05
■ Benchmark*	6.49%	6.49%	24.28%	2.24%	1.39%	11.33%	8.44%	12/30/97
■ Category**	6.07%	6.07%	23.22%	1.49%	0.49%	10.42%	8.22%	12/30/97

The performance data quoted represents past performance. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Investment return and principal value will fluctuate so that an investor's shares, upon redemption, may be worth more or less than their original cost. Some of the returns quoted reflect fee waivers or expense reimbursements that are no longer in effect. Returns for certain periods would have been lower without the waivers/reimbursements. Relatively high performance may not be repeated in the future. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance data quoted. For performance data current to the most recent month-end, please visit our website at www.astonfunds.com.

#### ^ Total Returns.

- \* The MSCI US REIT Index is comprised of equity REITs that are included in the MSCI US Investable Market 2500 Index, with the exception of specialty equity REITs that do not generate a majority of their revenue and income from real estate rental and leasing operations. The index represents approximately 85% of the US REIT universe, and is an end of day, gross return index. Indices are adjusted for the reinvestment of capital gains and income dividends. Individuals cannot invest in an index.
- \*\* The Morningstar Real Estate Category figures allow for a direct comparison of a fund's performance within its Morningstar Category.

## Morningstar Rating™

Based on Risk-Adjusted Returns



OVERALL MORNINGSTAR RATING

## Morningstar® Rankings

### **Based on Total Return**

Class N	1 Yr.	3 Yr.	5 Yr.	10 Yr.
Percentile Rank	5	53	70	50
# of Funds	268	244	211	114

As of 3/31/11. The N Class was rated 3 stars for the Overall and 3-year period, 3 stars for the 5-year period, and 3 stars for the 10-year period against 244, 211, and 114 US-Specialty Real Estate funds respectively.

For each fund with at least a three-year history, Morningstar calculates a Morningstar Rating based on a Morningstar Risk-Adjusted Return measure that accounts for variation in a fund's monthly performance (including the effects of sales charges, loads, and redemption fees), placing more emphasis on downward variations and rewarding consistent performance. The top 10% of funds in each category receive 5 stars, the next 22.5% receive 4 stars, the next 35% receive 3 stars, the next 22.5% receive 2 stars, and the bottom 10% receive 1 star. The Overall Morningstar Rating is derived from a weighted-average of the performance figures associated with its three-, five-, and 10-year (if applicable) Morningstar Rating metrics. © Morningstar, Inc.

The highest or most favorable Morningstar percentile rank is 1 and the lowest percentile rank is 100. The top-performing fund in a category will always receive a rank of 1. Various rating agencies categorize funds differently. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Applicable if shares are sold or exchanged within 90 calendar days of purchase.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>Based on a rolling 12-month average.

# **Aston Investment Product Overview**

## **Domestic and International Equity**

Large	Herndon Capital Mgmt. Value* MFS Investment Mgmt. Value	TAMRO Capital Partners Diversified Equity*  Neptune Investment Mgmt. International Equity	Montag & Caldwell, Inc. Growth Balanced  Todd - Veredus Asset Mgmt. Select Growth*
Mid	River Road Asset Mgmt. Dividend All Cap Value* Cardinal Capital Mgmt. Mid Cap Value*	Optimum Investment Advisors Mid Cap	International All Cap Growth  Montag & Caldwell, Inc. Mid Cap Growth
Small	River Road Asset Mgmt. Select Value  River Road Asset Mgmt. Small Cap Value**  River Road Asset Mgmt. Independent Value	TAMRO Capital Partners Small Cap**	Todd - Veredus Asset Mgmt. Aggressive Growth  Crosswind Investments, LLC Small Cap Growth

## **Aston Asset Management**

- Institutional investment process
- Well-defined asset class expertise
- Focused portfolios
- Seasoned professionals
- Seeks superior risk-adjusted returns

## **Alternative**

Lake Partners, Inc. LASSO Alternatives

Smart Portfolios, Inc.
Dynamic Allocation\*

M.D. Sass Investors Serv. Enhanced Equity

New Century Capital Mgmt.
Absolute Return ETF

## Sector

Fortis Investments Real Estate

## **Fixed Income**

Taplin, Canida & Habacht, Inc.
Fixed Income

<sup>\*</sup>Also available in Separately Managed Accounts (SMA) \*\*Closed to new investors

### **Investment Advisor Services (800) 597-9704** www.astonfunds.com

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The above individuals are registered representatives of BNY Mellon Distributors Inc.

